

# Spatial Theory II

## Abstract+Contextual Practice Essay

SPAD603

Amy Cherguit

18030307

Spatial theory Blog Link:

<https://lineardesign.blog/theory-two/>

# Abstract

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My intervention is embedded in the St James Theatre foyer, which explores the relationship between the inhabitants and the designed space between Queen Street and Lorne Street through a collaborative installation. The design of the installation is for the inhabitants to interact and collaborate with the space through motion and movement, to question their identity in relation to the surrounding space and people.

The installation design is submerged with colour and light, through geometric structures crawling along the walling and ceiling, reflecting light and patterning around the space. With the main idea exploring the relationship between the occupants and the space, the steel material of the structure and the shadowing of the occupants disbursing the patterning, the space becomes a mirror of identity. Allowing the interactive space to be a gateway of finding self-identity, in relation to the space and surrounding guests; the viewers will not only connect to the space but will become part of it, through their reflections. Creating an unforgettable experience of emotion and memory.

Through my process and investigation texts that have helped inform my design practices are "Lines of Enquiry" by Ro Spankie, "The Waiting Room" by Susan Hedged, and "Politics of Installation" by Boris Groys, and artworks "Paradox of Praxis" by Francis Alys, "Deep See Blue" by Laure, and "In Real Life" by Olafur Eliasson. These works have helped my investigation and exploration of designing and creating spaces for my further practices. That examines the relationship between the occupant and that space through a collaborative motion, to create a connectional experience. Particularly in my colour intervention, which has created a powerful static installation space, that triggers the public's experience and questions their self-identity concerning the surrounding world and people.



Image1:Cherguit,A.(2020).Proposed Intervention for St James Theatre.Watercolour on paper.Auckland

# Contextual Essay

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We live in a world where everything we perceive and visualise is based on emotions and memories from previous experiences. This process has become a significant factor in design practises, with how art will be distinguished and interacted. As a designer, I'm fascinated by the divergent ways of how people's thoughts and sentiments effect their relationship between spaces. My intervention into the St James Theatre space will investigate this notion, through an interactive collaboration walkway connecting Queen St to Lorne St. This space allows the inhabitants to become part of the work, collaborating through their presence and movement of the space. While investigating the relationship between space and occupants, I've begun to wonder how this relates to myself as a designer. I am in the second year of my degree and still figuring out who I am and what processes and techniques I will need to strengthen throughout my practice and further career. Right now, I am beginning to understand and acknowledge my style and preferences and how I will depict these concepts through my further practice. I want to be a qualified designer that expresses the importance of a relationship between the inhabitants and the space to create an experiential connection, what is critical to engage this interaction between the inhabitants and the designed space? How do the individuals own experiences and emotions alter the relationship? What qualities of design creates this meaningful experience? How does the motion of collaboration between the space and inhabitant create a connectional experience or raising questions about their own identities and relationships to others and life?

Everyone that interacts and comes into contact with my space will have different backgrounds in life, so their experience will vary with each individual; influencing whether the inhabitants will engage. I began to wonder how do people of different life experiences connect and interact within the same space? Why do they each have their own reaction? In Ro Spankie "Lines of Enquiry", the main discussion depicted is in connection to Freud's layout of his spaces, which describes the placement of everything in the environment, and how individuals would react or relate to the space. Her ideas explain the concept of the interior's layout connecting with people, specifically through the furniture layout, to trigger their personal experiences and memories. "It is not simply a physical space, it is also a memory, a method, and a metaphor" (1), portraying how the layout manipulates the mind to speak without hesitation creating a safe and peaceful experience—explaining how the interior connects with the mind, instead of a building itself, further creating a connectional experience. This is a similar idea in Susan Hedges "The Waiting Room" which addresses the concept of different reactions between spaces, with evoking emotions from past experiences. She details her ideas through the notion of a waiting room; where the environment creates a feeling, which becomes subconsciously present in similar spaces. "The waiting drawing is represented as a paneled interior of recurrence, an experience of time, and a prediction of time on itself(2)". Portraying how the occupants react to the waiting room similarly to waiting at a train stop or a hospital, because the notion of boredom will take over, resulting in similar action subconsciously—detailing how the psyche depicts how to behave in reaction to related surrounding spaces. As a designer that is discovering my path and

personality, I ultimately find myself relating with both Spankie and Hegdes's opinions, with basing my work and consciously thinking about the concept of how people's experience will trigger them to react within the space. I conclusively want to produce work that people will not only be able to consciously connect with but to relate and remember through their experiences. In my studio work, I am investigating the relationship between colour and spatial practice, which I am portraying through the relationship between the occupant and the space in a collaborative motion. With the layout of the interior connecting with occupants experiences, the space will be submerged in bright lights and geometric reflective surfaces, making shadows and mirrors of the inhabitants. Relating and creating experiences of identity, triggering and reacting with their emotions of self-identity; making the occupants question whom they are within the space, compared to the surrounding people.

Throughout the development of my practices and knowledge, I try to produce works that have the ability for viewers to relate or connect to the space with experience. However, I've struggled to create works that viewers can personally relate to, based on their own experiences, due to everyone's different lives. Not all occupants that observe my work will visually perceive it's purpose, basing their opinions on visual aesthetics. I began to explore what qualities of design creates a meaningful experience and allows the viewers to connect with. I examined the short film "Paradox of Praxis 1", by Francis Alys which depicts how a strong visual message and use of meaningful materiality can engage and connect with the viewers. Alys portrays himself pushing a block of ice through the streets of Mexico City till there was nothing but liquid, with the material of ice depicting the struggles of the residents of Mexico with their daily lives and success. "You do not need to witness this action in order to imagine it"(3), Alys defines that the viewers do not need to physically live through the residents' struggles to imagine their pain and hardships. This notion of portraying a powerful message through materiality in my practices, allows the viewers to connect with the work on a deeper level, creating a connectional experience. Specifically, in my intervention of bright lights and reflective surfaces, causes the inhabitants to recognise and question who they are with the surrounding environment; is this whom they are, or whom they want to be? With my strong visual message of identity, the viewers will understand my idea not only metaphorically but physically, with the medium all being the message. I want the process of self-identity not just to be internal with relating one's self visually to the work, but physically and becoming part of the work, to engage further and connect. Through the artist interaction, we learn and can visualise the idea he is trying to portray. I began to explore how I could create an interactive element to my work to have a meaningful connection.

I realised that for the relationship between the occupant and the space to be connected and meaningful, there would have to be a motion of interaction and collaboration. I decided that to create this bond, I would produce an installation that interacted with the inhabitants. What is an installation? Art critic Boris Groys's essay "Politics of Installation", defines installation as an "enclosed space that seems to be transformed into a platform for public discussion, democratic practice, communication" (4). He further describes that "it invites the visitor experience this space as the holistic, totalising space of an artwork" (5), detailing that these spaces are open to all, with the installation creating a collective experience, creating this bond between strangers and the space. The collaborative process of installations creating a strong bond between the viewer and the space is present in Laure Prouvost's film of her installation "Deep See Blue Surrounding You"(2019). The installation bases itself as an octopus with its tentacles representing different individuals, touching different surfaces and life experiences, making the viewers question whom they can relate to and somewhat connect based on their experiences. This causes the audience to question their own self-identity and misunderstanding, questioning themselves further. This has inspired my practice in my intervention, with the lights from all around the room reflecting and bouncing off the geometrically shaped wall, causing a reflection of patterning to be interrupted by the viewer's shadows. Allowing the viewers to see themselves within the reflection of the geometric walls and their shadows, not knowing which one is theirs. This allows my work not to give the viewers the complete picture like in Prouvost's work, allowing the viewers to work the experience of identity out for themselves.

For this specific design intervention, I was attracted to my artist's model Olafur Eliasson's stunning work "In Real Life" (2019-2020), the artist's captivating installation, allows the viewers to sense and gage with surrounding individuals and the world beyond. Olafur's use of reflective surfaces and brightly coloured lights results with extensive coloured patterning reflecting along the walls; which become disturbed with the audience's interaction.

This installation influenced my intervention, and I want the inhabitants to be immersed in colourful patterning and reflective geometric figures, that causes the audience to question who they are in relation to the surrounding environment: is this whom they are, or whom they want to be? I want the process of finding self-identity to not just be internal, with relating one's self visually to the work, but physically with becoming part of the work; to engage further and connect, creating a connectional experience. By considering these new creative insights of the relationship between the occupant and the space and how to create a meaningful experience, it has improved my further understanding in my spatial design practice, as well as further works creating spaces. Depicting how the relationship between the inhabitant and space in any situation, can become meaningful to the viewer, and the process of collaboration and interaction allows the bond to strengthen.

# References

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Image 2:Cherguit,A.(2020).Intervention model.Paper and Plastic.Auckland.



Image 3+4: Cherguit,A.(2020).Slow Surfaces Models.AUT ,Auckland.

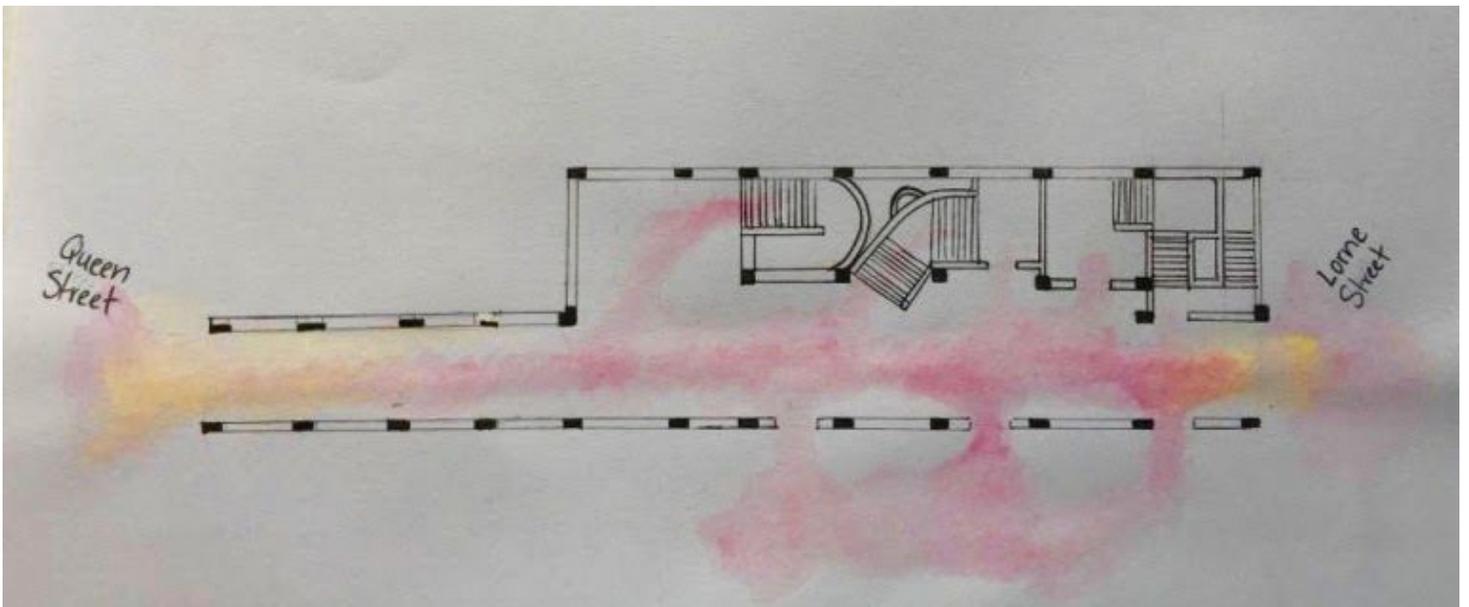


Image 5: Cherguit,A.(2020).Observation Study of People Movement.Watercolour on paper.Auckland.