

Trajectories, metaphysics of perception

Video work by Sigurður Guðjónsson and an electronic/piano composition by Anna Thorvaldsdóttir

“All perceptual experience is a matter of bringing the world into focus by achieving the right kind of skillful access to it, the right kind of understanding. Art matters because art recapitulates this basic fact about perceptual consciousness. Art is human experience, in the small, and so it is, in a way, a model or guide to our basic situation.”(Alva Noe, 2012, p. 128)

If we are being guided by this artwork, where will it take us? A model of what are we being presented with? It is a guide to a part of perceptual experience where sound and visual perception are in unison. This model has been constructed to immerse us in a bodily experience; light, darkness, movement, and sound are presented as pure. It is not sand as such we are being presented with, but a mass that moves in direct relation to sound, this is not the darkness outside our window at night, but darkness as a premise for light. This is a feast for our senses, we are guided by the sparse elements of the work to experiences; romantic, dramatic, filled with arctic night and white light of almost unearthly kind. This is perceptual experience that models something out of the ordinary.

At least since the rise of empirical science, metaphysics has not been the subject of direct experience. Our perceptual consciousness is usually not thought to contain any direct relations to metaphysical truths, or untruths. We do not experience these kinds of things (if they exist or are meaningful at all) but arrive at them with the aid of our rationality, our abstract thinking. But if our perception is, in fact, a learned or acquired skill, this strict dichotomy between perception and rational thought seems less important. We all approach perceptual experience armed with the experience and knowledge we have, and perceiving is conditioned on these factors.

The interrupted flow, the sounds from the piano, the visible mass, the darkness, the light, the movements, the trajectories directly experienced seem to model metaphysics, seem to offer perceptual access to something that is usually thought to be the subject of thought. This is a part of our basic situation that we seldom get the chance to *see*, but when we do, we do so in art.

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