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Lucas M. Ihlein

University of Wollongong, lucasi@uow.edu.au

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Attending to Anthony McCall's *Long Film for Ambient Light*

In March 2007, The Teaching and Learning Cinema, an artist group from Sydney, Australia coordinated by myself and Louise Curham, re-created the conditions for a contemporary experience of Anthony McCall's *Long Film for Ambient Light* (1975). *Long Film for Ambient Light* is a work of Expanded Cinema, comprised of the bare minimum elements required for 'film': light, time, a screen, and an audience. Here I discuss some aspects of this re-creation, with particular focus on the compilation of an 'experiential document' as a way of understanding how the work affected individuals who encountered it.

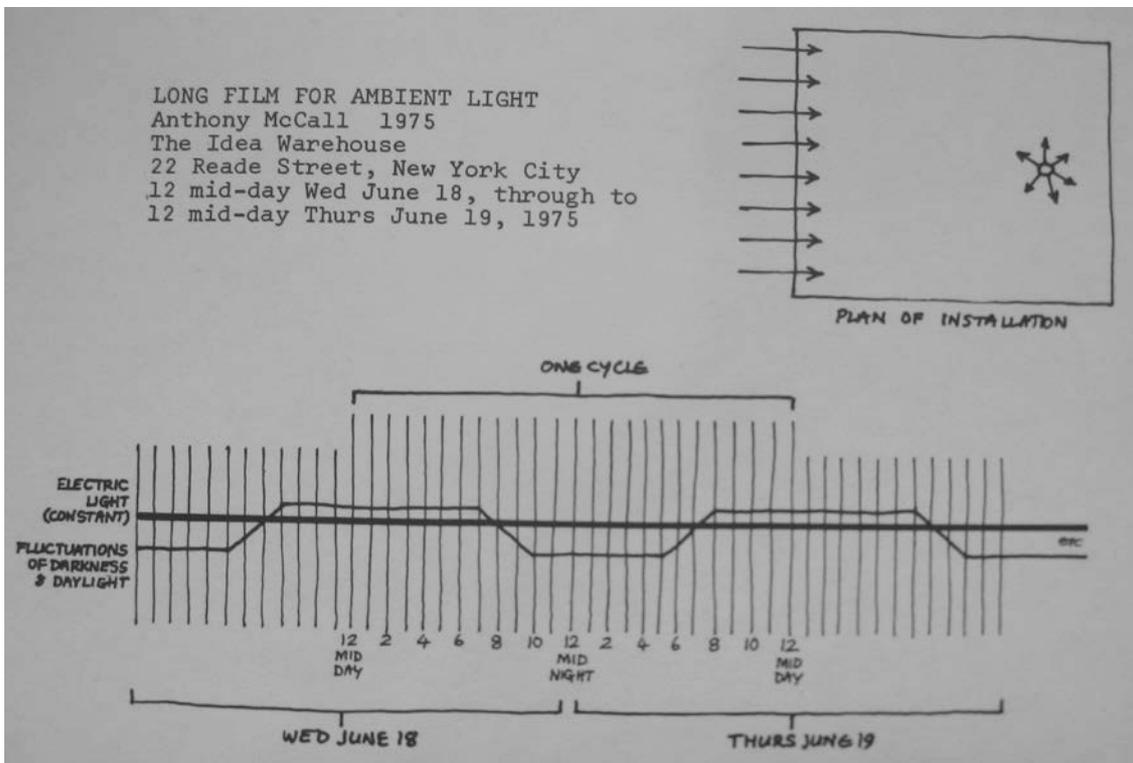


fig 1: Anthony McCall. "Long Film for Ambient Light" (1975). Invitation Card. Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

Expanding what cinema might be

Experimental films from the 1960s and 1970s which reached beyond the convention of a single rectangular projection screen were sometimes called 'Expanded Cinema'. 'Expanded Cinema' events often involved fragile and ephemeral situations: light bulbs that flashed in front of the screen, puffs of smoke which illuminated the cone of light from the projector, or performances involving 'mini-cinemas' utilising the sense of touch rather than sight.ⁱ This emphasis on the contextual elements of space, time, and the social transaction of the performance situation places Expanded Cinema alongside 1970s conceptual and performance art.ⁱⁱ Like other manifestations of performance art from that era, often these events were so specific to time and place that it is impossible to experience them ever again. Some, however, possessed certain characteristics--such as prepared film material, or a set of written instructions--which might enable a future re-creation.

During the last ten years, the re-enactment, or re-creation, of performance art from the 1970s has increasingly been employed as a method of historical 'research', as well as an art form in itself. Importantly, re-enactment has placed artists (as 'action-researchers') at the centre of a discipline traditionally dominated by (non-artist) scholars.ⁱⁱⁱ The Teaching and Learning Cinema engages with the history of Expanded Cinema through such re-enactments. Our 'cinema' is not an architectural space, but rather a collective that pursues a programme of action-research around the histories of experimental cinema.

The Teaching and Learning Cinema's interest in re-enactment began with a strong belief in the inherently *experiential* (rather than simply 'conceptual') nature of

Expanded Cinema events. In this, the group draws from the writings of pragmatist philosopher John Dewey, and radical educational theorist Paulo Freire - each of whom emphasised the primacy of lived experience over 'propositional' learning.^{iv} In light of this emphasis, this chapter presents a brief account of our 2007 re-creation of a 1975 work by Anthony McCall, focusing on the experiences of actual visitors to our new version of the work.

* * *

John Dewey, in his 1934 book *Art as Experience*, argues that art is not simply the painting or sculpture as a discrete object. The 'work of art' is rather *the work that art does* in lived experience. Art, he wrote, 'intensifies the sense of immediate living' -- and this intensification of the present moment needs to be considered as an intrinsic part of the work of art itself, rather than one of its by-products.^v In considering art as a sphere of human activity – a *practice* rather than an object (albeit a practice often mediated by objects) - Dewey shifts the definition of art from a noun to a verb. The work of art is not a singular, autonomous object or action, but a bundle of relations and artifacts that come together (differently at different times) in the creation of an aesthetic experience within the mind and body of the human subject.

The advantage of thinking about the work of art in these terms is that it potentially releases us from the disabling trap of mythologising the past. One's own experience is an important node in the network of interlaced relations which make up 'the work of art'. Thus, instead of privileging a prior moment in history as somehow more 'authentic', we are urged to value our own encounters with art in the present

moment.^{vi} The push to validate the present experience of the audience was a key tenet of much of the work produced by Expanded Cinema artists in the early 1970s. Malcolm Le Grice, a British filmmaker and theorist of Expanded Cinema, criticised the paradigm of the commercial motion picture industry for creating illusory worlds that (mis)represent the creative work as a *fait accompli*. In narrative commercial films, all aesthetic decisions appear to have been made at some moment *prior* to being projected for a passively seated audience. By contrast, Le Grice and his colleagues at the London Filmmakers' Co-op were concerned with composing events that emphasised the here-and-now – what he called ‘real time/space’ -- as a shared aesthetic encounter.^{vii} In the context of Expanded Cinema, this meant the foregrounding of the cinematic apparatus: the passing of film through a projector, the projection of light onto a screen, and the architectural space of the theatre. Together with the communal experience of the audience, assembled at a particular time and place, these apparatuses became tangible elements of the artwork itself. In this, Expanded Cinema shared many of the concerns of performance art and happenings -- in which audience members were not merely passive consumers of material created prior to their arrival, but actually participated (to varying degrees) in the making of the work.

Le Grice's desire to *work together* with the audience to develop an aesthetic experience echoes the writing of radical Brazilian educational theorist and activist Paulo Freire. Writing at around the same time as Le Grice, Freire attempted, in his book *Pedagogy of The Oppressed* (1970), to overcome the active/passive dichotomy in the teacher/student relationship. Freire criticised what he regarded as the ‘banking concept of education’, in which the student is merely the destination for deposits of

knowledge that are complete and pre-formulated. For Freire, the banking concept of education is fundamentally oppressive because within its system, success means becoming a docile subject accepting propositions on face value without testing them through lived experience:

The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.^{viii}

Conversely, Freire writes, when educational curricula emerges from the interests of students in collaboration with their teacher, the pedagogical process is more empowering and liberatory. Education then becomes a tool for enriching and improving the lives of students wherever they are in the here-and-now, rather than a means for creating model citizens. In fact, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire renames the partners in pedagogy as 'teacher-student' and 'students-teachers'.

I would like to propose that the recent growth in the desire to re-enact performance art and Expanded Cinema is compatible with this liberatory pedagogical movement. Rather than regarding the past with white-gloved reverence, re-enactments by younger generations of artists can be seen as a process of active intervention in history in the pursuit of vital knowledge. In contrast to the kind of knowledge that is generated through reading about artworks after the event, re-

enactments seek to provide a different kind of knowledge by making it possible to *encounter the artworks ourselves*. If (as suggested by Le Grice) the spirit of Expanded Cinema was to have an experience in the present time and space, then to consider such works after the event might mean their re-assembly wherever and whenever we happen to be. The process of re-enactment goes beyond polite homage, or slavish devotion to the 'authentic' work of art. Instead, re-enactments are an interaction with, and reflection on, history, transforming our experience (and therefore our understanding) of the original work.

In preparing to re-enact Anthony McCall's *Long Film for Ambient Light*, we discovered that very little had been recorded about the specific experiences of audiences who encountered the film at its debut in 1975. Essays about the piece, and interviews with McCall, mainly discussed the work in light of the artist's intentions, or placed it in a linear history of avant-garde or conceptual art practice. Connections had been made to John Cage's musical compositions, Minimalist sculpture, structuralist and experimental film, and anti-spectacular performance art. But nowhere could we find an account from someone who had actually been there.^{ix} Before describing McCall's work, I should note that The Teaching and Learning Cinema uses the term 're-enactment' only out of convenience. Given the nature of *Long Film For Ambient Light*, there is actually not very much to 'enact' -- and thus we prefer to describe our role as 're-creating the conditions for a contemporary experience' of the work.

Long Film For Ambient Light: New York, June 18-19, 1975

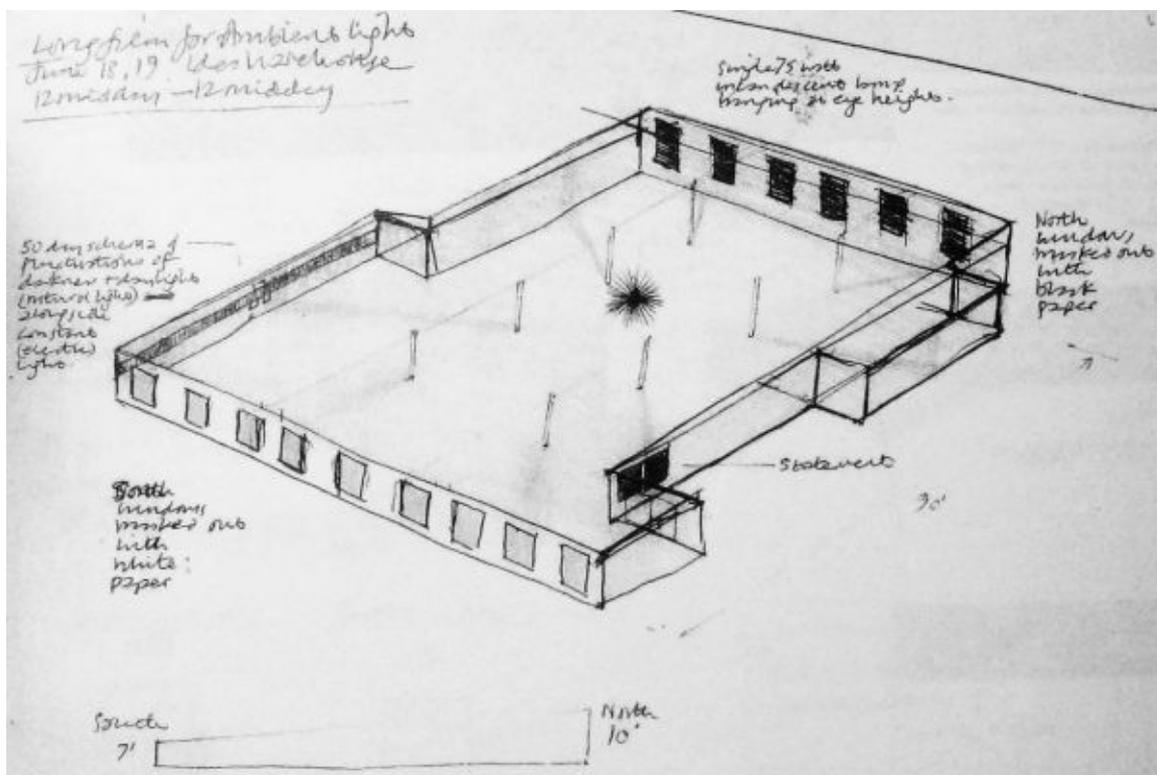


Fig 2: Anthony McCall. "Long Film for Ambient Light" (1975). Installation drawing (from May 1- June 26, 1975 notebook). Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

Long Film for Ambient Light was among the last of McCall's 'minimalist' films, in which he drew attention to the structure of cinema itself. In his earlier work, *Line Describing a Cone* (1973), focus was brought to the sculptural cone of light thrown by the 16mm film projector as it illuminated particles of smoke and dust in the air.^x *Long Film for Ambient Light* takes this process a step further. Even for a work of Expanded Cinema, the piece represents a rather radical 'expansion'. The work was in fact only nominally a 'film'. It did away with celluloid, projectors, and a passively seated audience. Believing that these were merely the technologies commonly assumed to be associated with cinema (but by no means indispensable to it) McCall stripped his work back to what he regarded as the fundamental elements in the creation of a

cinematic experience – ‘an architectural container, a light source, a given duration’.^{xi}

Long Film For Ambient Light consisted of a specially prepared room, made available for a period of 24 hours, beginning and ending at 12 noon. Unlike standard film viewing situations, the audience could enter and leave as they wished. The windows along one side of the room were covered with translucent paper, and this was the only source of natural light. In the centre of the space, at about head-height, hung a single light bulb. The bulb was continuously illuminated throughout the course of the piece.

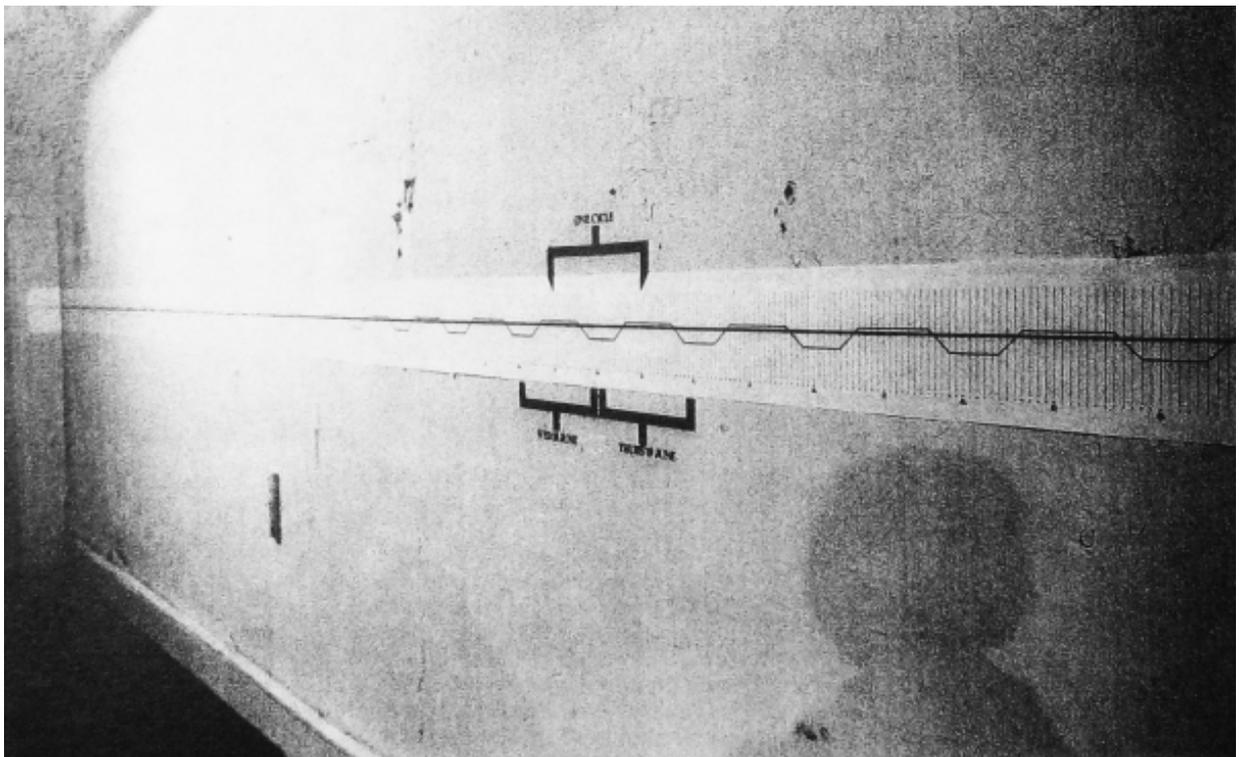


Fig 3: Anthony McCall. "Long Film for Ambient Light" (1975).

Time schema installation view at Idea Warehouse, New York, 1975.

Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York. Photograph by Anthony McCall.

On the walls were mounted two paper documents: a text entitled 'Notes in Duration', which outlined McCall's philosophical framework for the piece; and a 'Time Schema Drawing', which graphically represented the fluctuating relationship between the natural and artificial light sources in the room.^{xii} McCall did not consider these documents to be simply an explanation of *Long Film for Ambient Light*, but an intrinsic part of the work itself. In his 'Notes in Duration' statement, McCall argued that the quality of human attention is be the key to understanding our relationship with 'art objects':

Art that does not show change within our time-span of attending to it we tend to regard as 'object'. Art that does show change within our time-span of attending to it we tend to regard as 'event'. Art that outlives us we tend to regard as eternal. What is at issue is that we ourselves are the division that cuts across what is essentially a sliding scale of time-bases. A piece of paper on the wall is as much a duration as the projection of a film. Its only difference is in its immediate relationship to our perceptions.

Paradoxically, this radical statement at the heart of McCall's film has, to date, only been considered as a hypothetical proposition. If, as McCall states, it is true that 'our attending to it' (or, as Dewey would say, *our experience of it*) is a crucial part of the work of art, then surely it follows that any analysis of *Long Film For Ambient Light* should begin precisely there – in the actual experiences of its audience.

Creating an 'Experiential Document' for Long Film For Ambient Light

In order to document the experiential qualities of our re-creation of *Long Film For Ambient Light*, The Teaching and Learning Cinema invited visitors to participate in recorded audio interviews, during or after their encounter with the work.^{xiii} The intention with these interviews was to create an 'oral history' of our 2007 version of *Long Film for Ambient Light*. In this way, we hoped to contribute a different way of knowing McCall's work – through actual lived experience - to the prevailing theoretical and conceptual analysis.

Working with curator Lizzie Muller, we encouraged visitors to participate in 'semi-structured interviews'. Adapted by Muller to access the often difficult-to-describe experience of interactive digital (or 'new media') artworks, semi-structured interviews elicit experiential narratives, in which audience members 'tell the story' of their encounter with an artwork. This method of audience research draws out information about the particular events that make up an encounter with the artwork. The process often produces a deepening of reflection in the interviewee, and thus an intensification of the experience itself.^{xiv}

Experiential Narratives: Ambient Light

As might be expected for a work that runs for a full 24 hours, the interview responses varied greatly, depending on the time of the day or night the recording was made, how long the interviewee spent in the room, and the conversations and social interactions which occurred in and around the work. For the sake of brevity, my account here considers only one of many themes which emerged from the interview

transcripts – the audience's response to the ambient light sources from which the film takes its name. Curiously, neither McCall's published notes, nor later theoretical analyses of *Long Film for Ambient Light*, hint at the strong visceral and emotional effect of the light. And yet, in the transcripts from our interviews, the quality of light is repeatedly and vividly described and evaluated. In the following summary, I draw from a selection of responses from 12 visitors. Our re-creation was carried out between Friday, March 16th, and Saturday, March 17th, 2007, in a very large room at Performance Space, a centre for experimental art in Sydney.

The following account traces transformations in response to the light in the room over the course of the work: from afternoon, dusk, night, dawn, to the return of natural light the following morning.

* * *

Long Film For Ambient Light: Sydney, March 16-17, 2007

During the first afternoon, the room was flooded with light entering through the large translucent windows on the northern wall of the room. Because of this abundance of sunlight, the light bulb, although continuously glowing, contributed very little to the overall illumination. At this stage, one visitor, Anne, observed the bulb with a sense of curiosity - primarily as an 'object', rather than as a source of light. Her eyes, having adjusted to the natural light flooding the room, were able to gaze unflinchingly at the light bulb. She saw the bulb as a 'sharp point in the centre of the space,' and studied its glowing incandescent filament. Imagining the flow of electrons running along the

wire inside the bulb, Anne said: 'I feel a bit scared of it ... it's very electric, the light bulb. The "thing-ness" of it is for me very strong'.



Fig 4: March 16, 2pm: Long Film For Ambient Light, Re-creation, Performance Space, Sydney, 2007, photo by Lucas Ihlein and Louise Curham

Another visitor, Sam, arrived just before dusk. He too admitted that he had given the lightbulb a great deal of attention. 'For the first fifteen minutes,' he said, 'I couldn't stop thinking of the light bulb as an art object hanging in the room'. For Sam and Anne, the balance of light in the room, tipped strongly in favour of the natural light streaming through the translucent windows, reduced the artificial light source to an 'object' in the space. But with the coming of dusk, this balance changed.



Fig 5: March 16, 8pm: Long Film For Ambient Light, Re-creation, Performance Space, Sydney, 2007, photo by Lucas Ihlein and Louise Curham

From about 6pm, the intensity of the natural light began to slowly decline. Visitors' eyes gradually adjusted to the darker space, and it became increasingly difficult to look directly at the light bulb. The transition from day to night, via this slow shift in the balance of light, was described by visitors as a 'heightened' period in the narrative of *Long Film For Ambient Light*. McCall's work had managed to frame and dramatise the everyday occurrence of dusk. It was one of two extended moments (the other, of course, being dawn) in which the changing light conditions were almost perceptible in relation to the human attention span.

Sam's awareness of this fact was triggered after studying McCall's time-schema graph fixed to the wall: 'I could see that I was probably there at a dramatic time just by looking at the little up and down lines, when things were changing light-wise'. Lizzie, who was recording interviews with visitors, observed: 'that was a magical moment with no specific beginning or ending but I remember that there was a peak, a moment of acceleration when change seemed to be happening more perceptibly.'

After this 'dramatic' period of change, the natural light disappeared completely, and the room was lit only by the bare light bulb. Some visitors (especially those who were planning to stay in the room overnight) reported 'feeling time stretching out' ahead of them, with almost 'no end in sight'. One visitor, John, who arrived after 8pm, likened the room's nocturnal appearance (a seemingly empty space with a single lightbulb blazing at head height) to a theatre set suited to a play by Samuel Beckett or Harold Pinter. For John, the passing of time in such a situation could potentially be experienced with physical awkwardness, or jarring psychological self-consciousness. And yet, instead of this awkwardness, John reported a sense of deep relaxation in the room: 'It's funny, I was thinking about stuff before I came in here,' he said, 'but now I feel my whole brain's just switched off. And I felt like I could go in there and switch out, and I wasn't wasting time. There was a kind of guiltless non-doing about it that I really enjoyed'.

The experience of visitors Vanessa and Tim was more playful. They arrived around 10pm. Not having any awareness of what the room had been like prior to sunset, they began playing with the light cast from the single bulb, casting shadow puppets

on the walls and floor. Throughout the night, I observed other visitors lying on the floor under the bulb, chatting sociably while ‘basking’ in its glow.



Fig 6: March 16, 11pm: Long Film For Ambient Light, Re-creation, Performance Space, Sydney, 2007, photo by Lucas Ihlein and Louise Curham

However, many other visitors who spent time in the space between dusk and dawn were physically and psychologically ‘bothered’ by the incessant glow of the artificial light. Some began to develop an antagonistic relationship with the bulb, viewing it almost as a kind of aesthetic torture device. Lizzie, who arrived at 6pm on Friday, and stayed until noon the following day, reported:

...the light bulb bothered me unbelievably. In my eyes and my head, it hurt ... this aggravating insistence of it. I couldn't look anywhere else: it totally dominated my field of view no matter where I was. I feel like it's been printed on my retina possibly forever, that light bulb. Every time I shut my eyes, there it is on my retina.

Sleeping, for Lizzie and those of us who decided to stay overnight, involved strategically positioning our bodies in the space, facing away from the 'aggravating insistence' of the lightbulb, or else covering our heads with blankets or towels.

For the 'survivors' of the long night, the return of daylight was generally greeted with a sense of relief. One particularly enthusiastic visitor, Chris, arrived in the dark, at 5am on Saturday, in order to witness the sunrise. Like Lizzie, Chris found himself unable to escape the light bulb's glare, describing it, at first, as a 'horrible insistent little monster of a thing'. However, when dawn broke, and as his eyes adjusted to the natural light coming through the translucent windows, Chris welcomed the emerging sunlight with great pleasure: 'Yeah it's just real nice, and it's got a nice full spectrum of colour. It's full and juicy, and it represents all the good things in life'. This 'evaluative' interpretation of the ambient light conditions in the room was common across the recorded interviews.

A fresh batch of visitors arrived in the early morning. One of the first to arrive, Bob, observed the prevailing mood during this period as 'quiet and meditative'. He explained that he had read about *Long Film For Ambient Light* in advance, and actually planned his visit at this time precisely for that reason: 'It sounded like a work

you should contemplate and meditate on. I thought, you know, you're half asleep in the morning, so I thought that would be good.' Like Bob, many of the early morning visitors reported experiencing a calm and contemplative mood. Although the balance of light had tipped towards the natural again, curiously, nobody reported observing 'the light bulb as an object' as Anne and Sam had done the previous afternoon. Bob suggested that this might be related to the meditative, rather than analytical, state of mind of the early morning visitors.



Fig 7: March 17, 8am: Long Film For Ambient Light, Re-creation, Performance Space, Sydney, 2007, photo by Lucas Ihlein and Louise Curham

This brief account of various responses to the changing balance of light in our re-enactment of *Long Film For Ambient Light* is fragmented, anecdotal, and by no means ‘scientific’ in its methods or results.^{xv} However, it does point to the clear correlation between the actual, physical conditions of the work in the here-and-now, and the audience's experience of the piece. Besides reflecting upon the ambient light conditions in the room, other major themes that emerged from visitors’ interviews included:

- an increased sense of self-consciousness due to the relative lack of visual stimuli in the room;
- the observation of, and participation in, the social relations among people in the room;
- reflections upon the nature of the art work itself—as the “original piece”, and as the documented re-enactment.

It seems almost unnecessary to point out that our re-creation took place at a different latitude, and during a different season, to McCall's presentation of the work at the Ideas Warehouse, New York, in June 1975. One can only imagine that, depending on these variables, as well as the peculiarities of the architectural container in which it is set up, and the cultural context of the place in which it is staged, the work itself must engender a dramatically -- or subtly -- different experience. And yet, in the sense that the original concept for the piece explicitly encompasses a situated, evolving form, *Long Film For Ambient Light* remains ‘the

same work' of Expanded Cinema, regardless of temporal and geographical shifts.^{xvi} That is, for Anthony McCall (as for John Cage before him), the creation of an artwork is not simply the bringing forth of a static object into the world. Rather, it is the creation of a *framework for experience*. This framework is able to be expanded and elaborated upon over time, and be set up in different places, allowing us to imagine our own re-enactment as 'the actual work'. The difference, of course, is that our version of the work is not only *Long Film For Ambient Light*, but also its 'second coming'—a separate and distinct work of art.^{xvii}

For those who encountered it in Sydney in 2007, the work was imbued with doubleness: the here-and-now laid over New York, 1975; the thrill of accessing the original work overlaid with the pedagogical focus of the re-enactment; the direct encounter with the ambient light conditions in the room, enhanced -- or perhaps mitigated -- by our request that visitors contribute to our experiential document: a request that reminded them of the historical and theoretical motivation of the re-enactment. The ability to perceive an artwork such as *Long Film For Ambient Light* depends on a myriad of embodied conditions -- perceptual apparatuses such as eyes, ears, and their associated cognitive processes, the body's movement in space over a period of time, social interactions, and so on. All these components need to be brought into the equation when considering, and reflecting upon, a work of art like *Long Film for Ambient Light*. While the method we utilised -- semi-structured interviewing -- can only capture a fragment of the whole experience of visitors to the work, we believe it represents, at the very least, the beginnings of a broader understanding of the piece. As Lisa Lefeuve writes:

[A]s the work has become situated within history, each presentation of *Long Film for Ambient Light* will slightly shift it, and as documentation of each realisation is distributed, expectations of future manifestations of the work are layered upon past representations of experience.^{xviii}

The Teaching and Learning Cinema takes seriously the idea that *Long Film For Ambient Light* was not simply a conceptual gesture to be imagined only in the mind. Rather, McCall's film, along with many other works of Expanded Cinema from the 1960s and 1970s, was made to be attended -- and attended to -- in a specific time and place. The flux of light in a room, the gradual (or rapid) sense of time passing, the waxing and waning of one's own attention span -- these are phenomena which can only be encountered in lived experience. By restaging the work, we create an opportunity for a direct encounter in the here-and-now. Attending the re-enacted work offers an embodied alternative to shuffling through paper documents and archives. It allows us to compare our own experiences with the artist's statements and theoretical assertions. Since one of our own frustrations with the historicisation of live art events from the 1970s is the absence of first-person accounts, we attempt to address this problem by making a new deposit in the archive. If *Long Film For Ambient Light* were to be 'experientially documented' in a similar manner in several different times and places, a rich, expanded, and plural picture of the artwork might begin to emerge.



Fig 8: Anthony McCall. "Long Film for Ambient Light" (1975). Installation view at Neue Galerie, Aachen, 1976. Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

Photograph by Anthony McCall.

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- i A few iconic examples of Expanded Cinema: Malcolm LeGrice's *Castle One* (1966) which involved a light bulb that switched on and off during the screening of a 16mm film, momentarily blinding the audience members, whose eyes had adjusted to the darkness of the cinema; Anthony McCall's *Line Describing a Cone* (1973), which utilised particles of smoke and dust in the atmosphere to create a sculptural cone of light'; and VALIE EXPORT's *Tapp und Tast Kino* (Tap and Touch Cinema) (1968), a mini-cinema strapped to the artist's chest – audience members could 'view' the 'film' only by reaching their hands through the cinema curtain and touching the artist's body.
 - ii For a contemporary reflection on 1970s Expanded Cinema, see Lucas Ihlein, 'Pre-Digital New-Media Art', *Realtime* 66 (April-May 2005), <http://www.realttimearts.net/article/66/7779>.

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- iii For one recent reflection on this field, see Jessica Santone, 'Marina Abramovic's 'Seven Easy Pieces: Critical Documentation Strategies for Preserving Art's History', *Leonardo*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 2008, 147–152.
- iv See John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (1934; New York: Perigree, 2005); and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968; New York: Continuum Press, 2005).
- v Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 5.
- vi Dewey's theory of aesthetics drew from his much deeper desire to reform the American public education system. For Dewey, teaching and learning should be interactive, experiential processes of critical engagement, rather than a mechanical acquisition of 'facts'. See John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938).
- vii Malcolm Le Grice, 'real time/space', *Art and Artists Magazine* (December 1972), reprinted in Lucy Reynolds, *Defining FILMAKTION*, 2005, available at <http://www.studycollection.co.uk/filmaktion/Frameset7.html>.
- viii Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 54.
- ix One account that approaches a description of audience experience is that of Lisa Lefeuve, 'The Continuous Present', in *Anthony McCall: Film Installations*, ed. Helen Legg (Warwick: Mead Gallery, 2004), 33-41. However, even Lefeuve's experiential descriptions are of a hypothetical, rather than an actual, visitor to the work. For further critical analysis of *Long Film For Ambient Light*, see Anthony McCall, 'Line Describing a Cone and Related Films,' in *October 103* (Winter 2003), 42-62; and Brandon W. Joseph, 'Sparring with the Spectacle,' in *Anthony McCall: The Solid Light Films and Related Works*, ed. C. Eamon (Chicago, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 94-99;
- Jonathan Walley, 'An Interview with Anthony McCall', in *The Velvet Light Trap #54* (2004), 65-75; Jonathan Walley, 'The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-Garde Film,' *October 103* (Winter 2003), 15-30;
- Deke Dusinberre, 'On Expanding Cinema', *Studio International*, #978, 190 (Nov-Dec 1975), 220-224; and George Baker, 'Film Beyond its Limits', *Grey Room 25* (Fall 2006), 92-125.
- x In 2005, The Teaching and Learning Cinema (in its former guise as Sydney Moving Image Coalition) coordinated an Australian tour of *Line Describing a Cone*. Although presented in artists' lofts during the 1970s, in recent years Anthony McCall's films have increasingly been displayed in art museums. We chose to re-connect the piece with its 'rougher' history, showing the work in small artist-run warehouses in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. For McCall's reflections on the changing context for the presentation of his work over time, see Mark Godfrey and Anthony McCall, 'Anthony McCall's *Line Describing a Cone*', in *Tate Papers*, Autumn 2007, available at

<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/07autumn/godfrey mccall.htm>

xi Baker, 'Film Beyond Its Limits', 110.

xii The 'Time Schema Drawing' graphically contrasted the daily changes in natural light entering the room, with the constant lux of the artificial lightbulb. The drawing described twenty-four hours as 'one cycle' – seeming to suggest that *Long Film For Ambient Light* could be presented for a longer period. In fact, Anthony McCall has subsequently confirmed that the work has a potentially infinite duration: 'The piece is imagined as continuous, with no maximum duration, but the minimum duration would be a single cycle of 24 hours.' McCall, email correspondence with the author, April 10, 2007.

xiii It is worth noting that the visitors invited to our 2007 re-creation, in general, belonged to a social network of artists and art-enthusiasts, rather than representing a broad spectrum of the wider community.

xiv Muller, who demonstrated the method for us, agreed to be interviewed about her experience as well. For detailed description of Muller's audience experience techniques, see Lizzie Muller, *Towards an Oral History of New Media Art* (Montreal: Daniel Langlois Foundation, forthcoming); and Caitlin Jones and Lizzie Muller, *Between Real and Ideal: Documenting Media Art*, *Leonardo*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 2008, pp. 418-419. Muller's adaptation of semi-structured interviewing draws from the qualitative research methods described by Steinar Kvale in his book *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

xv The full transcripts of the visitor interviews are available on the Teaching and Learning Cinema website: <http://teachingandlearningcinema.org>

xvi As Lefevre writes in 'The Continuous Present': '*Long Film for Ambient Light* was inspired by the space of the Idea Warehouse; however it is not dependent on it, and has been exhibited elsewhere: for example in 1975 at Galerie St Petri in Lund, Sweden (a small storefront gallery) and the following year at Neue Galerie, in Aachen (a large Baroque hall within a museum).' Interestingly, since our own re-enactment in Sydney, Anthony McCall has re-created *Long Film For Ambient Light* himself, in a dramatically different context at the baroque Musée de Rochechouart, France, 2007 as part of the exhibition '*Anthony McCall: Elements pour une Retrospective (1972-1979 / 2003-)*.'

xvii In a similar vein, McCall himself has considered a (hypothetical) future digital re-make of his 16mm Expanded Cinema film *Line Describing a Cone*: 'It will be titled *Line Describing a Cone 2.0*, thus marking it not as a re-make at all, but as a second version. It would not replace the film version. It may be that over time, 2.0 gets looked at more than the film version. Or it may be that 2.0 drives people back to the film version.' Godfrey and McCall, 'Anthony McCall's *Line Describing a Cone*.'

