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FLUME

Exhibition dates 26 October –
12 November 2016

Opening Night | hursday 27
October, 6–8pm

Andrew Goodman

Flume is a sculptural intervention into the connecting doorways of gallery two, providing an provocative and intimate moment of transition and a tactile connection to the fabric of the building, where the qualities of thresholding are translated into a responsive and affectual environment.



'SOFT' FEELINGS

Black-cube/black box: gallery space that withdraws and technological artwork that obscures its operative relations. Focusing on the luminance of screen and image, most interactive, software-based, and responsive art architecturally and proprioceptively withdraws into a dark void. Evacuating surprise, hilarity, oddity and vagueness, this retreat into the blackened space of screen time, stamps out the fissures that enable art to generate novel spacetimes. Such work and its spaces more often than not instill only 'the feeling of' interaction.

What if a different kind of 'soft' art crawled the walls, doors and corridors of gallery spaces instead? Intensive transfers of data, pulsing horizontally and vertically in passageways; algorithmic moods whispering operations to each other; the tonalities of light, sound, touch computationally and corporeally

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enigmatic glowing room entices without reason, there is no 'you' – the predetermined participant armed with an imperative to engage – anymore. Rather, an inorganic vitality pulses through bodies and software in waves and particles, sweeping matter up in to pulsing, soft 'feelings'.

In Andrew Goodman's Flume, space rearranges itself and you/me. Sometimes the space takes off, and, like the space station in Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 film *Solaris*, a quantum time – extraneous to the present time of actual human bodies in the gallery – takes hold. Here the soft sculpture, luminous glow, and whispers compose unworldly durations in which past, present, and potentially forming data entities co-exist: 'an entity composes or creates itself by feeling

the other entities that have influenced and informed it; and it feels them as being spatially and temporally distinct from itself' (Shaviro, 2012: 60). The passageways of Flume channel and gather these feeling, grasping entities, making felt the compositional modes through which data might become affective. Such modes cannot be immediately perceived by (human) bodies, for we inhabit and generate different occasions of experience. The problem with much contemporary software-based art is that it resorts to forms of presentation – such as visualization and sonification – that attempt to translate 'data' for our presentational experience. Instead, Flume enables an ingression of data into the space of art. It enables an experience of 'soft' feelings that cannot be recognised by us and yet are nonetheless felt.

At other times, bodies – yours, mine, the air – become Flume's sensors and transducers, tuning the soft sculpture's rhythms, fielding the movement of soft feelings around the space, enabling the tonality of light to adjust between bright whiteness and hushed twilight, attenuating the scatters of the auditory topology. It's not that there's no space for (human) corporeal experience here. It's that 'the body' fails to form as distinct entity, its spacetimes merging and differentiating instead with soft durations.

Flume's sculptural intervention also elicits memories of more distinctly performative gallery bodies. Recall Ulay and Abramovic's *Imponderabilia* (1977), in which audiences squeezed through the performers' nude bodies positioned in the entryway to the gallery. In Flume, confrontation and identity fold, giving way to incipient architecture and inchoate flesh passing across each other's thresholds: hand to tentacle to orifice. That pause to probe the doorway's mawing protrusions creates a rhythmic contrast with that ductile pulse of the infrasonic ultra-violet dome;

intensities pull away and toward each vibratory field. An ecology of human and more-than human rhythms emerges, redistributing affects through passageways – movements of bodies, air, data dispersing throughout the space.

In the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and William James – returning now to a world that has effectively black-boxed most of its processes – all experience is already throbbing with feeling: 'The experience starts as that smelly feeling, and is developed by mentality into the feeling of that smell' (Whitehead, 1933: 246). A 'smelly feeling' is neither possessed by us nor directly attributable to some odorous object. It is, instead, a smell's diffusion and

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All feelings begin 'smelly' – begin already in process. Perhaps none more so than 'soft' feelings, since data, quite literally, processes incessantly. But the smell and tonality of soft feelings run the risk of being boxed away and re-packaged as 'the feeling of'.... Flume, instead, enables something beautifully 'elsewhere' to emerge: a 'feeling of' processing in process, shaded still by moods, flushes, and potentials.

ANNA MUNSTER

Anna Munster is an associate professor in Art and Design, University of New South Wales. She is the author of An Aesthesis of Networks (2013) and Materializing New Media (2006).



Hours: Tuesday to Saturday
12-6pm (during exhibition
program).

Closed on public holidays.

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