



PHOTOGRAPHY, STILLNESS, ATTENTION (with Carolin Duttlinger) 5 April 2024

Opening exercise (Zoom "Tableau Vivant" freeze-frame, led by Claudia Claremi)

14:24:39 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

Two mins to jot some notes....

14:25:17 From phillipbimstein1 to Everyone:

my attention was riveted!

14:26:55 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

the urge to laugh was only not bigger than the commitment to the practice and the joy of watching what seemed like frozen screens — except for that blinking, that inevitable coughing. intentional freezing... becoming a screenshot allowed my attention to take over my eyes as a curious wanderer amongst (almost) statues

14:27:02 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

That was kinda wild. I wasn't sure who had turned their camera off (and brought up their profile image). Lucy Alford was like 100% STONE! Incredible! I saw Eve Jacobs blink twice. I had a lot of trouble holding the bell perfectly still. It moved with my breathing...

14:27:09 From claudia claremi (she/her) to Everyone:

Reacted to "the urge to laugh wa..." with 🍷

14:27:22 From Julian Wright to Everyone:

Graham I thought you were v strong with your left arm, tiring!

14:27:29 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

^^^

14:27:30 From Jacob Weger to Everyone:

I found it pretty convincing! With most everything still I was able to take in a lot more information — scanning the faces and backgrounds of people in front of me, taking it all in at once, rather than constant distraction by minute stimuli.

14:27:31 From Lawrence Berger to Everyone:

I focused on one face, it was very still. I felt that and connected with that stillness

14:27:38 From Elisa Tamarkin to Everyone:

Jesse maintained a smile for two minutes

14:27:44 From claudia claremi (she/her) to Everyone:

Reacted to "That was kinda wild..." with 🤔

14:27:50 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

I desperately WANTED to take a screenshot...

14:27:53 From Melissa Galvez to Everyone:

I had a sensation that something was “wrong” the way you do when Zoom glitches and everyone freezes. But then it was kind of magical to know that it wasn’t wrong, it was intentional and we were all working together to make it happen

14:27:53 From Jacob Weger to Everyone:

It was almost as if time itself stopped, and the moment opened itself up to be explored

14:27:54 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

I DID

14:27:54 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

And then I was like...

14:27:58 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

take a screenshot

14:28:04 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

I noticed that for a second I felt frozen in my body, almost as if what I was focusing my attention on, a ‘still image’ was taking over my mind body consciousness of what was happening to me as a biological body outside the screen, the line between myself and screen began to feel blurred somatically, and it was strange!!

14:28:06 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

Wait, if I just take a screenshot later...

14:28:06 From Julian Wright to Everyone:

Graham’s left arm reminded me of the buglers at a Remembrance Day ceremony - everyone else is still for 2 mins, but they’re having to look ahead to doing the next fanfare to end the silence.

14:28:12 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

Nobody will know the difference!!!

14:28:16 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Like when you watch a movie of someone under water and you start having trouble breathing as you are watching

14:28:44 From Melissa Galvez to Everyone:

I noticed that the only thing that moved was the bell - cool to think about how as humans we could all keep still but the only thing that couldn’t be controlled was the inanimate object hanging in space...

14:28:49 From Carla Nappi to Everyone:

I became hyper aware of the imperative not to move - of my own potential for transgression in the eyes of and under the gaze of others - and found myself wanting to constantly look at other people as a way of looking away from my own potential for failure. (...coping this out to share with my psychoanalyst next week... LOL)

14:28:50 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

Reacted to "I had a sensation th..." with ❤️

14:28:50 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "I noticed that the o..." with ❤️

14:29:03 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "I became hyper aware..." with 😂

14:29:17 From Jacob Weger to Everyone:

Reacted to "Like when you watch ..." with 👍

14:29:22 From Jeff Dolven to Everyone:

So some of you may remember the old network TV show “Police Squad.” Every episode ended with the squad in some backslapping show of buoyant satisfaction, and, as was conventional in TV drama of the time, the screen would freeze as the credits rolled. On “Police Squad,” however, the freeze was achieved by the actors holding very very still—even as the culprit, realizing that nobody was going to stop him, slipped away, or a birthday candle fell into a wastebasket and the flames spread, etc. This idea that under close observation an object (a painting, a statue) might be trying very very hard, and only semi-successfully, to remain immobile, and that there would be something to learn from its failure, became (among certain associates of the OTB) the “Police Squad Negation.”

14:29:33 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

Reacted to "I noticed that the o..." with ❤️

14:29:34 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "So some of you may r..." with ❤️

14:29:37 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Made me think about how many spaces impose some degree of stillness, and how we have all become docile bodies. I wonder if the ordinary condition on a zoom, when we are allegedly not still, is already far more still than we would be were it not for decades of socialization.

14:29:44 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "Made me think about ..." with ❤️

14:29:46 From Lucy Alford to Everyone:

Strange motionlessness, bodies voluntarily stilled. The bell wavers on its string. Eyes focus, blur, blur. The muscles of eye movements are foregrounded by stillness. Foreground recedes, foregrounding background. After, the movements, so many small movements. Loudness of keys, brush of mic. I am not moving you are not moving I am not moving you are not moving. Our eyes betray us as living.

14:29:47 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

Reacted to "I became hyper aware..." with ❤️

14:30:18 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Reacted to "I noticed that the o..." with ❤️

14:31:48 From Ana Cristina (Tinha) to Everyone:

As soon as we started, I felt a little giggle, like when I was a child and my friends and I would be playing a prank on someone. Having us all playing pretend, acting "frozen" felt joyful and kind of very cool that we were playing this game together. A great sense of community. Then, after a few seconds, I felt some loneliness, the kind I used to feel when I would be playing hide and seek and it took too long for someone to find me...I took not moving so seriously that I didn't blink in the first seconds and my eyes got very dry, so I had to excessively blink afterwards. I enjoyed the blurriness and the sporadic focus when blinking, which created the different "realities".

14:32:22 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "As soon as we starte..." with ❤️

14:32:58 From Zachary Wojtowicz to Everyone:

"The breath of life"

14:34:27 From Carla Nappi to Everyone:

(Very cool synergy: in class yesterday I did a mini attention exercise with my students that involved taking and attending to a photograph of themselves, as a way of entering the reading they'll be doing of Hagglund's study of Knausgaard's My Struggle. It was very cool. Xo)

14:34:48 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

^^^^ cool!

14:34:54 From Carla Nappi to Everyone:

Reacted to "^^^^ cool!" with ❤️

Reflections on Duttlingers question: reflect on the issue of "absorption and theatricality" in the images.

14:45:46 From Melissa Galvez to Everyone:

Is there a link where we can see the photos again?

14:46:19 From Carolin Duttlinger to Everyone:

Helmar Lerski Köpfe des Alltags

14:56:16 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

I was struck by the "staged-ness" of the images — several of them felt like notably "theatrical" versions of "absorption"! Dunno if others had any of that sense? (I am going to jump, as I am just sort of "dropping in" on several of the rooms...)

15:04:00 From Lawrence Berger to Everyone:

Robert Kalman is doing a similar project in America

15:06:34 From Julian Wright to Everyone:

Elisa – photos taken in unemployment office. The absorption they show relies on the individuals' status as being unemployed. There is a lack of self-consciousness which relies on not being employed. Yet...! They are seeking employment!

Julian – Lerski pictures reminded me of portraits at the concert hall in Gateshead in Northern England - of audience members listening to a piece of music – because they show a state of emotional being that extends in time and through time over a longer duration. I found the contrast between Sander – an instant in time, a second in the life of someone busy – and Lerski – people whose state of mind is being captured as something that draws itself out over a longer time frame.

Melissa – reminiscent of religious imagery. Are we being encouraged to ‘revere’ these people? Should we being encouraged to ‘revere’ these humble poor as saintly figures?

15:06:56 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

THANK YOU JULIAN! Let’s go folks! Let’s get some stuff into the chat thread here!

Rapporteurs!

15:07:13 From Julian Wright to Everyone:

Elisa - how far are the individuals being encouraged to ‘appear’ absorbed – or ‘set up’ to appear absorbed – is this the affect of appearing to be absorbed? The exercise of not looking at the camera if the sitter has their eyes shut is remarkable, because the photographer is practically on top of them! Are the sitters trying to shut out (subconsciously?) the prying physical presence of the photographer?

15:08:55 From Carolin Duttlinger to Everyone:

Erna Lendvai-Dirksen

15:09:28 From Jeff Dolven to Everyone:

A first question: what to say about reciprocal attention, esp in Lerski? Lucy opened the difference between reciprocal attention (two people paying attention to each other) and co-attention (two people paying attention to the same thing at once). What would happen if those faces were to turn to us, look at us? (Cf. George Open, “Psalm.”) Jesse was discomfited by the voyeurism of the images, and was reminded of Booker Washington reflecting on his European travels and the opportunistic ethnography of travel writing. Jeff remarked on the complex mirroring of two people paying attention to one another, the sharing of a smile, the refusal of a smile, etc. Can you pay attention to someone else’s face with your face? What happens when you put a camera in front of one of them? (Between them?) Christopher wondered, is Lerski behind the camera? He also asked about still-face experiments with mothers and babies, and Lucy reminded us how distressing it is when the mirroring breaks down. Also: the weirdness of seeing...

15:10:54 From Jeff Dolven to Everyone:

...your own voice on zoom, having the option of a proper mirror always there. Claudia had us thinking about the dance of two bodies with light. We ended up returning to the question of exploitation, how Dorothea Lange has been able to defuse this problem.

15:11:04 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

We forgot to takes notes, so maybe we can reconstruct individual. I was interested in whether the images are exploitative. I thought about the poverty tourism in Booker T. Washington’s book *The Man Lowest Down*. I also thought about the cruel photo that Arbus took of Germaine Greer. And finally I thought about the contrast between these and Dorothea Lange. Are Lerski’s photos humanizing or dehumanizing?

15:11:24 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Ooh I just saw that Jeff got us all! THANKS, JEFF!

15:11:26 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

^^^

15:14:50 From Julian Wright to Everyone:

Thinking through Sander vs Lerski: been reflecting on musical works like e.g. Bach Passions - some of the music is explaining and telling things in time - things that are defined through the minute by minute passing of time; some of it stops and allows time to expand as an emotional reaction is explored. I feel like almost all on the call will know references in e.g. Nietzsche, *‘better than me’*, that could draw this out!

15:17:07 From Carolin Duttlinger to Everyone:

Please email me with your thoughts or questions.

15:17:26 From Lucy Alford to Everyone:

Thank you so much, this was wonderful

15:17:56 From Carolin Duttlinger to Everyone:
Reacted to "Thinking through San..." with ❤️

15:18:02 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:
<https://www.schoolofattention.org/events/somasound-pt-2>

15:18:28 From Alyssa Loh to Everyone:
Thanks all! That was great!

15:18:32 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
Thank you

15:25:17 From Ana Cristina (Tininha) to Everyone:
I'll have to go now. Thank you so much, again, Carolin. Have a great weekend, everyone.

15:25:26 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:
Same here , thank you everyone !!!!