

# Unsatisfactory Devices: Legacy and the Undocumentable in Art

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The ephemeral artwork is conceptualized, responds to and is created within a given time and place. Performance, works made with light, the materially unfixed, happenings, or those that decay or change in response to climate or site are examples of this type of art. These art-works rely on the acknowledged and integral conditions of impermanence to be inherently and intentionally fleeting. That is their intent and purpose—their very premise is located in a state of transience. They are there...and then they are gone, vanishing without any trace or evidence of being present (beyond an observer's fading memory). As an act of passage and passing, this type of artwork is lost to time and cannot be revisited, retraced, or retrieved unless an account is made of its existence. These tend to be of the physical and visual type to aid ease of access and comprehension.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, ephemeral artworks predominantly rely on lens-based methods to record and give evidence of their

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happening having occurred.<sup>2</sup> This method offers a snapshot of a specific moment in the making of the artwork, allowing secondary viewers a way into understanding what it might be like to experience the work now past. Although a snapshot can only do this partially (for it does not fully account for experience in reality), photographic imagery offers others the means to imagine the original from a visual anchor, thus making it the primary method to create documents as testaments of ephemeral artworks.

This chapter interrogates the critical, sensitive, and individualized distance necessary when capturing ephemeral artworks to allow a truth to artistic intent and value to remain. Critical distance is that which occupies the territory between observation and understanding, a significant component of the mediation of an artwork that assists with translating its primary encounter to knowledge. It allows the experiential and relational encounter to inform meaning, which is necessary for the observers' acquisition of conceptual and critical understanding. Temporal and transient artworks lose criticality when encountered beyond direct experience as a document, and so need appropriate means of providing agency, substance, and history beyond the frame of making if this is all that remains. Essentially, the critical distance established through the experience collapses. Moving beyond the disciplinary ghettos of the ephemeral artwork and the archival document, engaging divergent and sympathetic modes of practice allows for sustainable criticality. Within this context, and for its capacity to resituate the concept of critical distance, the discussion includes documentary as a responsive and timely means of mapping transience.

## THE DOCUMENT, DOCUMENTATION, AND DOCUMENTARY

The act of recording events with cameras, as still or video imagery, is so significant in an art historical context, particularly in respect of performing bodies, that for Amelia Jones there is a "dependence on documentation to attain symbolic status within the realm of culture" (1997, 3). A document is a delivery of fact, a translation of a timely observation and experience fixed in history by another observing and witnessing body. Although written, verbal, and other document making means exist, photography is the predominant method of capturing the creatively transient.

This text explores how the photographic document shifts attention from the original artwork to become the site of priority as a contiguous artwork in its second-hand representation. The document also formulates documentation when imagery is produced in a series, whether by multiple lens and viewpoints or by repeated encounters, which acts as a substitute or stand-in for the original. The document and documentation co-exist: the document is an artwork made of the original while being part of its documentation. Here, photographic imagery is both document (as artwork) and documentation (as substitute), and these serve as the working definitions for this discussion. Henceforth, the use of these terms acknowledges the relational slippage between these definitions and their co-existence, while also recognizing their singular positions.

For Phillip Auslander, the connection between time-based artworks and their historically locatable imagery is “ontological, with the event preceding and authorizing its documentation” (2006, 1). While this proposition might be right in its reference to how the relationship functions, records constitute and deliver a failure in demonstrating a full experience, for they cannot offer a real-time account of the complexities of the event. Traditional photographic devices cannot provide the breadth and full experience of an artwork to the second-hand observer (as opposed to that of the first-hand witness), despite for Auslander going some way to detail its ontology. The smells, climate, sounds, and personal navigation of the artwork together with the nuances that constitute ‘an art experience’ cannot be portrayed comprehensively through the photographic lens—however hard it might try. Therefore, diverse and critically positioned ephemeral artworks require suitable and specific mediatory modes of legacy making to testify to their actuality and experience for others. This is necessary for their translation beyond the immediacy of the event and their second-hand accountability as archival record.

In *Displacing the Haptic: Performance Art, the Photographic Document, and the 1970s*, Kathy O’Dell states that the document and documentation are inevitably unsatisfactory as “reconstructions’ are determined to be fragmentary and incomplete” (1997, 73–74). These substitutes for experience lack the visual density of the original and mediate understanding on the observer’s behalf, denying the variations of adaptive experience of the original, prescribing and guiding observation and understanding instead. A museological “failure to create

a singular documentation standard,” for Bradley Taylor (2010, 176), is responsible for what O’Dell refers to as insufficiency. Effectively, the decontextualization of the works of art through a lens-based image is in neglect of the artworks’ transiency (175). There is no comprehensive and meaningful solution that details affective and cognitive convergence of the art experience, and this presents a problem for communicating the intent of the original. The inherent conditions of artworks of this kind necessitate that their existence be undocumentable in a conventional, and lens-based, sense for Taylor. The document and documentation are merely tokenistic in this respect, as they deny comprehensive experiential access, offering only a viewpoint that is fragmentary and displaced. Effectively, these second-hand and edited representations create distance and displacement from the reality and criticality of the original. They serve as a reminder of the ineffectiveness of not being present.

The dissociation of the original artwork from its document is critically reflexive, and if suitable strategies are not in place, the relationship separates and becomes oppositional. Simply, the relationship loses a grip on itself at the expense of the original creative intent. However, with the re-establishment of transience in a convergent context, an invigoration of criticality can re-occur. For when the relationship between the original and its secondary record is taut and meaningful, the artwork re-affirms its critical position. The attention to its longevity ensures this is engaging, thus formulating a discursive and insightful means of mapping the artwork through its reinvestment and “redocumenting.” The solution is in documentary, defined here as a sensitively responsive and detailed recording created during the time of the occurrence or event. Incorporated as a method of mapping the artwork as it unfolds through time rather than fixing it chronologically, documentary is more in keeping with the intent of transient artworks. Documentary incorporates the properties of substitution in documentation to supply factual accounts of events as they happen, to sustain them in, and of time. This is a sense and narrative-making strategy that translates the duration of the event sympathetically in relation to the intent of transience. It allows for incorporation of the structures necessary for critical assessment of the ephemeral by capturing the reality of the artwork more effectively than the document alone.

## *THE ALTERNATIVE DOCUMENT: AN EXHIBITION AND METHODOLOGY*

In 2016, I curated *The Alternative Document* for Project Space Plus (Lincoln, UK), an exhibition with an aim to analyze and test appropriate strategies for responding to ephemera and transient artwork beyond the document and substitute as standard. The exhibition explored the potential for legacy beyond the formal and traditional in favor of the more experientially reliable documentary for its affect on the perpetually agitated artwork. The research embedded within the exhibition sought to find appropriate and precise strategies to keep the transient artwork or happening unfixed in its archival identity and to be more in keeping with its original intent. The exhibition responds to the tensions between the document (as factual account, additional artwork, and its relation to documentation) and the sustaining properties of documentary, of the critical distance and flex between approaches, and their practical uses. Here the document, as anchor to the past, and the documentary, as real-time delivery of fact, act somewhat like two boxers circling each other in the ring anticipating who will offer the first blow. The tension at play is connecting and magnetically polarizing in both situations; the resistance between oppositions activates and creates pressure and an uncertainty of connectivity. The document and documentary are situated in tense opposition as they await the trespass of the other.

Specifically, I analyze the potential for reconceptualization by an intentional closure of the gap between ephemeral artwork and archive through documentary, and its potential to capture a “fuller” experience. The *Alternative Document* (2016) adopts a curatorial strategy whereby the document provokes a re-experience by incorporating the responsive properties of documentary. Strategically, this creates a generating and responsive multiaccess rhizome (which for Deleuze and Guattari present multiplicities of entry to an artwork for a non-hierarchical acquisition of knowledge) of experience that is reflexive and responsive to affective change and adaptation through different circumstances. In response to these issues I discuss Luce Choules’ *Bideford Black: The New Generation* (2016), a photographic artwork that shifts through staged interactions during through the exhibition, and *Three-Nine*, a holographic installation by Andrew Pepper (2016) from the *Alternative Document* exhibition. These works dissolve and re-engage the criticality of the document through incorporating the experientially responsive possibilities within

documentary. They respond to how the document, as artwork in itself, becomes resensitized through documentary, as real-time and ongoing delivery. They do this through the vector of documentation, a substitute for experience that acts as a transitional state between the static document and the fluidity of the documentary.

## CLOSING AND RE-CRITICALIZING DISTANCE

In relation to his site-specific work *Spiral Jetty* (1970) Robert Smithson said he “wanted to set up a ‘dialectic’ within the artwork itself” (Hunt 1996, 37), a common concern for responsive and transitional art. *Spiral Jetty*, a land, or earth sculpture sited in Great Salt Lake, is an example of an artwork that creates a self-destiny through evolving in consequence with the geology, geography, and climate of the place of its location. As a self-evolving and redefining artwork, it presents and represents itself continually in real time as its own site-specific documentary. Responding to Bradley Taylor’s statement that “museum visitors respond to the affective content of original works of art in ways that are significantly different from the ways in which they respond to the affective content of works of art reproduced” (2010, 175), one can understand how this is effective. The difference between a site of origin and a site of display enforces and increases the critical separation of the document from the experiential bias of the original when on exhibition (as an additional artwork). Documents “fail to capture the quintessence of the relationship” (Taylor 2010, 177), of experiencing smells, shifts in light and tread on earthy terrain, which is significant to the making of the artwork and its justification for existence.

The documents of transient art are finite for Smithson, which is in opposition to the change and fluidity of site and material that gives active longevity and renewal to the original. Documentary, as a sense making and sustaining act of mapping lifespan, however, is more productive in its responsiveness to changes in spatial and material conditions. Reactive to properties that converge with the specificities of time, situation, and position in their refusal to negate and dislocate from experience, documentary offers a more sympathetic alternative to the document. Responsive to mapping mutability and change within the lifespan of an artwork, documentary offers a more sufficient and substantial means to access the tensions engaged within its critical existence. This is a sympathetic reactive recording that allows for a biographical detailing of the ontological

development and *self*-experience of the artwork. Smithson's expansive mass, made of mud, salt crystals, and rock asks for this approach, as it has outlived its intentions of being temporary and so cannot be fixed as finite in a document. A permanent yet evolving fixture, *Spiral Jetty* is self-directing and in dialogue with the site, and requires suitable devices to chart its trajectory. The responsive relationship of artwork to site is more meaningfully evidenced by documentary, which can chart material and spatial shifts with sympathetic sensitivity. Documentary as a form of map-ping the ephemeral and transient process of the artwork does not seek to overwhelm the original in the way that the document does, but offers a realistic and chronological framework for detailing its flux and mutability.

Essentially, *Spiral Jetty* is an artwork that is constantly changing as determined by the demands and synergies of climate, materials, and site. This initiates and determines an intuitive and symbiotic object-specific reshaping through connection with, and response to, the demands and atmospherics of place. The materials and site have taken over from the artist to be self-purposing, taking the concept of materiality and site-specificity beyond the document, documentation, and fixity to need different, more sympathetic and responsive methods of registering leg-acy. The artwork's dialectic and dialogue are beyond that of Smithson's making, and speak of regeneration and ever-developing modes of man-ufacture. Effectively, the work becomes its own living artifact and relic, one in a state of change through self-introduced land responsive adaptability. The materiality and place of *Spiral Jetty* chart its history through evolution to become its living testament, and this approach is of interest in relation to the uses of documentary.

Smithson's approach to this dialectic as discussed in *What the Butler Saw: Selected Writings by Stuart Morgan* (1996) informs a discussion of the non-prioritization of the original in relation to time, place, and materiality. Morgan includes in his analysis how experiments with acts of impermanence act as an antagonism to reification and the sculptural. This suggests that the artwork shifts and changes in its site-responsive proposition, which echoes in the work of Luce Choules, an artist who makes ethnographic and experiential photo-textual recordings to be reconfigured within the gallery environment. *Bideford Black: The New Generation*, a collection of fieldwork performance responses made in reaction to the geology at Green Cliff, North Devon, is included in *The Alternative Document* exhibition for its use of documentary and its rede-velopment of this material within the context of the gallery (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** Luce Choules, installation *Bideford Black: The New Generation*, 2016. Image courtesy of Angela Bartram and Chris Goddard

The artwork, containing maps, video, and photographic stills set around a wall-based collage of photographic triangles of the cliff seam, reflects the experience of the artist in a weathered and mined place. The imagery is documentation and provides a substitution of the experience, which, through re-articulation and “erosion” within the gallery engages documentary.<sup>3</sup> The erosion is through the precise interactions of others, whom Choules engages specifically to “mine” and change the artwork within the context of the gallery.

*Bideford Black*, the substance central to Choules’ work, is a formerly mined pigment unique in its dense blackness and use for paint and dye now redundant. Choules reactivates the documents of the defunct material and un-mined site through specific performative observations, through personal ethnography of place, and increasingly through restag-ing and interventions in the gallery. The gallery engages a different type of documentary for Choules, one that is purposefully dislocated from initial experience by its use of documentation, as a re-articulation through intervention and real-time, sensory manipulation. During the exhibition,

Choules seeks “interventionists” (who work at, or are affiliates of, the gallery) for the part of the artwork made of the collage of small photo-graphic triangles. Under precise instruction from the artist, these individuals actively manipulate the layout and assemblage of the photographic triangles to enable a shift and slippage down the gallery wall’s surface. The task for one individual is to remove triangles completely and deposit them in three adjacent wall-mounted frames. This interaction not only changes the layout of the artwork, but also allows for this act of displacement to forge a contiguous other, which is left as a donation to the collection of the venue of their making.<sup>4</sup>

The individuals acting as interventionists are not members of the public (who do not interact with the work), but those chosen and instructed by Choules to perform a role. The artist would lose control of her intentions for the artwork if the visiting public made the intervention, and this would transform its function within the gallery. For *Bideford Black: The New Generation* is to be observed in the gallery only, and is not an interactive artwork for the public. It is to be manipulated by Choules’ controlled instructions, and by those who are hidden in their interventions, which occur when there are no viewers present. The changes made are subtle, one triangle may be moved per day, and as the interventions are not made public or visible, they may never be noticed at all. This intention sees the artwork appear as if it were frozen in that particular iteration in the gallery, an opportunity for observation rather than interaction (despite this taking place behind closed doors).

This fragmented aspect of the artwork made of still photographs of Bideford Mine is a documentation of Choules’ experience of place made active through ethnographic and biographical land mapping on site, and again as an artwork that changes within the gallery. Exposing the land manipulations and erosions that reflect the activity of the original place, being “mine” by others is integral to its re-emergence within the gallery. Although the intervener cannot smell the air, trample the terrain or have their skin prickle in the cold, their investment in the evolution of the artwork in the gallery gives (albeit partial) access to understanding the site’s tangible problems and complexities as experienced by Choules. Each intervention partially closes the distance between actual and negotiated experience, thereby flexing in critical polarities and forging in real time a documentary within the gallery. In the moment of moving or removing a photographic triangle from the wall, there is a direct contact with Choules’ translation of place, which increases critical understanding through

intervention and touch. This is a vicarious experience to the artist's ethnography of Bideford that sees the interventionists and gallery site become the documentary "maker's". The manipulation by others and reconfigurations in different galleries create a sustaining and responsive mapping of the art-work. Translating Choules' documentation of experience of site within the gallery, these documentary strategies offer both an investment in the original ethnographic mapping of place and the reframed artwork within the gallery.

In giving the ethnographic documentary imagery (and a specific experiential one) to assigned individuals to change and alter, there is a re-investment in process and continuation of response to the site. The account of change in the artwork is propositionally reflexive to the original through Choules' incorporation of these devices. Her historically orientated imagery, which in this context is constituted as a museum-type archival reference to experience of place, becomes a slow and tumbling cavalcade of imagery, slipping in its abstraction and fluidity through its interaction with another individual. Through their vicarious and fractured engagement with the original experience of Choules, these individuals inhabit, even if momentarily, the space of critical distance within the gallery. Choules' documentation of her ethnographic, and critically locatable response to place, is given authority through further interactions with the artwork in this way. Their intervention within the gallery sees these individuals step into the space of critical distance for the moment of interaction, which agitates and activates a documentary (and new) approach. By stepping into the artworks' frame of reasoning, the interventionists' retranslate Choules' documents through their initiation of the documentary and responsive. They re-experience her ethnography through direct involvement, which sees the original critical distance (that was lost to the document) transformed and re-activated.

The interventionists, Choules' assistants necessary for the unfolding of the story of the artwork in the gallery, were not there at the time the shutter closed, could not fully comprehend the affect of place and environment on her imagery, but were able to engage and add *their* experience through direct acts in the gallery. They become the active documentary making and critically responsive means by which the affective legacy of the artwork then exists. Layering an experience of site and audience upon the original, the critical distance of mediation is altered and affected for the interventionists, and their manipulation through intervention creates a renewal within the artwork, of the here and now and in this space. A mechanism that adopts and shifts the critical

distance that exists with Choules' original experience to re-establish and re-articulate its premise anew. The site-specific imagery, so important for the heralding of place and embodied experience, subtly re-articulates and represents itself, becoming semi-collaborative through its experiential and critical encounter with others. This act of extended ethnography, as that beyond the artist's response to Bideford Mine, transforms and regenerates beyond the place of informed making. It becomes a proposition that responds to a difference in site through dexterous participatory negotiation. The re-activation and exploration of the criticality that developed between the document and its negotiation within the gallery are a response to documentary as embedded within its new structure.

The art tombs of gallery, museum, and document are posthumous consequences for the ephemeral and experiential, critical displacements that force a work into hibernation or death by pushing it into history prematurely. The stultifying reification in this instance denies the work the opportunity and possibility of living beyond as a proposition—in offering a visual emblem it cements its death, taking it beyond the intended context of being active. This becomes more complex when one considers that photographic descriptions are subject to the same vagaries of time as the artwork they capture. The documentary, the biographical, and the ethnographic are nearly experiences, real-time and direct accountability procurements of the original act. Choules reacts against, and with the parameters of configuration and gallery interpretation in *Bideford Black: The New Generation*, to enable additional experience and encounter beyond that of her own by investing in the experience of others. The document and documentation are only active and ephemeral in the now to capture activity in this work, yet within the gallery documentary creates the potential for meaningful longevity for the artwork. Beyond this, imagery is but a representation of the past, and in Choules' work, this becomes evident. In the gallery, the real-time aspect of her lens-capture is lost without continued intervention—the camera shutter closes and shuts down completely. It has reference, but still is a past act, and this presents a challenge. Unless they are activated by time and intervention, records mark a critical distance from experience. They become critically repressed slices of time, long gone increasingly false records of time described. Choules acknowledges the significance of the gallery for the continued act of experience to subject and artwork by interiorizing and reconfiguring her land-based art ethnography to be responsive to, and communicated on, its white walls. Through a remaking and conceptualizing of

the experiential and its photo-textual references, she takes on the gallery beyond the realm of static reproduction. She uses the gallery to explore the artwork through an introduction to the fixed, the static, and con-ventional while asserting an affective divergent position through its use, to make a work that is alive and in perpetual provocation. The artwork responds to the gallery as a site of displacement from the original, and utilizes the effect strategically for enhancement of its critical approach. The interventions that take place within the gallery reactivate the artifacts of her performative encounters with the land to allow for re-experience. The displacement from origin and site is negated by this engagement. Choules considers *Bideford Black: The New Generation* to be an active choreographed work, an event of sorts, and the translation from a walk through climate, landscape, and environment sees it explore that poten-tial, as one that is reshaping and re-engaging embodiment through oth-ers. The work in the gallery moves, flows, and shifts—it dances to the shape of its new institutional site. It keeps the documentary and ethno-graphic in play beyond the site and experience of its origins to provide a more useful act of legacy for the artwork.

#### LIGHT AND LINE: ARCHIVAL LOSS REDRAWN

Ephemera and the ephemerally predisposed artwork, whether Smithsonian's evolving spiral or Choules' ethnographic mapping, rely *on* time and its being specific to a moment *in* time. Even if durational, there is an exact and precise artistic placement within a specific chronology and location that is crucial to its concept. To paraphrase Peggy Phelan in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* to be there is to understand the intent of the artist, and to experience and connect with the artwork in its complex-ity offers an opportunity to comprehend what Walter Benjamin termed the "aura" of the original. Benjamin's definition suggests how unique-ness and authenticity convey energy, dialogue, and exchange within the creative timeframe of the artwork when directly experienced (and in a way that a document cannot). Benjamin notes: "the here and now of the original constitute[s] the abstract idea of its [art's] genuineness and denial of authentic experience impacts on the communicable value of the subject, removing it from its critically specific origins" (2008, 7). For Benjamin and Phelan, the precise time of experience is everything to understanding, which makes any act of preservation redundant. Phelan suggests that immateriality in artworks, specifically performance,

“shows itself through the negative and through disappearance” (1993, 19), so what are the consequences for the experience of the critically direct and locatable here and now and its legacy in this respect? Phelan was speaking of an “active vanishing, a deliberate and conscious refusal to take the payoff of visibility” (1993, 19), where invisibility is intentional and correct in certain circumstances, a meaningful and purposeful legacy in itself. Effectively, posthumous invisibility marks the event or thing as specific and happening, as an act of precision and accord to retain the ephemerality of the artwork. Transient artworks require loss and invisibility to ensure they remain true to intent. Loss ensures they stay beyond the reach of unsuitable methods of reification that transform their experience to document.

There are, however, creative approaches in which the tension between document (as factual anchor, and its use as a substitute in documentation) and documentary (as the experience of) can work more harmoniously to keep critical tensions taut. Holography, a light-sensitive image-making process, is a systematic re-articulation of the relationship of the ephemeral and the photographically fixed that presents the historic and contemporary simultaneously. In turning the three-dimensional subject into a two-dimensional photographic image, the hologram presents a perceptible alternation between the document and its active proposition in the here and now. It does this by translating the three-dimensional into document, and then making that document three-dimensional within the holographic image plane. This is a unique process that demonstrates the critical complexities and tensions engaged in two- and three-dimensional image making and the flex and constriction between mediatory perspectives. The process refuses to let the object become image and vice versa; each moves between these states of becoming as if in flux. The re-approach to each required thus creates a responsive documentary of the original photographic image through a refusal of it to remain as a document. Holography is a process by which the document can actively and precisely regenerate within a critical and spatial context. This media-specific oscillation of the original document and the documentary of holography demonstrates how criticality is fortified by the repeated enforcement and collapse of the distance between these positions.

The holographic-based installation by Andrew Pepper in *The Alternative Document* exhibition extends the notion of the documentary further. By incorporating holograms into a specific art context of

installation with other elements, Pepper's artwork situates an integral response to site. It is a light-sensitive sculpture and drawing that simultaneously acknowledges and refuses the loss of immediacy of the image. Taking the inherent movement between two and three dimensions of mediation of the photograph in holography, Pepper's *Three-Nine* further develops its situatedness through, and of conventional means, to develop an artwork that is critically reflexive and relational (Fig. 2).

The artwork, which had a hologram (a document of another site and circumstance) at its core, configured additional elements to become re-interpreted as object-specific spatial artwork. The dialectic engaged is complex—it concerns acknowledgment of the original subject, its document that is necessary to create the hologram, its spatial realization between being observed as two- or three- dimensional dependent of position to the image plane and its position to other objects within its gallery installation. Critical distance between these positions is relaxed and constricted through mediation, with the subsequent



**Fig. 2** Andrew Pepper, installation *Three-Nine*, 2016. Image courtesy of Angela Bartram and Chris Goddard

acknowledgment that the conventional image exists and is simulta-neously reconceptualized and respatialized within the hologram and installation. So how does this happen? The hologram gives permanence to imper-manence, and therein the agenda is set for an opportunity for a lack of fixity of subject and context (despite the origins of the work prescribing that in a conventional sense). It is a precise type of document that rep-resents both the original and a semblance of its aura, to use Benjamin's term, while offering a more active proposition of impermanence. Effectively, the photographic image shifts and changes dependent on the observer and his or her position, and it is here in mediation that the critical distance between document and documentary exists. At an angle, you might not see it; too close, it might vanish. Holography represents both the loss of the object in the original photograph and its simultaneous regeneration as three-dimensional image. It self-generates in this reflexivity to create a responsive account of its being. Pepper's artwork includes three plinth sited 35-mm slide projectors that draw a line of light across the three holograms to connect their surfaces to the wall. Here they are transcending the finiteness of their borders to connect with the immediate locality. The plinth-mounted projectors square the zone of critical reflexivity around the artifacts, echoing the invisible depth of spatiality of the hologram plane and compounding their three-dimensionality. The installation teases out the tensions within the singular hologram into a physical three- dimensional space within the gallery, thereby creating a taut reflex-ive environment for observation. The visible influence of the physical objects (plinth, projector, hologram) to the photographic referent of an object (that within the hologram) exposes the critical dexterity within the installation. The physicality and spatiality of the artwork, as an assemblage of interconnected elements, inform observers' crit-ical understanding. The installation reinforces the dexterous critical framework of the hologram, intensifying its affect through the inclu-sion of gallery-specific objects such as plinths and projectors within the exhibition. Pepper utilizes the complexities and potentials of the media to act as both document and documentary beyond the immediacy of being a light-reliant artifact, by extending its three-dimensional range in a gal-ery. This act both re-establishes the image and its derivation from the original, while actively expanding its range and role within the context

of an artwork within a gallery. The three wall-based holograms function beyond their immediate interpretation as images that reference original objects in *Three-Nine* by their sculptural and spatial manipulation in the artwork. Encountering the installation is to situate oneself within the critical distance between the process of document making, and its connection with documentary. It opens up, and perpetually returns the observer to a realization that this is equally document, active and reflexive imagery, and installation whereby the complexities of critical engagement require a navigation and movement between each state. For the observer is witness to the conventional and its active transformation through precise means, which uncovers a central critical zone held in tension within the installation. The taut referencing strategies that hold the varying elements together within the installation allow for the critical distance of the original to seek a re-inhabitation by new observers within the gallery. Similarly to how Choules' *Bideford Black: The New Generation* addresses this with acute attention through the employment of documentary making interventionists, Pepper's invite to observers is to encounter the critical distance between document and its restaging actively. The gallery is the site of translation and renewal of this engagement, one that sees critical distance become active and vibrant in its foregrounding of the artwork.

The hologram, the capturing of an image in light that references an object in a particular space and time, is the initial and then integral means for Pepper's installation set in another space and time. *Three-Nine* is both historic and contemporary, an *un*-document of the original's aura made by a negotiation of the documentary as engaged by the inclusion of the hologram within an installation. This reinterpretation redirects the intent and, in Benjamin's sense, reaffirms and embellishes the "aura" of the original to some degree (as this cannot be fully achieved due to the lack of access to primary encounter). It draws the document into the present without losing accountability to its indebted past. The projected line animates the holograms' surfaces to buttress being beyond historic to present, ensuring the original is a vital part of the new. In *Intuition of the Instant*, Gaston Bachelard states that "time has one reality, the reality of the instant" and that consciousness is with the present, and the hologram gives example of this visually (2013, 6). Using the philosophy of Henri Bergson as a means to describe present consciousness and of being there, Bachelard suggests that duration is *intimately* experienced, and that this is direct and affective. Pepper's integration of the hologram creates an intimacy of light and of

other objects that work in harmony to be immediate. The projected line enlivens the holographic surface, while its invisibility connects the inte-gral elements within the installation spatially. The hologram ceases to be a two-dimensional plane depicting the three-dimensional history of the original object photographed; it is transformed as an active and expanded platform for the convergence of transiency. It provides a potent nexus with indeterminable reach that suggests an intimacy with other bodies, objects, or places that have immediacy and primacy.

### A PROPOSITION

When discussing the complexities of the artwork in relation to the ephemeral, responsiveness to opportunities for enlivenment and re- enlivenment is paramount. Of course, this is an inexhaustible task, as artistic intention and purpose creates different solutions for situating the transient. In its attempt to explore the flex and relaxation within criti-cal dialogues and frameworks of ephemeral artworks, *The Alternative Document* exhibition suggests how appropriate staging and interpre-tation invests in the aura of the original artwork to reinvigorate that which is otherwise consigned to history. The strategy responds to indi-vidualized and sensitive methods of production, to allow for a continua-tion of the potency and critical affirmation of the original. The response re-invests in and re-engages the critical distance of the original, suitably adapting it for subsequent iterations of the exhibition. This gives the artwork a renewed critical position as determined through engaging responsive acts of documentary and restaging.

The present and our relation to it, as the reality of an event and happening, is significant in terms of Bergson's description of duration and experience, which has a bearing on Phelan's proposition of being there as important to make the artwork. Bachelard discusses the before and after as moments held in tension through a series of actively connect-ing and continually producing present *nows*. The notion of a series of repetitive and critically engaged *nows* in artworks is of specific interest when discussing the ephemeral. Evolution, change, and that series of *nows* keep the ephemeral *ephemeral* as it decays, reshapes or even dis-appears. A self-defining strategy that identifies, foregrounds, and inte-grates experiential *nows*, however subtle, is significant for the artworks' continuing critical development, dexterity, and ontology. I would argue that Pepper's use of the holographic and Choules' mining of the image

activate and generate a series of presences that respond to site, circum-stance, and critical framework, incorporating nows as points of invigoration and continuation of ontological consequence.

As a demonstration of sympathetic and divergent modes of response as a means to keep, in Bachelard's sense, a repetitive and performative now, the artworks of Choules and Pepper assert a demand to remain in critical process through a re-examination of the ephemeral by means of strategic exhibition and continuing negotiations in relation to the gallery site. Similar to Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* response to the material, geographic and geological conditions of its site, Choules' and Pepper's artworks react to the gallery to demonstrate an incorporating dependency on process, and the critical flex and relaxation within criticality that constitutes their understanding. Through subsequent exhibition iterations in other galleries, they are reconfigured and made anew. Responsive and relational to each site, they operate as if in an ongoing conversation on the subject of transience and the archive. Exemplifying how a work of art refutes its past-tense objectification, each demonstrates an ongoing and active integral critical tension. In responding directly to the gallery, by remaking and rethinking structure and translation, and rerouting orientation and criticality, they transgress the realm of the document by engaging the documentary and biographic mapping of their investment in self-ontology. In this way, they demonstrate how ephemerality can respond to history and legacy, while allowing for its development through reconfiguration and critical response.

The development of a *now* specific, responsive artwork sees the critical distance between the ephemeral and its document not only diminish, but also be productive. In acknowledging and denying the start and endpoint determinations that establish and demarcate artworks as time-based, the experience and legacy can be multi-dimensional and experiential beyond that of the original if documentary responds to its developing identity. Reusing and redefining the original (and its aura) increase critical reflexivity, whereby the tensions at play recharge and develop through their lack of being static. Through engaging new interpretations, additional timeframes for happening and modalities, the distance retracts and expands through this dynamic, increasingly fluid rhizomic potential, evoking a multitudinous experience through defiance of the conventions of documentation. It suggests how an artwork in transition is by virtue on a continual and never-ending trajectory to *become*, to re-become, to be unfinished and to address "the complex confluence of cognitive and

affective responses” (Taylor 2010, 175). In the works discussed, the document finds purpose through a takeover by the documentary, a process that in this situation is as un-tomb-like as a laboratory. An experimental proposition that intends to render the document as an *un*-document, by incorporating and responding to its history yet engaging with it as the enduringly anew.

## NOTES

1. Text and witness testimony may also be used to give account, but this is not normal practice. If they are in use, it is often to accompany photo-graphic records, which do give a fuller account of the event, but not one that represents its entirety.
2. The term “happening” is borrowed from Allan Kaprow, and in this context denotes all types of ephemeral artwork that rely on time-based structures of existence.
3. There are erosive acts performed by gallery staff/others over the duration of the exhibition, including the removal of three photographic triangles from the collage (which are then displayed in individual frames alongside), and the relocation of some to the bottom of the collage.
4. Choules donates the removed sections of the work to galleries as an act of heritage to the artwork’s diminishing history. It is the intention that the frames will eventually be the only element of the original artwork that remains.

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