

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Pre-essence to Art project started as a research study on raw emotion. Raw emotion as a representation of human unprocessed feeling that constantly vibrates within being, in both its conscious and unconscious response towards the experience of things and events that unfold before one's being. These experiences of things outside being become the triggers that stimulate human encounters with their own raw emotion, where it also makes apparent that humans are bound to these other existences to exist.

As praised by Rene Descartes, humans have the capacity of being conscious of their own existence. 'I think therefore I am' instantly posit the mind at the center stage of being; where the mind constantly assimilates and identifies with its surroundings to weave together a conscious awareness by the experience derived from the outside 'trigger' along with its latter response.

In viewing from a closer look, the mind's interrelations with the physical body are necessary, for the mind alone is not a separate entity from the body but a manifestation of each- being viewed from a different perspective. As Immanuel Kant phrase it "Man is so created as to receive the impressions and stirrings which the world must evoke in him through that body which is the visible part of his being, and the material of which serves not only to impress on the invisible soul that dwells in it the first notions of external objects, but also to recall and connect them interiorly" (pp. 186), and for that reason, the body that embodied the inner being

further served as a figurative representation of the self. That to reason with why something exists like the non-feasible mind, one standardly appeals to the existence of something else that is the physical entity. In a sense these physical facticities are the attributes that come into immediate sight when it is being sensed, captured, and processed by the eyes all the way to the brain; that in this case the body serves as a portal medium that delivers the message inward, carrying the abstract concept from the sensory impressions upon the external trigger to be understood by the mind, quoting John Berger 'it is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world' (Ways of Seeing ch.1) that eventually validates the presence of the physical substance in its existence as well the presence of the transcendental substance in its absence, in which both become the nature that authenticates being.

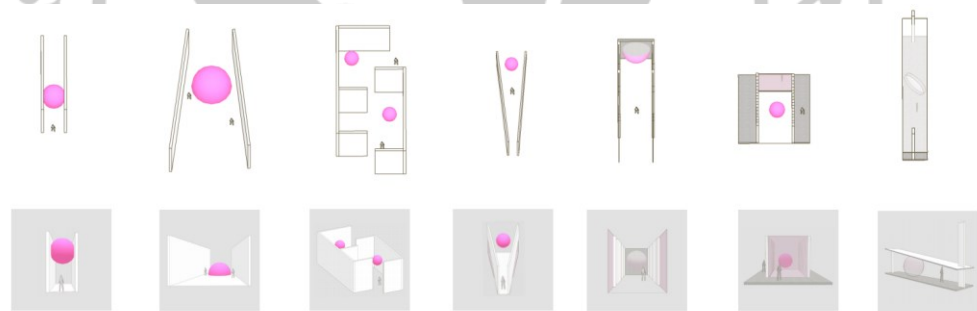


Figure 1. 1, 'Ways of Passing the Ball', 2020

As it is important to look inward, it is also important to look closer into the way external triggers operate. In conducting a series of experiential spatial sequences on the 'ways of passing' while adopting a pink ball in representation of the object to be encountered, seeks to explore the possibilities of its deliverance and how this variety of pathways may instill different impressions to the subject's experience of the pink ball. This further explores the ground of conception

concerning how the object may reveal itself to the subject, as to in how many diverse ways can the object present itself before subject.

At this point, it is clear that despite the presence of object is significant to trigger the subject into looking at the inward, the method of delivery is as prominent in crafting the kind of experience that builds up to the engagement with the subject. Furthermore, creating the kind of involvement that correlates with the subject being in the presence of the object involves.

While it is an established fact that having an 'in-person' experience is reckoned to be the zest that builds the instant identification of the things around one's being: from a subject to another, a subject to an object, and a subject to space. With the physical attributes simply confirming the reality of things to be present. Thus, to take away the 'in-person' quality out of a person's experience with things asks away the question of whether it is still possible to experience the presence of things in the absence of bodily physicality?

Taken the lead on the online viewing room (OVR) as a medium alternative to a direct art exhibition platform, which projects a contrasting shift from the 'in-person' experience where artworks were essentially being enjoyed within a shared physical space. The following alternative seems to let a certain crucial aspect from a formal art experience to be silenced, questioning the subject's relation to the piece while only being mildly exposed to a white wall setting that blends to the background with the art piece being pasted on the foreground, given a very flatten look upon the piece altogether. Further questioning if there is another way to deliver

art within the reality of the virtual realm that may present the art as not too far off from being an intangible piece beneath the electronic screen.

For in a way there is a form of dependency between things: the subject identifying with the object, the object resonating to the space that enfold it, and the subject perusing into the space that narrates one towards a point (the art).

Furthermore, in acknowledging the fact that all aspects are configured to formulate an extended form of reality where one is able to experience the dynamic of all realities combined as whole, one is made aware of the individual reality that needs to be first realized on its own. Each reality of things has to correlate with the facticities that adhere to its own reality independently. For instance, taking the virtual space in place of a physical one will require a change in ways of staging the experience towards the art piece destination which therefore responds to the virtual space's own reality.

With this connection grounding the idea that everything is in everything, the accumulation of things intertwining with one another and then happening to its subject must have still constructed a different outlook on reality to each differing subject. For the experience itself has instilled material images into the subject's mind, that allows the subject to form its personal understanding based on these sources of images for the thought to carry. Imagination here plays a crucial role; it has the ability to bridge perception into a form of understanding. As Aristotle's *De Anima* suggests on the conception that the soul never thinks without phantasm, which is closely linked to the assumptions and past memories that have pre-existed

human perception. The added images will then be processed along with the traces of the past in continuously forming a new understanding upon matters in relation.

The aim of the exploration into the encounter of an object is geared forward with the idea of an experiment on Pre-essence prompting the reveal of art in mind. At this point the experiment itself is outlined based upon the idea of subject encounters with an object, through a crafted pathway designated for the specified piece, taking the spatial intervention as a way to stimulate the subject of being present, within the virtual landscape setting as a medium that carries its circumstances of being distant from the physical reality, in challenging Pre-essence spatial narration to explore further with its intervention despite being denied physical presence.

Pre-Essence takes place in the reality inside a virtual realm as it is crafted in purpose to be the journey before artwork, where it specifically yields the way to deliver users towards a particular artwork.

Pre-Essence works in collaboration with three artists of different backgrounds and style in creating their art pieces, in representing each of their work with three pre-journeys towards the reveal of the pieces. These pre-journeys are crafted to resonate with each piece they represent; in dissecting and identifying with the naturality of its entity and beingness of the three different pieces.

The Pre-Essence project acts as a platform that seeks to trigger human imaginative capacity in exploring and experiencing raw emotions that vibrate within being when one is being confronted by the happening of whether an object, space, or an act of passing by.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The questions that emerged are as follows;

- (a) How does Pre-essence prompt the experience of an art piece in the context of the virtual realm?
- (b) Can Pre-essence stage a spatial experience within the virtual landscape?
- (c) Does Pre-essence engage to the art as part of the art or as part of the space it inhabits?

1.3 OBJECTIVE

The objective of the project was to focus on the human being's spatial experience within Pre-essence, on being closely observed through its performance in delivering the subject towards a designated art piece. The first step into this project was to put forward the ground understanding of what Pre-essence expected to convey. Pre-essence here is a spatial intervention that prompts the subject into the experience of art by a rendition of narration that leads the subject into a specified art piece that the intervention seeks to solely represent. The phenomena of art experience by the subject will then be looked further in how it may trigger the subject into imagining and having one's interpretation in response to the journey. The interpretative journey that takes place within a virtual platform has put forward the concern upon the physical limitation that might hinder its spatial execution, yet also provide the exploration

into the vast realm of virtuality that seemed to have no edge. Making the connection between the staging of art by Pre-essence to be bound foremost to the abstraction of the art piece it represents, in delivering a pathway that resonates strongly to the art it represents in extension to the piece. As human beings normally experience the journey towards a point through their sensory perception, in acknowledging their presence in reality, this virtual exhibition of art by Pre-essence furthermore prompted the exploration on how to find presence virtually, by first collecting research through literature and then through the examination of the virtual art experience that is tested to the public and then collected in the form of questionnaire responses. From the research made through literature, there are the features of immersion, involvement, resonance to reality, and sensory experience that may contribute to the experience of being a presence in the virtual realm. As the analysis of the data acquired from the outside resources distinguish on significant statements. Statements that prove themselves as such through the frequency of like statements appearing throughout the data. The research also covers the way of exhibiting art as the context to determine how Pre-essence will be introduced and put forward. Four qualities are being presented inside the virtual exhibition as the following: realistic experience, the prompting towards art, the presence before the art, and last the reality within the virtual realm- to conclude into the wholeness of the journey. The first part of the pre-essence experiment is to allow artists who are interested in the Pre-essence deliverance of the art concept, the freedom to curate on which work of theirs befitting the project. Afterward, the art pieces are taken into a closer analysis to

understand further the reality of the piece with its formalistic attributes as a ground to the implementation of each pre-essence for the specific work. Once gaining the understanding of the pieces the project moves into a more solid connection that specified the relation the piece has with Pre-essence abstractions of it in the form of spatial intervention. After implementing Pre-essence to the three artist pieces, the next step is to experiment on the virtual exhibition to the public. The reason for an experiment is because the research thus far has yet only consulted to literature, the singular perspective of the researcher in conducting the execution of Pre-essence, and to the artists whose works are being represented with pre-essence. The idea of this experiment is to bring outside perspective and interpretation inward, as to look for inputs and to check if the project that is entailed to its process and literature influence made sense as well to the outside experience.

1.4 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

The project is an examination of human art experience through the spatial intervention by Pre-essence that took place within the virtual realm, in delivering the existing works of three artists into the virtual exhibition to be tested as an experiment on quantitative data research on art experience as outlined by information explored within the project. The project addresses how human beings experience art through space, narration, presence, and interpretations through multiple disciplines and the implementation of this through experimentation. The work itself prompts the reflection on how the journey

before being in the presence of art may work as an imaginative platform to subject using regarded works as resources to guide the project exploration. In the hope, Pre-essence may present considerations to keep in mind in the practice of interior design, the learning, and the perception of existing works.

1.5 SCOPE

The scope and limitations of this project are as listed below;

- (a) Regarding Art pieces being represented in this project are all delivered through digital soft copy format, none are on its physical format.
- (b) Regarding Pre-essence, the project establishes on the spatial intervention within the setting of a virtual realm.
- (c) The Experiment:
 - The experiment consists of an online viewing platform to art exhibition that showcases three works of three different artists prompted by its specified Pre-essence, and followed by a questionnaire at the end which each participant is asked to fill without a time or space specific setting.
 - Each participant is required to participate in the Pre-essence to Art virtual exhibition, before moving onto the questionnaire form.
- (d) The project, the research experiment is limited by time constraints placed on the Interior Design program, which is expected to be done within one semester, with research done in the semester previous.

(e) The experiment medium on delivering the Pre-essence by mere animation choice is based on the researcher's limitation of technical skill and program knowledge. It was once intended to be made into a 360 Video View with user control movement feature to raise the interaction with participant.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

Before the final semester that is dedicated to the final thesis project, the class of the undergraduates is introduced to their pre-final project class namely Research Design I and II that focuses mainly on research and exploration. The students are guided through in order to choose a topic for their undergraduate projects, as well as to decide how they would then execute the project. The research class is supposed to guide the student towards the topic that interests them, in finding topic matters that are based on the student's interests, without it having to be bound to interior design topic-related source materials. Students were then asked to further look into the breakdown of its idea and conception and dissect understandings from it to stimulate the student's choice of final project topic later on.

ANISH KAPOOR: IN THE MOOD FOR ART

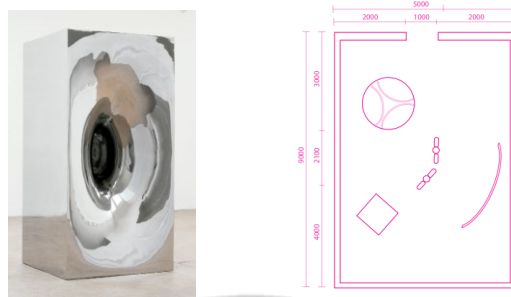


Figure 1. 2; 'Untitled', 1997, Anish Kapoor

The study case on Anish Kapoor's inclusivity of space into his works and exhibition, emulating the wholeness of a center stage. The void around objects and the potential depth inside them meet in between reflective surfaces, besieging the sight and eliciting a disconcerting sense of "unease." Kapoor's surfaces seem unstable; their convex curves or concave funnels give the sculpture the appearance of collapsing in on itself. One spontaneously reaches out to save them from sinking, but the sculptural form is dissolving into an optical whirlwind, as if dragged out of its own body and into a moving outside. "The abrupt disappearance of the surface of a deep, black hole physically slashes the earth underneath our feet." The incredible suction that emerges from these artworks and seems to practically eat them is not the result of unique optical illusions that occur on certain surfaces. They communicate not just their own depth, even when it is imperceptible, but also their own time. It merely takes time to become aware of their effects, and little may really occur. Externally, very nothing occurs, yet the longer we stare, the more we learn from the artwork.

His creations visually break the relationship that demonstrates substance and form, specifically the surface-to-body relationship. Kapoor successfully and physically undermines the distinction between what we can perceive with our eyes and what we can perceive solely with our bodily senses, that is, the premise that sculpture belongs wholly to the viewer's world. The sculptures' continually bending surfaces, executed with extreme accuracy, alter the conventional connection between surface and body into a continuity. Their juxtaposition results in a differential connection. As a result, their future use should increasingly depend on computer programs capable of calculating a full collection of distinct algorithms and their interaction.

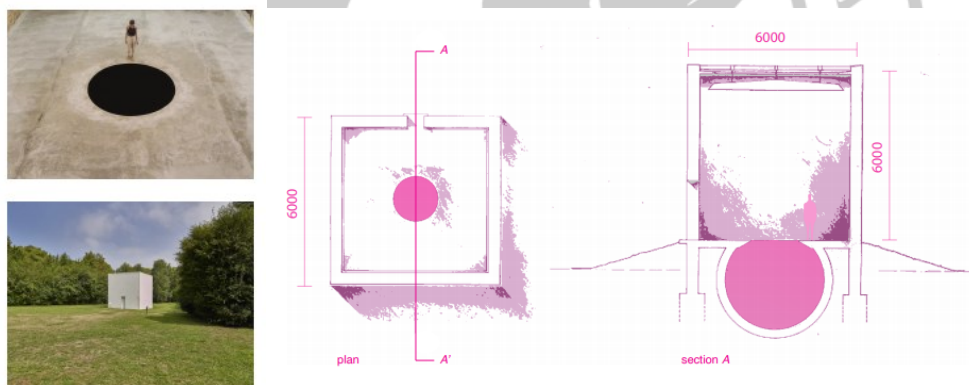


Figure 1.3 'Descent into Limbo', 1992, Anish Kapoor

Visitors enter the installation through a small doorway leading into a freestanding concrete and stucco room, 6x6x6 Meter. In the center of the floor is a circular pit, the sides painted black so that it at first appears solid, hiding its true depths. Kapoor designed Descent Into Limbo to appear like an endless chasm in space; looking down into it is a dizzying experience.

Kapoor was testing the curious power of sculpture that consumes its own volume as well as the room in which it is housed—in gigantic scale. In his own words, “The foreshortening of the building from the outside as one looks through the form is to me, surprising. The building appears to be only half as long as the impression one had of it from the external structure. From the outside of the building, only the inside of the form is visible. From the inside of the building, only the outside of the form is visible. It is as if the space inside the building had suddenly expanded and what was a hole became a form ... Inside and outside seem to be turning into each other.” The impression of Kapoor's work is also dependent on the relationship between closeness and distance, which varies according to the viewer's location and the texture of the material, whose extension, colors, and effects vary according to its observer.

Space is turned inside out, folded in on itself, and hollowed out. Such an endeavor requires an innovative approach of the kind shown in recent virtual realm research—a field concerned with the universe's inaccessibly remote and inconceivably ancient time-spaces—by confronting the ordinary three-dimensional reality with the concept of string theory's saddle-shaped spaces. Their visual portrayal bears striking resemblance to Kapoor's distortion of spatial funnels. We take consolation in the fact that there is at least one point of convergence between the unintelligible, unsolvable riddle of Kapoor's works and the need of visualizing things we will never see.

Objects optically interrupt the relationship that demonstrates substance and form, particularly the surface-to-body relationship. Kapoor successfully and

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GABRIEL ISAK: THE VICARIOUS DREAMINESS



Figure 1. 4, from the Entities Series, 2018, Gabriel Isak

Gabriel Isak experimented with surreal and abstract self-portraiture based upon his experiences; that he views as everything that transforms and develops the soul. Isak's self-exploration peruses the soul through different visual metaphors,

symbols, and scenery, while often trying to depict the way the soul looks through silhouette, light, or a sphere, yet at the same time gives off the space for any being to start their own journey of exploration. entering a dream world, where solitude is more than just being alone. It is a world of soul searching and dream interpretation, spun from a web of psychological states, which is filled with stimulating knowledge and energy of the self. Solitary figures are concealed in surreal sceneries, depicting their internal world, which symbolizes one's own unconscious states.

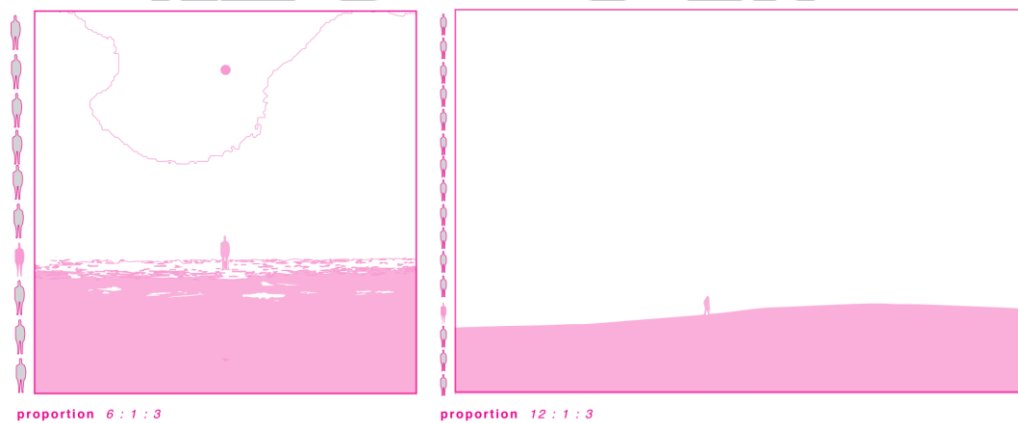


Figure 1. 5, 'Disintegration' from the Entities Series, 2018, Gabriel Isak

Entities, a series inspired by existentialism about exploring different personas and finding one's place. To observe and discover one's placement to its surrounding internals and externals. An abstraction of the self; a reflection of the life within.

the scale that stressed out the stark contrast of the person to the vast surrounding amplified the state of aloneness within one's internal state of consciousness. the presence of nothingness other than oneself in the composition, may disclose a possible fact that the piece is based upon an extracted situation inside the internal

state of being. Hinting towards the state of undisturbed solitude that is explorative and filled with possibilities in the extent of its space.

DATA COLLECTING METHOD

Quantitative research method with grounded theory is applied to collect data. According to (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), research involves interpretive and naturalistic approach meaning, “qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. Questionnaire responses’ data will be processed by Colliazi's seven steps descriptive analysis.

Conclusion resulted from grounded theory will be confronted towards empirical phenomena using behavior setting theory by Roger Barker (1968). This theory explains behavior and environment interface, where environment will affect behavior of an individual. Design will be created based upon multi-sensory design. Multi-sensory design encourages the participant of the virtual exhibition to be more engaged and involved within the situation happening on the different dimension of space. The connection between everything above to here is the concept of spatial presence that may intrigue its participant as subject to feel more immersed in having their presence felt in the event unfolding

1.7 OVERVIEW OF STRUCTURE

This paper consists of five chapters as listed below:

Chapter INTRODUCTION

I

Consists of raw emotion, ways of passing, imaginative triggers that ground the context of this project

Chapter LITERATURE

II

Relevant theories and bodies of work that influence the project, and how they fit into the progress of the research.

Chapter PRE-ESSENCE TO ART

III

Consists of the Art piece curation, Pre-essence execution, Webpage formulation for experiment as conducted for the purpose of this project.

Chapter VIRTUAL EXHIBITION EXPERIMENT ANALYSIS

IV

Interpretation of experiment data, resulting reflections and afterthoughts, to how they relate back to the core concept of the project.

Chapter CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS

V

Conclusive statements that address the research and experimentation sections of the project, the entirety of the project.

1.8 FRAMEWORK

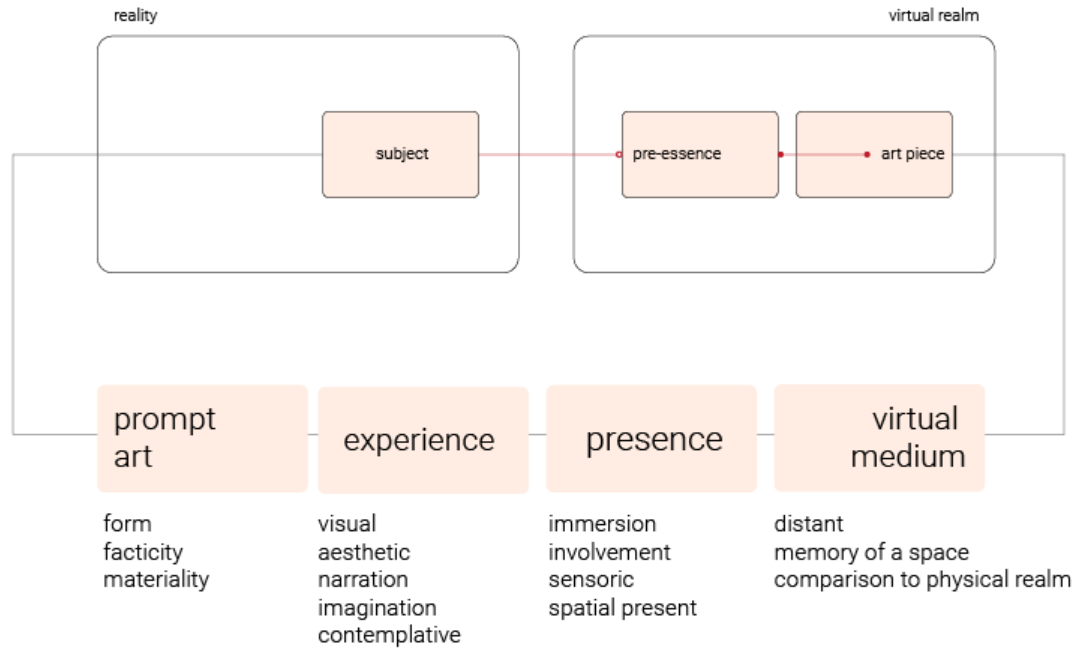


Figure 1. 6, A chart outlining the framework of the project

