# The Gamified Society and its Aesthetic Emancipation

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Fig. 1. A YouTube manager uses
an inflatable slide in the company's
headquarters in Palo Alto California, 2017.

The *rules* of the game should not be confused with the strategies of the players. Each player selects his strategy – i.e. the general principles governing his choices – freely. While any particular strategy might be good or bad it is within the player's discretion to use it or to reject it.

-John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, 1957.

The laborer stops his arms in order to let his eyes take possession of the place. His 'disinterested look' means a disjunction between the activity of the hands and the activity of the eyes. We can call it an *aesthetic experience*. The aesthetic experience is not the experience of an aesthete enjoying art for art's sake. Quite the contrary, it is the redistribution of the sensible, a dissociation of the body of the Platonic artisan whose eyes were supposed to focus only on the work of his arms. It is a way of taking time he does not have. This is what emancipation first means: an exercise of equality that is an experience of dissociation of the body, space and time of work.

-Jacques Rancière, *Recognition or Disagreement: A Critical Encounter on the Politics of Freedom*, 2016.

For Gerardo, Lupita
and Mariana

# Contents

# Preface

The original motivation for this research was my experience in playing chess throughout my life, both professionally and as a personal hobby. Since a long time I have been fascinated by exploring how meaning is created in the cognitive experience of playing chess and how that experience might be related to our encounters with art that is, with the aesthetic experience of art. Within the course of this research I found out about the phenomenon of gamification, the use of game elements in non-game contexts, so present in our contemporary societies. This notion generated a twist in my research. I became interested in how power is executed in societies throughout game-like experiences and how contemporary structures of power use them as a means of subjection of its individuals. The initial idea about how meaning is created through the experience of play, the experience of art and the interconnectedness of the two of them, did not disappeared after this change of direction, but it actually became more relevant. My research transformed into an enquire about the possibilities of resistance and social emancipation within that aesthetico-playful experience.

The present text would have never been completed without the support of many. First of all, to my supervisor dr.ing. R. Zwijnenberg. Thank you Rob for your unconditional and patient advice, but specially for allowing me to find my own answers at my own time. I am also very grateful with the Lectorate Art Theory and Practice directed by my second reader, Prof.dr. J.C. Wesseling. This year of research was influenced by my participation in the classes at the Lectorate as well as my collaboration with the art students of The Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. It reaffirmed my point about the possibilities of emancipation in our encounters with art. I also want to thank Prof.dr. Isabel Hoving and Prof.dr. Sybill Lames from the department of Game Studies at Leiden University for their kindly advise in the early phases of my research, when the amazing world of video games was unknown to me. I am also grateful with Tijs, Melissa and Rodrigo. Finally, I will certainly not be writing any of these lines without the support of my family, my source of inspiration and my deepest love.

# Introduction
## *The Gamified Society*

On a regular working day in the gamified society, a YouTube employee leaves his office and goes to the main reception desk by happily using a gigantic inflatable slide in the company headquarters in Silicon Valley, California (see fig.1). In a meeting room in Google's Boston office, gamified employees find the company of a Teddy bear while other colleagues play mini-golf (see fig. 2). In the British capital of the gamified society, Google employees work while navigating on a boat in the indoor simulated lake of the office (see fig. 3). On the other side of the gamified world, Chinese low-paid workers are hired to play online video games to level-up characters, so players in gamified wealthier countries can buy the usually tedious and repetitive first levels of the games. People in the gamified society are not unhappy, quite the contrary. Individuals report high levels of enthusiasm and engagement to the new playful modes of labor. As long as they are having fun, gamified subjects are willing to work extra unpaid hours. In the gamified society, fun has become a form of labor, play has been turn into a commodity, and its gamified subjects enthusiastically engage with the game of their own exploitation.

*Gamification*, which in its broadest context refers to the use of game elements in non-game contexts, is increasingly defining contemporary societies (Walz et al. 2014; Mekler et al. 2017). We are witnessing the emergence of a 21st century playful and ludic culture: "an era defined by its adoption of game-like strategies among social, personal and professional domains" (Flanagan 2014, 249). The use of game elements such as points, levels and feedback in non-game realms aims to improve user engagement, foster productivity, learning, usefulness of systems, physical exercise, etc. Although gamification has proved to have positive effects on its individuals, especially in educational contexts,[1] currently its main impact is in the same environment in which it was born in the early 2000s: the high-tech environments like Silicon Valley and corporative giants such as Google and Facebook. Gamification has become particularly successful in the corporations ruling today's economy, because it has proved to be a highly effective economic strategy to generate profit by influencing the behavior of producers and consumers. In a 2011 report by Gartner, international IT (Information Technology) research and advisory firm, it was stated that: "The opportunities for businesses are great – from having more engaged customers, to crowdsourcing innovation or improving employee performance". Gartner also

[1] Hamari, Juho; Koivisto, Jonna; Sarsa, Harri, (2014).

predicted that: "by 2014, a gamified service for consumer goods marketing and customer retention will become as important as Facebook, eBay or Amazon, and more than 70 percent of Global 2000 organizations will have at least one gamified application".[2]

As a highly effective tool for controlling behavior and as a practice deeply embedded in today's capitalistic economic force, it is hard to deny the relation between gamification and how power is executed in our contemporary societies. Gamification is not only an economic strategy used by the capitalistic techno-power structures to increase their profit. It is because its effects are perceived to such large extents in society, that gamification has a key role in the shaping of new modes of human identity which are favorable for our current global capitalist economy. As American Sociologist Patella Rey observes: "Gamification cannot be seen as a strategy of social control but instead, gamification must be examined within a broader pattern of socialization – of producing and organizing innovative problem-solvers and self-motivated consumers. Gamification is one of the myriad strategies for developing subjects that are compatible with the needs of late capitalism".[3] Gamification then can be understood as a form of soft power, a modern form of cognitive manipulation which attempts to create enthusiastic and engaged subjects/players suitable to capitalistic needs.

The phenomenon of gamification can better be understood within the context of the rise of *post-Fordist* capitalism, defined by its 'flexibility' in labor processes and its development of immaterial labor (Harvey 1990; Mouffe 2013; Rey 2014). Contrary to early industrial or *Fordist* capitalism, in which play and work were separate activities and 'fun' was a non-desired element by the capitalistic production, in the 'flexible' modes of production of post-Fordism, the boundaries between play/leisure and work are blurred. The immaterial modes of labor of *post-Fordist* capitalism encourage fun and 'playful' work, phenomenon that has been also labelled as *playbor*[4], so the labor process can be executed more efficiently.

Furthermore, gamification as power performs what French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) called *process of subjection*,[5] referring to the techniques used by power structures aiming to 'train' the human body that in turn allow for the emergence of specific modes of human identity or 'docile' subjections, that are compatible to the needs of authorities, as in this case, post-Fordist capitalism. The 'gamified' docile subject is shaped in a way to keep engaged in 'playing' the game of the capitalistic system. Thus, as political theorists have argued, the post-Fordist subject presents a tendency to allow

[2] Gartner Press Release, (2011).
[3] Rey, (2014) p. 279.
[4] Kücklich, (2005).
[5] Foucault, (1977) p. 136.

manipulation and exploitation when it comes as a playful and less-alienated activity (Harvey 1990; Deleuze 1992; Mouffe 2013; Rey 2014; Fisher 2017). In short, gamification as currently used by contemporary capitalism, is a practice that makes exploitation easier by functioning as process of subjection which manipulates the engagement of the workers in playful modes of labor. Gamification, through the production of *playbor,* shapes a new hegemonic system of domination and social inequality that for the purposes of this thesis I will call *the gamified society*.[6]

Gamification presents the workers of the gamified society with a dilemma: Should we accept these new 'playful' modes of labor because they make exploitation more bearable? Is gamification something to fight against? Is it even possible to emancipate from our own gamified self-exploitative subjection? We must realize that there is indeed the possibility to overcome the new hierarchical order established by the gamified society. It is often said that there is no way out to the repressive mechanisms of power of our today's growing global capitalist world. Under this view, our current state of gamified subjection is a fate that we have to accept because there is no alternative to it. However, it is very important that we realize that every hierarchical social order is the result of specific relations of power, therefore alternative structures and less hierarchical models are always possible. As Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe (b. 1943) observes, it is precisely because of the new configuration of post-Fordist modes of production and consumption which value performance, acceleration and engagement, that new modes of resistance also open up. I agree with Mouffe when she argues that the flexible post-fordist modes of production: "opens the way for novel forms of social relations in which art and work exist in new configurations. The objective of artistic practices should be to foster the development of those new social relations that are made possible by the transformation of the work process".[7]

This thesis departs from the idea that art and more specifically our *aesthetic experience* of art due to its virtuosic capacity to produce affects, have a strategic role in the emancipatory struggle against the new subjugated identities produced by post-Fordist capitalism. The aesthetic experience of art, that is the 'what happens' in our moments of encounter with works of art, can function not only as space of resistance against gamified subjections, but it can also contribute to the creation of 'disengaged' and 'decelerated' subjectivities. If the repressive power of the gamified society is largely executed as a gamified process of subjection, aiming at the construction of engaged, self-exploitative and

[6] *The Gamified Society* is a notion which helps me to emphasize my point of the increasing ludification of culture and its impact in our current global societies. Throughout the text I will keep coming back to this notion and as we go further, it will become more clear. Mainly in the first chapter I will expand in the theoretical basis I use for this term.
[7] Mouffe, (2013). p. 174-175.

competitive identities, then spaces of resistance can also be thought as counter-processes of subjection, that foster the production of alternative and disengaged subjecti

In the first chapter I explore further in the relation between gamification, capitalism and power. In order to answer the question of how gamification works as process of subjection in our capitalist and increasingly gamified world, I expand in the two social models that preceded the gamified society: the *disciplinary society* proposed by French philosopher Michel Foucault and the following *society of control* as proposed by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. In the second part of the chapter I focus mainly in the relationship between play and work in the post-Fordist system. I will do so by analyzing the case studies already briefly mentioned: the gamification of the corporative workspace and the practice of 'gold-farming' or 'grinding' within the video game industry. Karl Marx's critique of capitalism as intrinsically exploitative, as well as German game theorist Julian Kücklich's notion of *playbor,* the implosion of play and work, is crucial to my argument about gamification as power. I will argue that gamification works as a flexible process of subjection which produced gamified subjects willing to participate in the performance of power of its exploitation.

The question of how the aesthetic experience of art can contribute to the emancipatory struggle against gamified subjections is explored in the second chapter. Before offering a potential answer to this question, I engage with the problematic of what I call *gamified aesthetics*, that is the kind of art that is already inscribed in the mechanisms of power of the gamified society. I illustrate this point by analyzing the playful artwork *Stadium* (1991) by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan (b. 1960) and *Colored Sculpture* (2016) by American artist Jordan Wolfson (b.1980). I will show how notions of play, humor and spectator's participation in contemporary art, can be appropriated by the gamified society as mechanisms that foster its desired processes of subjection. As starting point for my notion of gamified aesthetics I take Guy Debord's ideas of a present-day society of spectacle. In the second part of the chapter I expand on how an aesthetic of emancipation might be possible by analyzing the work of Mexican conceptual artist Gabriel Orozco (b. 1962), which engages with notions of play and game-like elements as means to create strong moments of perceptual experience. By analyzing several playful and game-like artworks by Orozco, I will show how his 'games' radically differs from those of Cattelan and Wolfson. I will argue that the aesthetic experience of Orozco's work, allow its spectators/players ephemeral moments of aesthetic experience which in turn create alternative modes of identification and subjectivization. Here I expand in French philosopher Jacques Rancière's (b. ) theories of aesthetic emancipation as an 'experience of equality' in the redistribution of the senses, focusing mainly in his

concept of *dissensus*. Also relevant to my argument is German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1900 - 2002) notion of *cooperative play* as the significance of the aesthetic experience of art.

In the final chapter I explore how notions of aesthetic emancipation can occur through the emergent art form of the gamified society: video games. By analyzing *The Night Journey* (2007), slow-motion video game created by American media artist Bill Viola (b. 1951) in collaboration with The Game Innovation Lab at the University of Southern California, I theorize how notions of deceleration and pause can also be thought as spaces of resistance against the accelerated and engaged subjections desired by the gamified society. Crucial to my argument in this chapter is New Zealander cultural theorist and video game scholar Colin Cremin's approach to video games as *affects*. The concept of *affect* is used as a way to complement the already introduced notions of *dissensus*, *semblance* as starting point to think how the aesthetic of emancipation I am advocating in this thesis might be possible. American philosopher of art Susanne Langer (1895 – 1985) and Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi's (b. 1956) notion of *semblance*.

As it will come clear throughout the text, the general theoretical framework of this research departs mainly from three multidisciplinary approaches: emancipatory politics, a phenomenologist approach to the aesthetic experience of art and video game theory. For this research I was especially interested in exploring video games as an emergent medium of art. Although the art status of video games is still controversial,[8] I believe video games, perhaps even more than established art forms, play a crucial role in the struggle against gamified subjections. The incorporation of video games as an emergent art form of our increasingly gamified world, to the art historical discourse can provide new insights in how art and video games can collaborate together to become spaces of resistance where new emancipatory subjectivities can arise.

My hope with this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of the existence of an inner aesthetical/political capacity of art. An invitation to discover not what is political about art but what is political about our experience of art, either in its traditional formats or in emergent ones like video games. Finally, I also seek to emphasize that if there is a way out of gamification, if emancipation from our self-exploitative gamified subjections is indeed possible, it will ultimately depend on us. It is up to us to become more critical of the games our gamified societies encourage us to play, and to realize that more cooperative games and equalitarian worlds are always possible. It is up to us, the workers of the gamified society to invent, as Deleuze would say, new disengaged 'ways of existing'.

[8] For instance, film critic Roger Ebert has repeatedly stated that: "video games can never be art!". See: Ebert, 2010.

# Chapter 1
# *Gamification as Power*

> We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors, it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.
>
> -Michel Foucault, 1977.

## *1.1 Gamification as 'flexible' process of subjection*

Why the idea of integrating play, fun, and game-like elements has become so popular and successful in the high-tech corporations ruling the world's economy today? Why is it that the concept of gamification has functioned so well in this particular moment of post-industrialized capitalism and increasing globalization? As I previously argued in the introduction, gamification has proved to be a highly effective tool to influence user behavior in various contexts. Several studies in psychology have shown that: "provided a non-controlling setting, the well thought out implementation of game elements may indeed improve intrinsic motivation by satisfying users' innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness".[9] Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that as an effective tool for influencing behavior, gamification has been largely welcomed in the corporations ruling today's economy.

In order to understand the nature of the power of gamification, let's go back to one of the cases of study briefly mentioned in the introduction: the gamification of the corporative workspace. In Google's headquarters in London, designed by Peldon Rose architects, the offices are specifically designed to provide the workers with a playful working context. (see fig. 2 and fig.3). According to the architectural firm's website: "The Google office interior needed to promote their identity and show off their fun and playful nature. We brought in a working Routemaster bus, with functioning indicators and bells, so YouTubers and Googlers can now literally hop on to have a meeting. We transformed the central atrium into a Mini St James' Park including a boating lake, complete with rowing boat, deckchairs, trees and grass".[10] Indeed, our YouTuber or Googler in London enjoys a fun

[9] Mekler, Brühlmann, Tuch, & Opwis. (2017). p. 525.
[10] Peldon Rose (n.d.). Available at: https://www.peldonrose.com/projects/google/

and playful laboral routine. The use of game elements cannot not only be seen in the corporate physical workspace but it is also applied within the digital *modus operandi* of the corporations. By the use of game mechanics, such as points, levels, feedback, gamification aims to foster productivity and engagement of employees and consumers, as well as increasing innovation in processes of production. For instance, the systems of bonus in salaries, or "the salary by merit" is shared by most global corporations, and workers are rewarded with bonuses, discounts, 'employee of the month', etc. This new playful laboral situation was also observed by Deleuze when he commented: "the corporation impose a modulation of each salary, in states of perpetual metastability that operate through challenges, contests, and highly comic group sessions".[11] In the Gartner report, already mentioned in the introduction, the IT consultancy firm identified four principal means of driving 'engagement' by using gamification:

> 1. Accelerated feedback cycles. In the real world feedback loops are slow with long periods between milestones, gamification increases the velocity of feedback loops to maintain engagement. 2. Clear goals and rules of play. In the real world, where goals are fuzzy and rules selectively applied, gamification provides clear goals and well-defined rules of play to ensure players feel empowered to achieve goals. 3. A compelling narrative. While real-world activities are rarely compelling, gamification builds a narrative that engages players to participate and achieve the goals of the activity. 4. Tasks that are challenging but achievable. While there is no shortage of challenges in the real world, they tend to be large and long-term. Gamification provides many short-term, achievable goals to maintain engagement. (Gartner, 2011).

These principles are telling about the 'engaging' nature of gamification: Gamification works as economic strategy as long as it succeeds in *influencing* player's (workers and consumers) behavior in order for them 'to feel empowered', to 'maintain engagement' and therefore 'achieve goals', meaning more profit for the corporative. In the Gartner report it was also stated: "The opportunities for businesses are great – from having more engaged customers, to crowdsourcing innovation or improving employee performance".[12] However, the success of gamification as a 'great opportunity for business' is directly conditioned to the degree it performs well as a cognitive manipulation tool, so players keep engaged in playing the capitalistic game and therefore, generating more profit for the 'gamifier', the capitalistic owner of the game. However, the problem with gamification as a practice imposed in the work environment and by which profit is generated from, contradicts the 'free' and

[11] Deleuze, G. (1992).
[12] Ibid.

'voluntary' nature of play and games. In his influential text 'Homo Ludens' (1938), Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (1872-1945), mostly known for his studies on play and culture, defined play as:

> Play is a *free activity* standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and *no profit can be gained by it*. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner (Huizinga, 1938, 13).[13]

The free and voluntary nature of play is fundamentally contradicted by the purpose of gamification which is manipulation of player's behavior. As American Sociologist Patella Rey observes, gamification faces a certain paradox: "if play is about freedom and the purpose of gamification is manipulation: how is it possible to manipulate behavior and have that behavior still be voluntary?" [14.] In his article 'Gamification and Post-Fordist Capitalism' (2014), Rey argues that the paradox of gamification can be resolved through a nuanced understanding of power. As he explains: "Gamification is a form of soft power – it only works if it can entice individuals to genuinely want what the gamifiers want. Power, in this instance, should not be understood as a constraint; instead, power effected through gamification is better understood taking the form of a disciplinary strategy"[15].

Rey's notion of gamification as disciplinary strategy is a direct reference to French philosopher Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) notion of 'disciplinary power' as technique or 'process of subjection'. In his well-known text 'Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison' published in 1977, Foucault wrote extensively about the relation between power and social structures. Foucault argued that power in society is not only conditioned to the institutions associated with the State such as the municipality, police, army, which impose their power by oppression and dictating obedience. He argues that there is also another type of power in society that works through institutions which we normally consider 'innocent', such as schools, hospitals and work places. According to Foucault, these so-called 'neutral' social institutions exercise a kind of *disciplinary power*, which takes the human body as its main object of manipulation. These disciplinary methods (which as Foucault acknowledges, have always existed in societies, in for example the form of armies, monasteries or workshops), experienced an historic shift in the 18th century. From this point, the training of the body was not directed anymore to the growth of its skills but it became a mechanism that redirects the forces of the body in a way that makes it

[13] Huizinga, (1938) p. 13.
[14] Rey, (2014) p. 278.
[15] Ibid.

more obedient as it becomes of more utility, and vice versa. As Foucault explains: "What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behavior. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it".[16] According to Foucault, disciplinary power works as a technique or process of 'subjection' which manipulates the human body and produces 'docile' bodies by the imposition of certain disciplines which are manipulated by various forms of authority. Therefore, the human body becomes a target for new mechanisms of power. In Foucault's words:

> Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. (Foucault 1977, 138).

As a practice that controls human behavior, generating at the same time profit from it by increasing its forces and therefore its productivity, gamification can be understood as a technique or process of subjection and as a mechanism of disciplinary power which manipulates individuals, by making the players want what the gamifier wants.

Although Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power is useful to understand gamification as process of subjection, it is not entirely accurate for our analysis of how power works in the gamified society. Foucault's analysis of power in the disciplinary society was during the times of early industrialism, in which the factory was the main form of production. In the gamified society, the corporation replaced the factory as the main form of capitalistic production and therefore where disciplinary power is executed. As American philosopher Noam Chomsky (b. 1928), agreeing with Foucault observes: "the multinational financial corporations are the main institutions of oppression, co-action and autocratic government that appear to be neutral but are not".[17] According to French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995), the nature of the power that is executed in the global corporations of today does not correspond to the disciplinary societies anymore, but it belongs to a new type of social model that Deleuze called the *societies of control*, that are replacing the disciplinary societies enounced by Foucault.[18] Although Deleuze agreed with Foucault in the existence of disciplinary power in society that works as

[16] Foucault, (1977) p. 136.
[17] Foucault & Chomsky, (1970).
[18] Deleuze, (1992) p. 4.

technique or process of subjection, he argued that the shift from the factory to the corporation as main mode of capitalistic production represented a change in the nature of the power that it executes. According to Deleuze, unlike power in the disciplinary social model was executed in an enclosed and confined manner, in the society of control power is not enclosed anymore but 'modulated' and 'flexible', executed through the technological apparatus of the corporations. In Deleuze words:

> Enclosures are molds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point. …The factory was a body that contained its internal forces at a level of equilibrium, the highest possible in terms of production, the lowest possible in terms of wages; but in a society of control, the corporation has replaced the factory, and the corporation is a spirit, a gas". (Deleuze, 1992, 4)

For Deleuze, this 'gas-like' nature of the corporation is what defines as well the gas-like or 'flexible' nature of the power that it executes. Furthermore, much of Deleuze's analysis of the societies of control was based on its emergent digital technologies. Computers and the Internet are in Deleuze's view the centers of flow-like power ruling global socio-economic systems. Thus, what differentiates the gas-like nature of power of the society of control from the enclosed disciplinary societies is its ability to propagate itself through the digital and information channels. This modulated and fluid nature of power in modern societies is what allows gamification to perform not only as the technique of subjection mentioned by Foucault, but by being a practice executed through the global corporations. This in turn executes its 'flexible' and 'modulatory' power through its digital channels, gamification can be more specifically understood as a 'flexible' and 'modulatory' process of subjection, which is as malleable as each of its subjects.

### *1.2 The gamified post-fordist subject*

The *gamified society* represents a third step in the development of the processes of subjection, which started in the *disciplinary society* and later evolved in the *society of control*. The playful and flexible logic of gamification as process of subjection can better be understood within the context of the latest developments of capitalism, which political theorists call *post-fordist* or 'flexible' capitalism (Harvey 1990; Mouffe 2013; Rey 2014). Post-Fordism refers to the system of economic production and

consumption that has become dominant in industrialized countries since late 20th century. American political theorist David Harvey (b. 1935) defines post-Fordism as:

> Marked by a direct confrontation with the rigidities of Fordism [which corresponds to what Foucault calls 'disciplinary power'],[19] post-Fordism rests on flexibility with respect to labor processes, labor markets, products, and patterns of consumption. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and, above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation". (Harvey, 1990).[20]

Unlike the enclosed spaces of the disciplinary societies or Fordist capitalism, which still conserved a clear separation between types of activities, in post-Fordism there exists a hybridization, or as Deleuze's would call it a 'modulation', of the capitalist modes of production. The 'flexibility' of labor processes already mentioned by Deleuze in the societies of control is mentioned by Harvey as characteristic of *post-Fordism* too. Such hybridization or flexibility has welcomed the incorporation of notions of play, fun and game elements to the post-fordist work environment. This scenario differs radically from the *Fordist* modes of production, in which fun was offered as a commodity, a reward after the alienated labor. In fact, as Rey observes, fun was a source of alienation because of the desire for it, and for the commodities that fun promises to provide us, increased our dependency on the alienating labor that give us the wages to buy these commodities.[21] In short, in early industrialized societies, fun and work were separated activities and the Fordist capitalistic system was against fun because it was considered to be a distraction from the full concentration needed to perform a job adequately. On the contrary, the gamified post-Fordist society offers the promise that a fun activity can be productive and at the same time, it promises that labor will be less alienating. Just as the gamified society undermines the distinction of fun and work as separate activities, it does something similar with the binary opposition between play and work. Play and work have been historically defined as opposite activities. On the one hand, play as we have seen, is defined by Huizinga and others as a free and unproductive activity.[22] On the other hand, work or labor has been historically

[19] My addition.
[20] Harvey quoted in Rey, (2014) p. 280.
[21] Rey, (2014) p. 280.
[22] Similarly, to Huizinga, French sociologist Roger Caillois (1913-1978), also granted play a voluntary and non-profitable quality, when he defined play as: "Play is a *free* and *voluntary* activity, a source of joy and amusement. A game which one would be forced to play would at once cease being play. As an obligation or simply and order, it would lose one of its basic characteristics: the fact that the player devotes himself spontaneously to the game, of his free will and for his

defined as the creation of value. In his influential text 'Capital: Critique of Political Economy' published in 1867, Karl Marx defines work or labor power as:

> By labour-power or capacity for labour is to be understood the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use-value of any description. (Marx, 1867, chapter 6).

This binary opposition between work and play is completely blurred in the gamified society. The flexible modes of production of the gamified society implode play and labor into the very same act, phenomenon which some scholars have labelled *playbor* (Kücklich 2005).[23] Julian Kücklich is considered the first academic to have published an article using the term *playbor*, referring mainly to 'modding' and hacking in video games. However, most recently the notion of playbor has been largely applied when describing the gamification of the 21st century culture. In this sense, the gamification of corporative workspaces, is exemplary of the process of *playbor* or 'playful work'. If we remember our YouTuber using the inflatable slide in California (see fig. 1) or our Googler in London working in the fake indoor lake (see fig. 3), she or he is not only a common worker anymore but the playful nature of her or his work makes it a playborer. For the playborer, work becomes more play-like and the labor process less alienating.

So far we have talked about the ways the gamified society, through the production of playbor makes work more play-like. However, playbor also can function the other way around, when play and gaming become more work-like. A compelling example of this kind of playbor can be found within the video game industry in a process known as 'gold-farming' or 'grinding'. Gold-farming refers to the process by which workers from cheap labor countries are hired to play and level-up characters in online games for buyers of wealthier countries who want to avoid playing those usually repetitive first levels of the game. A clear example of gold farming is related with the multi-player online video game *World of Warcraft*, which reached about 10 million subscribers in November 2014. In *World of Warcraft* players compete with one another in a fictional world called 'Azeroth' populated by fantasy creatures such as elves, dwarves, trolls, goblins, and dragons. In order for players to move faster they need to gather weapons and gold within the game. Players can purchase such immaterial commodities in an online secondary market, therefore avoiding spending time playing the game. This secondary market started

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pleasure, each time completely free to choose retreat, silence, meditation, idle solitude, or creative activity". See: Caillois, R. (1961) [1958]. *Man, Play, and Games*. Glencoe, NY: The Free Press.

[23] See also: Kücklich, (2005).

to be developed in 2005 by Steve Bannon, former White House Chief Strategist of American President Donald Trump and the financial backing of Goldman Sachs, American multinational investment bank highly involved in the financial crisis of 2008. Chinese workers were hired as 'gold farmers' to play *World of Warcraft* for hours on end in continuous, rotating shifts of 12 hours (see fig.4).[24] Chinese prisoners also became gold farmers by being forced to play the game. According to some testimonies, the computers are never off and the prisoners punished if they do not complete their 'grinding'.[25] In some cases gold farming has proved to be more lucrative than physical labor. It was estimated that by 2011 only in China there are around 100,000 'professional' gold farmers who rake in $200 million each year.[26]

In both cases analyzed here: the gamification of the corporative workspace and 'gold-farming', play has been literarily, converted into labor, and labor become more play-like. For the Google 'playborer' work becomes is a playful and fun activity and for the 'gold farmer' gaming becomes labor. However, the most striking aspect about playbor is in the testimonies of the playborers, in which some of them have claimed they actually *enjoy* the playful nature of their job. According to interviews conducted to Chinese gold farmers, most of them did not complain so much about the playful conditions of gold farming as their job: "It is instinctual – you can't help it. You want to play". [27] And one other sweatshop employee who was about to move on to another job when interviewed, explained that he would "miss this job... it can be boring, but I still have sometimes a playful attitude... I loved to play because when I was playing, I was learning".[28]

It is precisely in this 'enjoying' the playful work that resides the power of playbor. As we have seen, play has been historically defined as an activity that one does voluntarily and spontaneously. On the other hand, work or labor, has been historically defined as a 'not' voluntary activity. Gamification, through the production of playbor aims to make labor a less alienated activity, and its power as process of subjection, allow work to become an activity which is willingly and even enthusiastically done. Post-fordist capitalism, which as Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe (b. 1943) acknowledges, is largely determined by the centrality of immaterial labor, [29] the gamifier (or the capitalistic owner) needs the

[24] Information retrieved from the exhibition: "Steve Bannon: a propaganda retrospective", curated by Dutch artist Jonaas Staal at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. (April 2018 - September 2018).
[25] Vincent, (2011).
[26] Bitmob (2011). The Rise of Gold Farming in China *in Venture Beat.* Retrieved from: https://venturebeat.com/2011/07/22/the-china-conundrum-the-rise-of-gold-farming/
[27] Goggin, (2011) pp. 357–368.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Mouffe, (2013) p. 146.

worker to be engaged with the work not only physically but also mentally. Thus gaming or playing in this regard functions to 'train' certain 'skills' of the worker that enables them to perform immaterial labor more efficiently. It is in this sense that we can understand that playbor is highly appreciated within post-fordist mode of production because it contributes to train the creative skills necessary for the profit of the capitalist corporative. As Rey observes: "self-motivation, innovation, and profitability are linked in the context of creative work, so that alienation impedes motivation, it ultimately impedes profitability. With playbor this obstacle is removed".[30]

Although playbor has contribute to make labor a less alienated activity in the gamified society, its capitalistic goal wealth accumulation has not altered. The gamified society still performs under the structure of capitalistic economy, which according to Marx is intrinsically exploitative. In his influential text 'Capital: Critique of Political Economy' published in 1867, Marx defines exploitation as the process in which the capitalist sells the commodities generated by his or her workers to a higher price than its value and return to the workers only a percentage of that extra value. This second value added to the commodity by which the capitalist generates profit, is what Marx called 'surplus-value'.[31] Marx distinguishes two times in the average laboral day of the worker. The first part of the working day represents what Marx calls 'necessary labor', which is the amount of time and energy produced by the worker by which the value of the commodity is generated and the worker is remunerated with a fixed waged for that. However, as we have seen, in order for the capitalist to gain profit from the commodities produced, an extra value (surplus-value) needs to be added to the commodity. Therefore, the remainder or second part of the working day is 'surplus labor', which is the process by which labor is converted into capital and therefore, capitalistic profit is generated.[32] For instance, if the value of a commodity is 80 euros because of the cost of labor and means of production on it, the added surplus-value increases its cost to 160 euros. The exceeding 80 euros expresses the exact quantity of surplus value, which in this case is 100%. This exceeding amount is what Marx called 'the rate of surplus value'. According to Marx, the rate of surplus value is equivalent to the rate of exploitation.[33] If a worker spends half of his or her working day producing use-value of a commodity of 80 euros and the other half of the day producing the surplus value, the cost of the commodity increases to 160 euros, and therefore its rate of exploitation is 100%.

[30] Rey, (2014) p. 288.
[31] Marx, (1867) p. 133.
[32] Ibid, p. 136.
[33] Ibid, p. 152-153.

Clearly much has changed since Marx's analysis of the working conditions at the factories. As we have seen, the corporate replaced the factory as the main mode of capitalistic production and with the development of digital technologies and global financial markets, labor processes become more complex than those analyzed by Marx in the early stages of capitalism. However, the capitalistic principle of the gamified society is still the same, and the creation of surplus value and exploitation is still the process by which profit is generated by the capitalist class. Or as Marx puts it: "(the laborer) creates surplus-value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of a creation out of nothing".[34] In short, the playful modes of production of the gamified society make exploitation easier. The less-alienated modes of production of the capitalistic gamified society increase the rate of exploitation of the worker, or as in this case 'playborer', by transforming labor in something enjoyable and done even enthusiastically, as the Chinese gold farmer's says: 'You can't help it. You want to play'. According to Israeli sociologist Eran Fisher, high levels of exploitation are dialectically linked with a low level of alienation.[35] Although Fisher focusses his analyses on the development of immaterial labor in its relation with social network sites (SNS), his approach is relevant here, since most of the corporations which currently gamify their labor processes (as the ones mentioned in this study like Google, Youtube, etc.) largely use game elements in their social media platforms. Fisher argues that the development of immaterial labor embodies a dual character of exacerbating exploitation and enabling de-alienation. As he explains:

> On the one hand, immaterial labor, in comparison with material labor, has a greater potential to be enjoyable, involve personal, idiosyncratic components, carried out during leisure time or even be perceived as a form of leisure activity, playful, emotional and communicative. On the other hand, to the extent that such labor is performed on SNS, it is also commodified and entails the creation of surplus-value. (Fisher, 2004, 181)

It is by understanding how the playful modes of labor, production and consumption of the gamified society make exploitation easier that we understand the power of gamification as process of subjection. Gamification or the use of game elements in non-game contexts not only determines the fabric of production of the gamified society, but it acts as a process of subjection that shapes a new 'gamified identity' according to the profitable desires of the capitalistic gamifiers. The gamified 'docile' subject is controlled and manipulated by the gamifiers in such a way that it becomes intrinsically programmed

[34] Marx, (1867) p. 152-153.
[35] Fisher, (2012) p. 182.

to willingly wanting to participate in the very playful exercise of power which exploits her or him. Or as British Sociologist Jaimie Woodcock puts it: "Neoliberalism entails an 'effective strategy of subjectivization', in which individuals are increasingly encouraged to view themselves as 'companies of one', seeking more efficient ways to mobilize and improve their own 'human capital'".[36]

As I argued in the introduction of the thesis, gamification comes with a moral dilemma: if gamification makes social exploitation more bearable, is it something that the playborers of the gamified society should fight against? According to Rey, if gamification achieve its promises, workers will be lured into exploitative conditions by genuine interest and motivation instead of economic coercion. Or as he puts it: 'gamification is simply another capitalistic strategy pushing toward the realization of post-fordist logic, which, if we trace its trajectory, culminate in a growing availability of 'free labor'.[37]

Furthermore, one of the most important aspects of the playful and gameful conditions of the gamified society is the nature of such games. The gamified subject is not only increasingly self-exploitative but also increasingly competitive. Although there are also examples in which 'fun' work activities aim to 'team building', and being a 'team player' as a work floor virtue, most of the games of the gamified society aim to increase productivity and engagement of the playborers and consumers. The nature of most of those games is *competitive* and not *cooperative*, thus it could also be argued that gamification poses a threat to playborers' solidarity.

The question then is: how to find spaces of resistance against the desired gamified subjections of the gamified society? How to emancipate from our own gamified self-exploitative identity? If the repressive power of the gamified society is largely executed as a gamified process of subjection, aiming at the construction of engaged, self-exploitative and competitive identities, then spaces of resistance can also be thought as counter-processes of subjection, that foster the production of alternative and 'disengaged' subjectivities.

In the next two chapters I will explore how art, and more specifically the *aesthetic experience* of art can be thought as emancipatory process of subjection, that counter-act the subjugated and self-exploitative identities created by the gamified society. If the appropriation of game elements by capitalistic power structures aims to produce gamified engaged and self-exploitative subjections, art through the appropriation of game-like elements can contribute to the creation of disengaged emancipatory modes of subjectivity instead.

[36] Woodcock & Johnson (2018) p. 548.
[37] Rey, (2014) p. 289.

Chapter 2
# *Disengagement through Art*

The social revolution
is the daughter of the aesthetic revolution.
-Jacques Rancière, 2011.

## *2.1 Beyond Gamified Aesthetics*

In the previous chapter I offered an analysis on the processes of subjection executed by the gamified society. I showed how the appropriation of notions of play and game elements by present day capitalistic structures of power, work as technique or process of subjection. Through the production of *playbor*, the implosion of play and work, the gamified society creates 'gamified' subjects, willing to participate in the performance of power by which they are constantly exploited. I concluded the chapter by suggesting that the aesthetic experience of art, through its appropriation of notions of play and game elements can function as emancipatory process of subjection that allow for the emergence of 'disengaged' subjectivities. However, before offering a potential answer to the question of how the aesthetic experience can contribute to the emancipatory struggle against gamified subjections, notion which I expand in the last part of the chapter, it is necessary to analyze first the extent in which art is already inscribed in the mechanisms of power of the gamified society.

How to claim a critical role of the aesthetic experience in times in which art is increasingly appropriated by post-fordist capitalistic production? The project of *critical art*, which as defined by French philosopher Jacques Rancière (b. 1940) "intends to raise consciousness of the mechanisms of domination in order to turn the spectator into a conscious agent in the transformations of the world",[38] is constantly threatened by the appropriation of art by present day capitalistic power structures. The 21st century gamified societies, largely determined by its technological developments, increasing commodification of culture, as well as the growing popularity of its entertainment industry, have appropriated artistic production in such way that it seems fair to question whether art can still play a critical role in society.

As we have seen, in the 'flexible' gamified society the boundaries between leisure and work have disappeared and new configurations in which work and other spheres can co-exist have opened up.

[38] Rancière, (2004). p. 83.

This flexible new situation has allowed art to expand its field of production too. The post-fordist commodification of culture constantly blurs the boundaries between art and new modes of advertising. At the same time, technology and science increasingly gain terrain within artistic production; bio-art, the development of interactive, also called new media, art, and the growing popularity of video games as medium for art, are just few examples. The 21st century work of art does not belong anymore to the 'enclosed' space of art, but has evolved into an 'interdisciplinary' collaborative product.

The gamified society's hybrid modes of labor have been especially beneficial for the further development of what German philosophers Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) and Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) called 'the culture industry', which refer to the moment in which capitalistic production finally entered to the realm of culture. As Adorno & Horkheimer explain: "with the development of the culture industry in industrial capitalism, culture has been completely appropriated by capitalism and used as manipulation tool to increased social passivity".[39] This struggle against social passivity provoked by the modern forms of capitalistic labor has often been taken by artists and thinkers, especially from the second half of the 20th century, which have turned their artistic practices into space of resistance and political ideology. The modernist movements such as Dada, Fluxus, Happenings created 'moments' of encounter and even moments of scandal with their audience, aiming at 'waking them up' from the social 'passivity' generated by the development of the culture industry and raise social awareness against the world of domination around them.

For instance, in his text "The Society of Spectacle" (1967) French Marxist and Situationist leader Guy Debord, criticizes the entertainment industry and the modern forms of production that have led to what he calls a present-day 'society of spectacle'. In modern capitalistic production amusement and leisure are offered as as a form of false consciousness, illusion is preferred above reality and truth, and its subjects are led into a social passivity and alienation.[40] In Debord's view, it's the western tradition of a '*vita contemplativa*'[41] and the culture of ocularcentrism around it that has led to the passivity of the society of spectacle. Debord and his followers also considered the traditional ways of doing art to be 'pacifying', thus also contributing to the social passivity reigned in the society of the spectacle. For them social *participation* was the way to liberate individuals from the art of spectacle. As Debord puts it: "The point is to actually participate in the community of dialogue and the game with time that up

[39] Horkheimer & Adorno, (1944) p. 49.
[40] Debord, (1967) p. 1.
[41] See also: Wesseling, (2017) p. 15.

till now have merely been represented by poetic and artistic works".[42] This pessimistic view on 'passive' art led Debord and his followers to develop an approach towards art based on the creation of 'situations'. For them notions of performance and participation of the audience in the work of art was necessary for social emancipation. The participatory nature of these situations was opposed to the idea of modern theatre, which in Debord's view, the audience was assumed to play the role of a passive spectator. As he puts it:

> The situation is thus made to be lived by its constructors. The role of the 'public', if not passive at least a walk-on, must ever diminish, while the share of those who cannot be called actor but, in a new meaning of the term, 'livers' will increase. (Debord 1957, 98-99).

Just to be sure, the idea of the artist as social revolutionary is not quite new. Already in 1825, in his essay *'L'artiste, le savant et l'industriel'* ('The Artist, the Scientist and the Industrialist'), French Saint Simonian Olinde Rodrigues (1795-1851) evoked a role for art in radical social reform. Rodrigues called on artists to: "serve as [the people's] avant-garde", insisting that "the power of the arts is indeed the most immediate and fastest way" to social, political and economic reform.[43] Rodrigues' text, which is believed to be the first occasion in which the term avant-garde was used within an artistic context, greatly influenced modernist notions of spectator's participation in art as means of create social awareness. Rodrigues' claim as well as Debord's seems to still have echo in the artistic production of today's increasingly gamified and participatory societies. Contemporary art, as German art critic Boris Groys (b. 1947) observes, "largely defined by its performative and participatory nature",[44] often combines game elements with participatory mediums such as performance, installations and happenings, with the aim of mesmerizing its audience or create moments of shock in them. Notions of play, participation and game-like elements are common in the artistic post-fordist production of today. Artistic 'gamification', that is the use of game elements in artistic contexts, often intends at performing as a playful and interactive critique of the entertainment industry and the development of mass culture, at the same time as elucidating the free and spontaneous nature of play and games.[45] This kind of 'participatory critique' is exemplary in *Stadium* (1991), a huge football table created by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan (b. 1960). The work is an interactive sculpture with the form of a 1.20m x 7.00-meter-long football table (see fig. 5). It contains twenty-two players divided between two teams

[42] Debord, (1967) p. 187.
[43] Olinde Rodrigues quoted in: Calinescu, (1987). p. 12
[44] Groys, (2008) p. 23.
[45] See Huizinga and Caillois definition of play as expanded in the first chapter. p. 8, 11-12.

of eleven each – the full number required in a traditional soccer match. Spectators are invited to join and play against each other the augmented football match. During the opening of the exhibition in which *Stadium* was presented to the public for the first time in Bologna, Italy, Cattelan invited North-African black migrants to play against a well-known soccer team of white players in *Stadium* (see fig. 6). By emphasizing the absurdity if this 'racial' soccer match, Cattelan's happening was intended to be a critique of the growing xenophobia in Italy at that time. In recent years, Cattelan's playful sculpture has often been included in exhibitions which aim was to raise awareness and create a social critique against the entertainment industry and the *playbor* produced by it.[46]

A more recent example of this 'gamified' artistic critique, can be seen in the toy-like artwork *Colored Sculpture* (2016) by American artist Jordan Wolfson (b. 1980). *Colored Sculpture*, as its title suggest, is an interactive sculpture created with animatronics technology, the popular robots used in Hollywood movies and amusements parks which emulate a human or animal. The sculpture, which resembles 'Chucky', the main character in the popular horror movie "Child's play" (1998), is hanged to a structure with heavy metal chains. Its mechanism moves around a white quadrangular surface similar to a box arena. (see fig.7) The viewers gather around the quadrangular surface to watch the animatronic figure torturing itself by repeatedly falling in the white surface. By elucidating a tortuous event, the artwork intends to cause moments of shock in the audience. The sound produced by the interactive sculpture and the metal chains falling is so loud, and the physical expression of the self-tortuous figure is so vivid that it indeed conveys the feeling of a tortuous moment. I encountered Wolfson's interactive work for the first time when it was exhibited at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, The Netherlands in late 2017. It was a holiday period so the museum was crowded with visitors. The experience of *Colored Sculpture* is not only about watching the figure torturing itself but experiencing what this tortuous event is causing the others across the white surface. (see fig.8) *Colored Sculpture* does not directly expose a social struggle, but instead it embodies it and performs it. Wolfson's animatronic turns art into a spectacle of torture.

Both Cattelan's and Wolfson's artworks show how notions of participation and interactivity in contemporary art still follow the modern avant-gardist tradition of participation as emancipation, as advocated by Debord and Rodrigues. However, it seems to me that this allegedly emancipatory nature of art as 'awakening' spectacle and art as participation is more than ever, questionable. In our increasingly gamified society which as we have seen encourage participation and engagement, it seems

[46] See also Rancière, J. (2004). p. 88

hard to belief that 'playful' moments of shock and spectacle would lead alone to an emancipatory ideal. In his text "Problems and Transformations in Critical Art" (2004), Rancière observes that Debord's book reinforced not only a critique of leisure and entertainment but it also: "it recalled that his antidote to spectacle's passivity is the free activity of the game".[47] Rancière goes on in arguing that this kind of playful critique, no longer suffices to perform as the 'critical art' they are intended to be and that: "their value as polemic revelations has become undecidable".[48] As Rancière observes:

> Where giant puppets once made contemporary history into an epic spectacle, balls and toys now 'interrogate' our ways of life. A redoubling of spectacles, props and icons of ordinary life, flimsily displaced, no longer invites us to read signs in objects in order to understand the jurisdiction of our world. (Rancière 2004, 88-89) [49]

It is precisely this 'undecidability' of meaning that, in Rancière's view, lies at the heart of much of the contemporary art. For Rancière, the only remaining possibility of subversion offered by this kind of approach is: "to play on this undecidability; to suspend, in a society working towards the accelerated consumption of signs, the meaning of the protocols of reading those signs".[50] In my opinion, the participatory performance offered in *Stadium* or in *Colored Sculpture* failed to accomplish this 'playful' subversion advocated by Rancière. Even as an apparent critique on 'gamified exploitation', Wolfson's and Cattelan's artworks only end up being just another interactive spectacle perfectly integrated in the gamified society. By performing as an interactive collage of the various game-like elements used in the gamified society as regulation and perpetual subjection of its individuals, *Colored Sculpture* becomes an aesthetic platform for the processes of subjection of the gamified society to be executed. Wolfson, whom in recent years has gained popularity and whose work has been widely exhibited, has claimed in several occasions that his work does not have any political connotation nor tries to convey a moral lesson: "I am a human being and I am looking at culture. I let the world pass through me. What you see in my work is how I let the world enter to my consciousness".[51] However, as the history of art has showed us we have long passed the Greek idea of art as mimic of reality. As philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer argues: "The essence of a great work of art has certainly never consisted in the accurate and

[47] Rancière, (2004), p. 88.
[48] Ibid. 88
[49] Ibid. 88-89
[50] Ibid. 89
[51] Online interview: JORDAN WOLFSON: MANIC / LOVE /TRUTH / LOVE Available at https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/exhibitions/jordan.

total imitation or counterfeit of 'Nature"'.[52] Despite Wolfson's efforts to detach his interactive work from social struggles, *Colored Sculpture* is neither a neutral nor an autonomous space with respect of the power relations governing the gamified world. In fact, Wolfson's claim ends up emphasizing Debord's very critique of the society of spectacle: "The spectacle presents itself as a vast inaccessible reality that can never be questioned. Its sole message is: 'What appears is good; what is good appears.' The passive acceptance it demands is already effectively imposed by its monopoly of appearances, its manner of appearing without allowing any reply."[53] Notions of interactivity and participation in art are not neutral with respect to power. As Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi argues, interactivity can also constitute a form of *soft tyranny*,[54] a process of subjection, that is executed through people's participation in the work of art. Notions of interactivity and participation in art might not be as emancipatory as it is often assumed to be nor are they neutral with respect to power relations. As Foucault puts it: "the imperative to participate constitutes one of the most invidious regimes of power".[55] With the techniques of subjection of the gamified society, we have evolved from passive subjects to engaged subjects who actively and enthusiastically participate in the performance of power, including the kind of performance offered by participatory gamified art.

In the case of *Stadium*, by explicitly exposing a situation of inequality, the artwork reinforces the hierarchical mechanisms of oppression which it is supposed to be against. The soccer match 'happening' orchestrated by Cattelan in 1991, did not emphasize the values of friendship and community that football can and should be about, but on the contrary, it turned football into a hierarchical game of competition, in which the 'oppressed' group had to fight against the 'privileged' group for a place in their society. *Stadium* reinforced the mechanisms of power of the gamified society that contribute to human self-exploitation by means of play and amusement. According to the basis of the emancipatory thinking, that is the main line of thought of this thesis, it is not through exposing a situation of inequality that emerges a way out of gamified subjections, but instead in exposing that something could be different, that other possibilities are available. Or as Rancière puts it: "emancipation starts not when revealing inequality but affirming equality".[56] I will come back to this notion of equality later.

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[52] Gadamer, (1986) p. 29.
[53] Debord, (1967) p. 12.
[54] Massumi, (2008) p. 8-9.
[55] Michel Foucault quoted in Massumi, (2008) p. 8.
[56] Yale University (2016). *The Aesthetic Today: Jacques Rancière in Conversation with Mark Foster Gage.* J. Irwin Miller Symposium: Aesthetic Activism at Yale University. YouTube. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4RP87XN-dI&t=4373s (Accessed June, 2018).

Furthermore, as Groys argues, participatory art gives the illusion that it is more democratic than traditional art forms because it suggests a 'self-sacrifice' of the artist, of the complete meaning of her or his artwork, by including the visitors' participation. However, participatory art, in Groys' view, far from empowering the audience by making it a participant in the work of art, can also become an extension of 'authorial power', because the judgment of the participant is not cold and external anymore, but internal and empathetic.[57] In Groys' words:

> One might also claim that the enactment of this self-abdication, this dissolution of the self into the masses, grants the author the possibility of controlling the audience-whereby the viewer forfeits his secure external position, his aesthetic distance from the artwork, and thus becomes not just a participant but also an integral part of the artwork. In this way participatory art can be understood not only as a reduction, but also as an extension, of authorial power. (Groys 2008, 23).

As with the examples of Cattelan and Wolfson I have shown, the appropriation of game elements, notions of play and participation in contemporary art do not constitute per se the emancipatory process of subjection that I am advocating in this thesis. Both artworks illustrate my point of how artistic critique and participatory playful art can turn into gamified aesthetics, complicit with the gamified capitalistic system. Participation and radical social critique in art, can also become part of the 'illusory' culture of spectacle of the gamified society. Far from achieving awareness of social struggles, it becomes a mechanism of subjection by which the social 'inequalities' produced by the gamified society keep on being exposed. In the capitalistic gamified society, even art in its most radical form of social critique, has been appropriated by its hegemonic mechanisms of power and becomes *gamified aesthetics*– art that functions as a channel by which the mechanisms of power and desired process of subjection of the gamified society are executed. In fact, the avant-gardist notions of the artist as social savior have been criticized by the emancipatory thinking. For instance, Chantal Mouffe consider these artistic approaches as 'anti-political' As Mouffe points out:

> Today, artists can no longer pretend to constitute an avant-garde offering a radical critique. But this is not a reason to proclaim that their political role has ended; they have an important role to play in the hegemonic struggle. By constructing new practices and new subjectivities, they can help subvert the existing configuration of power. In fact, this has always been the

[57] Groys, (2008) p. 23.

> role of artists, and it is only the modernist illusion of the privileged position of the artist that has made us believe otherwise. (Mouffe: 2013, 205).

### *2.2 The aesthetic experience as dissented process of subjection*

Fortunately, the same thinkers that acknowledge the appropriation of art by contemporary power structures, also believe that art still can play a critical role in society. From Adorno to Groys, Mouffe and Rancière, they all argue that art indeed can still offers a space of autonomy from the discursive apparatus of capitalism. For instance, Mouffe argues that artistic practices have a crucial role in the emancipatory struggle against post-fordist subjections because of its virtuosic nature to produce affects. As she puts it: "the main task of present-day artistic practices is the production of new subjectivities and the elaboration of new worlds".[58] But how exactly art can produce the "new subjectivities, they can help subvert the existing configuration of power"? How could a playful aesthetic experience actually perform as an emancipatory process of subjection that help the 'playborers' of the gamified society to resist its own self-exploitative identity?

In the first chapter I emphasized how gamification works as process of subjection and how its power can be understood as the production of playbor, the implosion of play and work, which ultimately makes social exploitation easier. It is my content that to understood the 'power' or the emancipatory 'force' of the aesthetic experience is necessary to explore its nature as a process of subjection, and thus, the relation between aesthetics and politics.

In this sense, Rancière's ideas of aesthetic-political emancipation are relevant to my argument not only because he relates aesthetics and emancipatory politics but also because he approaches these two as processes of subjection, which is the main line of thought of this thesis. Since the 90's, Rancière has extensively studied the relation between aesthetics and politics. Rancière's aesthetic theory opposes the common belief that assigns aesthetics to the philosophy of art, or artistic appreciation. For him, the understanding of aesthetic is not originally connected to art but to politics. Thus, he argues that aesthetics are political before being artistic. According to him, the aesthetic problem is not about beauty, but about the sensitive experience, that is "the experience of a common wealth and who is able to share this experience".[59] Rancière gives the example of the philosopher Plato (b. 428/427 or

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[58] Mouffe, (2013). p.205. Available at iBooks.

[59] Yale University (2016). *The Aesthetic Today: Jacques Rancière in Conversation with Mark Foster Gage.* J. Irwin Miller Symposium: Aesthetic Activism at Yale University. YouTube. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4RP87XN-dI&t=4373s (Accessed June, 2018).

424/423 BC), who in his influential political text 'Republic' (circa 380 B.C.) stated that the workers cannot do politics because they do not have the time to do it because they are working. However, Rancière argues, it is not that they do not have the time, it is the fact that the established social order does not allow them the time to do politics. For Rancière, emancipatory politics begin when those who supposedly do not have time to do politics, show that they have time to act political.

Central to Rancière's theory of emancipatory aesthetics is is the idea of 'an implementation of *equality*'.[60] Equality, in Rancière's view, is the basis of the emancipatory project. According to Rancière, the aesthetic has an emancipatory duty to implement the capacity that is denied to the subject. Within the context of emancipatory politics as well as emancipatory aesthetics, the 'social' duty of art radically differs to that promoted by Debord and the Situationists, which as we have seen, aimed at emancipate its audience by exposing them to the inequalities promoted by advanced capitalism and teaching a moral lesson by aiming at the creation of fixed notions of community.

The emancipatory aesthetic experience does not mean to convey a moral lesson, or a 'definite true' that expose social inequalities. The project of emancipation, as enounced by Rancière, as well as by Mouffe in her long-life collaboration with Argentinean political theorist Ernesto Lacau (b.1935), argue that a democratic ideal can never be fully accomplished, so a truly emancipatory ideal should be envisaged as a never ending process of struggle. For instance, Mouffe & Lacau's emancipatory model, which they call 'Agonism', implies the impossibility of the final reconciliation of all views. Central to their agonistic approach are the notions of 'antagonism' and 'hegemony'.[61] Antagonism asserts that negativity is constitutive and can never be overcome and that there are no rational solutions. The concept of hegemony, makes evident the contingency and non-fixed nature of every social order. As Mouffe explains: "every hegemonic order can be challenged by counter-hegemonic practices, which attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to establish another form of hegemony."[62] Mouffe & Lacau's agonistic pluralism argue that there is indeed an alternative to hegemonic structures of domination, but that however, this potential alternative should not be envisaged as a fixed new democratic model. In this way, the agonistic pluralistic approach is against the idea of a radical break with the state as proclaimed by post-theorists such Michael Hard and Antonio Negri in their book 'Empire' (2000). Instead the agonistic pluralist approach argues for a strategy of 'engagement with', a subversion from inside the existing post-fordist structures of power.

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[60] Rancière, (2009) p. 24-25.

[61] Chantal Mouffe interviewed by Elke Wagner in *Und jezt?: Politik, Protest and Propaganda*, ed. Heinrich Geiselberger, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2007. See the interview also in: Mouffe, C. (2013). p. 130-131.

[62] Ibid. 132.

Thus, the project of emancipation, as proposed by Rancière, Mouffe and Lacau opposes the idea of a definite social *consensus* to be achieved. Within this context, the emancipatory duty of the aesthetic experience, in Rancière's view, should not be understood as a form of democracy reached by art, but instead as 'events', as consecutive 'experiences', that instantiates what Rancière calls, moments of *dissensus*. The notion of dissensus is crucial in Rancière's thought and the way he envisages his theory of emancipation in relation to the aesthetic realm. For Rancière, an emancipatory aesthetic experience, by creating moments of dissensus, raises awareness of the constant struggle, and in doing so, turn the gamified subjects into 'political subjects'. As Rancière explains:

> Politics only exists in intermittent acts of implementation that lack any overall principle or law, and whose only common characteristic is an empty operator: *dissensus*. The essence of politics thus resides in acts of subjectivization that separate society from itself by challenging the 'natural order of bodies' in the name of equality and polemically reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible. (Rancière 2004, 95).[63]

Contrary to the mechanisms of subjection of the gamified society, which 'unequally' redistribute the senses of *playborer* by fostering his or her self-exploitation, an 'emancipatory' aesthetic experience, under Rancière's view, can be thought as a process of subjection, which aims to 'equally' redistribute the senses of the gamified individuals to turn them into 'political subjects'. Following Rancière's thought, the emancipatory force of the aesthetic experience, resides in the way it provides the playborer with a 'dissented' aesthetic experience, by which she or he become aware of the contingency of the self-exploitative gamified system, which she or he is part of.

Although Rancière's notion of dissensus allow us to understand better the relation between aesthetics and political emancipation, now the question now seems to be in how to understand moments of dissensus in relation to a playful aesthetic experience? How playful or game-like aesthetics can be dissented in its nature? At first glance it would be improbable to consider a notion of *dissensus* to occur in games, since they have been traditionally defined as 'closed' systems. In their influential book 'The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior' (1944), mathematician John von Neumann and economist Oskar Morgenstern define a game as: "simply the totality of rules which describe it. Every particular instance at which the game is played – in a particular way – from beginning to end, is a play. A move is the occasion of a choice between various alternatives, to be made either by one of the players, or by

[63] Rancière, (2004) p. 95.

some device subject to chance, under conditions precisely prescribed by the rules of the game".[64] Although Neumann & Morgenstern recognize the existence of an element of chance present in games, or what they call a 'chance move', they argue that games still have a 'closed' systemic character which is restricted to its rules and to the information given to its players. In their words: "The rules of the game, however, are absolute commands. If they are ever *infringed*, then the whole transaction by definition ceases to be the game described by those rules".[65]

Although the systemic nature of games is evident, game scholars and artists engaged with 'playful' aesthetics, on their part, argue games also represent more than systems, and that there is indeed a possibility of disruption within them. As artist and video game designer Mary Flanagan argues: "They [games] are performative and affective experiences that offer a kind of transformation: the initiation state at the beginning of a game rarely fixes in equilibrium".[66] In Flanagan's view as well as in the opinion of other game scholars, art can contribute to this disruption of the systemic nature of games, while still maintaining it 'gameful' nature. In the closing chapter of his book 'Gaming: essays on algorithmic culture' (2006), still central in contemporary game theory, video game scholar Alexander Galloway argues that artist's games can accomplish a kind of disruption within the system of the game, or what he calls 'countergaming'.[67] Galloway's notion of countergaming is critical they way artists often approach games in the way that they modify or 'hack' them (in the case of video games), to the extent they cease to be games at all. Galloway argues that instead: "artists should create new grammars of action, not simply new grammars of visuality".[68] For Galloway, the 'true' potential of countergaming lies in its ability to create a critique of the gameplay, the space where the action of play happens, while still maintaining the qualities that makes it being a game. Or as he puts it: "a realization of countergaming as gaming".[69] It is by the game 'disrupting' its own systemic nature from inside, that in Galloway's view, an alternative and open game can emerge. Thus we could argue that for Galloway this 'true' countergaming or disruptive game, is dissented in its nature, that is, a game that avoids the permanency of a fixed order of things.

[64] Neumann & Morgenstern, (1944) p. 49.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Flanagan, (2014) p. 255.
[67] The designation for games created by artists varies according to literature. Some scholars call it: artists's games (Sharp), minor games (Cremin 2016), video games art, artgames, etc.
[68] Galloway, (2002) p. 125.
[69] Ibid.

*2.3 The little 'crack': Gabriel Orozco's dissented games-works of art*

Galloway's notion of *countergaming* as critique through gameplay, and Rancière's notion of *aesthetic dissensus* as process of subjection can be perceived in the game-like artworks *Ping-Pond Table* (1998) and *Horses Running Endlessly* (1995) by Mexican conceptual artist Gabriel Orozco (b. 1962). *Ping-Pond Table*, is an interactive sculpture encompassing two ping-pong-like tables cut in half and rounded in two of its corners. The space in the middle of the tables contains a small water-filled pond (see fig. 9). Four players, instead of two as in the traditional game, gather around the table to play the altered version of the game created by the artist. In Orozco's 'game', the line in the middle of the traditional ping-pong table has been substituted by a tri-partition line, creating a visual composition of geometric shapes and adding an extra dimensionality to the work. This additional dimension is experienced both spatially and timely (see fig. 10). By altering ping-pong's traditional space of action or gameplay *Ping-Pond Table* 'infringes', as Neumann & Morgenstern would say, its own system of rules and creates an alternative mode of 'time' for its players.

By incorporating two more players into the traditional binary experience of the game, Orozco's artwork makes a 'countergaming' of its own very playful nature. The artwork creates a 'crack' within its own system of rules which allows spatio-temporal accidents to occur: when for instance, the little white ball falls into the pond. Once the system of the game has been disrupted and opened the function of the pond as a new 'in-between' space is activated. The pond materializes the alternative order of time and space created in *Ping-Pond Table*. Orozco's playful artwork creates a certain subtle 'chaos', an alternative and experiential world for its players, that she or he doesn't entirely control or comprehend.

It is precisely in this 'play' of time and space that the dissented nature of *Ping-Pond Table* could be found. What makes the participatory performance of Orozco's artwork different to that of Cattelan's soccer table, which as we have seen borrows game elements as a means to show the inequalities made by the industry of leisure and emphasizing an 'illusory space' of consensus through play, *Ping-Pond Table* does not criticize the social system in which it is inscribed, instead it invents its own 'accidental' system of play. The kind of performance created in *Ping-Pond Table*, acts as what Galloway calls 'radical action', the game-like artwork "reinvents the architectural flow of play and the game's position in the world".[70] However, it is not only a reinvention of the flow of gameplay, but also an alteration of the

[70] Galloway, A. (2002). p. 125.

flow in the playborer's process of subjection. The flow of play of *Ping-Pond Table* functions as an alternative process of subjection which equally redistributes the senses of its spectator/player, and offers them with an 'extra-ordinary' experience, which not only allows to question the established order of things, but it allows them to experience an alternative non-fixed order.

The alternative and non-linear spatio-temporal 'event' created in *Ping-Pond Table* is not only experienced by the players of the artwork, but also by its spectators. In the case of *Ping-Pond Table,* meaning is created between the spectator and the artwork in a perceptual 'event', either by participating on it or by seeing the game to be played. In *Ping-Pond Table* is not its participatory nature per se what achieve moments of dissensus, but the 'perceptive' nature of that experience of participation. Although the artwork is a form of participatory art, the significance of the offered aesthetic experience lies more in the domain of perception rather than engagement.

*Ping-Pond Table* seems to contradict Dubord's ideas of contemplation as a form of 'repression', and participation as a form of liberation.[71] This idea that participatory art is emancipatory because it involves active engagement and traditional forms of art are passive therefore repressive, because of their contemplative nature  seems to still permeate much of the gamified society's contemporary artistic production. The engaging and interactive nature of the gamified society has contributed to the illusory belief of the 'passiveness' of visual contemplation and perception. However, contemplation is not as passive as some advocates of participatory art assume it to be, and participation in art is not necessarily of an emancipatory nature. If there is indeed the possibility of the existence of an emancipatory force of art, it is not found in the 'content' of the work nor in its participatory or political engagement, as with Cattelan's and Wolfson's playful artworks. The answer to the question of how art might create 'new subjectivities' which perform as spaces of resistance against gamified subjections lies, in my view, in how meaning is created in a moment of encounter between a spectator and a work of art, that is, in the aesthetic experience of art.

Within the phenomenological tradition in the context of art history, philosophers like Marleau-Ponty, John Dewey, Hans-Georg Gadamer and most recently Dutch art historian and art critic Janneke Wesseling, argue that meaning in art is constructed in the interactive dialogue between the spectator and the work of art. Opposing the idea that art should be 'interpreted' in the sense of interpreting the 'content' of the work and what it means, the phenomenological approach attempts to understand how

[71] For instance, Dutch art critic Janneke Wesseling, in her readings of Dubord's 'The Society of Spectacle', argues that: "Debord's book is a declaration against visual contemplation and for concrete and active engagement". Wesseling, (2017). p. 205.

meaning is constructed by how the artwork 'actually' works. For instance, in his well-known text 'The Relevance of the Beautiful' (1986), German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) argues that it is in the aesthetic experience itself that lies the significance of art. Central to Gadamer's aesthetic theory is the concept of play. Gadamer's aesthetic theory, which has also been known as 'hermeneutic aesthetics', makes an analogy between how meaning occurs in play and in the experience of art. For Gadamer, play is a phenomenon of excess, of a 'living-self' of representation.[72] ( I will return to this notion of self-liveliness in the next chapter). The rational human activity (of art) is, in Gadamer's view, the one that set the rules for the 'excessive' movement of play. As he writes: "The function of the representation of play is ultimately to establish, not just any movement whatsoever, but rather the movement of play determined in a specific way. In the end, play is thus the self-representation of its own movement". [73]

Immanuel Kant's ideas of art as the 'free play of imagination' has a clear influence on Gadamer's theory. Like Kant, Gadamer conceives play as a 'free' impulse, a movement that is not tied down to any goal. However, for Gadamer, play is not only an analogy for the moment of artistic creation, but also for the moment of encounter with art. For Gadamer, the self-representation of movement, or what he calls the *something is intended as something* is what grants the significance and the continuity of art. Gadamer argues that the significance of art does not lie in identifying its content as such but instead, it is a question of 'constructing' the artwork, so its resonant meaning can be revealed. For Gadamer there is always something intellectual about the aesthetic experience of art. A challenge for the spectator to construct the meaning of the work that he or she is perceiving. As Gadamer writes: "The challenge of the work brings the constructive accomplishment of the intellect into play".[74] Thus for Gadamer, the significance of art and of the aesthetic experience of art comes into being in the *cooperative play* between what is represented and the active cognitive and perceptive engagement of the spectator. It is thus in this triggering of the creative activity in the imagination of the spectator is where, in Gadamer's view, the significance of the aesthetic experience of art resides.

Such notions of the perceptual movement of art, in its cooperative play with its spectator, are present to a large extent in *Horses Running Endlessly* (1995), another of Orozco's game-like artworks. The work is a wooden sculpture, which at first seems to be a chess board with only knights left on it. (see fig. 11). Looking closely, we realize there are four types of colors (black, dark brown, light brown and

[72] Gadamer, H-G., (1986). p. 23.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid. 28

white), thus the board contains 256 squares instead of 64, as in traditional chess. The knights are also made in these four tonalities. The impossibility to touch or to 'play' Orozco's altered version of the game enhances a strong experience of perception by the imagining of the knights' movement, which is unique amongst the chess pieces. The movement of the knight, which in the board looks like the letter 'L', differentiates for its unique ability 'jump over' all other pieces. The artist successfully created a poetic forcefield of jumping horses. *Horses Running Endlessly* seems to captures the nature of the beauty of chess – a kind of beauty that does not reside in a visual domain, but in the domain of the mind. As precursor of modern art and chess player Marcel Duchamp (1887 – 1968) observed: "In chess there are some extremely beautiful things in the domain of movement, but not in the visual domain. It's the imagining of the movement or of the gesture that makes the beauty, in this case. It's a *cosa mentale*, completely in one's gray matter".[75] This *cosa mentale* or abstract beauty is precisely what *Horses Running Endlessly* is about. The aesthetic experience intended in *Horses Running Endlessly* triggers our imagination in thinking of the infinite possibilities of the knights' movement. The artwork emphasizes the performative of artful perception as a creative process of subjection.

According to Gadamer, Duchamp's critique of 'retinal' art and argument on the beauty of the cognitive activity of the mind revealed some aspects of the nature of the aesthetic experience.[76] For Duchamp, as well as for Gadamer, there was something artistic about the experience of playing. Before abandoning his artistic career to focus entirely on studying and playing the game, on many occasions Duchamp criticized the art of his time or what he called 'retinal' art. For Duchamp, art was more than the visual representation of the work, he believed that there must be something more 'intellectual' about it. Duchamp found in chess a model for art. For him, the aesthetic pleasure of playing chess was in the cognitive experience of performing the medium, in the domain of the cognitive movement.[77] Not in the way that cubists or futurists understood movement, but instead in the possibility of movement, of the cognitive activity of the mind.[78] A kind of abstract beauty. Another analogy to knights' movement and chess' cognitive beauty is to be found in Orozco's painting *Samurai Tree*. (see fig. 12). The painting is system of red, blue, white, and golden components which seems as the diagram of the knight's movement in the board. Unlike in *Horses Running Endlessly*, the aesthetic experience of *Samurai Tree* is not about imagining the horses' movement but about imagining the closed 'L' movement of the horse already open and broken. In fact, it seems as if the painting is the

[75] Marcel Duchamp quoted in Damisch, H., & Krauss, R. (1979). p. 8-9.
[76] Gadamer, (1986). p. 22
[77] Ibid. p.10
[78] Ibid.

mapping of the equestrian forcefield created in *Horses Running Endlessly*. By starting diagraming the original 'L' movement of the horse, Orozco's system gradually invents its own rules, which are depicted by growing on a scale and the alteration of the colors' rhythm. Although the structure of the movement has been disrupted, *Samurai Tree* still conveys a complex yet poetic equilibrium that triggers the senses of the spectator of imagining the possibilities of this disrupted new system.

Notions about the nature of perception and movement of art are central to most of Orozco's oeuvre. Orozco's artistic practice is very much aware about this cooperative play of art in the creation and re-creation of modes of identity. In one occasion Orozco commented: "It has been important for me to try to erase identity, or the cliché of identity, and in doing so generate this space in which anyone who is looking at it can be the one who made this, and find identity in that experience.[79] In this notion of the creation of identities through an aesthetic experience is that we can find common ground between Gadamer's theory of the aesthetic experience as 'cooperative play' and Rancière's theory of an aesthetic experience of 'dissensus' as possibility for social emancipation. Like Rancière, Gadamer also recognized a social function for art. Gadamer refers to the aesthetic experience as the possibility of creation of a communal festival, which by its ephemeral and communal nature, reveals an alternative meaning to the spectator towards the other which has been denied to them by social and cultural systems. Gadamer's festival performs as what Rancière's 'redistribution of the sensible'. Both philosophers acknowledge the relevance of the aesthetic experience as a process in the formation of identities, or what I have been calling throughout the text, a process of subjection.

The dissented and festive nature of the processes of subjection instantiated in Orozco's artwork-games analyzed here, aesthetically allows its player to live strong moments of experience, in which the self-movement of the mind advocated by Gadamer appears so forcefully, that allow her to perceive herself perceiving her own cognitive self-movement in a real-time experience. The strong experience of cooperative play achieved by them constitutes a 'playful' indifference that maintains a distance from the processes of subjection desired by the gamified society. The artworks succeed as emancipatory processes of subjection in that they do not offer a definite 'democratic' alternative, but instead because of its open-ended structure created in its players, ephemeral moments of aesthetic awareness about the contingency of systems.

[79] Orozco, et. al. (2009). p. 191.

# Chapter 3
# *Deceleration through Video Games*

There will always be a need for artists to detoxify things.
-Bill Viola, 2010

## *3.1 The affective nature of video games*

By the end of a lecture American artist Bill Viola, specially known for his work with media and video installations, was giving at Berkeley University of California in 2010, one of the students asked him: What if you knew that everything you do will be used as 'pure evil' in the future, would you do it anyway? The student started his question with a small anecdote. He said he recently attended a military airshow and recruitment rally in North Carolina, US., which used video games as recruiting strategy. He said he felt overwhelmed when he realized one of the game simulations at display was using a video of American artist Vito Acconci he had seen previously exhibited at the Whitney Museum, New York. Bill Viola thanked his honesty and answered: "Evil is not what it seems. As an artist you cannot be really sure what is going to happen to your work once it is out in the world. Because people will take it, use it and distort it anyway, whether is the press or the military. One of the things that artists do, the way I explain this to myself is, we detoxify things. We take the ugliest, the most horrible, the worst thing, such as a gun, and turn it around, just turn it around. That is one of the most important things that we will always have at use. There will always be a need for artists to detoxify things".[80]
It is this 'detoxification' of the medium mentioned by Viola that I am interested in explore in this final chapter. How art, as dissented process of subjection can 'turn around' video games, a medium so deeply embedded in the self-exploitative apparatus of the gamified society? How video games *as* art can contribute to the 'detoxification' against gamified subjections?
This story is illustrative of the various aspects of the gamified society I have explored throughout this text. On the one hand, it emphasizes the gamification of culture and the appropriation of game

80 Bill Viola: "The Movement in the Moving Image", Lecture at at the Townsend Center for the Humanities, UC Berkeley. Published on Oct 24, 2011. (Accessed March 14, 2018). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0RCkNugozU

elements by structures of power, as in this case, by the US military.[81] It is also telling about the growing popularity of video games in present-day cultures. The video game industry, which its worth has skyrocketed over the past two decades,[82] has greatly benefited from the playful forms of labor and production of the gamified society. On the other hand, the anecdote touches upon the appropriation of video games as a medium for art. It is precisely because of this double role of video games: its appropriation and dependence on the gamified society's power structures, and its increasing incorporation into the artistic field that video games have an important role in the struggle against gamified subjections. Perhaps even more so than previous art forms, video games as an artistic medium that has gained great popularity in the post-fordist gamified society becomes a strategic arena for experimentation and intervention of aesthetics of emancipation.

In the previous chapter I have shown how *dissented aesthetic experiences* can potentially perform as process of subjection that affect the spectators through the meaning that is constructed in that encounter. By analyzing Orozco's games-works of art, I argued that the experiences created in *Ping-Pond Table* and *Horses Running Endlessly* allow for moments of little 'crack' or 'accidents' that disrupt its own systemic nature, redistributing the spectator's senses to the other and the different. Thus, creating momentary spaces of *disengagement* from the self-exploitative system of the gamified society. In this final chapter, I would like to approach how moments of dissensus in video games can be created through an aesthetic experience of *deceleration* or *non-intensity*. According to Rancière, dissensus not only occurs by affirming 'existence' (of equal possibilities) in a world of inequality (the gamified society), but it can also occur the other way around, "by showing 'inexistence' where 'existence' is expected".[83] In my view, Rancière's second function of dissensus, can be translated as an exposure of 'deceleration' in the 'accelerated' world we inhabit. In the gamified society, as we have seen, fun and games have been absorbed into the capitalist economic fabric as tools of cognitive manipulation that create intensive modes of engagement, which ultimately result in our accelerated self-exploitation. Thus, if the mechanisms of subjection of the gamified society aim at playborers' permanent engagement, a dissented aesthetic experience in video games can function otherwise, as a game of disengagement

[81] US. army amongst other countries are now using video games as recruitment tool. See also: When the US Army uses a video game for recruitment (2017). https://thenewsrep.com/94391/when-the-u-s-army-uses-a-video-game-for-recruitment/

[82] It is estimated that the video game industry is now worth greater than $25 billion surpassing the film industry in box office's revenue, see Fullerton, (2007).

[83] Yale University (2016). *The Aesthetic Today: Jacques Rancière in Conversation with Mark Foster Gage.* J. Irwin Miller Symposium: Aesthetic Activism at Yale University. YouTube. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4RP87XN-dI&t=4373s (Accessed June, 2018).

and deceleration, which in turn performs as space of resistance against the process of subjection desired by the gamified society. As Rancière writes: "Art should also allow us to be absorbed in our thoughts, to distance ourselves, to have a moment of rest. Sometimes, but not very often, it rearranges the set of perception between what is visible, thinkable, and understandable, and what is not".[84]

Like previous art forms, video games are a medium that might potentially entail experiences that 'redistribute the sensible'. New Zealander cultural theorist and video game scholar Colin Cremin defines video games as: "art only in motion, affective only through participation of two or more bodies, developer and player, a collaboration in the event of play".[85] In his book 'Exploring Video Games with Deleuze and Guattari' (2016), Cremin develops a video game aesthetic theory, or what he calls 'an affective theory of form', which departs from the understanding of video games as form in motion, an 'in-between' medium. Unlike Galloway, who approaches video games as 'action', Cremin approaches them as *affects*. Certainly influenced by the 'flow-like' terminology used in Deleuze & Guattari philosophical theories, Cremin understands affects as: "a force rather than emotion, a force that varies in intensities as it combines with multiplicities of different objects and assemblages".[86] Just as Gadamer argued that the identity and significance of the work of art is directly related with the spectator, for Cremin the experience of video games, or what he calls 'the event of play' is directly conditioned to the subjectivity and the 'intensities' of its players.

It is my content that this affective nature shared by video games and art both of them to have a potential collaborative role in the struggle against gamified subjections. By creation of new modes of 'intensities' or rhythms, video games as art can alter or 'detox' the accelerated and engaging ways of existence created by the gamified society. In order to illustrate my argument, I will expand in American philosopher of art Susanne Langer (1895 – 1985) and Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi's (b. 1956) concept of *semblance* as a moment of higher artful perception and how such notion can be applied to Deleuze's and Foucault's ideas of *the 'fold' of the intensity* in its role in emancipatory processes of subjection. As example of how dissented subjectivities can potentially be achieved through a 'decelerated' or 'non-intense' aesthetic experience in video games, I will analyze *The Night Journey* (2007), a slow-motion video game developed by Bill Viola and the University of Southern California.

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[84] The Politics of Art: An interview with Jacques Rancière. Available at: https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2320-the-politics-of-art-an-interview-with-jacques-ranciere (Accessed May 5, 2018)

[85] Cremin, C. (2016). p. 4.

[86] Ibid. p. 3.

*3.2 The 'fold' of the intensity: Bill Viola's The Night Journey*

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Gadamer argued about notions self-significance of the perceptive experience of art. Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi also acknowledges this 'autonomous significance of perception', advocated by Gadamer, in his aesthetic theory that he refers as a philosophy of the 'event'. Like Gadamer, Massumi argues for the existence of a perceptual movement in art that is created by the active engagement of the spectator in his or her aesthetic experience, what Gadamer called, the 'cooperative play of art'.

From the assumption that visual contemplation is dynamic, not passive as assumed by Debord and others, Massumi argues that we see *with* and *through* the artwork. The actual form, or artwork, and the abstract dynamic constitute in Massumi's view the two sides of the experiential realm of art. In the actual or natural mode of perception the work of art is perceived as an object and shape, yet at the same time its volume is also perceived but in an abstract sense. Thus, Massumi argues, we experience the object through its qualities. A second phase in the perceptual experience occurs when we become aware what we are seeing is abstraction of form, form of potential. When such moments come, the object is not being perceived any longer, but instead the perceiver (spectator) perceives herself alive, because of our capacity to see this potential of perception. The human body has been relationally activated and what we perceive is, in Massumi's view, a *semblance* or 'live relation' in the 'event' of art.[87]

The concept of semblance was originally coined by American philosopher of art Susanne Langer in her theories about the perceptual movement of art. Langer, which was one of the first to propose the 'virtuosic' and dynamic nature of the work of art, calls a semblance to a a 'feeling of life' produced by the virtuosic nature of art. In Massumi's view, semblances are created when the artful perception, or what he calls the event of art, is so enhanced that it goes beyond its own limits but is still contained in its own momentum. Massumi, as well as Gadamer, acknowledge that semblances or highly intense moments of artful perception are of an autonomous and 'unique' nature.[88] In their view, these moments do not belong to the subjectivity of its player, but to its own. Because of its autonomy and capacity to detach from the actual object, semblance constitutes a *potential* form of inclusion for speculative meanings in art. As Massumi writes: "A semblance is a place-holder in present perception of a potential 'more' to life".[89]

[87] Massumi, (2008). p. 2-5.
[88] Massumi, (2008). p. 10.
[89] Ibid.

Thus, in Massumi's view, semblances expose art's open-ended nature and its ability to reinvent the ways it affords itself with the world. What is interesting about Massumi and Langer's notion of semblance is that they afford another perspective to how moments of aesthetic dissensus can occur in the aesthetic experience of art. The kind of moments of strong artful perception mentioned by Massumi, in my view, can be understood as dissented by nature, because of its ability to 'redistribute our senses' and allow us to perceive ourselves perceiving things differently.

Such dissented 'feelings of life' or semblances can be perceived in the slow-motion experience *The Night Journey* (2007), video game developed by Viola in collaboration with University of Southern California. *The Night Journey,* currently exhibited at the ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, in Karlsruhe, Germany, is projected in a screen encompassing an entire wall in the back of a dark room. The only elements in the room are the game projected on a screen in the back wall, a white furniture in the middle of the room containing the controller of the game as well as the headphones (see fig.13). As soon as the player puts the headphones on and press the start bottom of the controller, she or he is drawn into a black & white landscape that simulates the night, which is experienced from a first-person perspective (see fig.14). Instructions appear on the screen: 'move', 'view', 'reflect'. In my case push the 'move' bottom on the controller and start exploring the space. The immediate thing to notice is that the pace is so slow. It seems as if there are no goals to achieve, no levels to reach. The movement within the game is so slow that it conveys at first a feeling of impatience. Silence and solitude reign in the dark simulated world, although some sounds resonate in a far distance. When I press the 'reflect' button, a sound resonates loud and a strange light whitens the screen. A beautiful white owl appears. Unlike the simulated digital landscape, the image of the owl is 'recorded' from a real bird. The silent movement of the owl's fluttering is captured by Viola's camera as it makes it disappears into the night (see fig.15). After some seconds, the owl vanishes off the screen. The dark landscape appears again and I notice something: My speed is different. I feel faster, lighter. I become aware that the more I 'reflect' the more I can experience. I also notice that the landscape has become brighter. I decide to keep on going through the pine forest in front of me, and approximate to what seems like a cliff with the ocean below it. I get so close that fall off the cliff, making the digital landscape become blurred (see fig.16). I fall into the water and the sonic frequency changes. The vivid aquatic experience reminds of swimming under the sea. I manage to escape from the water and come back to the surface. After some time of navigating Viola's simulated world, I take the headphones off and leave the room, still immersed in a silent and 'contemplative' state of mind.

It is precisely this tension between intensity and non-intensity achieved by the experience of playing *The Night Journey* that in my view, resides the dissented force of the game. The 'feelings of life' or dissented semblances are not to be found in the narrative 'content' of the game, but in the way *The Night Journey* creates a shock of intensities between two worlds: the non-diegetic (the digital space of the game) and the diegetic (the physical space the player inhabits). The slow-motion experience of the game, achieves a deceleration in the time and space of both of these worlds and the redistribution of the player's senses and intensities generated by this experience can also be 'felt' in both words. First I will talk about how the dissented semblances are experienced in the diegetic space and then I will talk about how that decelerated 'feeling of life' generated have its own 'force' in the non-diegetic space of the gamified society.

Central to *The Night Journey* are notions space and how the exploration of a particular space can affect the senses. In the experience of game, which is about exploring a vast landscape in slowness, silence and solitude, such 'contemplative' mechanisms are used as a means to create an evocative spatial atmosphere, which in turn activate the senses of its player. In his article 'Game design as narrative architecture' (2004), media and video game scholar Henry Jenkins argues that when these kind of evocative spaces are created in the gameplay, they perform as what he calls an 'information space', or a 'memory palace'.[90] In Jenkins' view, these spaces endows the gameplay with a 'poetic' and 'symbolic' potential that is activated with the human activity that occurs there (in this case an artful perception in an diegetic world) and encourages the deposit of a 'memory trace'. These evocative spaces entail, according to Jenkins, a 'deliberate manipulation of the world for sensuous ends'.[91] For instance, in the aquatic experience I narrated before, when falling off the cliff and entering to the water, the sensuous atmosphere is so vivid that it reminds of past memories swimming at the see (in the non-diegetic world). Since it was also my choice to fall off the cliff and this decision might vary according to the player, it makes the aquatic experience of a personal intensity, or what Jenkins calls, a 'memorable moment'.[92]

At the same time as the senses are activated through the atmospheric gameplay, they are also continuously confronted by the slow motion time of the game. This tension between a 'vivid' space that stimulates the player's senses and a slow 'contemplative' time produces a continuous 'shocked' flow of intensities in various layers. The first layer is the shocked intensity generated in the diegetic

[90] Jenkins, (2004) p. 126
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid. p. 124

world which remains in a sensitive-contemplative state of flow. This diegetic shocked identity, because of its 'evocative' qualities just mentioned, functions as a highly perceptive intensity. A semblance or as Langer calls it, a 'feeling of life' comes into being when for instance, in the aquatic evocative experience, this 'reminding' of a past memory does not only occurs in the mind but also in a perceptive level. Already in the water, the senses we would have, for example, of pressing with our hand the 'move' button of the controller, and following that movement with the entire body as if we are indeed swimming. After some time (seconds perhaps) the movement redirects to the surface while trying to escape that aquatic life because we 'know' that our respiratory human condition does not belong there. These moments of 'feeling like', which at the same time afford us to become aware of our own body as capable of 'feeling that' perception, are what in my view, make a semblance occur in the artful experience of perception of *The Night Journey*.

On the second layer, the contemplative intensity created by the game gets confronted with the non-diegetic gamified intensity of its player, which is also very perceptive, but this one is of an accelerated and engaged nature. (see fig. 17/ diagram 1). This clash of forces does not only happen in an abstract manner foreign to the knowledge of the spectator. Since semblances also 'affect' us, it could be argued that they produce a certain subjectivity or actuality too. This subjectivity created by the semblances of of the diegetic world of *The Night Journey* collides with the accelerated gamified subjectivity of its player. In *The Night Journey* the player becomes part of what Cremin refers as a 'machinic assemblage', the human/machine relation of the video game, in which the intensities are decelerated. By the intense moments of focus created by the game, this machinic assemblage, as Cremin argues: "actualizes diegetic objects simultaneously virtualized in the event of play".[93] In the moments of 'reflect' of the game, the diegetic objects appearing on screen such as the owl do not belong to the digital aesthetic of the landscape, but they are elements from the non-diegetic world, so they function as a kind of 'window' that allow the player to 'not' become totally immerse in Viola's simulated system. It makes a crack in its perception by overlapping elements of both worlds. Thus the owl's apparition and our cooperative play with it can potentially function as a dissented semblance that equally redistribute the senses by not prioritizing neither world, but just an in-between mode of being. By the emergence of construction of these triggers such as the owl, and the slow motion evocative atmosphere, *The Night Journey* succeeds in taking distance from common the rhetoric of interaction and performance of engagement with the medium of video games, but instead it focuses in what Massumi calls a 'relation

[93] Cremin, (2016). p.2.

of non-relation'. The dissented intensities generated by the game does not belong to *The Night Journey* neither to the gamified society neither to the individual, belong only to the 'event' of play. The gamified 'accelerated' intensity and the diegetic 'decelerated' intensity interact in a state of flux by which any of them dominates the other, both forces interact and affect the other in an eternal state of dissensus, never consensus. (see fig. 18/ diagram 2).

Notions of semblances or new intensity generated by *The Night Journey* relates to Foucault and Deleuze theories of the 'folding' of the intensity of the process of subjection. As I previously argued, Cremin's understanding of video games as affects or as 'a force that varies in intensities' is influenced by the 'flow-like' terminology used in Deleuze's philosophical theories. A central aspect of Deleuze's who in turn was very much influenced by Foucault's thinking, is their conception of power as force, and the 'play' of forces, not fixed-form.[94] Within this context, in Deleuze and Foucault's view, processes of subjection are also understood as a play of forces. As Deleuze explains: "Subjectification isn't even anything to do with a 'person': it's a specific or collective individualization relating to an event (a time of day, a river, a wind, a life…) It's a mode of *intensity*, not a personal subject".[95] This 'eventual' nature of the processes of subjection as flow of forces entails, in Foucault's and Deleuze's view, certain receptivity of these forces to be affected by other 'positive' or counter-forces, which do not exist on their own but occur already in relation with other forces.[96] Foucault and Deleuze 'subjection' or 'subjectification' is distinct from both knowledge and power, because they are not fixed to a single identity, thus they can potentially perform as a counter-force to existent power relations. As Deleuze, in his readings of Foucault explains:

> Crossing the line of force, going beyond power, involves as it were bending force, making it impinge on itself rather than on others forces: a 'fold,' in Foucault terms, force playing on itself. It's a question of 'doubling' the play of forces, of a self-relation that allows us to resist, to elude power. (Deleuze 1995, 97).

According to Massumi, semblances have the potential to constitute this 'fold' or 'drop sink-hole', as he calls it, of the regime of power of the game. As he writes "If the inside fold interactively come out, then [semblances can] fold the whole inside-outside interaction in again. [Semblances can] make a vanishing point appear where the interaction turns back in on its own potential, and where that

[94] Deleuze, (1995). p.97
[95] Ibid. 99
[96] See also: Ziarek, (1996). p. 33-34

potential appears for itself'.[97] An important aspect to understand the 'fold of the intensity or semblance in *The Night Journey* is the evocative atmosphere of *solitude*. Central to Viola's artistic practice are such experience of solitude and about the potential 'force' of those kinds of experience to counteract and 'deflect', using Viola's term,[98] the accelerated subjections produced by the gamified system. In Viola's game semblances are not so much about 'cracking' as in Orozco's work, but about 'evocating' a certain intensity of contemplation and perception so high, so hyper-tense till the point that it 'folds' into itself. *The Night Journey* provides its player with a 'moment of rest' in solitude as Rancière would say, a moment of deceleration and disengagement of the intense rhythms that reign the gamified society. However, such moments of rest do not lack of power of its own nor surrender to the force of the accelerated intensities of the gamified society, but as we have seen, have a dissented and 'folding' force of its own.

For instance, the contemplative experience of *The Night Journey* disrupts the gamified exhibition space in which it is situated. Around the dark room where Viola's game is projected, there is a larger room filled with accelerated intensities by all the players engaged with all sorts of games. *The Night Journey* is part of the 'Gameplay Exhibition', which resembles like an arcade store, where its visitors engage with all different kinds of games, from the classic early video games such as Pong and Tetris, to simulation games. By engaging with the same gamified technologies, it disrupts the system of the gamified society from inside. It is disruptive because it allows for a moment of rest and pause within the accelerated environment it is immersed. *The Night Journey* function as a short circuit by allowing the existence of an intensity of nothing in the middle of a room where acceleration and engagement is the rule. Thus at least for the few seconds that the dissented semblances last, The Night Journey performs as a 'Trojan horse' which by inscribing itself and emerging from the 'striated' gamified system, it 'folds' it from inside, to transform it for few instants into a 'smooth' one. This disruption obviously is not a permanent one, nor is intended to be one. But the force and the intensity of those ephemeral dissented seconds, is enough. As Deleuze and Guattari comment: "Even the most striated city gives rise to smooth spaces: to live in the city as a nomad, or as a cave dweller. Movements, speed and slowness, are sometimes enough to reconstruct a smooth space".[99] Those few seconds after the game is over, by which the 'decelerated' mood created by the game is still present that, in my view, make *The Night*

[97] Massumi, (2008). p. 10.
[98] Yale University (2016). *The Aesthetic Today: Jacques Rancière in Conversation with Mark Foster Gage.* J. Irwin Miller Symposium: Aesthetic Activism at Yale University. YouTube. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4RP87XN-dI&t=4373s (Accessed June, 2018).
[99] Deleuze, & Guattari, (1987). p. 500.

*Journey* succeed in achieving an aesthetic of emancipation through a sensuous experience of non-intensity.

The capacity of the semblance to fold in itself is in Massumi's view, what makes art a political 'force' in its own artistic manner. As Massumi puts it: "a semblance explores its own living potential, new postures – invents new ways of affording itself of the world, in collaboration with the world, and with what the world throws before it". [100] Massumi as well as Gadamer argues that only by an active engagement of the spectator, what Gadamer calls the 'cooperative' play, is that such moments of artful perception can come into being. As Massumi writes: "only thought and imagination are the leading edges if this exploratory expansion of potential".[101] Viola's 'contemplative' video game potentially succeeds in performing as a dissented and decelerated process of subjection. I put an emphasis in the 'potentially exist' because the semblances in the game are not granted. It does not exist a given social and emancipatory function of the experience of art, but it is something that is only triggered by the cooperative play of our though an imagination. The dissented semblances are not produced by the artist, nor by every player experiencing the game, they only come to being in the 'cooperative play' of the creative mind of the player. Is precisely this what Gadamer meant when he argued that the true significance of art only come to being when there exists an active engagement in the player. In video games as in previous art form the spectator becomes the architect of the meaning of its own aesthetic experience. A meaning that only belong to the cognitive effort of the spectator's creative mind. It is this creative and intellectual effort required from us that can potentially function as process of subjection that in turn performs as the 'drop-sink hole' by which the accelerated and engaging modes of subjection generated by the gamified society can 'fold' in themselves.

[100] Ibid.
[101] Massumi, (2008). p.10.

# Conclusion
## *The Emancipated Playborer*

> What are our ways of existing,
> our possibilities of life or our processes of subjectivization; are there ways for us to constitute ourselves as a 'self', and (as Nietzsche would put it) sufficiently 'artistic' ways, beyond knowledge and power? And are we up for to it,
> because in a way it's a matter of life and death?
> -Gilles Deleuze, 1999.

During the last months of writing the present text an unexpected development occurred: From June 2018, Bill Viola's *The Night Journey*, after more than ten years of its release and being only exhibited in museums, has been acquired by PlayStation and it is now available to purchase online. (see fig. 19). It is now possible to buy our own *aesthetic emancipation* from the gamified society for only $19.99. Does *The Night Journey* becoming commodity invalidates my point about an emancipatory aesthetic force? Or, will its propagation through the technological channels of the gamified society allow for more people to play the game and have more emancipatory aesthetic experiences? I do not have a definite answer to these questions, only time will tell.

What I do know and I contend is the main idea behind this thesis: an emancipatory power of the aesthetic experience of art. Already Walter Benjamin when writing 'The Work of Art in The Age of its Mechanical Reproduction' (1944) argued about he 'dangers' of cinema and the unprecedented degree of manipulation they entail because the medium capacity to they catch the individuals in their most intimate routine. At the same time cinema, a medium that was born in popular culture, has proved to be one of the greatest forms of art precisely because of its capacity for giving 'room for error', as Sontag would say, and because of its proximity to people. The point that I have tried to greatly emphasize along this thesis is that the possibilities of resistance or emancipation offer by forms of art against systems of domination do not reside in the artworks per se, but in our relationality with them. The aesthetic experience as process of subjection is not only one way around. It is not only about 'open ourselves up to the work' so 'art can speak for itself', but to find some criticality within that dialogue. It is our task to become more critical not only with emergent forms of art but also with the ways we relate with the world as a whole. To constantly question what modes of being or existence do new technologies such as video games or new practices as gamification entails. Ultimately it is up

to us to liberate ourselves to the game the gamified society forces us to play, and find the "moments of silence, solitude and creative activity" mentioned by Caillois, not only in play or in our encounters with art, but in our everyday life. Invent new games and modes of existing that work towards values of freedom, friendship and solidarity. Because as *The Night Journey*'s acquisition by the gamified structures of power makes evident, the emancipatory struggle is and will always be, a never-ending task.

# Figures

Fig. 2 Meeting room at Google's headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts, designed by the architectural and consultancy firm Nelson.
Image retrieved from: https://www.homedit.com/office-playground/

Fig. 3 Indoor garden at Google's headquarters in London, designed by the architectural firm Peldon Rose.
Image retrieved from: https://www.peldonrose.com/projects/google/

Fig. 4 'Gold farmers' in China playing the online video game *World of Warcraft* by Blizzard Entertainment, released in 2004.
Image retrieved from: http://secondliving.tumblr.com/page/3

Fig.5 *Stadium* (1991), by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan.
Image retrieved from:
http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2013/may-2013-contemporary-evening-n08991/lot.39.html

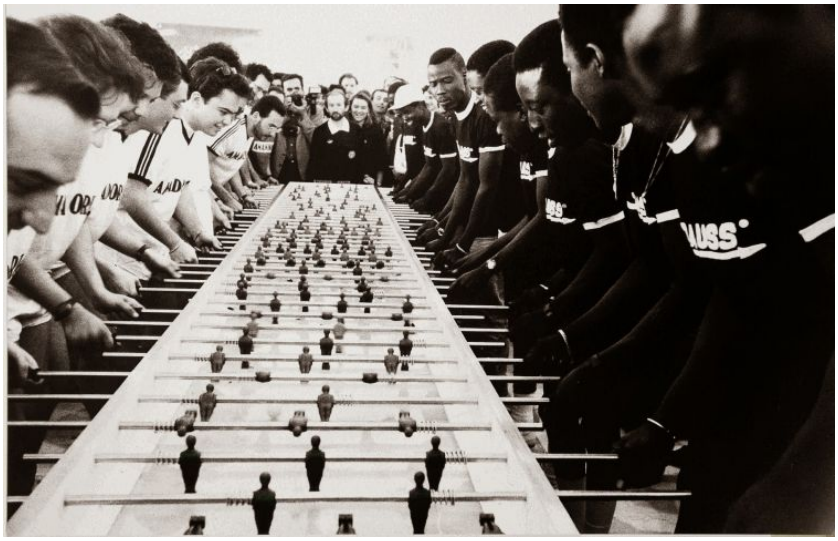

Fig.6 *Stadium* (1991), by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan.
'Happening' at the opening of the exhibition where the artwork was first shown in Galleria comunale d'arte moderna in Bologna, Italy.
Image retrieved from:
http://www.artnet.com/artists/maurizio-cattelan/cesena-47-ac-forniture-sud-12-RCoD0snHtBpzeJZ350HwlQ2

Fig.7 *Colored Sculpture* (2016), by American artist Jordan Wolfson.
On display at the exhibition 'JORDAN WOLFSON MANIC/ LOVE / TRUE / LOVE' at Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. November 2016 – April 2017.
Image retrieved from:
https://www.artsy.net/show/stedelijk-museum-amsterdam-jordan-wolfson-manic-slash-love-slash-truth-slash-love

Fig.8 *Colored Sculpture* (2016), Jordan Wolfson.
(Ibid. fig. 7).

Fig 9. *Ping-Pond Table* (1998), by Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco.
The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Los Angeles, United States.
Image retrieved from:
http://www.arte-sur.org/es/non-classé-es/gabriel-orozco-inner-cycles-2/

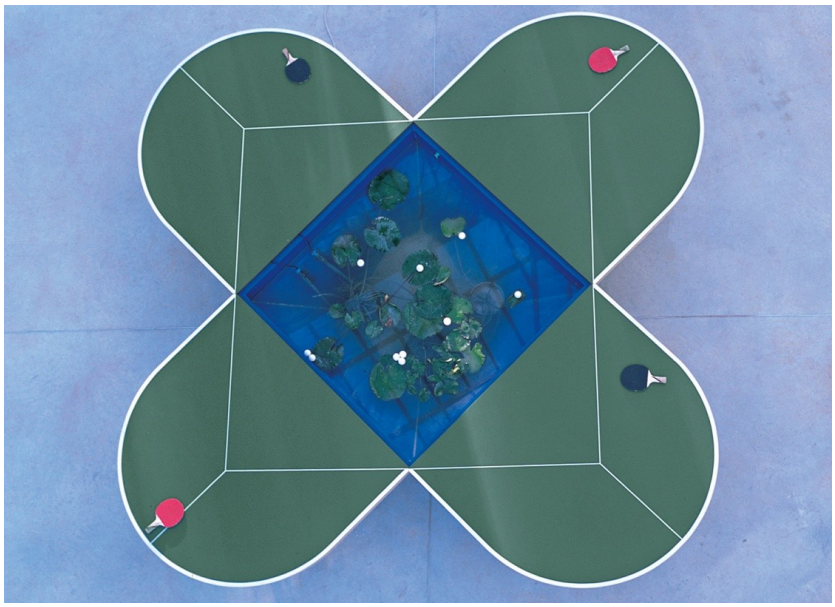

Fig 10. *Ping-Pond Table* (1998), by Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco.
Image retrieved from:
https://www.moca.org/collection/work/ping-pond-table-mesa-de-ping-pong-con-estanque

Fig 11. *Horses Running Endlessly* (1998), by Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco. Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States.
Image retrieved from: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81977

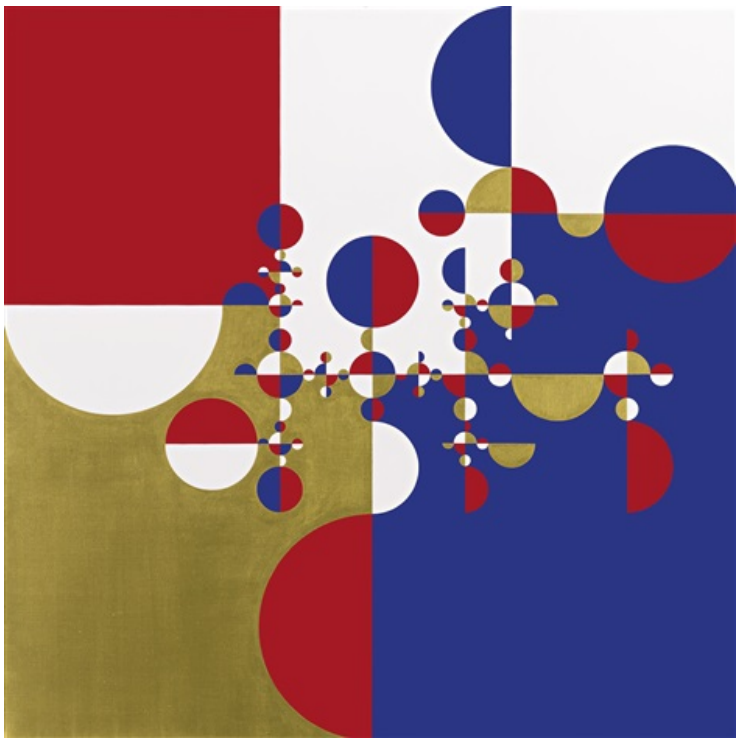

Fig 12. *Samurai Tree* (2005), by Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco.
Image retrieved from:
http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.422.html/2015/contemporary-art-day-auction-n09501

Fig.13 *The Night Journey* (2007), by American artist Bill Viola
& The Game Lab at the University of Southern California.
ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany.
Photograph taken November 2017.

7 9-10-11 40-42-43, 3-5, 35
2, 9, 4-6, 8-11, 22, 35, 40
22, 30-31,32, 35, 36, 5, 21, 29, 42
8, 11, 19,
22, 35-37, 40, 42, 5
2, 3,13, 24-25, 10 13, 23

32, 4, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 41, 49-51
17,

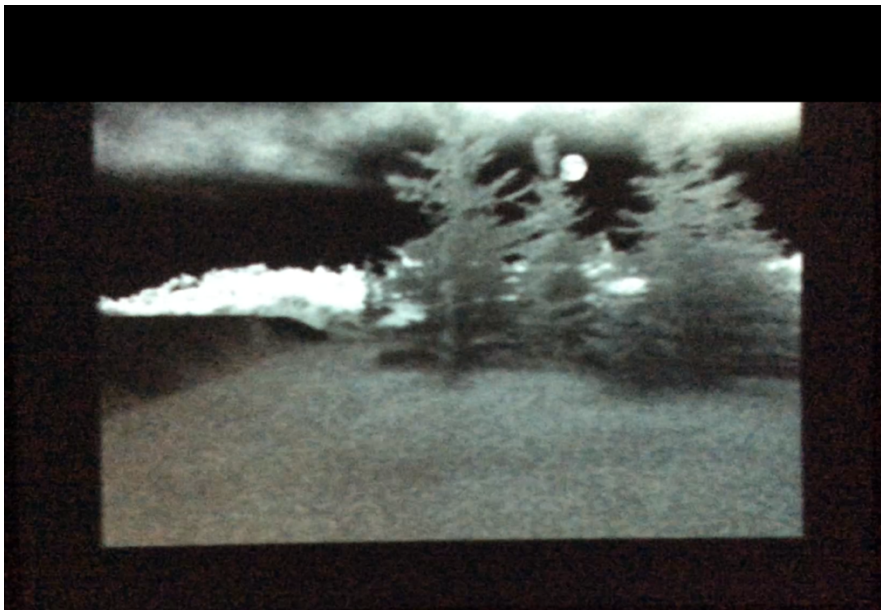

Fig 14. Still from *The Night Journey* (2007), Bill Viola &
The Game Lab at the University of Southern California.

Fig 15. Still from *The Night Journey* (2007), Bill Viola &
The Game Lab at the University of Southern California.

Fig 16. Still from *The Night Journey* (2007), Bill Viola &
The Game Lab at the University of Southern California.

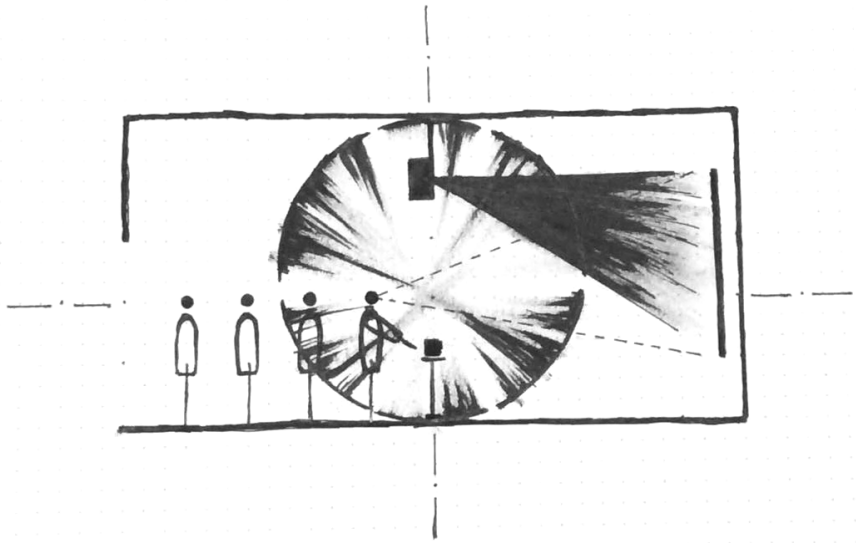

Fig 17. (Diagram. 1.) The aesthetic experience of *The Night Journey* at the ZKM.

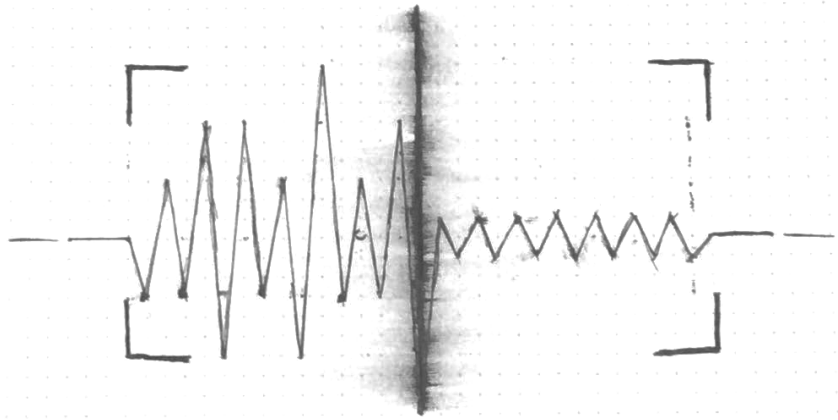

Fig 18. (Diagram. 2.) The 'fold' of the intensity in the aesthetic experience of *The Night Journey*.

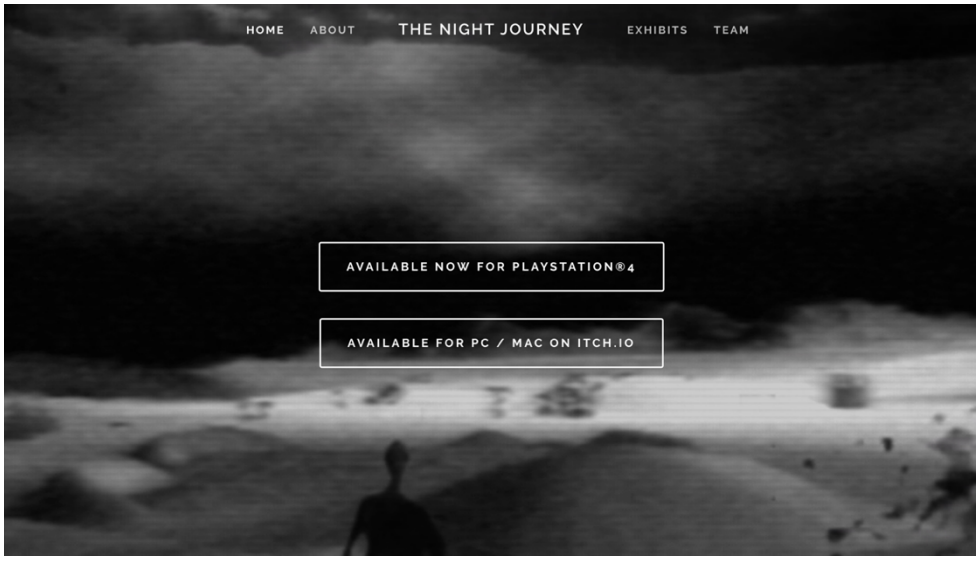


Fig 19. Still from *The Night Journey's* online site. https://www.thenightjourney.com/ (Accessed June 2018).

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