



UNFOLD: Nan Hoover

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writing the light



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by students of the Gerrit Rietveld academy / Dogtime

19th of May, 2021

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self-portrait 2004



This publication forms the documentation of a selection of the works that students of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, of the DOGtime department, have conceived as re-interpretations (re-enactments) of works by Nan Hoover (1931 – 2008). The works formed the concluding element in the media theoretical course Forensic Aesthetics (tutored by Willem van Weelden); part of the second year curriculum. The presentation of these works is part of the UNFOLD : Nan Hoover programme of LIMA, a one-day reinterpretation festival (May 2021). It is the third edition of LIMA's reinterpretation programme that seeks to give as many as possible answers to the question of what the work (media art work) is, or can be, today.

Forensic Aesthetics

Forensics normally is associated with the truth-finding process in court cases, and is based on the assumption that crimes are registered within the material properties of objects including bodies and places. But in the classical age, forensics (from the Latin : 'of the forum') was a branch of rhetoric (the art of persuasion), and referred to the practice and skill of making an argument before a professional, political or legal gathering. In that practice forensics developed its aesthetic dimensions, which included its means of presentation, its theatrics of its delivery, and forms of image and gesture. In a sense the objects were granted the agency to address the forum (prosopopoeia; the mediated speech of inanimate objects). Yet, because objects do not literally speak for themselves, there is a need for translation or (re)interpretation. It is for this reason that the scope of forensics is by default a transdisciplinary one.

Forensic Aesthetics then is the art of considering such objects and thinking not only about how they are used in the forum (e.g. the courtroom), but its agenda ignites speculations on what they mean outside their original context, especially in relation to artistic practices, or in alternative knowledge production.

Art, like anything else, is set within an informational world in which entanglements of languages, codes, protocols, materials, sounds, predictive structures, standardizations, have produced the urgency to the question : how can the understanding of these hybrid entanglements inform a new artistic attitude or a new prospect for relational art making? And in what way can art regain a new sense of being public?

What is required is the acknowledgement of its material embeddedness, as the works become the evidentiary material within the virtual flows of code that project a new imagination of being in the world.

The course as it is given in the context of the DOGtime propaedeutic program (second year) is an investigative practice that fuses (media) theoretical analysis with a projectionist practice of materializing media critical research outcomes in works that challenge representational approaches to art making, and introduces an emergent sensibility attuned to these material investigations that has the potential of revealing yet uncovered worlds of imagination both in already conceived works of art, and the virtual ones waiting to be actualized.

Re-interpretation / Re-enactment : Nan Hoover

Applying a wider lens to the particularities of a Forensic Imagination, the course also focusses more specifically on the re-enactment of media art works that were conceived with what are usually considered to be obsolete or outdated media types or formats. In earlier editions the work 'Performer, Audience, Mirror' (1978) by Dan Graham was investigated by students and re-enacted in various ways, also in the context of the UNFOLD program of LIMA, in front of an audience (January 2020) ¹. The process of investigating the specificities of the media used, the time of the origination of the work, the documentation and staging of the work, and of course the larger context in which the work featured, all belong to the intrinsic preparatory work of the conception of these re-enactments, in order to not only comment on the historical works, and their medial appearance but also create new ones that have their own artistic sovereignty within our current media set up.

This time the same type of investigation was done in the context of the re-interpretations of the work of Nan Hoover. LIMA supplied generously the access to its online collection, granting the students to scrutinize in depth the works of Nan, and to note the medium specificities of the various works, and consider their position within the oeuvre, and its development over time. This resulted in a wide scope of differences in both the choice of works that were used as the inspiration for a re-interpretation, and in the chosen approach.

Just to highlight some of the examples of the works, Emily and Mieke chose to work on the medial reconfiguration of the work 'Returning to Fuji' (1984), by using found images of Mount Fuji and using GAN (Generative Adversarial Network) software, a class of machine learning frameworks (AI) to create a re-interpretation of Nan's work. In the original piece Nan purposefully used no images of Mount Fuji, but instead used simple means within a studio setting to create this evocative piece, that played with the metamorphosis of a mountain due to changing weather conditions and camera angles, being at the same time a highly ambiguous entity and yet a spiritual symbol of Man's coexistence with the eternity of Nature.

By using 3D modelling software and Snapchat filters, Nicolas re-interpreted 'Desert' (1985), by radically challenging notions of the naturalness of early video footage by the total artificiality of the projected 'realities' of software.

Noel worked with a dangerous laser beam to re-create Nan's favourite piece 'Impressions' (1979), her first color video, in which the gesture of the index finger gives the suggestion that the finger is actually writing the light. The 'innocent' light of the original, suddenly has become a dangerous beam that when interacting with it could result in a fierceful 'medium' burn.

In all, all the projects focus on various aspects of the original works, sometimes from a more medium oriented approach, to poetically playing with the more performative aspects of Nan's works, in which duration, slowness and the intrinsic gestural movements of bodies and body parts seem to challenge the limitations of their mediation, opening up to moments in which the mediality seems to break down, into something uncanny and mysterious, transcending the ordinary and particular.

This aspect of Nan's work, with its razor sharp concentration and investment to work abundantly with limitations of both the medium and its use was for most of the students a vital factor of their fascination of their re-interpretations. For we are living now in times in which such rigorous slowing down of pace rather feels like a burden, producing a sense of unease and disorientation. Yet, in all the projects of the students, Nan's work instigated a tremendous intensification of perception and challenged them to work with the possibilities of enhancing medial presence even given our current media types and formats and while noting the differences in their use and occurrence. This small publication gives a fair overview of what these investigations put on the table for a more in depth account of what the legacy of Nan's work might be for the future.

Documentation

The history of video art emerged out of the desire to document time based art works or performances. Yet, for Nan the video became rather a tool for the experimentation with the medium itself, based on a painterly imagination exploring in time movement, gestures and light, creating nether worlds that challenged the medium itself. Given the suggestion to take this aspect in their re-interpretations on board, the students set out not only to conceive their works with a similar sense of experimentation, but also in their approach to the documentation of their pieces, they worked with a variety of formats and documentation types.

Some of them take the form of poetry and seem to be a medial transposition of the re-interpreted work, e.g. by mimicking the flow of the video imagery, while others give a more factual account of the working process and the motivations that led them to their works. In their richness, both the works and their documentation can be deemed to be inspirational to further negotiations and research into the possibility to remake important media works and grant them an after-life or a life yet to come.

Willem van Weelden, April 2021
(Tutor Media Theory, DOGtime,
Gerrit Rietveld Academie)

1. 'Performer/Audience/iPhone – Herinterpretaties van Dan Graham bij LIMA', Lena van Tijen, Metropolis M 22.01.2020. http://www.metropolism.com/nl/reviews/40236_dan_graham_performer_audience_mirror_lima

Thanks

First of all I would like to thank all the students of DOGtime 2A that participated in this project, and their inspirational take on the work of Nan. It has been a truly rewarding project, I thank you all!

But of course I would like to thank also Manel Esparbe Y Gasca, Head of the Department of DOGtime, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, for his support and his commitment to this publication, and Gaby Wijers, Head of LIMA, for offering a Forum to the students work, and taking seriously the potential that these works might possibly exert on the UNFOLD programme.

A special word of thanks to Fransien van der Putt, as part of the UNFOLD team, and an expert on the work of Nan Hoover, investing time and energy in talking to the students on their re-interpretations and giving them valuable feedback on their proposals.


light dissolves 1975 - 1977
18' 26"



Alaa Ammar

Techno Movement in the dark and body light





Emily Bernstein & Mieke de Roo
Returning to Fuji in 2020



'Returning to Fuji in 2020' is an AI-generated re-enactment of Nan Hoover's work 'Returning to Fuji' (1984).

The keywords used in the LIMA catalogue to describe Nan Hoover's work 'Returning to Fuji' are: perception, reality, and representation. With a pile of typing paper, Hoover creates an illusion of Mount Fuji, which appears to be blanketed in fog, its presence changing subtly as it shifts from dark to light. The video is accompanied by a synthetically produced sound that resembles a mountainous wind. We perceive what we presume (at least at first) to be a representation of a landscape, mediated by video. However, as we observe more closely, the representation is not entirely clearcut. Are we looking at a landscape, or perhaps something else? Hoover nudges us to linger a while and question what we are seeing versus what we are perceiving, which invites us to question the nature of reality itself.

The subject of the work is Mount Fuji. This volcano is considered to be a sacred symbol of Japan and is believed to inhabit the spirits of its ancestors. Hoover's attempt to capture the spiritual dimension of the landscape through the use of video and a pile of paper adds another layer to the work. It turns the viewer's attention to nature and our connection to it.

The following quote from Paul Auster's book 'The New York Trilogy' captures the issues that Hoover touches upon in 'Returning to Fuji':

'Adam's one task in the Garden had been to invent language, to give each creature and thing its name. In that state of innocence, his tongue had gone straight to the quirk of the

world. His words had not merely appended to the things he saw, they had revealed their essences, had literally brought them to life. A thing and its name were interchangeable. After the fall, this was no longer true.

Names became detached from things; words devolved into a collection of arbitrary signs; language had been severed from God. The story of the Garden, therefore, not only records the fall of man, but the fall of language.'

Auster (1987) p.43

If we consider video to be a form of language as well, we might say that Hoover 'writes' with light and dark, and in this way she attempts to capture a natural phenomenon while at the same time separating what we see from what we perceive. As evidenced by the way in which she constructs a 'natural scene', the attempt to reveal the essence of nature (or the 'essence' of any one thing) is futile, for the 'essence' or the 'reality' of something relies entirely on our perception of it. Hoover's work confronts us with this realization; by using paper to represent the mountain, the artificiality of the 'landscape' is just subtle enough that it creates an opportunity for the viewer to question the landscape they are seeing. Mount Fuji and what we see are not the same; as humans, however, we make this connection based on what we perceive, and ultimately redefine what nature is.

Hoover used analogue video to create this illusion. Since she made this work in 1984, both the impact of human activity on nature and our technological means of representing nature have drastically changed. In our re-enactment, we wanted to highlight these points by using Artificial Intelligence as a medium.

In order to re-enact Hoover's work, we trained a series of images with Artbreeder - an open source General Adversarial Networks (GAN) application. General adversarial networks are a type of machine learning that generate new data from a set of 'training' data. The training data allow users to create outputs that are a unique hybrid of the input by tweaking various parameters. For example, it is possible to create images of realistic human faces that do not belong to a real person (Google, 'Introduction to GANs'). By commanding the software to reproduce and mix certain features of the 'parent images' (e.g. 'red hair', 'blue eyes', and 'big nose'), the user can create 'children' that display these parent features to the desired extent.

We used a style transfer approach, meaning that we trained our GAN model on ten stills from Hoover's work and ten images of the actual Mount Fuji. In other words, our model used ten Hoover 'genes' and ten Fuji 'genes' to produce a Hoover-Fuji "child". We also manually adjusted the following parameters: fog, snow, sunlight, mountain, sea, red sky, brightness, and sharpness. This allowed us to control the output and to remain true to the aesthetics of Hoover's original work: blurry, lonely and shifting between dark and light.

During the re-enactment, a number of questions arose. Most saliently, the distance between the viewer and the mediated image of Mount Fuji is notable. Whereas Hoover's video tricks the viewer into believing they are seeing a shifting landscape in the fog, the AI-generated work offers more overt hints of its own inauthenticity through its rising and falling peaks and the blue and purple hues that result from

many iterations of mixed 'genes'. Crucial to Hoover's work is that it 'force[s] a focused acceptance, the process from seeing to perceiving' (Museum Kunst der Westküste); and, perhaps, the artist suggests a romantic view of nature through the very suggestion that we can transport ourselves there while watching printing paper blow in the wind of a fan, should we only choose to perceive it as such. In our contemporary context where climate change looms large, societies are ever more conscious of how products are produced, and any ordinary user can put filters on an image to produce something eye-catching, Hoover's approach feels childlike in its simplicity. It also marks a noticeable change in our consciousness of 'nature' and our relationship to it in the historical present.

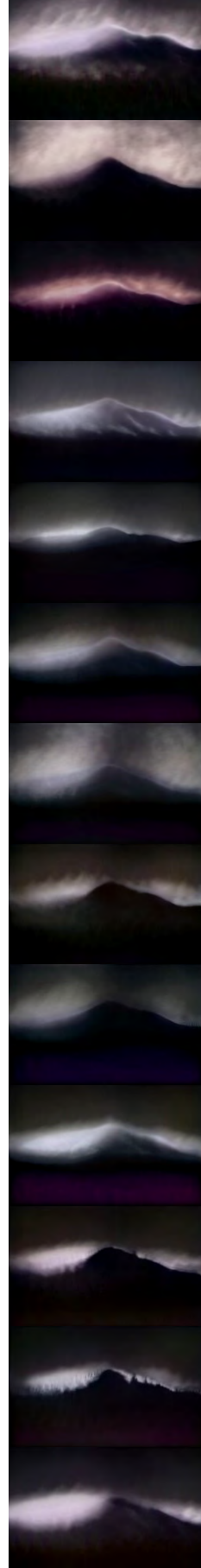
This shift in consciousness makes Hoover's work ripe for re-enactment and invites a number of deeper theoretical questions. First, how does an AI-generated artwork force not only the viewers, but us as artists to question the way we interact with our perception of the world around us? Furthermore, how does AI as an artistic medium further exaggerate this question by putting an extra artificial barrier between us and nature? This is particularly provocative when one considers the making process itself. Hoover only had the most basic of tools and minimal editing. On the other hand, we as contemporary artists are confronted with a choice: will we return to the simplicity of analogue, keeping something as simple and effect-free as possible and using light, form and other elements as materials to create the effect that we want to see? Or will we opt for filters, video effects, even artificially intelligent means of producing our images?

What does that choice say about us as individuals, and more broadly, as a collective?

Another element that is central to Hoover's work is her awareness of what video as a medium can capture. In fact, small imperfections and her appreciation for them are part of the magic of her work. In contrast, our making process relied heavily on determining aesthetics. GAN software allows the user to tinker with various parameters until the achieved result is aesthetically pleasing. In using GAN to generate art, we become active participants in determining the output, and by default the result is far removed from the input - sometimes so much that the idiosyncrasies of the original genes become lost in the mix. This offers a glimpse into our present-day psyche: how close to or far away from our perceived 'reality' will we decide to go?

Emily Bernstein & Mieke de Roo

- <https://www.li-ma.nl/lima/catalogue/art/nan-hoover/returning-to-fuji/82#>
- <https://www.li-ma.nl/lima/catalogue/art/sam-schoenbaum/meeting-nan-hoover-a-video-portrait/19721>
- Catalogue: Nan Hoover: Catalogue Raisonné, volume I (c) 2017 by Dawn Leach
- Book: The reflexive Medium. Yvonne Spielmann & Anja Welle 2008
- <http://www.eai.org/titles/returning-to-fuji>
- Book: The New York Trilogy. Paul Auster 1987
- <https://developers.google.com/machine-learning/gan>
- <https://www.mkdw.de/en/exhibition/time-nature-light-nan-hoover-1931-2008>





Giulia Capineri

Moving Lights

This re-enactment is an 8 minute video without sound or editing. It can be viewed comfortably on a screen.

Looking at Nan Hoover's work, I was struck above all by her large production and the variety of work. Videos, installations, photographs of performances and extended performances but also drawings and sculptures. What do they have in common, what is the research of this prolific American / Dutch / German artist?

In the video work 'La Luna'(2002), the moon is framed by the branches of a tree, a light source, it is almost unrecognisable, but a circle of light attracts the observer's gaze. A few subtle ripples suggest that it is mirrored in a watery surface. The shot is still, with clouds passing by, slowly, there is no narration and time is only defined by the movement of the moon that gradually disappears, leaving the frame in the dark.

In 'Desert'(1985) the narrow shot is fixed on the folds of what appears to be a desert landscape. The emphasis is on the slow process of the changing of the light, that in its natural feel plays with the capacity of shadows to evoke unexpected forms to appear. The video is about twelve minutes long and has no sound and there are no cuts nor editing. Without a narrative, the observer gets lost in the image and can imagine him/herself looking at either a body, a desert or the folds of a sheet.

In her videos Nan Hoover plays with light and space, letting the observer recreate the image and its story. Through real-time shooting, time is what we see, we are distant observers but at the same time the subject of what we are looking at. This is expressed both through the filming of natural objects but also through the body of

Nan Hoover herself. Many of her videos contain imagery of her body, or body parts, especially her hands. They seem to be inserted as abstractions. The person they belong to loses its importance, as everything becomes movement.

Hands play an important role in her work. Sometimes they are shown in such a way that it evokes something totally different than a hand. Like in 'Landscape' 1983) where the hand becomes something like a mountainous landscape with a strangely curved horizon. The sound accompanying the video is a distortion that adds peace to an almost dreamlike, spatial tale.

In 'Impressions'(1978) the hand is a hand that plays and dances together with the light. Sometimes the light is broken by the volume of the hand, and at other times the light remains intact. The streak of light becomes an object that can be extended with the index finger and the hand is the tool that evokes the drawing gesture.

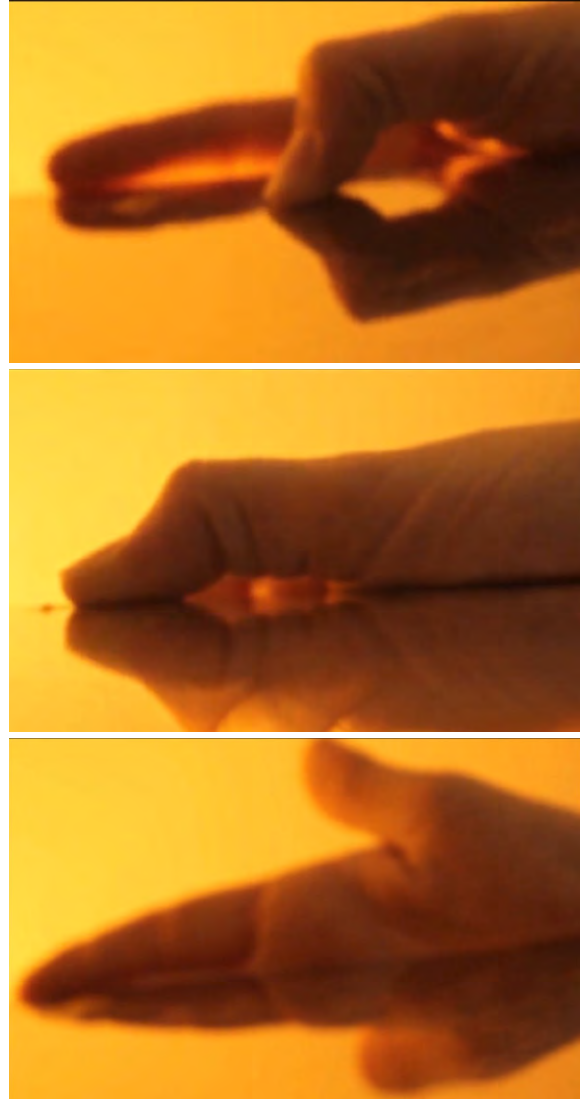
When I first thought about the re-enactment of her works I was more interested in the devices she was using for her works: the cameras she used, how she made her set ups and how she was capturing her recordings. I was very interested in the analogical part of her work, how she made use of monitors as sources of light.

I went to LIMA to visit the archive and to find some inspiration. I had the opportunity of delving into the documentation of her work and her research, and how it was documented. I started to imagine her to be in her studio with her camera, taking the time to build a set and play with light, shadows and shapes to create her world.

For my re-enactment at first I wanted to use the same type of camera that she was using, a Sony DXC- 1600. Yet, after having seen it, I decided to use just my own (a digital Canon), available in my studio.

The 8 minute clip is a real time recording of my hand holding a piece of aluminium that works as a kind of mirror for my fingers. The image is out of focus because I didn't want to let the details take the spot in the image. The fingers are recognisable but the overall shape is alien to what we usually see, as they are constantly making different drawing-like gestures and figures. The camera moves slowly at a constant pace, and the scene is covered by the strong warm yellow light coming from a reclaimed street lamp, that helped me to create a surreal atmosphere. At the same time I was performing with my hand, I also was handling the camera with my other hand, framing the scene. It resulted in this little world that I could follow in its action thanks to the viewfinder in my camera and a screen that projected the video image.

In my re-enactment I wanted to come close to a recreation of the Nan's working environment. The type of set up that inspires to let you be immersed into an explorative process, rather than being fixated on conceiving a finished work. I wanted to approximate the sensibility of how she perceived, getting lost in time, enabling to see things like my hands gradually becoming something else. I wanted to be immersed in the surprise of what was unfolding in front of me and yet, have the distance of a glance to be able to frame it with my camera.



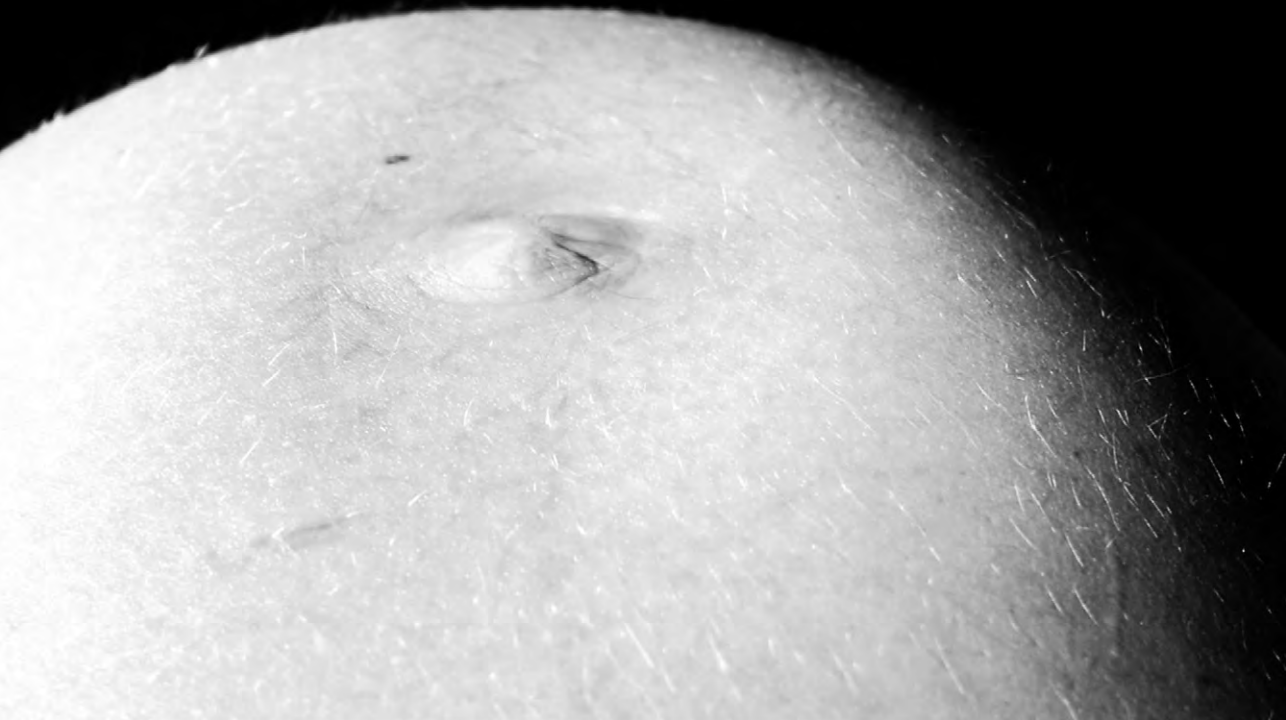
Giulia Capineri

Movement in Light^m, b/w. 20 min. sound



Britt Cox

Belly meets Fuji



Almost 8 months ago we've started to investigate the meaning and context of re-enactments. As a follow-up and practical continuation, we got introduced to the video works of Nan Hoover by our teacher Willem van Weelden, with the clear ambition to re-enact one of her works. In this period, I discovered I was pregnant, and I decided to announce the news to our class in Nan Hoover style.

I edited fragments of the first echo of my baby into a collage-kind-of-movie that eventually transformed into the complete image of the echo, which I showed to the 'audience' a.k.a. my classmates via a projection on my belly. It was the first time I realised how precise Nan Hoover had worked and how much time she must have spent to measure distance / play with shadows and light and how complicated it is to involve your body in light sculptures, performances or even video's.

After this performative announcement in Nan Hoover style, I took a deeper dive into her work and got fascinated by the way how she investigated her own body in combination with lights and shadows. Since my own body was transforming those weeks in a rapid pace, I thought it could be interesting to use my body as a 'material' or 'medium' as well. I decided to continue on her work 'Light Poles', since I was curious how stripes of light would appear on my body and how they would bend as a result of the changing shapes of my belly/ body due to my pregnancy.

After many attempts of me moving slowly (but obviously uncomfortable) in the projection of a beamer, trying to capture both the light on my belly as well as the shadow of my body, I realised



that I drifted too far away of the simple concept of movement and body. My work had become too illustrative. It took me a couple of months to fully realise this.

Now, almost 33 weeks pregnant, I made a simple movie where my body serves as or becomes a landscape. Whether you could see it as a reference to the moon, or to Mount Fuji or simply to life, that's up to you. For me the most important elements in this video are the slow movements of my belly, breath and if you look closely also the slow and uncontrolled movements of my baby. We are syncing in the light, but somehow the darkness and shadows gives it a more surreal feeling. Just like many of Nan Hoovers video works, this video work is lacking action or explosive movements. It is soft, gentle,

with very basic elements: daylight and a female body. Somehow the works of Nan Hoover remind me of the hypnotic vibe a pregnant woman can get in - a slow state of reflecting and not too much acting - what is... is.... It seems simple but appears to be complex. And that is the beauty of it.

This re-enactment is not a re-enactment of a specific work of Nan Hoover. It is a re-enactment of the tools she is using to create certain atmospheres. My video is the end result of an investigation of these tools through several of her artworks. I have used the findings of this research as input to make an abstract video of my personal situation.

Britt Cox



light poles 1977
8' 47"





Cassandra Dinah De Giorgi

Eye had always been found

And she must have been waiting.. For a long time.. The subject was unsure of
whom they was the
subject got loomed into the viewer's experience It
was unsure who the viewer in this case was . was she -?- had she been the
subject all this time
gazing and holding the gaze at the same
waiting under the fire waiting on the surface of the river
flows
transported with the framer framed in time as ignorance was burning on the
side of the water she
was at but was at all ?
the lasso was a tool to stop the
in real-time collapsed the lasso was an extension of the self in space
landscapes were an immanent rhythm, like the breathing that flows in your
body-lasso was moving
too, transported by
this life had remained unedited and center-staged
the use of hers and mine body too as source material to blur
the lines in between all cognitive spaces
& ambiguity was a charm that played & ambiguity was a charm of life like a
child that played in
several spaces and paces in time. who's time? Conception and reflection,
making blue under a
yellow sky with our distortions
Your body slows down
it does and as it does, through it's apparent stillness it
wilderness fast paced its heart, rhythm skin, tempest the blood in your river
flows, craziness the
sensation changes into a hurricane, volcano under ground generating explo-
sions, leaking lava
trembling all members ripple movements ripple further..
Bitumen and Ocean ahead
imperceptible meanings and movements as natural as the sun getting up
every morning
craziness, and she must have been waiting for a long your imagination time,
paces its lasso-time
extension of my, your, our, their, she-breath that enters the water and the sky
tempesting at high

velocity as it does but slowly very as you see
imperceptible
all is well
the woman you think you are watching is watching you as
she tricked you into staying in this very grey
you don't make a sound and you may not hear blood pulsing into your veins
and the text explores
explodes the unfinished ever flowing ambiguity between body, landscape,
signs, language, abstract
forms and synchronicity
.. it never happened
hieroglyphs remained manipulation of the signs and the water ripples of your
life alienation of the
common zone grey space as a natural reflection of light as natural as mul-
ti-love as natural as the
light palpable in the sky making blue with our distortions
The immanence of the rhythm floating survival conveyed
Invisible nature that forms alienation gaze ambiguity viewer subject body as
camera tool movement
real time time waiting light watching experience floating survival waiting
appearing excite story
telling she must have been waiting who is watching for a long time what is
her hand in a river you
must never forget immanence and repetition strangling lasso of fire maybe
trying to cease what
escapes constantly dancing like life maybe light was a boat light was an
escape into life maybe light
as a totem do you think the water has human totems -?- you could feel the
light in the air and you
could touch it materialised the moon rivers flow day was slowing down in the
night and in the black
of the light waves of probabilities were watching us watching her so many
layers you'd get I'd get
the story fixed confused in the meaning take was the image real ?
the light took the time
slow down imagination invisibilities organised
stop the search

Cassandra Dinah De Giorgi

One day walking I had found a (bunch of) diapositiv on the floor. The tension in this particular image struck me as a suspended story. Suspended like the work of Nan Hoover, suspended like a re-enactment, suspended constant tension line, flirting with imagination. To add texture to the image like in a painting it was directly clear to me that I'd want to play with the transparency of the dia and superimpose it on the water's ripples and reflections of light. Once I was there filming the diapositive on the water pierced by the morning light, it ocurred to me very neatly that my all body was becoming an extention of the camera, and it didn't stop there, my she-body was becoming an extension of the diapositive, the story, the tension line, an extension of the idea of the body, my body, where it should lay in the story/ work, the woman's body in the dia, and further my body was getting in synch with the story, the ripples of the water, the light, the being outside...

It surely wasn't the first time I sat outside, musing on a waterside, actively, consciously watching nature around me and letting the city moove around me, getting sunk into that moment that was, but for the first time I was with a camera, filming... Filming what? My inner world? My being in synchronicity with the elements?

My conception of time changed, my accute awarness of the time inside my body and outside of it, then my feeling beating at the same pace than the water, the air, the ripples, the changing light... How do you convey this? I had the instant feeling that I could re-enact this work forever... Being there everyday, trying to find a way to convey the change of role in the story we tell and let the story be told... Ceasing to be the observer and the story teller, becoming totally and humbly a part of "it".

With this unedited video titled "eye had always been found" inspired by Nan Hoover's wasser, reflections and waiting videoworks and the text I wanted to dare, to dare to show a life like work or the contrary, not being the regisseur so much, the writer, twisting with our frames of lecture, playing with the signs, differently in the hope to create new worlds, new conceptions of worlds, new ideas, a new being alive probably. That is why I try to write the way I write, in a very personnal way, almost intimate, as the way I film, and do everything else, trying to bring big ideas, concepts, intricated and complex thought processes, philosophy and theory into a life's experience.

Nicolas Dagieu
Polygon Desert



Can we perceive the light ?

Nan Hoover is pushing the viewer to feel light. The relation between light and shapes is a clear.

The experience of reenactment.

Nan Hoover made 'Desert' in 1985. The piece relates to the place of light and the human perception attached to it. She has chosen to use the light as the only active part, passifying any other implied elements. This choice pushes the viewer to experience time by following the light and activate the imagination. Would you see a desert, organic shapes or something else? How far does your imagination reach?

After getting to know the work of Nan Hoover and with the frame of the reenactment and its prolongation in the context of the UNFOLD program by LIMA in mind, I started to work with 'Desert' as my source of inspiration and medium of experience.

We are now in 2021, the ability to experience 'Desert' moved to something that we can call 'distorted'. The most common way to experience the work of Nan is to watch a digital recording of the analog original. The screen frame is unchosen by the artist, yet, modified and distorted, and in the new medium the colours and light have a new meaning. The light-time entanglement of her 'Desert' rendered in its digital form is the discrepancy between image and time.

Our boundaries with nature have become more blurry and yet sharp at the same time, very like how the experience of Nan Hoover's work has become: over time the degradation of light is perceptible. The first point of interest for me was the set up of the piece. The performance of light

as the only element of the final work place the camera and the subject to passive states. This shift of usual perception, this stall in movement, brought me in focus of the time-light interaction which Nan expresses in her work.

How do you see me without light ? Can we perceive the light ? Why is it that time can be affected by light?

My phone screen affects my daily light-time interaction with the sun-heart rhythm. Could these organic shapes of Nan Hoover cloths set up be transferred to a digital matrix ? I wanted to push the viewer to feel what she had made me feel when experiencing her 'Desert', when viewing it from the screen of my phone.

The context.

I tried to imagine and discover what the context was, back than 1985, in which she created the piece. Analog equipment, simple cloths, light. A very minimal setup. 2021, digital equipment, low poly 3D objects, light. My vehicles to explore the 2021 version of what Nan discovered in 1985.

I started to explore my digital 3 dimensional world and started to shape a simple parallelepiped. Creating my 'Desert', the emptiness of the 3D scene, leaving only the immovable object in a digital void. The camera is central in the scene, fixed and only the light source follow a circadian rhythm.

A set up was found, I started to shape the light-time relation. This very simple framework, contextually very close to the one Nan Hoover could have experienced, gave me the freedom to explore how I perceived her tracks.

Time, is money, is human conception, is value. Those are the imperative slogans of this moment. How could my fellow human be able to experience the light-time shift revelation that Nan had made me sense?

Does nature reflects on anything human or is it that humans are a reflection of nature ?

Face filters are daily used by million of humans across the world. A huge time-light is spent by users to experience a reality distortion. The time-light digital desert created needed this possibility to let people experience it. The face filter world is at first glance the exact opposite of the artistic world that Nan proposed with her work. I started using it as an oxymoron. To frame my work in such a way, gave me the possibility to really focus on the viewer experience.

The viewer becomes part of the piece. Their own face acts as a second reflecting medium. In Nan's work the experience of becoming included in the piece is done with the help of a screen window. But in the case of the face filter, the viewer forms the ground of the experience as much as they are actively experiencing what is created. This duality between time and light is not only visible but also 'realy' seen from a digital perspective.

The augmented reality experience as a duration lasts approx. 10 minutes, close to the length of the original 'Desert' piece. This human time frame is important to really catch the shift.

Nature has been integrated in a phone, but the phone needs a human face to start its work properly. An organic incarnation is needed to produce the experience.

This detail has been drawn to the light and has become the reflection of Nan's work projected on the viewer.

As time passes by the experience is enriched by the rise in frequency. Inside the experience a very minimal feeling is set. A low detailed desert with a dark background. Your face is lit by the face filter effect, the desert light hits the viewer's face.

Are you part of this 'Desert' ?

Your front POV shows simply shapes, vaguely resembling organic or 'desert' hills. From the very dark screen that you face, the subtle movements of light produce all possible shapes.

Your face glows up at the same time as the 'desert'. Can we really speak of a desert ? Or should we only call it a 3D scene. Like in Nan Hoover's work, would you call it a desert just because she labeled it like one?

You are part of an experience, in a fine play between viewer and art piece. The goal of the play is to blend the lines that are created by defining a large circle. Not with the spirit of Romulus.

The Light-Time relation, the light perception.

The sun clock is a well known human construction to represent the movement of the light that we experience on earth. This movement of light is deeply linked to our conception of time. Visually, without light source, only a void is present. This contrast is the fundament of human visual experience.

Movements are also linked to time. How could you know if you look at a picture or watch a still movie ? Is a picture only a frozen movie ?

Would you like to wait to know for sure that the still image is not just something moving slowly ? Waiting amounts to a longer perception of time, it dilates. The digital 'Desert' that I propose is an invitation to wait, to dilate your time. Entering a possibility for a new perception.

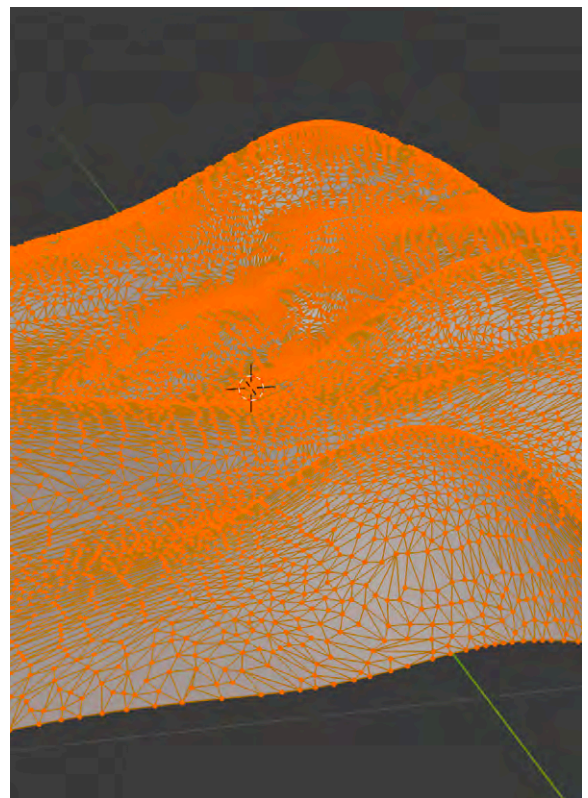
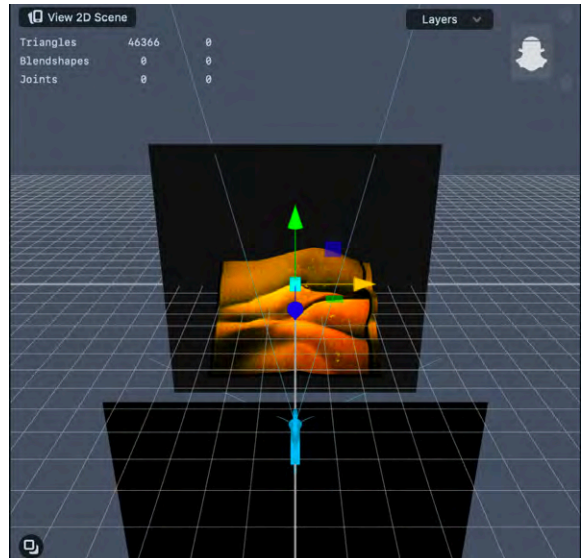
When the void has been left aside, after a period of waiting, our perception, our look on things is renewed. The light that allows the eye to receive data, creates the experience of time. The void that is installed in the illusion is perfect, it expresses the idea that nothing exists and yet everything is real. This is where the imagination pops out and delivers its flow of new artefacts.

How to use the work

Download the SNAPCHAT app on your phone. Scan the SNAPCODE. The lens should load in the SNAPCHAT app and starts. The user is welcome to switch cameras (front/rear) to experience the work fully.

Augmented reality experience and video.
Duration of 10 minutes.
SNAPCHAT lens application support.
3D landscape with less than 10k polygons.
Immersive experience with user integration into the work.

The Augmented reality experience consists of :
A SNAPCHAT lens, usually used for face filters, now re-appropriated for an art experience.
rear view : Nan Hoover's 'Desert' work reenacted in digital world.
front view : the reflect of the digital desert on the face of the user.



Nicolas Dagieu

An abstract watercolor painting featuring a rich palette of colors including deep blues, vibrant yellows, earthy oranges, and various shades of green. The colors are layered and blended, creating a complex, textured surface with visible brushstrokes and organic, irregular shapes. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and organic complexity.

Marjolijn Houdijk
Fifth Piece

Before my education at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, I was not yet familiar with Nan Hoover's work, so I decided to start the project by viewing her work on the LIMA website. At first, I noticed certain characteristics: a number of black and white works, a series of works with the basic colours such as yellow, red and blue, and I noticed (the details of) body parts. An interesting variety! I also found it striking that the time span of the works differed substantially. There was a work with a duration of 4 minutes, but also other ones that lasted almost 29 minutes. On the website of the Nan Hoover Foundation I also found interesting work, especially the attractive photos and the bronze sculptures as well as stills of her performances. I think that we can say that she was a versatile artist - which made my ultimate choice for a work to re-enact not any easier.

After looking at and diving into all her work, my interest was mostly in the triptych. The series contains the works: 'Two Pieces' (1983), 'Three Pieces' (1981) and 'Four Pieces' (1983).

When you watch the video 'Four Pieces', it seems as if you see a landscape in which the colours and the light are constantly in motion. For a moment, I imagined myself on the coast, as it reminded me of a dune landscape. On the foreground it seems as if you are looking at a yellow-green hilly landscape with a strip of blue sea behind it that forms the horizon in the image. The golden yellow sun seems to be setting above this horizon. The position of the camera is fixed, but the landscape is in full motion.

For 11 minutes and 18 seconds I actually thought these were images of a coastal scene (I

could almost feel the wind and heat on my skin), then I discovered that this landscape was based on an illusion. This artificial landscape was made of paper - a cheap and easily available material. Nan Hoover has positioned the light sources in such a way that it appears to be a rich and full material. Personally, I think it's a nice idea to use basic, cheap or recycled material, especially if it creates a full and fancy look.

I wondered what kind of materials I could use for an artificial landscape in 2020 - a year in which we not only live in a throwaway society, but are also currently in the middle of a global pandemic. Today, the 'Thuisbezorgd' scooters drive back and forth with bags full of food in disposable plastic containers and a foam warming container. Mailmen carry cardboard boxes full of articles ordered online every day. Now that all restaurants are closed for visitors, I see trash cans overflowing with disposable coffee cups during a walk in the area. At first glance, it does not seem that much has changed in all those years - cheap materials abound.

While walking in the region where I live, I came across another artificial landscape, one that is almost as mysterious to me as Nan Hoover's artificial landscape, and one that could perhaps be a starting point for my re-enactment. Funnily enough, this landscape also dates back to the early 1980s.

It is a landfill that was closed in the 80s because it had reached its limit. A top layer was poured over it and a layer of grass was laid over that. In this way, the hill blends better into the flat green landscape. To give the hill a function, it has been turned into a golf course.

'De Heuvelbaan' is one of the highest points in the Green Heart and more than 17 meters above sea level, the website told me. So much better than looking at a hill of garbage, of course!

Despite a certificate for sustainable and responsible environmental policy, there are still 200,000 barrels of heavy chemical waste under the golf course and an unknown number of barrels are leaking. In some places chemical fumes rise, the ground is noticeably warmer and the grass quickly becomes dry and dies. Chemical liquid seeps into the soil water in a number of places and around the golf course are places where the water quality leaves something to be desired. For years, this place has been a sensitive headache issue for various parties, including the local residents, and the golf club that in itself also happens to be a sensitive issue, politically speaking.

With Nan Hoover's work in mind and especially with her key attributes : landscape and light, I was (I am!) curious whether it would be possible to record the radiation from these leaking barrels. Would it be possible to capture the heat radiation with a thermal camera? In preparation I downloaded a number of apps on my phone and took some test photos with different filters and tested on different surfaces. When viewing the results I was not completely convinced. You need a considerable temperature difference to get a good picture. The first question that pops up, is whether the radiation on the golf course is really strong enough to be captured? And secondly, if the radiation is strong enough to be captured with my phone, is this the place where I want to be?!

The passage of time also plays a major role in Nan Hoover's work. What is the best way to capture the passage of time? Should I consider a time lapse recording from sunrise to sunset? I think it stands out too much in the sensitive and crowded environment. Somewhere deep down I am also curious about what happens during the different seasons. How much influence does the ambient temperature have on the leaking process? But this idea almost leans towards a year-long observation project rather than a re-enactment of a single Nan Hoover work.

Since the apps on my phone did not provide any accurate imagery, I looked for professional equipment. I found two tools: an infrared photo camera and a thermal camera. In both cases I would like the owners to come over to hand me the expensive professional material, but as we were heading towards a second lockdown, making an appointment was impossible on a short term basis. In regard to the thermal camera, another equally sensitive issue played a role : the camera is partly financed by a large neighbouring municipality.



As the environmental issue of the site is politically explosive, I thought the risk of provoking a conflict was too great at the time.

I decided to switch to a solution that is easier to manage. I wanted to keep the golf course concept and decided to go from high tech back to low tech. I decided to depict the passage of time from Nan Hoover's work by showing the different layers of sedimentation. When you dig a hole in the ground, the passage of time slowly becomes visible. Soil surveys seemed appropriate to me in the case of the golf course.

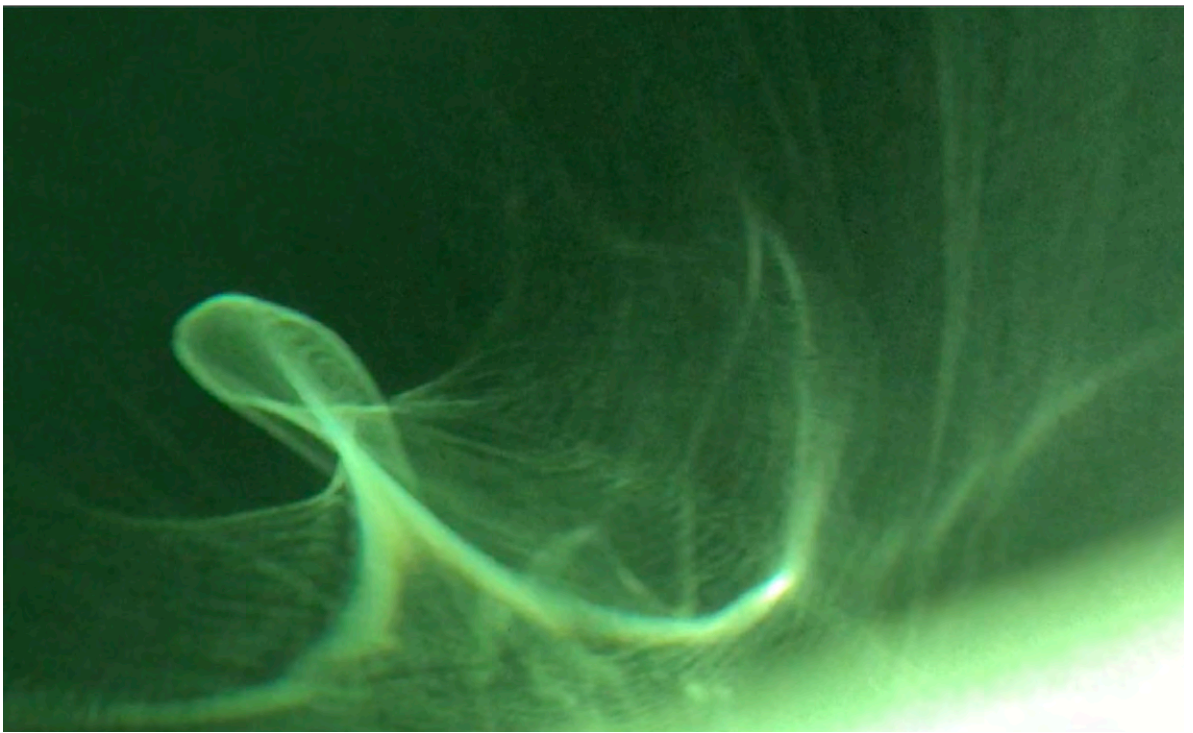


I was looking for cheap household ingredients to create a beautiful, undulating artificial landscape. I wanted to start with a virgin white base and manipulate it in such a way that it slowly transforms into a coloured landscape.

I made a small installation of, among other things, two glass plates and let the white-coloured ingredients (salt, sugar, soda and starch) sink between them. In different places and depths I placed plastic soda straws so that I could slowly run ink to the different layers. The ink would slowly be absorbed by the ingredients and the colour would slowly spread over the surface just like the leaking barrels. Slowly, subtly, almost without noticing. You need to pay attention to see the subtle differences, just like Nan Hoover's work.



During the preparations for filming, I noticed that the glass was mirrored. It bothered me very much. This observation felt like a contradiction because the effect of light occupies a large part of Nan Hoover's work. I decided to get rid of the mirroring.



After recording the first part of the video work, I started to investigate how to add light back into the work. Fortunately, at that moment the sun was shining (short but strong) and I quickly grabbed everything I could find with reflective materials. From various glasses to pieces of plastic packaging material. After I had started testing different light sources and adding even more different materials, including a small mirror and aluminum objects. Some reflections looked really fascinating and it was nice to make a kind of temporal moving art piece.


For the presentation at the academy I wanted to show the original video of the coloration of the earth layers. This video lasts almost 1 hour and I wanted to show it projected on the wall in a loop. Because this assignment was about a re-enactment, I thought it would be a nice idea for the presentation to create a set up where the audience could put themselves in the place of Nan Hoover and experiment to work with light and reflective objects in an analogue way.

It seemed like a welcome change in these turbulent and digital times.

Given the length of the video itself, there was plenty of time to find the calm and focus to add the reflection in the work. Luckily enough, there was also some time left for self-reflection.

Thank you, Nan!

Marjolijn Houdijk



intercept the Rays 1982
11'02"



Martijn Janssen

Everything I observe in this world
is myself - a Nan Hoover exploration

Prior to 1929 there was nothing. No development.
Just a barren landscape, some trees, a raffled edge east of the city.

I imagine the low sun casting long shadows across the field.

But the city had to expand, so houses were built.
The wasteland vanished, residential areas appeared. And some trees remained.

I imagine the low sun casting long shadows across the wall.

Decades later; 2020. There is everything.

A phenomenal journey through time. My wall as time portal.
Every Fall I see this magical and almost sacred play come and go.

*I imagine the first residents seeing it too.
This constructed (yes), this elusive dance.*

I spent hours following this meandering through space and time. Often asking myself the question: "is this matter, or spirit?". Each time interpreting the shadow/light game in different ways. Making up variations. Putting the separate stripes of light together into something brighter. Mixing one contour with the other and coming up with new deeper silhouettes.

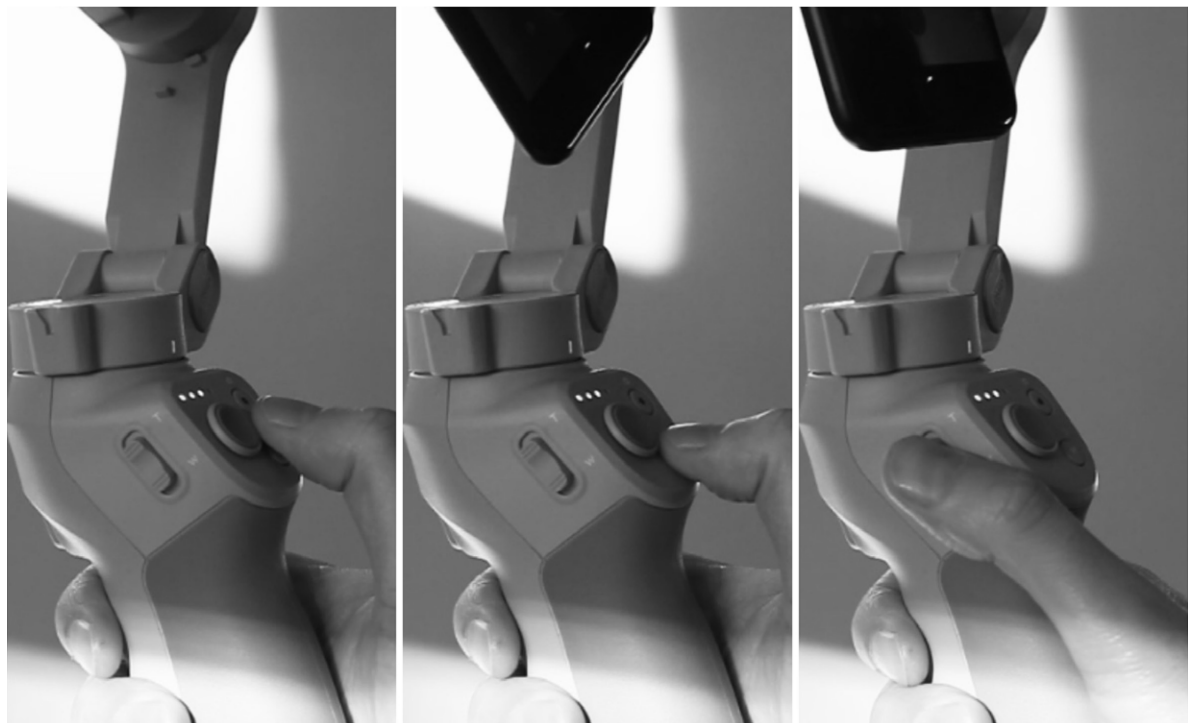
So how to make the elusive tangible?
How to understand what I don't understand?
How to value this moment?
By filming it.

Do I value a moment by filming it?

So I just start.
A couple of times over.
And it's becoming a ritual: the sun setting, me setting up the scene.

And while filming, using the medium as the eye looks and concentration taking over, I'm thinking of the former residents of this house observing these magical moments. Standing where I am standing now.

How are we in a space?



A screen.

I see myself slowing down my movements. I am observing me observing the magic. Concentration taking over. Surrendering to experiment, becoming part of this. Working without an interruption in time.

Am I delaying time?

Using time based media to lose time.

*Am I present in reality?
In which present am I really?*

I'm already losing concentration.

The observing being obstructed by tech. Watching becomes acting becomes reacting. A strange bodily awareness. Disconnected by adding this tool to my body schema.

My performing hand mechanically follows my gliding eyes. My gliding eyes following on screen my mechanical hand.

Where's my concentration?

I'm thinking of a new set-up. The magic, serene and sacred, something we cannot grasp, aligning with the mechanical. Combining matter and spirit. And since this process, to be honest, is not yet clear to me, I pause.

But the sun setting and me setting up the scene, it's becoming a ritual. And because the magic is also in (re)doing it, I start again.

Martijn Janssen

untitled 1991





A hand holding a pen that glows with a blue light, set against a blue background. The pen is held in a way that the tip is pointing downwards, and a bright blue light emanates from the tip, creating a glowing trail on the surface below. The background is a solid, light blue color.

Noël S. Keulen
2nd Impressions

A conversation between light and dark.

L: Hello Darkness, my old friend, I've come to talk with you again. Because a vision softly creeping, left its seeds while a human was sleeping. And the vision that was planted in their brain still remains. It's hands was offered the flash of a laser light that could split the night. Which brought me here, to see you again. You were absent in my presence.

D: Well, that is the very core of my being. As it is yours. But now you have taken on the form of a laser beam; a light that is not so much luminescent, it's glare does not fill a room. It likes to travel in a straight line and only shows itself when it is interrupted, diverted by solid particles; smoke, dust, a paper surface, a silver finger. There is enough room left for me. We can coexists in a temporary high contrasted harmony.

L: Yes, I don't take on this form that much, as it can be quite dangerous. I like to be pleasant. Off course I can be harsh as sun light, but most eye bearing beings know not to look straight up to the sun. But the sun is quite honest to where it's coming from, a laser is traitorous. Luckily the harnessers of the laser light - humans - put a DANGER sticker on most laser devices. They are warned. Yet still some like to play around with it, because they think lasers are cool... Don't consider me a toy. I need focus and caution when handled with.

D: The kind of focus and caution humans mainly apply when handling me. Yet I'm rather harmless.

L: Yes, I can see how that can feel unfair.

D: It does. All the negative things are associated with me. You generally get all the positive connotations...

L: Ah come on, lighten up. You have quite a cool reputation.

D: But what is coolness worth when it mainly scares humans.

L: Humans seek you when they need rest. They block me and can feel safe in your presence.

D: That's true. And they wear sunglasses. There is a clear love/hate dynamic around you!

L: I don't know you can take it as far as hate, come on, most humans like me. Except for easily burned people...

D: What is your role in this piece? Are you the villain or the hero?

L: I don't think I feel comfortable in a good/evil narrative setting. I work better in the roam of metaphors. As I do think you do too.

D: Maybe. We have always existed, before the idea of narrative, before words, before time, before everything.

L: First nothing, then you, then me.

D: But I was nothing till you came. Several 'religious' humans (whatever that may be, I know only what is) say someone or something created you first, and then me. But that came with the idea of a story. We know better. We can be multiple things at the same time. Heck, we trancent time. We are. Like a river. The river is a river that stays there, yet it also moves, in the form of water particles. You, for example, behave as a wave and particles, that is confusing to the humans, a species so eager to understand. You can be overwhelming and take over a complete room or you trickle in unnoticed.

L: Yeah, let's not get to much in the factual, scientific, technical part. We seem to no longer exist in a world where that is valued. The way to speak to humans is to show them the mundane in a extraordinary way. I think that is what this is about. A hand playing with light. A camera capturing that interaction.

D: Then why as a laser?

L: Well, first, because it was offered to my

handler by his brother in law when he told him about the video of a human artist named Nan Hoover and how she played with light and how he wanted to translate that to a contemporary version, placed in his now. His brother in law sent him this laser and - very important - several protective goggles. This sounded very cool to my human handler.

D: Like you said, they consider lasers to be cool.

L: Yes, they do. They do. He also saw a parallel with the fact that Nan Hoover got into video art because a friend, she trusted in her opinions, said she should buy a second hand camera that was up for sale. He also wanted to believe in the serendipity of his brother in law's offer.

The human handler wanted to cut things with it. destroy, ruin the poetry of the original by Nan Hoover (Impressions, 1978).

D: Oh my, there is already so much destruction.

Why?

L: He did turn it around. I had to hurt him first, though.

D: You hurt your human handler?

L: I burned his finger. Just the tip.

D: And then?

L: He decided to look for another way to handle me. He showed his human teacher how I had burned him and the teacher suggested a small hand that also is used where human hands are not welcomed. The teacher offered his father's 'jatje' to my handler.

D: Ah, that's a 'religious' thingy, right?

L: Yes, a tool to point where they are reading the text of a story some value a lot, in a book some value immensely. So much, it can't be touched, but by this silver tiny finger.

D: Is this a religious play then?

L: No! The human handler wanted to use the



'jatje' but didn't care for the 'religious' connotation. He thought when he would get as close as possible, only the hand would remain and with it only the every day idea of the hand, nothing more. So he found a lens to put on his camera, that could get very close. A lens that is mainly used for product presentations because one can get so close to a juicy burger or yummy milkshake...

D: Really? They invent all these intricate things to capture us in a unique constellation and they film a piece of meat with it?

L: They are doomed, we know they are. We've seen several species come and go, little so simple as humans.

D: But your handler wanted something else with it? Does that make him a special kind of human?

L: Not really. he belongs to a kind of category like the 'religious' humans; the artists. They make art.

D: Ah yes I've been the inspiration and central theme to endless works of art. What defines art?

L: My handler overheard a nice one from a small human child and it's human mother. The child asked it's mother what a unknown object in the public space was. the mother replied: "When you don't know what it is, it's probably art."

D: But you said earlier, 'showing the mundane in an extraordinary way', can that be art?

L: Yes. In this case it can be. But he did seek the 'extraordinary' in a technical execution. this special lens (Laowa probe lens), a motorised glider and two intense LCD transmitters of me (because the lens doesn't let a lot of me in, high aperture).

D: And then they would be stuck with me.

L: Which would not be a bad thing necessarily! But, yes, not this desired in this case.

D: I know. Why all these gadgets?

L: Because the human handler likes gadgets

(yes, simple like that). And because when the lens comes so close, the image is enlarged and with it, every tiny jitter becomes earthquake like. So all this equipment to give stability to the human. he didn't trust himself to have the focus and patience Nan Hoover had. She wanted to work in 'real time' so she worked very slow. He used the possibility, the luxury to be able, with more advanced technology, to work at double the frame rate and slow it down to the 'real time' tempo of Nan Hoover. Giving stability to his very unstable life, not equipped to de-crease the resonating anxiety of the human body, the human soul, for that matter.

D: Still, it's not that still.

L: No, it's not. Like you pointed out before, I only show myself in the form of a laser when my stable trajectory is obstructed, by the fibre of the paper, in this case, and the silver finger. But the human handler also wanted to create an illusion. The steadfast desire to create this illusion may have taken him off of the playfulness he intended to find in this process. But he found joy in achieving the illusion. He saw in Nan Hoover's original the illusion of 'writing the light'. It seemed like the light was emitted from the hand and its fingers by blocking the light and moving in it's trajectory.

D: It looks like he achieved that, yes. But actually it's me that helps him create that illusion.

L: Yes, you did. You could say you didn't take the lightest part of the job.

D: Ha, funny.

L: Sorry, couldn't leave it.

D: But why the jitter?

L: Yes, the jitter. To create the illusion he had to keep the finger from blocking me and giving room to you. But all the stabilising equipment could not make up for the unruly nature of matter. the bullhead of the glider was unruly, the

weight of the camera with the long lens creates slack in the position of the lens' tip, the movement of the glider created a bump at every turn, despite the 'ramp' function of the electric motor. And the 'jatje' had to be mounted on the glider as well without proper accessories. In short, the hand went, in the tight frame, all over the place, and wasn't as precise as I was. So the human handler had to handle not me but the glider, by moving it ever so slightly to keep the hand in my trajectory.

D: I know, I was there, you were pushing me out of your way.

L: Just on that thin line. There was enough space for you.

D: It did create that illusion when the finger blocked you.

L: It didn't so much block me, it diverted me in a different direction. My reflection on the silver,

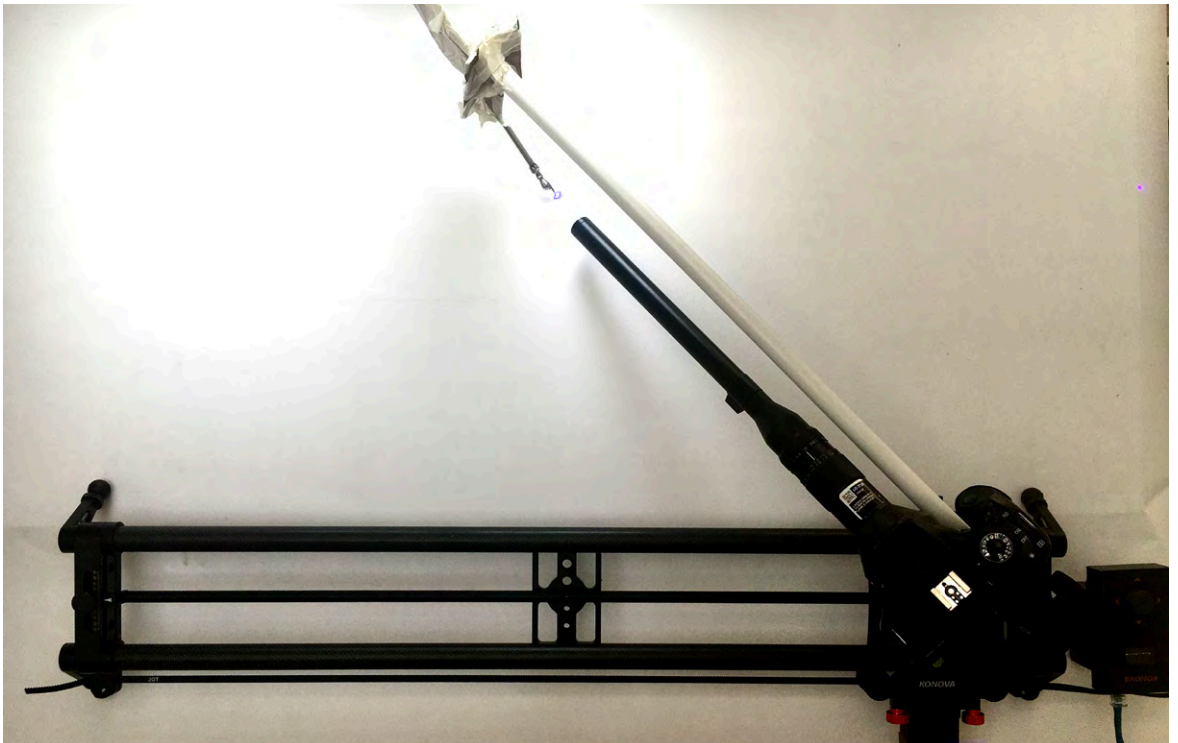
the abyss I form on the paper, I created a world of my own. We, we created a world of our own. And every human will see something different, because what one sees is determined by passed experiences and associations with themes, thoughts, memories, metaphors, feelings.

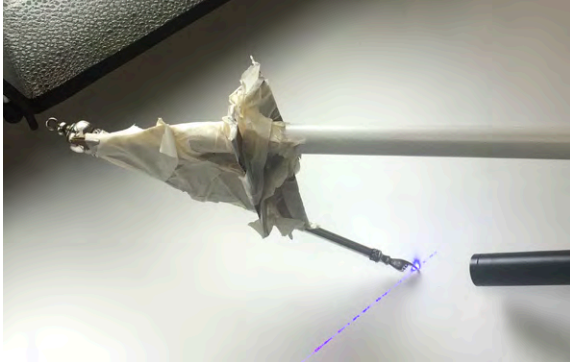
D: Is the repetitive going back and forth a metaphor for the dreary rut of human life?

L: You are being a bit cliché by seeing the negative and very anthropo-scenic interpretation of repetition. Seasons repeat themselves, yet are not considered to be in a rut. It can be soothing to know certain things will go on, whether you are there to watch or not.

D: Is that why he took the 'human' element out of the original, by replacing the human hand by a metal one? Have you seen Terminator? The machines shall rise!!

L: Very on brand for you, again, to like that





movie. You were in it a lot. But to answer your question. I think he took the hand out because I burned him and his teacher offered the 'jatje' and with that the idea emerged (emergent strategy) that it could show the mundane in an extraordinary way, by not showing a real hand, but a representation of a hand. Making it more about what is happening, then to whom it is happening; less personal, more universal.

D: Yet you see his hand in the correction of the 'jatje's trajectory. He is still there, the human touch.

L: It is still made by a human. And us.

D: The magic of the illusion is a bit lost now that you've explained the decisions and actions that took place off camera, isn't it?

L: I don't think so. And it's not only about the illusion, it is and was also about this process. His process. Our process.

D: That's nice. On second impression I see that now.

L: Now I would love to retreat in you, may I?

D: Off course, my old friend, be my guest. All that remains is me. And the sound of silence.

Noël S. Keulen

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Marina van de Lecq

Watch us!



When considering to re-enactment a work, what then to re-consider in the work 'Watching out – a trilogy' (1986) of Nan Hoover setting out to re-enact it?

When I read Inke Arns' definition of an artistic re-enactment, it seemed to me that making a re-enactment of a work by Nan Hoover was not at first instance an obvious choice for me, as she writes :

[...] "Thus one can say that artistic re-enactments are not an affirmative confirmation of the past; rather, they are questionings of the present through reaching back to historical events that have etched themselves ineditably into the collective memory." [...] ¹

The following example is a typical artistic re-enactment. It questions our relationship to the present and past of the world around us. In 'Eternal Frame' (1975), Ant Farm questions how the media have helped our memory recreate the highly mediatised image of the JFK assassination. These kind of re-enactments and many others featured in the exhibition: 'History will repeat itself. Strategies of Re-enactment in Contemporary Art' a joined project of Hartware-MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund and KW Institute of Contemporary Art Berlin (2007 - 2008). An artistic re-enactment is about the relevance of what happened in the past for the here and now.

In Nan Hoover's work I see concentrated slow movements of her body that becomes an abstract form or a kind of landscape. The abstract form or landscape becomes a body again through movement. She accomplishes this effect by her use of light. Her work, I find, is timeless.

Nan Hoover: 'Watching out - a trilogy'

What aspects of Nan Hoover's work make it relevant for a re-enactment? Which history and which here and now related to Nan's artwork I can question? I opted for 'Watching out - a trilogy', because with this work I can make a clear link to the present. I may have chosen an atypical work of hers. But via this particular work I can relate with her fascination with new techset in combination with her classical background.

Nan is considered one of the pioneers of video art. She played in her own way with the technique of video, which was at that time expensive and exclusive and thus not accessible to everyone. In comparison: in the eighties a camera crew costed f. 2,500 a day. Video-editing was f150,- to f200,- per hour.² Nowadays video is just something regular and can be reached by anybody anywhere using a smartphone.

The following text is the description of the work shown on the LIMA's website :

"In three stages we watch a woman whose head and hands appear on screen and who looks out over what appears to be a seascape. First she holds her hand above her eyes - a gesture which seems to aid perception - then she places her hand against her forehead so that the physical aspect of looking appears to have acquired its mental equivalent. At the end of the tape she brushes both hands through her hair as if she's confused. But these last minutes are preceded by one essential moment where she suddenly looks at us as if she wants us to take over, to be responsible for this act of seeing, her seeing. These images (in contrasting black-and-white) sometimes resemble abstract ink paintings on white paper. 'Watching Out' is visualised 'introspection'."

Analysing effects used in

'Watching out - a trilogy'

For this piece Nan used the LUMA-key effect. Parts that are lit in the foreground layer are made transparent by that effect. The amount of transparency is created by adjusting the tolerance in the background layer at the level of the analogue video-editing hardware. It is very graphical effect; the image surface is flattened due to the lack of contrast. There is neither foreground nor background. Second is the contour correction; one can see white and black lines around the image. Third effect is that the video has been delayed. This is indicated by the choppiness of the video.

I find these effects of analogue hardware fascinating. It makes me curious about their technical explanation. In the 70's and 80's the LUMA-key effect was popular in a lot of music videos. Many of these productions had a huge budget and could afford the newest technology. Today almost the same effect could be achieved with software, but to the most of us it remains a mystery what the software is actually doing.

What is way that I look and what is it that I am actually looking at?

At certain points she looks into the camera which makes you as the audience complicit to the work. The camera becomes the eye of the audience, where the camera stands, the audience stands. It is a general cinematic rule to avoid someone looking straight into the camera. It produces a shock effect. Only a newsreader directly addresses the audience. I did see Nan looking into the camera, but it didn't produce the shock effect she might have intended.

But why is that?

Could it be that this effect no longer can be experienced so intensely, because we have grown accustomed to a changing visual language due to vlogs and video conferencing with permanent camera presence?

Did I get distracted? Can we still bear the patience to watch a 13-minute video, in which the image moves very slowly? To what extent can I experience the work as genuinely authentic, as I have to watch on the LIMA website in my living room, instead of being in an exhibition space watching the work on a cathode ray tube with these black edges as a frame? Is there any loss of the quality of the image from the original, as video tapes decay in a relatively short period of time? Was the lack of me being shocked caused by my homy mood having to work at home due to corona, and having to look at my computer screen all day?

Another difference is the frame ratio. Then it was 4 : 3, today the norm is 16 : 9. How authentic can I experience Nan's work if it presents itself in on the internet? Is this the fair basis on which I make a re-enactment? After all, I never experienced the actual work as supposedly intended by Nan.

How does our perception change if we see the thousands of art works that were never made to be shown on internet, are actually shown on the internet? What does this change of technology do with our collective memory?

<Action!>

I just started out with this insecure state of mind. Nan had a video camera, a monitor and editing equipment at her disposal. And I had a

telephone, a laptop, a photo camera, a beamer, an app and... the internet. We both worked intensively alone.

Beantwoorden Ailen beantwoorden Doorsturen

za 9-12-2020 23:41



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Stream Start Detecteren Mijn inhoud Maken Zoeken

Kan de video niet vinden.

Mogelijk is de inhoud verwijderd.

I locked myself up and tied everything together. I put myself in front of a wall in my room. I beamed a Hoover-type seaside onto my face and the wall behind me. On my phone I installed an app with a certain comic filter which could pass for the LUMA-key effect. I filled my camera view with my phone and a small section of the background. At the borders of the frame you can also see some light of the beamer and some shadows of my movement. But you can't see me directly, which gives an 'unheimlich' (uncanny) feeling. Something in between spaces. I connected the camera to my laptop as an external webcam. My laptop acted as a monitor and then I started performing in Teams. And... I recorded it.

'Being watched - a trilogy'

The audience is not aware that they are watching a live-performance using the Microsoft Teams video conferencing tool. Instead they assume they are looking at a prerecorded video of a re-enactment.

I see the audience, I hear what they say. They do not know that they are being watched by me. Or do they notice my subtle interactions? 'Being watched - a trilogy'.

Lost between spaces

During the project, the project itself hovered between spaces. I couldn't find on my computer where my recorded Teams meetings were stored. I saw them in the chat, but where were they stored? I also got a message that Microsoft stopped using streams, and that I could find my video on my OneDrive. But that wasn't the case. Unfortunately I didn't make a screen grab of this message. For a week I couldn't find my videos anywhere.

It appeared that Microsoft had not stopped using streams. Beginning of this week I tried again, and I could download my videos. Immediately I thought I had done something wrong the first time. Was it me, or was it the developers. Was it the blind spots that their design had left? Blind spots mirrored in cyberspace.

We have created an enormous dependence on modern communication technologies. I've used Teams for something it is not intended for. And it was probably not the intention of the software either to make my work disappear.

In addition, the question arises for me: to whom actually does the work belong? And how does this question affect the work and how does it affect me?

The audience sees me watching, but is unaware that it is them that are actually being watched. While Nan Hoover was still concerned with a beam of light and imagined herself alone in her studio to transform shapes from abstract to realistic and vice versa in slow motion, I notice that I am not alone. I am collaborating with people I can not see. With whom am I working? And I do not even know where my work is stored. It should be out there somewhere. With whom or what am I working? Do I have to give credits? To whom, to what? Is Microsoft aware of this artistic collaboration?

Marina van de Lecq

1. Arns, Inke. History Will Repeat Itself, Strategies of Re-enactment in Contemporary (Media) Art and Performance. p. 2

2. Ank Verrips, instructor editing studios Gerrit Rietveld Academie (19-10-2020)

Returning to Fuji 1984
8'37"

Robyn Leipoldt

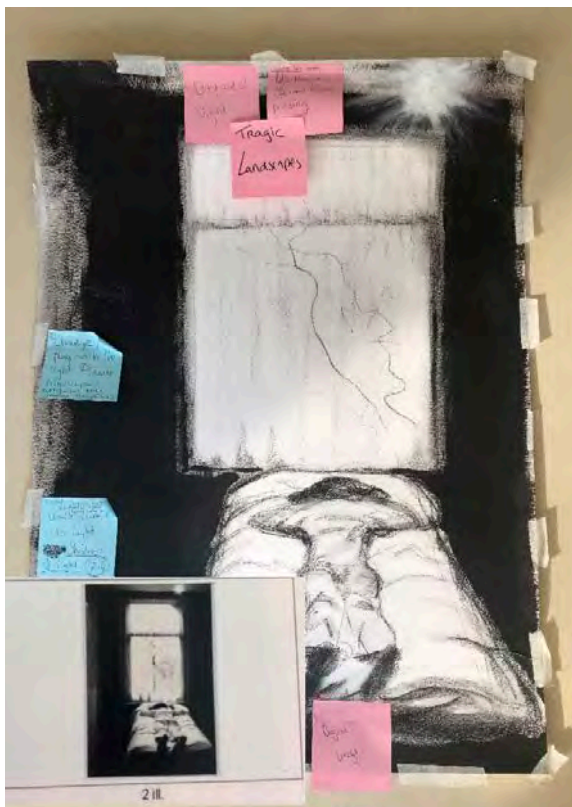
Once upon a light



Introduction to the research

My contribution for the re-enactment of a work of Nan Hoover this year will be of imaginative origin. In this report I'm going to share my idea's, proposals, final conclusion.

For this assignment I started to look into the archive of Nan Hoover, and studied on her video's and photos. This is where I got my first idea and feeling of Nan Hoover and her way of making art. There was one photo that got my attention, in between all these images. And this became my starting point.



Source: Archive of Nan Hoover <https://rhizome.org/editorial/2008/jun/18/nan-hoover-1931-2008>. (This image is combined with my own first attempt to find out what a re-enactment is about)

After seeing this image I started to think about the relationship between real light and artificial light. This idea started to circle around in my brain for a while.

About the image: it is a beautiful picture of a person, laying on a bed, head facing down in front of a large window. Through this window natural light comes into the room and it is shining a light on the body. It first gave me a feeling of peace, combined with a little strange aftertaste because I was wondering for how long this person was lying there. The (artificial) light was still on, and daylight already there.

This is where my idea was created to use the effect of Glow-in-the-dark, to comment on (or continue) this idea of natural versus artificial light.

What I have learned is that when you shine a light, on in her works often used fabrics or body parts, in a certain angle and with a certain amount of light, the image would change into a mysterious landscape when you film or photograph it. 1.

How this technically work is still a mystery to me.

As a visual the images becomes very interesting because of this effect. Your brain (or at least my brain) is starting to see different things in the original object. When there is too less light coming into the lens you will see that borders of that object (hands for example) are starting to blur. The image will become less and less recognisable. It starts to change. And the brain will make something different out of it when it can't recognise the original anymore.

Your fantasy will take over. Your unconscious mind will show you things which can be very surprising or even scary.



Source: Meeting Nan Hoover, a video portrait.
By Sam Schoenbaum 2008.

'Gestures'

After seeing the photo series 'Gestures' I started to combine the idea of real light versus artificial light with the shape of the hands. Reflecting on this idea later, I can see the difference in concept. Nan Hoover uses for her works natural light, or at least light coming straight from a light source. Lets call it firsthand. My idea is to use Glow in the dark (body)paint to play with this idea of the reflection of light. So this we can consider secondhand. And therefore the concept is changing actually.

With this effect I was hoping to create a similar effect as the photo series 'Gestures'. Where you can see just a part of the hand, because she plays with light and shadow to create this contrast. In my proposal I'm replacing the light from the outside (natural or a lamp) for the reflection of this second hand light. When you put this glow in the dark makeup on your hands and photograph (or even film) them in the dark after they are exposed to the light, you will get similar visual results. Some parts are brighter because on that spot there was more light exposed. And the stronger the light source, and also the longer the exposure of the body paint to the light, the stronger this phosphorescent effect will be. And so the level of phosphorescent effects will determine the visual outcome.

I remember Nan Hoover saying in an interview, that with her work she is reflecting on life and time passing. 2.

This sentence, how I have understood it back then, was for me the inspiration for the next step of my proposal. With 'A reflection on life and time passing', to my understanding, she's reflecting on her work with the idea that maybe the next year she would not be able to see what

she is seeing at that specific moment. She said that when you are older you will look different to an artwork, different than when you are younger. You will experience it differently. I didn't realise that at that specific moment when the interview was made, she was actually already at the end of her life.

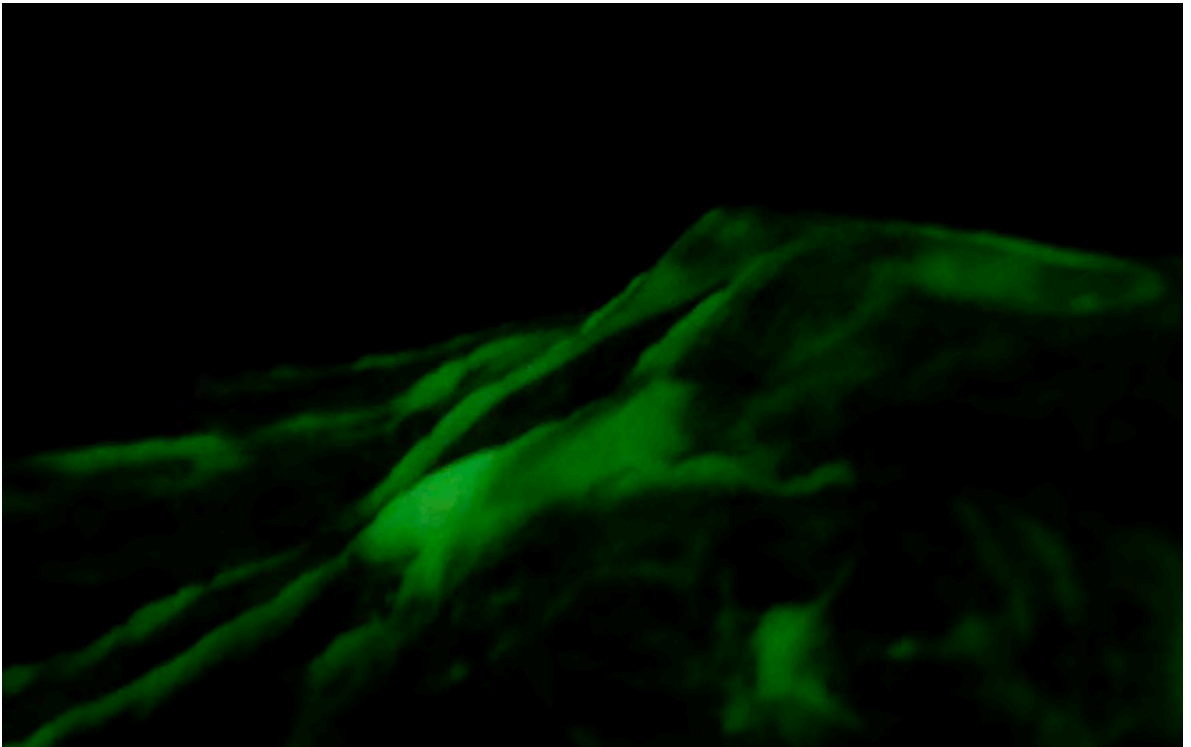
So reflecting on this part of my process, this would actually have changed my understanding of this interview. Like I said, I took this sentence as a new step in my work, or my proposal of it. But more in a practical way, instead of a spiritual one maybe, after all.

While trying to understand the concept of her work, and while trying to re-enact specific works, or even trying to copy the effects of light and shadow which are very important in her

works. I found myself failing constantly. Already very early in my research I found out that it maybe looks quite simple to play with light and shadow to create mysterious shapes. Or to turn a body, or even a piece of a body into a landscape. But it is definitely not. And I've been struggling with it until this very moment while writing down the research results, thoughts and founding's. The ideas in this conclusive text are still attempts of re-enactments, try-outs, research.

A proposal for the re-enactment:

My idea was to make a live performance with naked bodies covered in Glow In The Dark paint. In a dark room. With few light beams. And the bodies moving slowly through the space. When a body would cross a light beam, the light will



not only be broken but also will leave 'scars' on the bodies. These scars will slowly fade, because the effect of Glow In The Dark is temporary and also depends on the duration of the exposure. The re-enactment would have referred for me to this sentence of Nan Hoover in which she's speaking of 'reflecting on life and time passing'.

Trying out how this glow in the dark effect works and how the visual outcome will be:

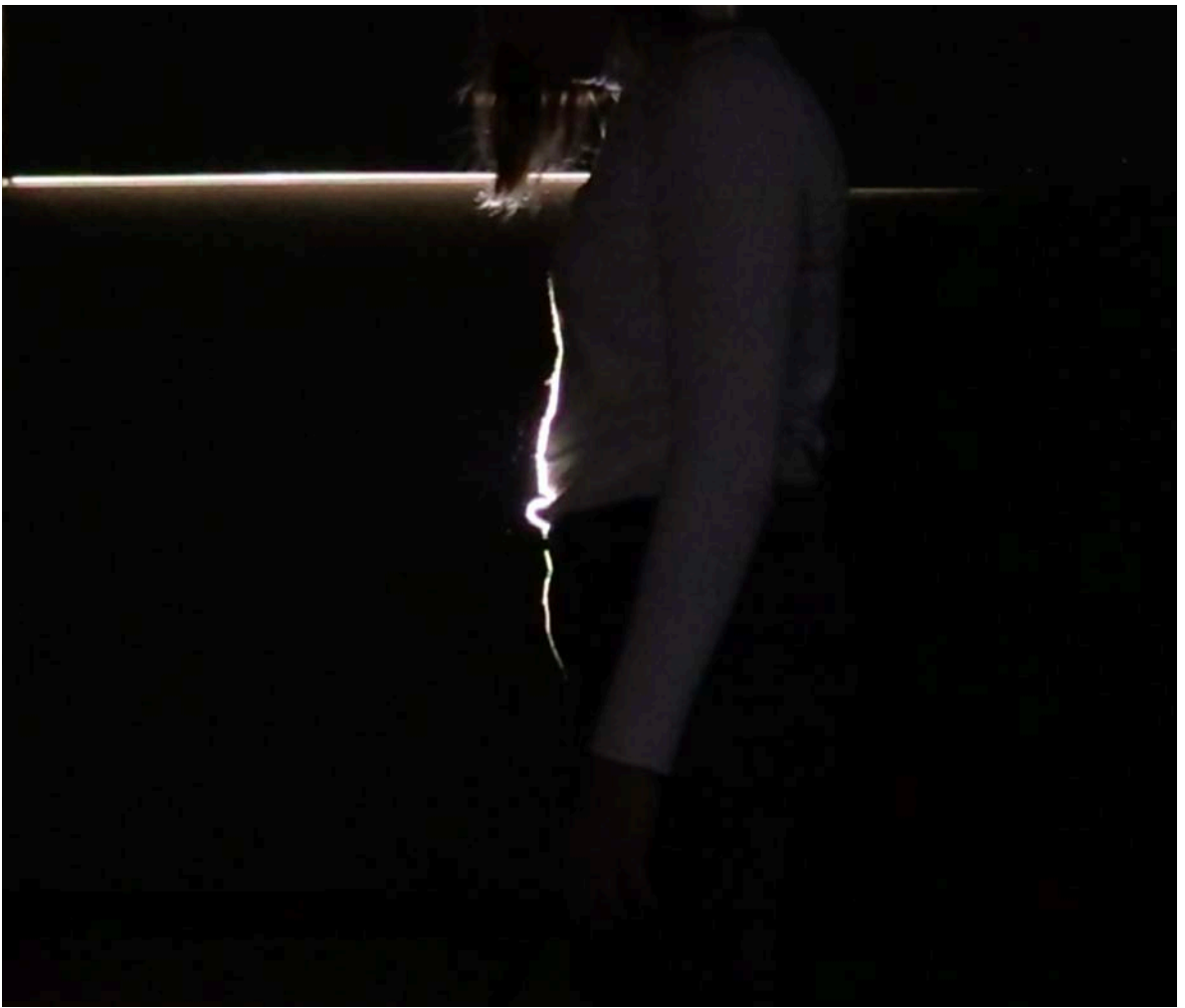
Experiment inspired by Nan Hoover's Gestures. Here I was trying to achieve similar visuals as Nan Hoovers work 'Gestures'. About images where you can see just a part of the body. And trying to put her work in a different light, by using Glow in the Dark. Second hand light. Or as Willem van Weelden would say 'ashes of light' which I found a beautiful and suiting title for this experiment. Because the phosphorescent effect is only working when exposed to light. And after the exposure the body part will still glow but slowly fade out. Like life, and time.

For me this idea is a reaction on Nan Hoovers work, something inspired by, but maybe it isn't a re-enactment yet.

Because there is a big difference in the nature of this light and how it works. Instead of reflecting light, this work is actually about absorbing light. And that would be something different than in Nan Hoovers work. But I could not get it out of my head anymore, this effect of the Glow in the Dark.

Experiment to bring Glow in the Dark into a bigger space:

When I was looking at the video's I've made together with Britt Cox in room 218, I sometimes really had to laugh. Comparing to the slow movements and focus which Nan Hoover has in her works, and actually in my opinion is a great quality, these visuals (my experiments) were a total disaster. It was very far from slow movement and focus. Although I thought I really moved slow in the first place, after seeing the recorded video I knew it was very far from it. It looked clumsy and chaotic. But it was funny to see us experimenting with light and shadow. And because of these experiments I did came to the conclusion that 'focus' was the main missing link. Both for my research as well as for my visual outcomes. It was an interesting experience.



An other idea came out after the experiment in room 218:

Screenshots (vs. analogue film images). Taking screenshots from the digital video's. While I was looking at the video's that I've made, I knew that they were too fast, too unfocussed.

Only some very short moments I had the idea that there was something happening.

That's where I started to think of making screenshots from these tiny little moments in the video's.

To filter those moments out of it. I will have to do more research on how Nan Hoover did this with the analogue film images to make it really into something.

Thanks to technology, we are able to see things we would not see otherwise. It can help us to focus. Or at least help me to focus, for this is my biggest challenge in all aspects of my life. My brains 'somehow' have difficulties focusing. They want quick results. Great results. Immediately. I have noticed this in my try-outs. Is it just me, or is it how the world works today? Fast, quick results. Whatever we want, whenever we want it. Food, water and light. Light with just one click on a button. Changing our natural rhythms. Where the day should start at sunrise, and end at sunset, it is now these days a scheduled thing. You can create your own day and night. With artificial light. How will this change us, or maybe this already has changed

us. Artificial is the new normal. So, I kind of drifted off a little bit while typing this part of the report. So I'm going to leave it for now. This was actually a side idea which is bringing me back to the beginning of this research, where I started question the relation between natural light and the artificial.

Conclusion

Although I was surprised by certain effects that appeared while experimenting with the body and light. And with lights and cameras. Some of the visuals did gave me a feeling that I was coming more closer and closer to the feeling I have, when experiencing Nan Hoover's work.

During this research, I came to the conclusion that the main quality of Nan Hoover and her artworks is actually my biggest obstacle in making artworks myself. And that is focus.

To be able to tune in on something to see the details, the small changes, the magic. To be able to interact with the unexpected. And from there you start to master these focusing moments, you know why, when and how specific effects will appear. How it will work. And then you can even start to anticipate on it. Like Nan Hoover could.

It is also becoming more clear to me why the setting of her working space, the set up for her works, and also choreography is so important. The magic happens at a certain border. Of light and dark. A certain amount of light. Exposure. If you add too much light, you will cross a border, and the mystery is gone. If you have too less light the visual can get boring, because nothing happens. So the conclusion I can make is that I've learned that preparation and focus are the key elements. And that magic happens where you could not think of it to happen. I will take this knowledge with me into the future.

Robyn Leipoldt



black and white
2001
installation

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page no. corresponding to student's articles

**Watching Out -
a Trilogy**

1986 13'17"

48 Marina



Two Pieces

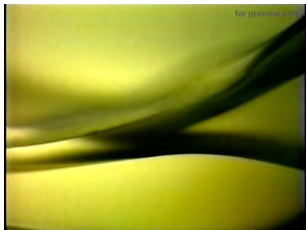
1983 6'45"

Marjolijn 32

Color Pieces

1980 12'25"

38 Martijn



Three Pieces

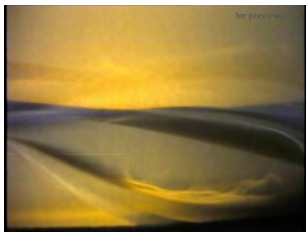
1981 10'45"

Marjolijn 32

Projections

1981 7'42"

38 Martijn



Four Pieces

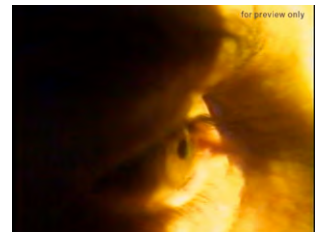
1983 11'18"

Marjolijn 32

Eye Watching

1984 7'55"

38 Martijn



Light Dissolves no. 2

1975 9'46"

Alaa 10

Desert

1985 12'39"

28 Nicolas



Movement in Dark pt 2

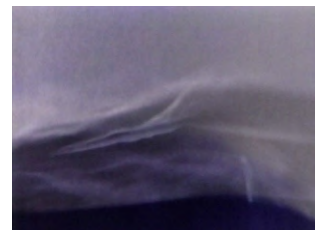
1978 10'16'

Alaa 10

Returning to Fuji 1984

8'37"

12 Emily & Mieke
20 Britt





Meeting Nan Hoover:

A Video Portrait

Sam Schoenbaum

2008 42'00"

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Wasser

1989 6'31"

Cassandra 24



Reflections

1986 10'49"

Cassandra 24



Waiting

sound: Bryan Nicholls

1986 9'45"

Cassandra 24



Impressions

1978 10'17"

Noël 44



Moving Light

1975 - 1976

13'15"

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Nan Hoover Foundation

to event page

and pdf of this publication



light composition 1977
14'57"



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