

The Locative Function of Situated Art

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes a locative function as a defining feature of situated art. All artworks orient their beholders, but situated art is characterized by this context-sensitive orientation entering the work's content. In so doing, it facilitates "here"- and "now"-thoughts, not only towards the "real" situation encountered (the work's *outer orientation*) but to the work's "virtual" or "bracketed" realm (its *inner orientation*). These orientations overlap, but do not necessarily align; indeed, situated works often construct a tension through a deliberate miscalibration of these orientations. But what is the mechanism by which such works afford indexical thought towards their worlds? Drawing upon Gareth Evans's account of demonstrative content, I contend that sensory imagination—conceived in Evans's terms as an *additional* conceptual component—plays a necessary role in negotiating demonstrative thought towards two (or more) separate spaces conceived as "here." This is something the beholder brings to the work.

This article proposes a locative function for situated art, a function that is a defining feature of such art. While many artworks orient their beholders through conventions determining aspects of their reception, situated art is characterized by a context-sensitive orientation entering the work's perceptual and imagistic content. Of course, such a locative function facilitates wider associations of what it means to be oriented towards a work, encompassing ideological as well as spatial/temporal aspects. As such, situated art might be said to be context-sensitive in a double sense: that is, a context sensitivity to host space and the social frameworks that influence reception (Rebentisch 2012, 69; Wilder 2020b). The focus of this article, however, is on the former, in that I set out to find a mechanism for such a locative function (on which a richer sense of orientation depends).

Here an immediate complication arises. I want to argue that such a mechanism must not only facilitate "here"- and "now"-thoughts towards the "real" situation encountered—the work's *outer orientation*—but towards the work's "virtual" or "bracketed" realm: its *inner orientation*. This distinction, adapted from Wolfgang Kemp (1998, 186–87), is something I will return to offering concrete examples—not least because I want to argue that while these orientations overlap, they do not necessarily entirely align. Indeed, situated works often locate the beholder only to then dislocate them, constructing a tension through a deliberate miscalibration of these alignments.

I. EVANS AND DEMONSTRATIVE THOUGHT

A good place to search for a mechanism for the locative function of situated art is Gareth Evans's *The Varieties of Reference* (1982). Evans's approach is pertinent because of his claim that direct informational links are a necessary condition for perceptual reference across various sensory modes (reminding us that situated art engages us through multiple senses). Developing an idea proposed by Bertrand Russell (1910–11), Evans suggests that “demonstrative identification is a mode of identification quite unlike descriptive identification” (1982, 143). Unlike knowledge acquired by description, demonstrative identification refers to the capacity to know which object is being identified, and hence to distinguish an object of selective attention from all other things. Couched in terms of an informational link, demonstrative thought is, for Evans, an information-based thought that takes place “in the context of a *continuing* informational link between subject and object” (1982, 146). Nevertheless, an information link—necessary for “this”-thoughts—is insufficient criteria for demonstrative identification, in that it cannot guarantee that a subject can locate an object in space. To do so not only requires that a demonstrative identification of an object be “part of a scheme of thought which also allows for a place to be identified as *here*,” but this must “be explained in terms of the position of a subject in a spatial world; hence [...] connected with the subject's identification of himself” (1982, 176). However, for Evans, “here”-thoughts, on which egocentric spatial thinking depends, are different from other demonstrative thoughts:

While the latter are information-based thoughts *par excellence*, the former do not seem to depend necessarily either upon the subject's actual possession of information from the place, or upon the actual existence of an information-link with the place. Thus one can think “I wonder what it is like here” when one is blindfolded, anaesthetized, and has one's ears blocked. (1982, 152–3)

Nevertheless, Evans argues that it would be wrong to conclude that “the special way of gaining knowledge which we have in virtue of occupying a place is irrelevant to our ‘here’-thoughts about it, and that in those thoughts we identify the place by description, roughly as *the place I occupy*” (1982, 153). Such thinking gives primacy to “I” over “here,” and in so doing ignores the fact that for “here”-thoughts to get a grasp there must be a possibility of action and perception, and this takes place within a system of egocentric thoughts about places where the “subject conceives himself to be in the centre of a space (at its point of origin), with its co-ordinates given by the concepts ‘up’ and ‘down,’ ‘left’ and ‘right,’ and ‘in front’ and ‘behind’” (1982, 153–54). Thus, for Evans, a dispositional connection with place “rests upon a vastly complex network of links between perception and action which allows us to speak of the existence of a unified egocentric space,” whether such links are merely potential or actualized, such that “this information is controlling one's thinking” (1982, 168). Evans locates this argument within the wider remit of embodied perception, conceiving a *perceptual field* where the spatial

content of auditory and tactual-kinaesthetic perception is specified in the same egocentric terms, forming a unitary representation based on a single egocentric space—in that there is just one “behavioral space” in which we are disposed to act (1982, 160).

We might note an overlap between Evans’s distinguishing of “here”-thoughts from other demonstrative thoughts with David Kaplan’s (1989, 489–91) separating of so-called pure indexicals like ‘I,’ ‘here,’ and ‘now’ from demonstratives like ‘this,’ ‘that,’ ‘she,’ and ‘you.’ Whereas the latter require associated “demonstrations” to complete them, for Kaplan pure indexicals require nothing more than context to determine their reference. Both Evans and Kaplan’s positions have implications for a scheme of thought associated with situated art—works that facilitate embodied, egocentric thoughts about the space encountered—and for the difference I want to make between the beholding of situated or non-situated artworks. While with non-situated art demonstrations (pointers) embedded within the work can afford demonstrative thoughts like “this” and “that”, it is our situated presence in situated art that facilitates “I”-, “here”- and “now”-thoughts. Pure indexicality is therefore not a property of the artwork, but *something that the anticipated beholder brings to the situation*. But can a subject align an egocentric identification of place to the artwork’s virtual frame of reference? And how might these dual (and possibly conflicting) alignments coexist?

Here we might refer to Evans’s consideration of situations that involve an *additional* conceptual component that is not part of ordinary “here”-thoughts. He gives the example of an operator of a remotely controlled submarine, searching the seabed from a distanced location utilizing a camera and monitor. Absorbed in their task, such an operator might naturally think “here”- or “there”-thoughts:

The subject can *play* at being where the submarine is (“Here it’s mucky”); he can play at having that mechanical contrivance for his body (“I’ll pick up that rock”). But really *he* is (say) in the bowels of a ship on the surface of the water. This is not just one view he can adopt if he likes; it is the view to which everything in his thinking points. And from this perspective a question arises about the place where the objects that he can perceive and manipulate are: a question he need not permanently pose, but which he must understand how to answer. Somewhere *out there*, *down there*—somewhere in a space that has him as its origin—there is a place (a rock, a fish) that he is thinking about. What is it for a place to be *that place*? And it is here—in answering a question that cannot even arise for a subject normally located, perceptually and behaviourally, in his egocentric space—that the extra conceptual ingredient is required. (Evans 1982, 166)

As Evans suggests, it is a knowledge that if it is conceived to be real, “so that what appears to be happening there [*that place*] is really happening somewhere in a unified space which also contains himself and his actual environment,” must bring a conception of the “spatially extended causal processes that underlie his afferent and efferent connections with the place” (1982, 166–67).

It is this “extra conceptual ingredient,” involving “spatially extended causal processes,” that is my concern, in that I want to suggest that an analogous construal of a situation (with perceptual and imagistic contents) is required when negotiating our orientation towards a situated artwork’s virtual or bracketed space. This might be thought of as a kind of make-believe or pretense, utilizing “informational props” on which Evans argues almost all representational art depends (1982, 340). Conceived as a form of make-believe, I want to contend that the extra conceptual ingredient is in fact a sensory (or, indeed, multisensory) imagining (Martin 2002) involving a certain kind of perspectivalness: an imagining of a perception such that we are aware of the first-personal side of the experience. And while employing mental imagery as content, such sensory imagination is attitudinal. In other words, it is a complex state *utilizing* mental imagery but accompanied by cognitive attitudes towards the content of the imagining, in the sense developed by Margherita Arcangeli (2020).¹ Arcangeli, in turn, draws upon M.G.F. Martin’s suggestion that sensory imagining, used in make believe, can arise “out of the wider cognitive project of which the imagining is a part” (Martin 2002, 403).

II. DOMINIC LOPES’S POSITION

I am not the first to co-opt aspects of Evans’s thesis with respect to appreciating artworks. In *Understanding Pictures* (1996), Dominic Lopes maintains that pictures refer through “aspect” presentation, conceived as a form of recognition-based reference. While Lopes’s account is restricted to pictures, the differences in our use of Evans’s account of demonstrative thought clarifies important aspects of the wider locative function of situated art.

For Lopes, “Evans’s conception of reference and its connection to information-based thought provides a suitable model for a perceptual account of how pictures refer” (1996, 107). As “information-transmitting devices” (1996, 182), Lopes argues that pictures engage the recognitional capacities of their beholders: the same perceptual skills which are used to recognize objects in the flesh. Thus, what Evans calls recognition-based identification—dependent upon information antecedent to the perception—is seen as the “underlying perceptual mechanism that explains depiction” (Lopes 1996, 144). Importantly for the current discussion, Lopes argues:

A picture represents an object only if it conveys information from it on the basis of which it can be identified. To understand pictures, viewers must employ a specifically pictorial mode (or modes) of identification which single out, on the basis of their contents, the pictures’ sources. (1996, 107)

These modes include recognition-based and demonstrative identification, the former exploiting a viewer’s recognitional capacities, the latter which “provides discriminating knowledge because it confers an ability to locate the object perceived” (Lopes 1996, 106).

Lopes's account has faced criticisms, many of which focus on the issue of pictorial reference. John Hyman (2015), for example, has argued that many philosophers' accounts of depiction fail to register the significance of Frege's distinction between "sense" (*Sinn*) and "reference" (*Bedeutung*). "Reference" associates the semantic power of an expression with a singular extra-linguistic entity, described as the expression's referent; "sense," by contrast, is a "mode of presentation" of the referent, whereby its semantic value is being *shown*. According to Hyman, it is the latter mode of presentation that is relevant to a theory of depiction, with reference determined by an intention communicated by extra-pictorial means, such as the work's title or knowledge of a causal history of the picture.²

John Zeimbekis is likewise skeptical that pictures are suitable for acquainting us with particulars. However, he suggests that "while pictures are not suitable devices for providing the *referential parts* of thoughts, they are excellent devices for providing the *attributive parts* of thoughts whose reference is fixed independently" (2010, 16, emphasis in original). Zeimbekis here makes use of Jane Heal's (1997) claim that indexicality is a feature of predicates and predicate components as well as referring expressions. Zeimbekis applies this to how pictures, in acquainting us with properties rather than particulars, "amount to a form of indexical predication" (2010, 19).

In fact, Lopes argues that pictures support *both* recognition-based and demonstrative identification, and it is the latter (as noted earlier) that "provides discriminating knowledge because it confers an ability to locate the object perceived" (Lopes 1996, 106). However, Lopes founds this claim on a commitment to the so-called transparency of pictures. Indeed, "transparency," conceived as a spectrum where some pictures are more transparent than others, plays a prominent role in Lopes's hybrid theory, extending Kendall Walton's claim (1984) that photographs are transparent to pictures of all kinds, such that "we see things through pictures because the conditions under which they represent parallel the conditions under which we experience the objects of visual perception" (Lopes 1996, 192). This brings us to the issue of how pictures support demonstrative thought. It is "seeing-through" (1996, 179–93) that allows Lopes (2010) to argue that pictures put a viewer in the same kind of position with respect to depicted objects as a face-to-face encounter with the same object, enabling pictures to perceptually ground demonstrative thought. This includes an awareness that one knows that one is looking at a picture;³ following Paul Snowdon (1992, 59), Lopes regards image-based demonstratives as "dependent" rather than direct, such that demonstrative thought about one (depicted) object is conceived as dependent upon demonstrative thought about another object (the picture itself) (Lopes 2010, 77–78). And distinguishing his position from one set out in Mohan Matthen's *Seeing, Doing, and Knowing* (2005, 271–324), Lopes maintains that while the object we see in the picture does not implicate the motion-guiding (dorsal) vision that provides the kind of "readiness to hand" which Matthen identifies with much ordinary demonstrative identification, for Lopes descriptive (ventral) vision does not preclude deictic representation of an object. However, rather than characterize this as a form of indexical predication, Lopes claims that in exploiting overlaps between egocentric and "*cameracentric*" viewpoints (that is, the kind of perspectival representation typical of a photographic image) pictures facilitate a

“decentering” that transforms “a central relational representation” into a “central monadic representation” (2010, 76). So, when we are appropriately oriented towards the picture, objects descriptively depicted to the left of or below the picture’s depiction point are perceived as being to the left or below (rather than, say, the self-relational notion of to *my* left, below *me*), hence constituting “a *monadic* representation of the location of objects in space” (2010, 77) consistent with ordinary perception.⁴

Now, it is not the co-opting of John Campbell’s “primitive” term *monadic* that is at issue here (Campbell 1994, 119). Rather, I want to challenge the idea that, without an additional conceptual ingredient provided by sensory imagining (with imagistic content), pictures support such a monadic representation of the location of objects in space. Lopes allies the entirely feasible claim (given mechanisms within early vision for transforming representations from one frame of reference to another) that descriptive (ventral) vision does not preclude deictic representation of an object to his questionable notion of “seeing-through.” But for Evans, the issue is not the *ease* with which demonstrative thoughts of “this” or “that” occur when, say, watching the television or listening to the radio (Evans 1982, 147–8), but rather that the existence of an information channel is insufficient criteria for demonstrative identification: “It is when an information-link *does not provide the subject with an ability to locate the object* that a conceptual component is needed for identification” (1982, 149, emphasis in original). Evans insists that this conceptual component is not, for instance, knowledge of the technicalities of transmission (1982, 149), nor is it merely a “dependent” awareness that we are looking at a picture. Rather, *we need a mechanism to re-orient ourselves to another frame of reference not readily available to us*. As Evans notes: “These cases are very similar to what Strawson calls ‘story-relative identification’ (Strawson 1959, 18) where one can identify an object with respect to a framework, but cannot locate the framework” (Evans 1982, 151).

This has relevance to the distinction between the way we engage with situated and non-situated painting. Pointers (demonstrations) within non-situated painting, such as depicted gestures, gazes or perspectival cues, might legitimately facilitate demonstrative thought with respect to the descriptive perceptual information-link necessary for “this”-thoughts (albeit conceived as a form of indexical predication). But as we have seen, an information-link is insufficient for “I”-, “here”- or “now”-thoughts, which must account for our location in space and therefore are something that the beholder brings to the situation. Some paintings afford a distinctive form of access whereby we imagine the scene from the point of view of an internal beholder, negating the position we occupy. But, by suggesting a continuity between the virtual scene and the space/time that we occupy, a situated painting facilitates the location of depicted objects as an extension of our own world; this is dependent upon an imagining seeing that negates the ontological divide between real and virtual by projecting the latter onto the former, thus facilitating a *monadic* presentation of objects in space. And while attitudinal, in the sense of being a conceptual construal of the situation, such sensory imagining employs mental imagery as

content, which has been shown to activate the visuospatial processing parietal regions of the brain that Matthen refers to.⁵

We might remind ourselves of Evans's submarine operator, who bridges divergent frameworks through a complex interaction facilitated by the translation of the operator's actions into the resulting movements facilitated by the mediating apparatus. This affords a special kind of information about a "remote" undersea space specifiable in an egocentric spatial vocabulary involving a conception of "spatially extended causal processes" (Evans 1982, 157). My claim is that such a dispositional connection is also a feature of situated artworks that implicate the beholder within their worlds, such that the beholder's presence is necessary to complete the work. Such instances instigate a pure indexicality facilitated by a sensory imagining utilizing a perceptual/proprioceptual awareness of our actual space allied to concurrently perceived indexical cues (demonstrations) embedded within the work. With regards to situated painting, it is this sensory imagining that furnishes the monadic quality of leftishness or rightishness, given that otherwise, as Matthen rightly suggests, "[t]he space in the picture lacks, if you will, a *here*" (2005, 316, emphasis in original). Sensory imagining provides the necessary sense of spatial and temporal presence, consistent with Martin's dependency thesis, where "one kind of phenomenally conscious state," the imagining in question, takes "as its object another type of conscious state of mind, as sensory experience" (Martin 2002, 404). And as we shall see, if this applies to situated painting, it equally applies to situated sculpture and installation art, gaining access to the bracketed work as semblance.

III. SITUATED PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

To summarize the argument thus far, I am claiming that Evans's extra conceptual ingredient—equated with an attitudinal sensory imagining that employs mental imagery in a form of "make-believe" — provides a suitable mechanism for locating the beholder toward a situated artwork's dual orientations. Such an engagement confronts the problem that "it is not possible for a single subject to think of two (or more) separate spaces as 'here,' with the conceptual simplicity of normal 'here'-thoughts" (Evans 1982, 167). I am claiming that with situated art "here"- and "now"-thoughts are something the beholder *brings to the work*, integrating perceptual aspects of the real situation into the imaginative remit such that an egocentric identification of place is aligned with our orientation towards the artwork's virtual realm, that, while bracketed from the sphere of practical reason, draws a work's context (and wider associations we bring to it) into its content. While I do not have the space to make good this claim, I believe this is a "dependent" form of imagining that involves the instantiation of a "subjective perspective" (Martin 2002, 407).

Of course, many artworks orient their beholders, and in so doing facilitate demonstrative thought. Certainly, it is unproblematic to state that artworks afford demonstrative thought about configurational or material properties. Drawing upon Evans, we might conceive of such "ordinary" demonstrative

thought as a perceptual information-link between subject and work. As a form of selective attention, it allows us to pick out by sight, hearing, or touch, objects or events which we identify as constituent elements of the work. But when we say that artworks orient the beholder towards their *worlds*, we are no longer talking about “ordinary” perception of material objects or events—a perception that places an object or event for the perceiver. Even with postconceptual art that self-discloses its configurational properties and “staging” (Wilder 2022), we might distinguish between a work’s *outer* and *inner orientations*. I am arguing that it is the latter that requires sensory imagination. Let me try to make the distinction clearer, starting with examples of situated painting and sculpture. In the following section, I will consider a work of installation art.

Now, most non-situated paintings do not oblige the beholder to negotiate these dual orientations. For instance, with a landscape painting such as Caspar David Friedrich’s *The Great Enclosure* (1832), in the Galerie Neue Meister, Dresden, there is no relation between the point from which the scene—as virtual entity—is depicted and the space of the gallery in which the beholder stands. Here, the picture frame loses touch with the scene’s content. Utilizing spatial cues within the picture, we might use the picture to imagine the scene from a position internal to its world (where frame and picture surface are negated). Such imagining seeing might (in rare instances) even sustain “here”- and “now”-thoughts, by imaginatively reorienting oneself (or centrally imagining someone *other than oneself*),⁶ towards a position that while unrepresented is internal to the representational space. In the Friedrich example, this generates a sense of vertiginous detachment by suspending the *internal beholder* in mid-air (Wollheim 1987, 136–8). But if we are to experience the depicted scene thus, we must imaginatively negate our actual temporal and spatial situation (the space of the gallery).

In sharp contrast, with situated painting our orientations towards real and virtual overlap, such that our embodied awareness of the painting’s context primes the imaginative project. Consider Masaccio’s *Trinity* (c. 1425–27), in Santa Maria Novella, Florence (see Wilder 2020a). With its life-sized figures and Mary’s prominent gesture engaging the beholder as witness, *Trinity* draws aspects of the actual situation (primed by the religious context) into the work’s imaginative remit. By locating the painting’s centric point at eye level, the painted architectural frame and sarcophagus are integrated into both the painted scene (its inner orientation) and host architecture (its outer orientation), such that the painted chapel is conceived as both autonomous scene *and* imagined as a continuation of actual space. But despite this overlap of real and virtual, strict limits are placed on our participation. While a large section of the fresco is implied as existing on “our” side of the supporting wall, the space depicted “behind” the wall depicts a religious scene allied to a temporal separation, providing the necessary distance for the religious image. Moreover, there is a further spatial/temporal displacement reserved for the Trinity itself, such that God the Father, supporting the cross on which Christ is crucified, is depicted from a viewpoint above our heads, which we cannot occupy: a device that, in deliberately withholding perspectival information that would allow us to locate the Trinity, implies that it exists outside of time and space.

Many of Barnett Newman's paintings from the 1950s and '60s might likewise be characterized as situated. This is reflected in titles, using demonstrative terms such as *Here and Now*, *Right Here, Not There—Here* (Schreyach 2013, 351). Newman makes this situatedness explicit when, interviewed by David Sylvester in 1965, he states that "painting should give man a sense of place: that he knows he's there, so he's aware of himself"; but then Newman continues by directly relating this to the place of the artist in front of the work:

In that sense he relates to me when I made the painting because in that sense I was there. And one of the nicest things that anybody ever said about my work is when you yourself [Sylvester] said that standing in front of my paintings you had a sense of your own scale. (Sylvester 2001, 39–40)

This sense of scale is heightened by Newman's stated intention that the beholder stand close to his large paintings. Despite Michael Schreyach's "noncontextualist" account of Newman's sense of space (2013), in an account of MoMA's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* (1950–51) he emphasizes the situated restraints on Newman's otherwise enveloping color field through his famous use of zips: thin, vertical stripes which structure the perceptual experience:

Without the zips, the broad area of the field would overwhelm any sense of its being modulated or differentiated, resulting in an overall homogeneity. Staring into a painting with attenuated visual relief, a viewer would perceive a nonoriented space, and the painting might induce a sense of placelessness. Yet Newman avoided precisely this effect by carefully arranging the bands so that viewers, when standing at a short distance from the surface and looking at it either frontally or obliquely, will—to greater or lesser degrees—perceive one or more of the zips in their field of vision. (Schreyach 2013, 367)

Unlike Schreyach, I would argue that Newman constructs a tension between the push and pull of the painting as one moves backwards and forwards, and from side to side at close proximity to the surface, such that one alternates between feeling oriented to disoriented.

Locating the beholder towards the virtual space of sculpture presents a different problem, in that its mode of virtual space is carved out of—yet distinct from—the actual space we occupy. Susanne Langer argues that sculpture constructs a *semblance* of kinetic space, such that "sculpture makes virtual 'kinetic volume' out of actual three-dimensional material," such that the immediate "environment derives all proportions and relations from it," rather than from the embodied beholder's experiential space (1953, 95, 91). While the beholder's point of view is relevant in a way that it isn't for most painting, we do not occupy the same space. In Antonio Canova's *Theseus and the Centaur* (1805–19) sculpture, the imagined trajectory of Theseus's club, deployed against a centaur that he holds by the throat, passes not

through the space of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, but rather the represented mythological realm.

Robert Hopkins suggests that this kinetic organization involves the imagination, and I would agree, in that it “is constitutive of that experience that the viewer is *imagining* certain things of the sculpted object” (Hopkins 2003, 284). While with free-standing figurative sculpture we use multiple locations to imagine such a kinetic potential, not only are we extraneous to the represented world but “here” and “now”- thoughts towards that world generally do not arise. No less than with non-situated painting, the depicted figures exist outside of our time and space. Counterintuitively, then, most representational sculptures are not situated in the sense I am using the term, in that although their placement may well affect their reception, the space of reception is extraneous to the work’s content.⁷

Nevertheless, with non-gestural “abstract” work, such as Anthony Caro’s *Prairie*, the beholder’s location within the gallery space can form part of the work’s perceptual and imagistic content. In reinforcing our sense of scale and location whilst disrupting the beholder’s relation to the ground, *Prairie* destabilizes the space we occupy. This is achieved through the motif of “floating” elements: four parallel horizontal steel poles, three of which (seemingly defying gravity) are welded at one end only. Unlike the imagining of a kinetic volume from which we are separated, here the imaginative project activates the space of reception in such a way as to afford a phenomenological focus on the viewer’s bodily and subjective experience, such that, as I have argued elsewhere, “*the real situation is brought into the imaginative remit of the virtual through the sculpture’s capacity (rather than the sculpted object’s capacity) to organize gallery space*” (Wilder 2020a, 170, emphasis in original). Removed from its plinth, this non-representational and non-gestural work does not so much exhibit living form as generate a kind of oscillation between the miscalibration of its “virtual” defiance of gravity and the literal but destabilized ground on which we stand.

IV. SITUATED INTERMEDIAL ART

While situated paintings and sculptures are relatively rare, installations and other forms of intermedial art, such as video, sound and performance art, are prime candidates for being considered works of situated art. Indeed, Anne Ring Petersen’s (2015) definition of installation art includes parameters that might be thought of as integral to the notion of situated art: an activating of “space and context”; a stretching of the work in time, “whereby its character becomes that of situation and process”; a “phenomenological focus on the viewer’s bodily and subjective experience, and on the temporal aspects of reception” (2015, 41). Nevertheless, little has been written about installation’s particular mode of virtual space, let alone the requirement that the beholder negotiate two places simultaneously conceived as “here.” Indeed, while Claire Bishop argues that “installation art presupposes an *embodied* viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision,” she also maintains that the “insistence on the literal presence of the viewer is arguably the key characteristic of installation

art” (2005, 6).⁸ This might be thought to be at odds with my argument about the dual orientations of situated art.

My response would be that the literal beholder’s presence is not only anticipated, but situated in such a way as to bring “here”- and “now”-thoughts towards not only the work’s outer but its inner orientation. This is consistent with Juliane Rebentisch’s “conception of aesthetic experience as a process that comprehends the subject as well as the object of this experience to the same degree and equiprimordially, and which therefore cannot be attributed to either of these entities alone” (2012, 11). Unlike Michael Fried’s “objectivist misunderstanding” of autonomy (2012, 14), Rebentisch insists that: “Art is not autonomous because it is constituted in this or that way, but because it allows for an experience distinct from the spheres of practical and theoretical reason, by virtue of the specific structure of the relation between its subject and its object” (2012, 11). Such a position acknowledges a “bracketing,” but also that the recipient is caught in a process of oscillation such that she does not exercise “complete control over the subjective powers at work” (2012, 271). Elsewhere (Wilder 2020b) I have suggested Rebentisch’s account might be amended in such a way to allocate a role for the sensory imagination in this oscillation, that I maintain arises from a miscalibration of inner and outer orientations: a slippage calculated to generate feelings of orientation/disorientation, placement/displacement. Following Evans’s lead, this is an “additional” conceptual component to ordinary “here”-thoughts, engaging the imagination while inheriting the non-conceptual indexing capacity of the visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and proprioceptive systems. This affords egocentric spatial thinking towards a bracketed realm.

Let me give an example. With Bruce Nauman’s *Get Out of My Mind Get Out of This Room* (1968) the beholder enters a room, around ten feet square, devoid of objects other than a single light bulb. While empty, the space resonates with the sound of a gruff voice uttering alternating imperatives: “get out of my mind, get out of the room.” The source of this voice is uncertain, and even when one registers loudspeakers recessed into the walls, the sound seems to emanate from the room itself. The voice is the artist’s own: “I said it a lot of different ways: I changed my voice and distorted it, I yelled it and growled it and grunted it” (Nauman, cited in Simon 2003, 335). Nauman’s installation is a disconcerting work when encountered alone, while heightening our awareness of the process of beholding when others enter into the space.

Given his attentiveness to speech-acts, it is significant that Nauman amended the work’s title from the words actually spoken—“*the* room”—to the ordinary demonstrative, “*this* room”: a room where reference is a function of context. I believe the change reflects a sensitivity not only towards the role of the situational in linguistic meaning, but the locative function of situated art. Certainly, Nauman understood that something approximating this function is crucial in affording the “literal” beholder “here” and “now”-thoughts towards an artwork. Within the circumstances of installation art as an emergent form, physically entered into by the beholder, Nauman’s title clarifies that the voice refers to the room in which the beholder is situated, such that the beholder is the intended recipient of Nauman’s

imperatives. “Our” presence is anticipated, and it is “here”- and “now”-thoughts, which I have been arguing the beholder brings to the work, that establish “us” as the subject addressed.

As with many of Nauman’s works informed by Wittgenstein’s language games, *Get Out of My Mind Get Out of This Room* is consistent with Nauman’s wider interest with the “functional edges of language,” exploiting linguistic ambiguity and *miscommunication* (Kraynack 2003, 35). Nauman sets out to “jolt” the beholder, such that our presence is rarely unproblematic. As Janet Kraynack notes, “Nauman’s screaming rant of ‘get out of my mind’ may be a not so subtle clue and, in the long run, not so dissimilar as his ‘silence’ [a reluctance to speak about his art]: to find meaning, look not to his words but to the space in which they are encountered and the responses they engender” (2003, 36). The space of reception is drawn into Nauman’s content, such that the work might be said to be completed by our physical presence in “this” room.⁹ And like many of Nauman’s early installations, this anticipated presence is tightly constrained by the physicality of the confining space. The effect is destabilizing—physiologically and psychologically.

Get Out of My Mind Get Out of This Room is exemplary of the locative function which defines an artwork as a work of “situated art.”¹⁰ But why not think that there is just one, literal space, the public is confronted with, and that Nauman is additionally prompting the public to engage with verbal language that likens that space to his mind?¹¹ One reply would be that *Get Out of My Mind Get Out of This Room* is consistent with Nauman’s works and texts from the late 1960s and ‘70s which are full of explicit instructions for the beholder to engage in mental projections, triggered by bodily engagements with confined spaces.¹² But one can go further. In her argument for an attitudinal understanding of sensory imagination, Arcangeli notes that “like perception, sensory imagination encompasses more than mere perspectival information: it conveys self-relative information, that is to say, it specifies the type of self ‘occupying’ the given viewpoint” (2020, 318). This is key to Arcangeli’s claim that sensory imagination cannot be reduced to mental imagery. But it also gives us a clue as to what sensory imagination might offer in Nauman’s case. Here, we are bracketed from the spheres of practical and theoretical reason by virtue of a specific structure, primed by the installation’s museum or gallery context. In such circumstances, Nauman’s words are not mere instructions to vacate a space (as with an emergency warning to “leave the gallery immediately”) but become *an affective property of the room itself*, such that we reflect not only on the “here”- and “now”-thoughts prompted by the spoken words, but on the “type of self” that occupies this empty but resonantly filled room.

V. CONCLUSION

In performing a locative function, I have claimed that works such as *Trinity*, *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, *Prairie* and *Get Out of My Mind Get Out of This Room* fuse “here”- and “now”-thoughts afforded the perceptual experience of our actual or “literal” location with *an additional conceptual component* necessary for placing us towards the work as a “bracketed” entity. I have characterized this component

as a fully embodied sensory imagining that, while dependent upon non-conceptual perceptual content (in that the spatial properties are out there, projected onto the real world), is itself—as a form of construal of the situation—fully attitudinal. While demonstrative cues—embedded within the work’s *inner* and *outer* apparatus—bring our orientation into play with regard to the real situation *and* the artwork’s virtual realm, “here” and “now”-thoughts are something the beholder brings to the work, such that the resulting sensory imagination includes self-relational information that specifies the type of self that is oriented towards the work’s inner and outer orientations. So while self-relative information can be a feature of non-situated art (as with paintings implying an internal beholder), situated art requires us to negotiate two places simultaneously conceived as “here”—for example, in Nauman’s case the literal room encountered within the gallery and a “virtual” room, likened to the artist’s mind. Sensory imagination is thereby conceived as an additional conceptual ingredient which is attitudinal but utilizes mental imagery (thereby activating visuospatial processing parietal regions of the brain). So, while Evans insists that a single subject cannot think of two spaces as “here” with the conceptual simplicity of normal “here”-thoughts, in such circumstances our imaginative “play” facilitates a dual orientation towards an artwork’s overlapping, but often misaligned, real/virtual realms and our literal/implied presence.

I have characterized this as a form of construal, which—common to the linguistic and non-linguistic conceptualization of a situation—is not only consistent with Frege’s *sense* (that is, constitutes a mode of presentation), but is crucial to how we negotiate our orientation towards an artwork’s virtual realm. What Leonard Talmy (2000) refers to as “image-constructing processes” are therefore central to construal in language *and* art, and with the latter, we test scenarios which are context-sensitive in a double sense: that is, a context sensitivity to host space and to the social frameworks that influence reception. Moreover, I have been arguing that the former relies on a mechanism (provided by sensory imagination) that can facilitate “here”- and “now”-thoughts towards both the “real” and “bracketed” situation encountered.¹³

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END NOTES

1 Arcangeli contends that “the equation of mental imagery with sensory imagination stems from a confusion between two senses of mental imagery. In the first sense, mental imagery is used to refer to a psychological attitude, which is perception-like in nature. In the second sense, mental imagery refers to a mental content, which can be grasped via different attitudes” (2020, 304). Arcangeli sketches out an attitudinal account of sensory imagination that utilizes mental imagery as content, pertinent for the kind of imagining involved when we orient ourselves towards the “bracketed” world of an artwork.

2 Lopes is certainly aware of Frege's (1952) distinction between "sense" and "reference", arguing that "a theory of depiction will be a theory of pictorial *sense*, not *use*" (1996, 89), but then muddies the waters by arguing for a perceptual account conceived (in Nelson Goodman's terminology) as a denotative symbol system: in other words, conceived not in terms of *sense* but *reference*.

3 This does not deny the possibility of losing awareness of this fact when fully absorbed, but rather that a viewer would, when challenged, acknowledge the truth that they were looking at, say, a photograph, painting or a television image (Lopes 2010, 78).

4 According to John Campbell (2002), a *monadic* relation is operative in organisms capable of visual proprioception but lacking self-consciousness of first-person thoughts, and is consistent with the nonconceptual content of early vision.

5 See, for instance, Zenon Pylyshyn (2007).

6 See, for instance, Richard Wollheim, who insists that the beholder adopts a certain repertoire (1987, chap. III).

7 There are exceptions. John Shearman's seminal account of Cellini's *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* (Shearman 1992, 44–58) emphasizes the conceit that the marble figures that surround the carefully placed "living" bronze in the Piazza della Signoria have been petrified as they appear to look, opportunely, towards Cellini's Medusa. And we, too, are vulnerable: the myth played out between the sculptured figures in the Piazza embraces the beholder into the narrative, such that we might also be turned to stone.

8 Michael Fried disparagingly uses the term "literal" beholder in relation to his critique of the theatricality of minimalist art. Fried, from a critical perspective, anticipates the move to an art practice that privileges the experience of "a *situation*—one that, virtually by definition, *includes the beholder*" (Fried (1967) 1998, 153, emphasis in original).

9 In later installations, Nauman makes the fact that the beholder is an anticipated presence is explicit by the addition of monitors linked to CCTV cameras, though such arrangements rarely afford a direct glimpse of our own image.

10 I limit my consideration to works of "visual" art, though I reject the ocularcentric premises by which such work is categorized. I also differentiate situated art from *in situ* or *site-specific* art, which may, or may not, perform a locative function. A medieval carved sculpture, while *in situ* (made for, or at, a particular host site) and *site-specific* (establishing a specific connection to its site context), might not perform a locative function in the sense I am using the term. Conversely, Nauman's *Get Out of My Mind Get Out of This Room*, as a temporary installation installed in multiple locations, is neither *in situ* nor *site-specific*.

11 This is a question raised by one of the anonymous reviewers.

12 See, for instance, the sculptural installation *Body Pressure* (1974).

13 I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments, one of whom suggested a reordering that has greatly benefitted the article. I am also grateful for comments received from Elisa

Caldarola and Enrico Terrone. An early version of the paper was given at the European Society of Aesthetics Annual Conference (2020), and I received many useful comments from the online audience.