How to do things with pictures in the museum

*Photography, montage and political space*

Rombout, M.K.

**Publication date**
2020

**Document Version**
Other version

**License**
Other

**Citation for published version (APA):**
Krzysztof Wodiczko, The *Bundehaus* Projection, Bern, 1985
The artists discussed in the preceding chapters—Heartfield, Höch, Rosler and Haacke—are linked by a shared strategy of detaching and reforming disparate two-dimensional photographic images, and complementing these new hybrids with a textual component within or adjacent to the image field. Yet, their technical approaches, staging a modality of performative speech are each distinctive in their own way. I have discussed their projects through the Austinian lens of proposing distinct kinds of speech acts: in the consideration of image acts, I have suggested a new taxonomy of speech acts: the combative, the integrative, and the contemplative.

In this chapter’s discussion, I will introduce another mode of image act by examining the ephemeral light projections of New York-based Polish émigré Krzysztof Wodiczko. I have chosen work by Wodiczko in this study because of its unorthodox position as a multimedia, ephemeral, extra-museal form of montage. I regard these works as instances of the rhetoric of interpellation, or hailing, to a civil community in both literal and discursive public spaces. By creating an oppositional public sphere in real space that attracts crowds of spectators to projections over multiple evenings, Wodiczko’s work constitutes a particular kind of montage practice that introduces an addressivity directed toward the collective experience rather than the operations of individual contemplation examined in the discussion of Haacke’s work.

Wodiczko’s projections enjoin the body of architectural buildings and monuments to the body politic: his practice also invites meetings or collisions between the timeless and the ephemeral, the sanctioned and the forbidden, the gaze and the beholder. I argue that Wodiczko attempts to retrieve the potency of collective agency of Giambattista Vico’s concept of sensus communis¹, lost in the spectacle of the private sphere, fetishized in the culture through enticements to be at once solitary as the heroic individual (fashion, celebrity) or the isolated hermit (solitary obsession with television and computer).

Wodiczko has been celebrated for his activist industrial design work addressing marginalization, homelessness, xenophobia and migration\(^2\), but his acclaim was initially based on his projections of photographic images onto buildings, memorials and heroic statuary. Wodiczko trained as an industrial designer in Warsaw, and like many of his contemporaries exploring conceptual art in the early 1970s, his concerns were twofold: the poststructuralist critique of the spectacle, politics and capitalism, and the intersection of performance, subjective experience and the machine systems. In 1976, he was appointed artist-in-residence at NSCAD (the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design in Halifax), and thereafter moved to Canada, working in several established art schools before eventually relocating to New York.\(^3\)

Wodiczko’s nocturnal projections of the 1980s and 1990s were carefully crafted in the studio and projected onto public monuments and buildings he had chosen at his “subjects” at night. He employed both covert and overt techniques in his creation of local disruptions, inserting alternative, critical readings of each site’s *ideosis*, a term defined by Wodiczko as the space where dominant political options hold sway over individual choices\(^4\), whether in Toronto, Bern or Jerusalem. Wodiczko’s works are symbolic and literal “illuminations” which are dramatic and spectacular in nature: they are constituted by the appearance of an ethereal, foreign “body” or specific image(s) from a vocabulary of readily accessible visual icons (e.g., a missile,


\(^3\) Wodiczko, like the other non-Canadian artists Haacke, Sekula and Rosler discussed in previous chapters, also had a connection to the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design as a part-time instructor and represented Canada at the federal outreach gallery, Gallery 44, in New York. He discussed this period in “A Conversation with Krzysztof Wodiczko,” with Douglas Crimp, Rosalyn Deutsche, and Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, *October* 38 (Winter 1986), 42-43. For analysis of his early Polish works, see Andrzej Turowski, “Wodiczko and Poland in the 1970s,” *Art and Public Domain. Public Address: Krzysztof Wodiczko*, edited by Peter Boswell (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1992), 26-35, and detailed biographical notes in the (unpaginated) appendix.

a bowl of fruit, a padlock) onto buildings or monuments, themselves historicized and resonant with cultural and mythological significance. Wodiczko has employed both covert and overt techniques in his creation of local disruptions, inserting alternative, critical readings of each site. His strategy is to make visible what he calls the monument’s “ideosis”, a porte-manteau term formed from the words ideology + disease. He also makes reference to another pathological connation in the term “necro-ideological function” referring to the dormant (dead) ideology of monuments, which are frequently themselves addressing the subject of the dead.

We must stop this ideological ‘ritual’, interrupt this journey-in-fiction, arrest the somnambulistic movement, restore public focus, a concentration of the building and its architecture. What is implicit about the building must be exposed as explicit; the myth must be visually concretized and unmasked. The absent-minded, hypnotic relation with architecture must be challenged by a conscious and critical public discourse taking place in front of the building.5

Long connected to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the October press group, Wodiczko speaks and writes prolifically about his work, and his position in relation to theories of seeing and of political structures. A former citizen of the Eastern Block, he refers in his practice in particular to the writing of Chantal Mouffe and Michel Foucault concerning the critique of social systems, as well as to post-Marxist critique and the writings of Antonio Gramsci, Jürgen Habermas, Emmanuel Levinas, Étienne Balibar and Giorgio Agamben.6 Wodiczko’s work draws on all of these writers through the pragmatic mapping of theory to practice, involvement in the public sphere and collective engagement, and making space for the voice of the marginalized, in projects that address homelessness and (im)migration.7


7 Wodiczko is a voluble speaker and prolific writer: many of his earlier assessments of critical theory and avant-garde art (as well as its successors) are collected in Critical Vehicles: Writings, Projects, Interviews (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999).
Much of the literature about Wodiczko emphasizes the term *public address*, and one can readily locate the elastic and polysemic nature of this term. As a performative strategy, *public address* refers to the live event phenomenon fostering a dialogic political discourse in the *public sphere*, a speaking to an assembled crowd through a kind of visual vandalism or “graffiti” that intercepts the rhetoric of the public space itself. Also, the sites chosen for his works, such as Trafalgar Square in London, Bunker Hill in Boston or the Hirshhorn Gallery in Washington, are geographically situated at real public addresses within the context of the urban organism. A second, related term is *art in the public domain*, a term that Wodiczko himself has applied in founding a graduate programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with the same title. Again, this term supplies manifold inferences. It brings to mind that the idea of *public art*, which is its own specialized “department” of artistic production, and often (and notoriously) implemented via a collective entity such as a public body or committee that makes formal decisions on behalf of the public good on commissioning permanent installations. Public address also invokes the idea of the work being in the *public domain* in the legalistic sense, so that it seems free of individual intellectual property rights. For instance, when the copyright has expired on photographs, we refer to them as being in the *public domain*, that is, free from the strictures of use by a stipulated entity. Although Wodiczko’s projections have been created through the invitation from a gallery or museum to create a site-specific project, his work appears to possess characteristics of the practices of both public art (sanctioned) and art in unestablished channels (forbidden). On one hand, he appropriates or custom creates each image proposed for the work in the studio and applies for permission in advance from public or private officials to project images far beyond the gallery walls, onto the surface of selected buildings or monuments for an audience of passers-by. On the other, Wodiczko practices a kind of urban

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Wodiczko’s *Homeless Vehicle* project critiques this phenomenon by proposing a multi-function modular mobile “home” for the homeless: the vehicles point to the de facto privatization of public space and the creation of homelessness as a result of systemic construction policy rather than individual social problem.
graffiti that leaves no discernible physical trace but endeavours to alter the observer’s response to the site and its political implications through identification and engagement of the subject. In the examination that follows, I will draw out how public address is activated in Wodiczko’s work, and how he uses interpellation as a political speech act.

[fig. 4-1] Wodiczko, projection on the School of Architecture Building, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1981

1. The Body

The attack must be unexpected, frontal, and must come with the night when the building, undisturbed by its daily functions, is asleep and when its body dreams of itself, when the architecture has its nightmares.

This will be a symbol-attack, a public psychoanalytical séance, unmasking and revealing the unconscious of the building, its body, the ‘medium’ of power.9

In Wodickzo’s statements about his public projections, he draws attentions to the building as a kind of “found object” entity that is the permanent physical substrate upon which his selected images are temporarily projected. These buildings encountered at night (and sometimes also monuments or even entire sites) are interpreted/revealed as somnolent organisms of state power,

dreaming their nightmares of repression, and thus vulnerable to exposure. He often visually calls attention to architecture as a “body”, revealing the innately anthropomorphic characteristics of the built environment (head, body, limbs). It is nearly always a male, authoritarian and militaristic persona that appears as if it was previously hidden in the inert materials. In this way, he activates the operation of montage in the transition from dormant to animate (and eventually, a new hybrid state: the charged afterimage).

Wodiczko’s 1981 projection onto the School of Architecture Building at the Technical University of Nova Scotia in Halifax [fig. 4-1] consisted of projected (male) hands resting on the cornerstones at the entrance steps, with the doorway and large Palladian window dramatically backlit to identify the persona of the building and its larger rhetoric as the gendered domain of architecture. This anthropomorphic conversion creates an entity with a strange head (double glass doors) and hands resting on the arms of a massive seat. It’s (con)frontational posture, suggesting an enthroned male authority or judge, recall the colossal seated figure of Abraham Lincoln by Daniel Chester French situated on Washington’s National Mall. This mutation also animates the latent codes of the campus building, so that as a body it synecdochically represents not only the specific department (architecture) but also the school and the profession. In a later work, Wodiczko projected an enormous hand with cuff-linked shirtsleeve onto the AT&T Long Lines Building located in Manhattan’s financial district. [fig. 4-2]

The projected image, which appeared on the north face of the building, forty stories up on November 2, 1984, four days before the United States presidential election, was derived from an existing, published photograph of then-President Reagan taking the oath of allegiance. The projection onto the building switches out the gesture of loyalty of the patriot’s beating heart for fealty by American’s privileged class to maintain its own corporate interests. As Ewa Lajer-Burcharth remarks,

> By creating a spectacle in which a fragment of the governing body, the presidential hand, was asked to stand for corporate business, Wodiczko offered a suggestion about the class identity of those forces that – hidden under the guise of God, State and Nation – are the actual receivers of the pledge of allegiance.\(^\text{10}\)

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[fig. 4-2] Wodiczko, AT+T Building projection, New York, 1984

The Duke of York’s Column at Waterloo Place projection that took place in London in 1985 [fig. 4-3] made reference to a bitter mineworkers’ strike in Wales in 1984 protesting the planned closure of twenty coal mines and the loss of 20,000 jobs. The work consisted of three elements: on the steps of the monument were projected images of crowds of British mineworkers; at the base of the column, tank treads appeared; and above the tanks, two male hands crossed in a gesture of (false) modesty, unmasked the towering war monument itself as a violent phallus.

Wodiczko explains his strategy in using this gesture:

> The absent-minded, hypnotic relation with architecture must be challenged by a conscious and critical public discourse taking place in front of the buildings. Public visualization of this myth can unmask the myth, recognize it on the street, can observe and celebrate its final formal capitulation. This must happen at the very place of myth, on the site of its production, on its body – the building. Only the physical, public projection of the myth on the physical body of myth (projection of myth on myth) can successfully demythify the myth.\(^\text{11}\)

In this operation of arousing a somnolent *sensus communis* and revealing its systemic underpinnings, Wodiczko is constructing an entirely new context for the intersection of the constructed body (architecture) with the cognitive body (community). The live event becomes the animation of the body’s gesture to “demythify the myth” and form a powerful, new reading of both the familiar, permanent site, and the foreign, ephemeral image which is conflated onto it.\(^\text{12}\) This “poetics of authority”\(^\text{13}\) embedded in the myths of historic commemoration and civic purpose are illuminated, revealed and negated, is described by Walter Benjamin in his essay “The Storyteller”\(^\text{14}\). Benjamin posits a role for the storyteller as the carrier of cultural truths that exceed temporal and geographic boundaries. It is the performer whose travels transcend social boundaries, and the artisan who employs accessible forms of communication. Wodiczko reveals the hidden by literally shining light in the darkness of night, and profits from the absence of its bureaucracy, asleep and unaware, unmasking the myths that arrest individual and collective agency.


\(^{12}\) See a discussion of Wodiczko’s “bodily confrontation with architecture”, see Nick Kaye, *Site Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 33-41.

\(^{13}\) This term comes from the title of Alisa Maxwell’s 1982 exhibition catalogue *Poetics of Authority: Krzysztof Wodiczko* (Adelaide: Gallery of the South Australian College of Advanced Education).

Wodiczko’s technique is rooted in the cultural predisposition toward the spectacle. The dramatic nocturnal illumination is akin in technique and scale to urban billboards, neon signs, and Jumbotron messages deployed for a mass, urban audience. Wodiczko describes the difficulty in shifting one’s “focus”:

Slide projections mean, for most people, a ‘slide show’, a multi-image spectacle … they had to try to see the relation between the image and the architectural form. At first, people don’t see architectural structures as images in themselves; they seem them as physical surfaces, as screens for the projection.15

The spectators—bystanders whose presence is a response to a notice about the event through art and media channels, as well as passers-by in the course of their transit through the city—are awake and aware during the monument’s nocturnal unconscious state. They are an audience to the architectural creatures’ masked narratives. They are called to witness this unmasking, and in so doing, to consider their own role in the denial or affirmation of the previously uncontested but ever-present myths forming the status quo. Wodiczko’s ephemeral projections align with Austin’s characterization that the performative work cannot be an object; it hovers, as Austin notes, like fire between an event and a thing.16 In this way, it is the viewers who “make” the work and in turn, are altered by the work.17

2. The Bundeshaus Projection

Wodiczko’s destabilization of the semiotically charged built environment through his projections, also brings to mind Henri Lefebvre’s understanding of city monuments as public act, as well as public art, and of monumentality itself as a technique for domination over human scale:

Monumentality … always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message. It says what it wishes to say – yet it hides a great deal more: being political, military, and ultimately fascist in character, monumental buildings mask the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought.18


In 1985, Wodiczko was commissioned by Jean-Hubert Martin, then director of the Kunsthalle in Bern to mount a projection in the Swiss town in conjunction with an exhibition Martin was organizing under the title \textit{Alles und noch viel mehr} [Everything and More]. Wodiczko later recounted that he arrived in Bern and conducted his research by querying the habitués of local bars as to their suggestions for remarkable features of the city.\footnote{Krzysztof Wodiczko quoted in “A Conversation with Krzysztof Wodiczko,” by Douglas Crimp, Rosalyn Deutsche and Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, \textit{October} 38 (Fall 1986):50.} Wodiczko was struck by the nonchalance his respondents demonstrated in recounting that all the gold of Switzerland resided in a vault beneath a parking lot in front of the Swiss Parliament Building, the Bundeshaus, itself a prominent tourist attraction located in a central urban area. Accordingly, he decided to assemble his equipment, including a powerful xenon arc projector in this parking lot in front of the Bundeshaus, which is flanked on the remaining three sides of the square by the Swiss national bank, the canton bank, and the city bank.

On three consecutive evenings, 12–14 April 1985, Wodiczko projected just one single motif onto the pediment of the Parliament Building, a single eye:

I figured no one would object to the image of an eye, and at the same time they wouldn’t have to know that the eye would change the direction of its gaze, looking first in the direction of the national bank, and then at the canton bank, then the city bank, then down to the ground of the Bundesplatz, under which is the national vault containing the Swiss gold, and finally up to the mountains and the sky, the clear, pure, Calvinist sky.\footnote{Ibid. Note the discrepancy between the artist’s description of the sequence, and the variation presented in fig. 4-1 published in the \textit{October} article.} \footnote{It should be noted here that also in 1985, Wodiczko chose the pediment of another building upon which to project a charged image: this projection happened in the context of a two-evening public projection on planned for Nelson’s Column in Trafalgar Square, London. The event was commissioned by Canada House (Canada’s High Commission), situated in one of the stately Georgian style buildings bordering the square, adjacent to “neighbours”, Britain’s National Gallery of Art, and across from South Africa House. I will return to this installation later in this chapter.} [figs. 4-4, 4-5]
It is important to point out that, in this passage, Wodiczko’s references to “no one” and “they” indicate the bureaucrats from whom formal permission was sought to stage the projection event: by withholding the fact in the project proposal of the eye’s change of gaze, a gesture indexical to the entire meaning of the work, Wodiczko was able to make the proposal for his projection appear to be innocuous and thus evaded further scrutiny on the part of city officials. In this sense, we can locate the juxtaposition of a visual speech act that is at once sanctioned (an image projected onto a specific site) and yet also transgressive (by omitting the detail about projecting a dynamic sequence of images, the message which would be apparent to spectators). In this sense, his use of juxtaposition as a strategy is first located in the conflation of planning/implementation and official/subversive in the very construction of the work. While the projections do not break laws per se, they attempt to break ideosis. The visual signs themselves are not forced onto the façades of state and corporate property, but the exposé produced by the mutability of the original myths is enforced.

[fig. 4-4] Wodiczko, The Bundehaus Projection, Bern, 1985
Another key juxtaposition is the site of architecture/memorial as a site of the body and of the body politic. The projection sequence creates a collision, conflates the authoritative permanence of the substrate (the building, the monument) with the projected icon to destabilize the homogeneity of its narrative. Juxtaposition is also located in the selection of the materials, essentially light/stone: a mixed-media approach consisting of a series of static images, rendered as a slow-motion animation through the projection of light onto the very material surface of a monumental building. The work conveys a sense of stability via the physical solidity of the substrate upon which a project is located.22 This practice of montage, between the two- and the three-dimensional, provides a new dimension to the selection of works in this study, a new strategy in the creation of visual/physical rupture pushing the boundaries of seam and seamlessness.23

Wodiczko, again, anthropomorphizes the building, this time by projecting a single eye, creating a kind of architectural Cyclops. (I will refer henceforth to this monstrous eye as the Eye—a specific, sited Eye to distinguish it from a generic or human eye.) It is important to

22 See also Rosalyn Deutsche’s commentary on another “dynamic sequence” in Wodiczko’s *Homeless Projection*, 38.

understand how this work, an image conflated onto a building, constitutes a kind of photomontage that performs three focal points: surveillance, anxiety and blindness. Located at the pinnacle of the bank building, and framed within its pediment, this disembodied Eye looms over the assembled crowd and initially appears all-seeing and all-knowing, with associations to icons of theosophical mysticism, to the signifier of gold in the Masonic symbol of the eye imbedded in a pyramid (and prominent on American currency), as well as invoking a major icon of Swiss identity with reference to the soaring heights of Bern’s surrounding mountains. The trope of the omnipotent Eye, and the connection between the gaze and governance, is also located in Jeremy Bentham’s perpetual surveillance tower and the ubiquity of state surveillance in George Orwell’s novel 1984.

Rather than being static, this Eye is dynamic: it makes physical and semantic connections visible as it selects its field of vision. Each of these gazes, and the “blinks” that separate them, contain a distinct significance. In the first part of the sequence, the Eye addresses its referents: the objects in the periphery and directly ahead. The cyclopean Eye of the state (political power) first shifts its gaze between the surrounding sites of commerce (economic power), and then to the parking lot, beneath which resides the national vault containing the gold. The conflation of the Eye onto its architectural background, and the (con)sequence of its gaze, constitutes yet another montage between the fictive field of vision and the actual field of relations between the Swiss parliament, and the (international) economic forces that determine the real value of the space. The eye that surveys is rooted throughout the history of image-making as an index to both the dominant human sense, and to divine metaphysics.

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24 Rosalind Krauss’ *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1993) is a fascinating study about looking, subjectivity and the operations of seeing. She locates the all-seeing eye within the tradition of Euclidean geometry, and its uptake in the composition of Renaissance painting located symbolically as the vanishing point of parallel lines. (213-214)

25 John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation. Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988). Tagg refers to Jeremy Bentham’s 1818 proposal before a parliamentary proposal for a model institution “in which each space and level would be exposed to the view of another, establishing a perpetual chain of observations which culminate[d] in the central tower, itself open to constant public scrutiny.” (85) One also thinks of the ubiquity of modern closed circuit surveillance, particularly as used as a deterrent to crime in Britain. Since 1991, Canadian artist Cheryl Sourkes has been appropriating images from web cams and live video streams found on the internet. See Cheryl Simon and Cheryl Sourkes, *Public Camera* (Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 2007). Finally, a kind reader of an earlier version of this chapter helpfully points out that the Great Eye of Sauron surveilling Middle Earth is featured in the *Lord of the Rings* novels/movies.

27 See Bent Fausing, *Synet som Sans [Sight as Sense]* Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter, 1995). The eye as iconographic element is found in several examples of photomontage and film of the 1920s and 1930s (Alexander Chapter 4 The Interpellative
This sequence of the Eye’s gaze can be considered as a kind of photomontage in two ways: first, through the spatial condition of one element (an eye) conflated onto another (the pediment of a parliament building); and secondly, through the temporal condition which suggests kinetic sequence, a selection or ordering of a sequence of scenes, as in cinematic practice. The very term projection itself is polysemic, referring most immediately to conflation of one thing over another, but also to the presentation (performance) of projected slides and to film screenings, and to psychological displacement.

In this latter instance, we can discern also an association via wordplay as homophone projecting as Eye/projecting an I. This animated sequence of the Eye’s gaze transforms its powerful authoritative gaze into a gesture of anxiety, the neurotic gaze of the Eye of governance anxiously glancing around it. [Victor Burgin’s notion of oscillation is germane here: referring to Freud’s definition of fetishism as a scopic process built around vision, disavowal, the frozen moment, and repetition, Burgin argues that the spectator of photographs is likewise in the position of shifting, between recognition (of the photograph as representation) and disavowal (a belief that the photograph/projection is in some way real.28] The backdrop formed by the brickwork seems to create a bloodshot glancing around it effect in the “white” of the Eye, further emphasizing its neurotic state. Wodiczko himself linked this sequence back to the trauma of the human body, likening its agency to a half dead hospital patient, completely paralyzed, and only able to move his eyes.29 As a political body, its anxiety is borne from a recognition of the responsibility of governance, as well as its privileges, an accountability of democratically elected representatives referenced in the Latin inscription below the pediment “CURIA CONFOEDERATIONIS HELVETICA” (Swiss Union Senate). Therefore, the authority of the State is not accountable unto itself, but to the polarities of the seemingly placid yet secretive Rodchenko, Man Ray, Herbert Bayer, Luis Buñuel). It is featured as an architectural element in Broodthaers’ sculptural construction Building (Les Yeux) (1966): the tiered structure is filled with jam jars filled with cut-out images of eyes, resulting in a total seeing device. See Wouter Davids’ analysis of the work in the context of museum design as spaces for seeing in “Art Factories: Museums of Contemporary Art and the Promise of Artistic Production, from Centre Pompidou to Tate Modern,” Fabrications [The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand] 16/1 (2006):23-42.


banking institutions on either side of the square, to the real and symbolic community of spectator/citizens before it.

The recurring themes of surveillance, state power and anxiety also appear in one of Wodiczko’s post-9/11 works If You See Something… (2005). [fig. 4-6] The title comes from the oft-repeated exhortation by American Homeland Security authorities: *If you see something, say something*, a motto that ostensibly encourages constant vigilance and suspicion of visible minorities and presumed immigrants generally, and Muslims and Arabs specifically, as a potential source of terrorism.\(^{30}\)

\[\text{fig. 4-6} \quad \text{Wodiczko, If You See Something..., 2005}\]

\(^{30}\) In practice this policy is a conduit to report anything about anybody. A notable example is the Texas schoolteacher who, in 2015, reported a Muslim student’s science project (a homemade analogue clock) as a potential bomb threat. Fourteen-year-old Ahmed Mohamed was arrested and detained by authorities after his teacher noted that he was a “weird little kid” who could have a future in crime.
The installation marked a departure from Wodiczko’s then-established practice of episodic nocturnal projections onto monuments and buildings: *If You See Something...* — a series of projections onto the four walls of the darkened exhibition space of Galerie Lolong in New York City — was Wodiczko’s first large-scale indoor video projection.\(^{31}\) Through frosted windows, we catch glimpses of indistinct figures and fragments: each projection (or scene) is accompanied by an audio narrative relaying anxious and causal moments in which appeals are made or confidences revealed, based on true experiences narrated by those who relate their experiences as the war on terror touches the lives of thousands of ordinary people.\(^{32}\)

In this work, *listening* is privileged over *seeing* as the principal spectator/auditor experience: the covert surveillance of anxious governmental agencies, the overt listening of the gallery visitor, creates a charged environment where we become implicated as both authority and suspect.

In the discussion above, I have pointed to significance of Wodickzo’s prosthetic eye as it shifts its gaze in successive projected slides. As authoritative beholder (static slide) or nervous observer (sequence of four slides), in either instance, the Eye is occupied with *seeing*. At the same time, as Wodiczko programs the operation of the projector so that each version of the Eye appears in sequence, there is a moment when the projector’s aperture closes, in effect, the Eye “blinks”. This is the moment of blindness, of interiority, of selection. The blink does not fulfil the need of the human eye to lubricate itself or to filter dirt: the blink of Wodiczko’s mechanical Eye refers to the liminal boundary between each destination of the Eye’s gaze, its condition of

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\(^{31}\) Nicole Leigh Mahan has argued that this controlled artistic environment resulted in greater impact than the artist’s outdoor projections by transforming observers into complicit eavesdroppers of the recorded audio conversations. “Krzysztof Wodiczko’s ‘If You See Something...’: Counter-Memory and the Role of the Artist in Post-9/11 America.” Master’s thesis, Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2010. As I did not attend this installation, it is difficult for me to support or refute her well-articulated argument, but I would respond by noting that the measuring of relative impact in itself poses substantial methodological issues, such as the composition of viewers as a comparatively small group of self-selected gallerygoers versus large crowds that include a substantial proportion of passersby, to name just one. Issues in the development of behavioural science instruments through which to measure and define subjective audience experience is itself a significant area of debate within academia and the art community.

\(^{32}\) See Dora Apel, “Technologies of War, Media, and Dissent in the Post 9/11 Work of Krzysztof Wodiczko,” *Oxford Art Journal* 31.2 (2008), 261-280, and Nicole Leigh Mahan, “Krzysztof Wodiczko’s ‘If You See Something...’: Counter-Memory and the Role of the Artist in Post-9/11 America.” Master’s thesis, Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2010. (At the time of this writing, in the early days of the Trump Administration, the net is again cast wide to interrogate and disrupt the lives of American citizens as well as students, doctors, patients, translators, temporary workers, and family members from outside the country caught in the net of suspicion, to cite only a few of the disquieting examples covered by news media.)
“not-seeing”. It is at once all-seeing and not-seeing: as Krauss notes in her remarks about Derrida and the eidetic, this Augenblick (blink of the eye) is the realm of the unconscious, the surreal, the locus of desire.

I have also introduced in the above discussion the basic components, and implications, of a specific projection by Wodiczko. I have focussed on the illocutionary construction of Wodiczko’s visual speech act, drawing out the ways in which the anti-material montage (projected light plus building surface) extends the promise and potency of Dada cut-and-paste subversion discussed earlier in the examples of Heartfield and Höch as the generation of a minor language to speak back to dominant discourse. In the next section, I will move the discussion from message sending to message receiving and address the perlocutionary effect of Austin’s speech act model: the experience of the spectator in this performance. I will examine the ways through which the beholder participates in the events in which the processes of interpellation and counter-spectacle can produce identification and activation from in its audience.

3. The Interpellative: Art that Calls Us into Community

Wodiczko summons citizens to active engagement in a democratic community, that is, to awaken the agency of the individual in order to resume collective vigilance over civic or political affairs. As a specific type of speech act, the interpellative has been taken up by several influential contemporary thinkers whom I consider relevant to Wodiczko’s practice. The term is usually linked to the writing French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser as parole interpellative:

I shall then suggest that ideology “acts” or “functions” in such a way that it “recruits” subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or “transforms” the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: “Hey, you there!”

33 Wodiczko’s projection precedes, and does not directly address, public discourse regarding the Nazi appropriation of Jewish gold, and “sheltered” in purportedly apolitical Swiss banks, which gathered intensity around 1995. Mounting international pressure forced the open discussion of Switzerland’s banking secrecy laws, its wartime record, and the principle of neutrality on which its national identity is based. Nomi Morris with Jo-Anne Velin, “Nazis, Gold—and Justice: Swiss banks confront their past,” Maclean’s (11 November 1996):32.


In Althusser’s model, the term derives from a judicial model in which a representative of the state addresses a citizen in a way that compels a reply. Althusser develops the term in order to demonstrate how ideology is not simply an illusion or false consciousness masking the “real” nature of society but is instead a material system of social practices, which he terms ideological state apparatuses.36

Interpellation is also introduced in a negative sense through literary theory in the writing of Roland Barthes and Kenneth Burke as an alternative to persuasion: the rhetoric of interpellation, “the ideological trick” of such a rhetoric, is that it presents that which is most rhetorical, the existence of a community or of a subject, as extrarhetorical, that is, beyond the argument through a presumed constitution of subjects.37

Wodiczko uses interpellation in a more positive sense of public address38. In a 2003 interview with Patricia C. Phillips, Wodiczko stressed his alignment with the ideas of Chantal Mouffe in the belief of democracy as an always unfinished project and he positioned the role of the artist as an abrasive actor who instigates new political frameworks.39 Wodiczko’s later practice addressing the agency and trauma of displacement through global migration, and the recovery of identity in projects such as Alien Staffs (1992) realizes Mouffe’s emphasis on multivocal engagement in the public sphere, on the importance of speaking, and also of listening. Austin’s model of a theory of action is predicated on a shared understanding of conventions, more than this, it demands a hegemony of linguistic interaction so that speaker and hearer are aligned in the conventions of speech, which is of course culturally determined and diverse; when these are not contained, utterances risk going awry, or misfiring. Mouffe’s position advocates for


37 Maurice Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Quebecois.” The Quarterly Journal of Speech Volume 73/ Number 2 (May 1987): 133-150. Charland cites a reference in the Petit Larousse illustré (1979) noting that the term is also used to refer to questioning of ministers by members of parliament and to the formal address of a judge or bailiff as part of a legal act, in both instances, the person who is interpellé is under some constraint to respond. The term enters literary theory through Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1950); and Roland Barthes, Mythologies, translated by Annette Lavers (London: Grafton, 1973).


a theory of action that consciously disrupts convention, to create an ensuing misunderstanding which then serves as the basis for discourse and active listening. It is in this framework that I consider the interpellative as a strategic framework for Wodiczko’s earlier projection: not calling us into a singular or hegemonic community, in an Althusserian sense, but framing fragmented and contested constituencies into a public space of discourse.

The use of interpellation in Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalytic model is perhaps the most intriguing for Wodiczko’s practice. In considering the Lacanian model of the gaze, as interpreted by Kaja Silverman⁴⁰, I locate a number of interesting parallels with the Wodiczkean model.

[fig. 4-7] Mapping Lacan’s model of dialogic field of vision [diagram by the author]

As Silverman argues, Lacan establishes a dialogic field of vision in *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* in which the subject acts as the point of origin of the gaze, but is in turn acted upon, or constituted within the field of vision.\(^1\) [fig. 4-7] In this paradigm, the subject, that is, *our* eye constructs an image in relation to the object so that it surveys the world from an invisible, transcendental position. [position 1] In Lacan’s alternative model, the subject (us) is also within the field of vision in the other’s gaze: we are therefore located within visibility as a confirmation of self. [position 2] Lacan argues that both models intersect so that both processes occur simultaneously: “the object of our gaze ‘looks’ back at us from precisely the site of those others whom we attempt to subordinate to our visual scrutiny”.\(^2\) [position 3] We are therefore *already* implicated: as subjects under the gaze of the object, we are both spectator and image.

Let us now return to the arrangement of the *Bundeshaus* projection and construct a diagram that represents Wodiczko’s model. [fig. 4-8] Here, in considering the Lacanian model of the gaze, I locate a number of interesting parallels with the Wodiczkean model.\(^3\) Wodiczko installs his projector in the square before the *Bundeshaus*; the “live” audience encounters the projection from a position behind the projector (the aperture of the projector present as yet another oculus) and sees the Eye projected onto the pediment of the Bundeshaus. [position 1] Next, Wodiczko animates the montage sequence of the Eye, so that its symbolic gaze is deployed: the Eye “looks” at the surrounding banks, at the gold beneath the Bundesplatz (and by extension, also at us, the audience), and finally up to the sky. [position 2] In this stage, we are within the field of the Eye’s gaze. As these two models intersect, Wodiczko develops a discursive intersection: he has now “illuminated” the (pre-existing) ideological gaze of the Eye, and summons us (the presence of others), imbricated through “hailing” to contest the gaze of governance. [position 3] The Eye of the pediment finally becomes also the object of *our* gaze.

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this way, there is a confrontation between the “living” eyes of the projector and its human audience, and the “dead” Eye of the pediment that appears to have been arrested photographically and mechanically reanimated.

[fig. 4-8] Mapping Wodiczko’s model of dialogic field of vision [diagram by the author]

Terry Eagleton’s links the Lacanian psychoanalytic model of the subject to Althusser’s political application of interpellation through ideological state apparatuses and this is also done by Wodiczko: the projection at once renders openly visible operations of power (Althusser’s ideological state apparatuses) and constitutes a means for newly (re)empowered subjects-as-citizens to speak back to them. In Silverman’s analysis of Lacan’s dialogic field of vision, the gaze is thus transformed from a “memorializing” function into a “mortifying” gaze; Wodiczko wittily refers to the deadness or ideosis as “necro-ideological”.

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46 Wodiczko, “A Conversation…”, 27.
the *Bundeshaus* projection, to the illumination of the Eye and the significance of its intermittent “blindness”, acknowledges and condemns the ideology of the state apparatus of political and economic control.

In the Bern projection, there is, in fact, a double spectacle. The projector does its job: it projects light but also imputes critique onto the surface of the Parliament Building. The Eye cannot actually “see” but points to the objects of its gaze indexically throughout the choreographed sequence. 47 Wodiczko’s projection is constructed as a narrative to be encountered by a mass audience: the simple icon of the eye transforms the space into a text to be “read”, for its meanings to be discerned. Wodiczko first constructs the narrative as given above, then he reveals how this narrative is deliberately obscured and hidden from being seen. Ironically, it is this condition of darkness that makes possible what is normally hidden during daylight hours. The work becomes a critique of both the manifest narrative and of its occlusion from public view: Wodiczko uses the icon of the eye and its spectatorial properties to render visible the invisible.

In a powerful sense, the projections speak to a *vox populi*: Wodiczko summons citizens to the carnival, to realize the dreadful presence of the grotesque, to acknowledge its poetics as an active and destructive force. Wodiczko’s sign combinations awaken a dormant critique within the mind of the viewer, substituting the visual sign with a mental one after the projection is concluded. Something, indeed, has been broken: the spell of the myth. By gathering citizens in the public sphere, Wodiczko attempts to revive a lost *sensus communis*, narcotized by the force of spectacle, to reactivate a participation that was once dynamic and potent.48

The appeal of this approach is not limited to oppositional work. I think here of the monumental projection I have twice visited: *Fountain*, by Spanish artist Jaume Plensa, is a public space video installation/interactive fountain at Chicago’s downtown Millennium Park. [fig. 4-9]

47 One could also link this double-gaze manoeuver to film theory: the shot/reverse shot editing technique of film theory: “The first shot as it were opens a hole in the spectator’s imaginary relationship with the filmic field. This hole is “sutured” by the shot of the character presented as the absent-one of the preceding shot […] The first shot raises a question as to the source of the image. The second shot identifies that source as a character within the fiction. The two-shot figure constitutes a statement about itself. This statement is a lie.” William Rotheman, “Against ‘the System of Suture’,” in *Film, Theory and Criticism*, edited by Leo Brandy and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016 [1974]), 119.

The fountain consists of two 50-foot glass block towers at each end of a shallow reflecting pool. The towers project video images from a broad social spectrum of Chicago citizens, a reference to the traditional use of gargoyles in fountains, where faces of mythological beings were sculpted with open mouths to allow water, a symbol of life, to flow out. The interaction by children and adults alike is joyful and playful: between mid-spring and mid-fall, water pours over the flat slate surface between the towers. (The images remain on view year round.) The vibrant sense of community (even for out-of-town visitors) is fostered first, it seems to me, by becoming more informal through the removal of footwear and through the physical relief of cooling water; there is also a connection of shared sensory experience among strangers, of acknowledging one another’s reactions, of an experience in which everyone can participate as a consequence of thoughtful universal design, regardless of status or even physical ability, as wheelchair-mobile persons and babies (and/or pets) in strollers sprint through the splashing water.

Wodiczko’s nocturnal projections are neither designed for interactivity or play in this way. Through hailing, he compels their response, that is, an active engagement and participation once again in the public sphere. Indeed, this concept recalls the classical notion of the good citizen participating in viable democracy through the principles of action.\footnote{See, for instance, Plato’s \textit{Gorgias} (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).} He endeavours to lead his audience not to adopt or adhere to a certain proposition, although many of his “speech acts” are specific in nature, but to a realization that their complacent silence is acquiescence, that they can become active in \textit{choosing} or \textit{refusing} a poetics.

\section*{4. Counter Spectacle}

Wodiczko’s interest in the oppositional potential of performance—the possibility of the subversive, the unknown and the spontaneous associated with crowds and live events—owes something, it seems to me, to his formation in a repressive, censorious environment, his interest in the student uprisings of the 1960s, and his coming of age as a conceptual artist through the phenomenon of “happenings”. (Alexander Kluge notes that the term “oppositional public sphere” dates to the Paris protests of May 1968, perhaps more appropriately as a counterpoint to a degraded \textit{pseudo}-public sphere.\footnote{Alexander Kluge, “The Public Sphere” in \textit{Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture}, edited by Brian Wallis (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991, 67-68.)}) By introducing the technique of an outdoor slide montage and the immediately recognizable language of popular imagery, the Public Projection can become a communal, aesthetic counter-ritual. It can become an urban night festival, an architectural ‘epic theatre’, inviting both reflection and relaxation, where the street public follows the narrative forms with an emotional engagement and a critical detachment.\footnote{Wodiczko, “Public Projections,” \textit{Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory} 7, (Winter-Spring 1983):187.}

Wodiczko’s own statements are aphoristic and situate powerful systemic forces as the locus of control in society, as in the manifesto-style writing of Guy Debord.\footnote{Debord, \textit{Society of the Spectacle} (Detroit: Black and Red Press, 1977 [1967]).} This control, which is mediated by images, is concentrated on the spectacle, that moment when commodity becomes the total preoccupation of social life.\footnote{Ibid.} In such a culture, as Wodiczko experienced in Reagan
and post-Reagan America, capitalist-driven consumerism is evidenced in the relentless profusion of vapid spectacle in the form of advertisement and mindless amusement.

Wodiczko has chosen as his arena solid structures in the world outside the art gallery walls; his projections are similarly accessible and invite participation by a wide range of non-specialists: the works are free of text and rely on simple icons for clarity, for instance American and Soviet missiles chained together at Grand Central Plaza, a swastika on the pediment of the South African Embassy, the Eye of the Bundeshaus projection. The projections are in publicly accessible places, not in more specialized locations such as the art gallery or cultural centre and are freely accessible to all passers-by.

The basis for Wodiczko’s work is the projection of photographic images, which are more common in the daily lives of average people than are paintings or sculpture. The form of the projections, as well as the macrocosmic subjects of the content (militarism, gentrification, distribution of wealth, race relations), are derived from concerns articulated from, and specific to, the local community.

Since the 18th century at least, the city has operated as a grand aesthetic curatorial project, a monstrous public art gallery for massive exhibitions, permanent and temporary, of environmental architectural ‘installations’; monumental ‘sculpture gardens’; official and unofficial murals and graffiti; gigantic ‘media shows’; spectacular social and political ‘happenings’; state and real-estate ‘land art projects’; economic events, actions and evictions (the newest form of exhibited art); etc., etc. To attempt to “enrich” this powerful, dynamic art gallery (the city public domain) with ‘artistic art’ collections or commissions – all in the name of the public – is to decorate the city with a pseudocreativity irrelevant to urban space and experience alike.54

Rather than perpetuating a theatre of spectacle, which would only habituate the viewer further into an apathetic delirium, Wodiczko posits his projections as counter-spectacle, as a jolt freeing the viewer from mute acceptance of the historicizing mythologies toward revelation and freedom. As he states, “slide projectors must be switched off before the image loses its impact and becomes vulnerable to the appropriation by the building as decoration.”55 In this way, the observations of M.M. Bakhtin on the role of the carnivalesque are useful to consider.56 For


Wodiczko, as for Bakhtin, the notion of the carnival is an entirely urban phenomenon centred in the town square. This is the public space where official culture resides, where “architecture has its nightmares”. The periodic influx of citizens into this space constitutes a confrontation of official with unofficial culture, indeed, where they are dialectically connected. In this environment, we become acutely aware of the polarity that calls these two oppositions into dialogue. In this sense, Wodiczko plays the role of Bakhtin’s jester or simplex, provoking the crowd by revealing or unmasking the grotesque nature of official culture: by alienating the familiar, Wodiczko exposes the normative as the truly grotesque, its excessive, unattractive character disguised in the privileged *politesse* of the routine, the quotidian.

Wodiczko’s project(ions) depart from Bakhtin’s notion of the carnival in an important way by the absence of humour to oppose the decorum of official culture. For Bakhtin, as for Rabelais and later the Situationists, merry-making, the inversion of the high seriousness of systemic power, is a necessary component in successful mockery or blasphemy. Although Wodiczko is personally humorous in his direct dialogue about his work, the use of symbol itself is composed of a matching decorum. His goal is not to invert the solemnity with which power is amassed and deployed, but to *negate* its myths, to decompress them. His work does employ irony, which is effective as a strategy of the powerless against the powerful. By using the artifacts and motifs of the dominant culture, Wodiczko reveals and distorts the meaning of these symbols, or better put, distorts the existing distortion to provoke spectators into dispelling the dormant but powerful mythology of the site or building.

5. Afterimage

In her essay “Making Art as if the World Mattered”, art historian Suzi Gablik traces the development of the role of art from a narcissistic structure of the self toward community-oriented art production with reciprocities of a social world: she identifies the categories of *art as mirror*, *art as hammer*, *art as furniture* and finally, *art that calls us into community*, which is where she situates Wodiczko’s practice.57 The ephemeral occupation of the public sphere during each projection invites an identification of a lost or compromised social identity, as well as

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destabilizes the authority anchored in buildings, monuments and public spaces. The ability to project images in public spaces is dependent in large part on careful planning and premeditation, sanctioned by the relevant authorities. The artist 1) applies for, and receives, advance permission to use specific architecture as the basis for his work; 2) is sponsored by recognized cultural entities who finance the events as part of their programming; 3) works within a recognized professional discipline.

While the artist studies the local area, interviews residents to determine the prevalent political concerns, selects a building or monument and then creates the specific photographic images that will form the projection, he cannot control its reception once it has begun in real time. As he suggests, his intervention is designed to continue long after the projection event itself:

In fact, in many ways the power of the projection can be better understood when the projectors have been switched off. Something has been broken – at least for those who know the building, who work in the building, who grew up looking at this building. For those who saw the projection – even for only five minutes – the building will never return to its original power. For them, the [building’s] mask has been stripped away; the building has lost the power of its costume. And, on the following evenings when the physical projection is no longer there, another projection takes place – a mental one.58

What has been witnessed by spectators/participants during the nocturnal event (and the subsequent discourse about it, such as media attention) also harkens to a future moment: what has been seen cannot be unseen. Once the projectors are shut off, the afterimage resides in the consciousness of individuals, and continues to haunt the site. In this sense, Wodiczko’s event goes beyond Austin’s total speech situation. Judith Butler, writing about performativity, notes that the moment of performance is in itself a condensed historicity: “it exceeds itself in past and future directions, an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute and escape the instance of utterance.”59 Kati Röttger, writing about theories of spectacle, references the term from classical theatre—peripeteia—signifying a turnaround or reversal in the narrative: “With this reversal, time itself is turned around. It condenses and builds up: a time of the now, which strips the past of its logic, leaves the future open. This moment of peripeteia can therefore be_
understood as an *open situation, as a space of opening.*” (author’s italics) This elasticity of spatial and temporal dimensions, and of continuity of the agency of the event addressing both a past and future moment, is a strategy I noted in Chapter 1 with Martin Krenn’s 2016 installation *Remembering Anti-Fascism*, an intervention at the St. Lorenz (Austria) memorial space through the installation of large metal fabric “billboard” featuring a reproduction of Heartfield’s 1933 *AIZ* photomontage *Deutsche Eicheln* [*German Acorns*]. Krenn has stated “[…] it becomes clear that history politics is not so much related to the phenomenon of just forgetting what once happened, it is an active act of remembering as well as of excluding the remembrance of certain history events.61

History politics is also a fundamental component of Onondaga Iroquois artist Jeffrey Thomas’ intervention pointing to historical representations of “Indianness”: his photographic series *Scouting for Indians* (1992) is both a documentation and advocacy project addressing Ottawa’s monument of Samuel Champlain and his kneeling Indigenous (Anishinabe) scout. This sculpture was created by Hamilton MacCarthy in 1918 and portrays an imagined moment in the “discovery of the New World”, a discovery that is dependent on guidance of newcomers from the already-there communities. Both the figure of Champlain and that of the Indigenous scout are occupied in the act of looking, although with culturally distinct modes of analysis: Champlain using his astrolabe, and the scout through direct observation. In the wake of Thomas’ extensive use of the sculpture and its prominent site as iconography in his photographic work, Canada’s federal agency responsible for the aesthetic appeal and historical interpretation of the nation’s capital eventually agreed to re-position the scout figure a short distance away, now framed as a pre-colonial self-determined carrier of knowledge, looking across the cliffs to the Ottawa River independent of Champlain’s navigation.62

[figs. 4-10, 4-11] The original plinth where the scout

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was situated remains unoccupied to mark the presence of absence, and acknowledges the gesture of reconciliation in the re-siting of the Indigenous figure.

In Wodiczko’s history politics, the alien presence of counter-symbols is a strategy of resistance, a vandalism inscribed is physically ephemeral but mentally indelible. But can this work be considered as civil disobedience? Hannah Arendt posits that civil disobedience is enacted by the individual in the name and sake of a group, as one who disobedys publicly. The notion of civil disobedience is difficult to support knowing that the projections are promoted in advance through printed invitations produced and sent by the sponsoring institution to its mailing list (artist, culturecrats, art patrons). For instance, a projection event was commissioned for Trafalgar Square by Canada House (Canada’s High Commission), and formally announced. [fig. 4-12] On the second night of the projection event, Wodiczko projected an image of a swastika


onto the pediment of the adjacent South Africa House. He later recalled:

I did not say exactly what I was doing. That’s one issue. Another debatable issue is whether I had the right to project a swastika onto the pediment of the embassy, above a relief of a boat underneath that says ‘Good Hope’. I think I had the full right to do so, but others could debate this, so I had a lawyer with me with a suitcase of documents. 64

Although this un-sanctioned projection lasted only two hours, images of the event were circulated and published in the press the next day, as Ewa Lajer-Burcharth recounts, South African officials summoned the police to stop the projection. They also threatened legal action against Wodiczko, and demanded an official apology from the Canada House as sponsor of the original scenario. 65 There are limits to the poignancy, the barb, of his attack, so as to avoid inciting violence, as in a particularly gentle projection of a shepherd messiah on a skyscraper in Jerusalem. 66

In February 2018, the Hirshhorn Museum planned to restage Wodiczko’s 1988 projection featuring images of a row of microphones flanked on one side by a hand aiming a pistol toward the viewer, and on the other side, a hand grasping a lit candle. When bright at night, the museum’s row of windows suggests a mouth, and with the juxtaposition of the projected images, appears as a monumental anthropomorphized speaker with hands, positioned before microphones to further project its utterance. The imagery projected by Wodiczko in its original context referenced the disconnect in American polemics regarding the right wing support for the death penalty (image of the loaded gun)—a heavily racialized issue given the high proportion of African-American males incarcerated—conflated with condemnation of the right to choose abortion as part of women’s reproductive rights (candle vigils held at abortion clinics). The image of the lit candle can also circle back to suggest other “pro-life” vigils, those held by anti-gun, pro-choice advocates, such as those held outside prisons to protest death row executions, or


to honour victims of (gun) violence. The work’s re-presentation was meant to coincide with the opening of *Brand New: Art and Commodity in the 1980s* and was scheduled for display on two evenings (February 14 and February 15). On the morning of February 14, a school shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, left 17 people dead, and many more seriously injured, due in part to the choice of a rapid-fire automatic combat weapon. The Hirshhorn subsequently issued an advisory postponing the Wodiczko projection that evening and the next evening and Wodiczko appeared to agree with the postponement: “To me, the silence feels most respectful,” Wodiczko said in a statement. “In this case, not showing the projection shows respect and sensitivity to the people who suffer from this great tragedy.”

This example seems to me to be more about the limits of the museum and sidesteps perhaps the ideal moment for art to re-enter this discourse. Indeed, this example return us to where this study started, Nadia Myre’s installation of *For those who cannot speak: the land, the water, the animals and future generations* at the National Gallery of Canada, where the role of museum operations as corporate voice profoundly determines the encounter of the work. Wodiczko’s approach is ultimately at once somewhat utopian and preposterous: as he himself has stated, it is an impossibility today to be both optimistic and intelligent. For Wodiczko, power is sinister, hidden in the systemic apparatuses that drive modern society. With official approval in hand for an event, he unleashes the subversive power of the sign, inscribing the intended site with a lethal exposé of the previously hidden relations of power. Wodiczko works brilliantly within the deadpan Orwellian non-reasoning of bureaucracy: his project proposals are seemingly innocuous, consisting of monotonous descriptions devoid of the cultural metatheory packed into each projection target.

67 I thank Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes for noting this last association. Correspondence, May 2018.


69 Ibid.


71 One key distinction here is the fact that Wodiczko locates the systemic power source as gendered (male) where Althusser and Foucault fail to do so. See Somer Brodrib, *Nothing Matt(ers): A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism* (North Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex Press, 1992).
Canadian High Commission
Haut-Commissariat du Canada
Canada House
Trafalgar Square
London SW1Y 5BJ
01-629 9492

Krzysztof Wodiczko
public projections

Location to be announced, possibly Trafalgar Square
28 August from 9.30 pm

Duke of York Monument, Waterloo Place
(adjacent to Institute of Contemporary Arts)
29 August from 9.30 pm

Albert Memorial, Kensington Gardens
(opposite Albert Hall)
30 August from 9.30 pm

Location to be announced, possibly Trafalgar Square
31 August from 9.30 pm

These are static projections designed for the passer-by. Please contact Canada House (629 9492 ext. 246 or 229) or the Institute of Contemporary Arts (930 0493) to check times and venues, as these may be subject to alteration at short notice. Final details will be posted outside Canada House on a daily basis.

[fig. 4-12] Printed announcement for projections sponsored by Canada House and the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 1985
In a Viconian sense, Wodiczko’s true enemy is the post-capitalist military/industrial complex barbarism wrought by the dominance of technology in the (post)modern world, the dictates of utilitarianism against the sensus communis. Citizens are reconstituted in public discourse by hailing the resurrection of individual and collective agency, a transition from participatory observation (objectifying) and participatory seeing (self-reflexive): as Mieke Bal argues, only the latter can be called “the political”, the literal and aesthetic space that is shared. He presents the dual possibilities of a powerful contestation of the public sphere and an awakening to participate in it. As he unmasks presiding past mythologies, he also seeks to provide a mechanism to encourage reconciliation and healing. In anticipating this future moment, where the citizen embraces critical thinking to consider both dominant and contestatory discourse, it is possible to construe Wodiczko’s strategy of projection as hopeful. In much the way that Heartfield’s savage caricatures worked on his original audience to foster contestation and reform, Wodiczko’s disruption creates a kind of conflation or montage between the performativity of three entities: the original discourse, its critical (photographic) overlay, and its radioactive pulsating residue (afterimage). Wodiczko’s interpellative strategy is ultimately regenerative in nature, promoting the coming together in social space, rather than deploying strategies of alienation; the roving Bundeshaus Eye looks in all directions including the plaza...

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72 For a more detailed analysis of Wodiczko’s theoretical formation, mapped from his origins in Communist Poland to his disappoint with Western liberalism, see “A Conversation with Krzysztof Wodiczko,” interviewed by Douglas Crimp, Rosalyn Deutsche, and Ewa Lajer-Burchard, *October* 38 (Winter 1986), 23-51. The term “military-industrial complex” is a term from the Cold War period of my own childhood, since outstripped by a broader panoply of global actors identified by the current Occupy Movement. The term originates with American President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his Farewell Address to the Nation on January 17, 1961: “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military–industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist.” Before that, the concept was defined by Daniel Guérin in his 1936 book *Fascism and Big Business,* as "an informal and changing coalition of groups with vested psychological, moral, and material interests in the continuous development and maintenance of high levels of weaponry, in preservation of colonial markets and in military-strategic conceptions of internal affairs.” See C. Purcell, *The Military-Industrial Complex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).


74 It is not clear if Wodiczko subscribes to a Habermasian concept of the public sphere as a dynamic but singular entity, or as Nancy Fraser has argued in her critique of Habermas, a constellation of multiple spheres to form a multiverse. See Justyna Wierzchowska, “Performing the Return of the Repressed: Krzysztof Wodiczko’s Artistic Interventions in New York City’s Public Space,” *European Journal of American Studies* [Special Double Issue: The City] 10/3 (2015):1-14, and Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* 25/26 (1990):56-80.
where the night-time observers of the projection are gathered, embracing the elements of the physical space into a continuous social space.

In the discussion above, I have examined Wodiczko’s projections as 1) a strategy of photomontage, the projection of the photograph upon an architectural substrate, operating outside of designated art space at street level, and 2) as an interpellative mode of visual speech hailing both an actual community of spectators (people at the evening events) and the greater collective, communities called to critical discourses of history, myth and memory. The interpellative works as both a form of public address, and also the incantation of social attitudes, such as belonging. I will turn next to the collaborative practice of Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge, Canadian contemporaries and colleagues of Wodiczko, Haacke, and Rosler, whose complex multi-image constructions can be considered as the “I am” declarative stance of unionized autoworkers as an already-constituted body standing ground against corporate labour practices. Declaration, like interpellation, has its own multiple dimensions, and I will examine this performative strategy announcing the existence of a marginalized social body, as well as advocating that it ought to be recognized.