

To my Parents and loving sister Bushra

THE ELEVATOR RIDE: IN FACT AND FICTION

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

of

Ihsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

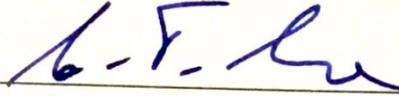
by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN MEDIA AND DESIGN

THE DEPARTMENT OF
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IHSAN DOGRAMACI BILKENT UNIVERSITY ANKARA
May, 2016

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Media and Design.



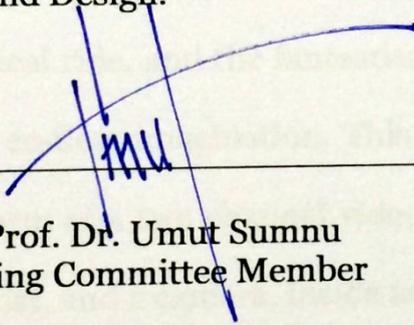
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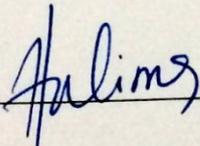
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ABSTRACT

THE ELEVATOR RIDE: IN FACT AND FICTION

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MFA in Media and Design

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Andreas Treske

May 2016

The Elevator is the intersection of space, time, and sound. Space that designs a democratic communication and interaction among people from all walks of life, time that is amplified and in motion, and sound, that is in isolation. The focus of this study is to observe the function of elevators in fact and fiction. The actual physical experience of elevators will offer us facts about this mechanical ride, and the fantastical use of elevators in the fictional realm is a story of endless imagination. This paper is accompanied with visual artwork, in the form of a two channel video installation that presents the intervention of an artist, and a camera, inside an elevator.

Key words: Elevators, Fact, Fiction, Film, Space, Time, Intervention.

ÖZET

ASANSÖRE BINMEK: GERÇEK VE KURGU

Narjis Mirza

İletişim Ve Tasarım Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Andreas Treske

Mayıs 2016

Asansör mekan, zaman ve sesin birleşimi olarak ele alınabilir. Bu bağlamda; mekan farklı kesimlerden insanların arasında belirli bir etkileşim ve iletişim yaratırken, zaman daha fazla uzadığı gibi hareket halindeki, ses ise birbaşınalığı temsil edebilir. Bu çalışma hem olgusal hem de kurgusal anlamda asansörlerin işlevini gözleme amacındadır. Asansörlerin esas yarattığı fiziksel deneyim bize mekanik kısmıyla ilgili olgular sunduğu gibi kurgusal anlamda da sonsuz bir hayalgücünün hikayesini verebilir. Bu tez, aynı zamanda, bir asansör içinde kamerayla çekilerek yaratılmış iki kanallı video yerleştirmesinden oluşan bir görsel çalışmayı içerir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Asansör, Uzay, Zaman, Gerçek, Kurgu, Müdahale,

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CHAPTER I

ELEVATOR RIDES: AN URBAN CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE, TIME, AND SOUND

1.1 Introduction:

This chapter will primarily focus on three elements that surround every person; these three elements are space, time, and sound. The discussion will begin with our engagement and interaction with these three elements inside an elevator space, and how they correspondingly design our communication. The conversation of space, time, and sound can be a broad discussion, from its physical capacity to its philosophical understanding, therefore, the focus will remain within the urban context, featuring the urban design of space, and the surrounding notion of time and sound. The ultimate goal though is to understand the experience of space, time, and sound, inside elevator machines in particular. Elevators are not only vertical means of transportation, but they also design our interaction with space, our idea of time, and our isolation to sound. The elevator marks the intersection of space in motion, to time in the movement.

1.2 The Rhythm and Relationship of Space, Time, and Sound:

These three elements are the building blocks and fundamental features of any city landscape. They have an interrelationship that builds unity in a habitat, with in the local setting of everyday activity. Lefebvre speaks of this unity between energy, space and time,

stating that, 'Even if the links between these concepts and the physical realities to which they correspond are not always clearly established, we do know that such links exist, and that the concepts or theories they imply- energy, space, time- can be neither conflated nor separated from one another.'

The relationship of space and time, along with energy and sound is interlinked and intertwined, creating a unity in substance. Although Lefebvre deals with energy separately, note that our discussion of space, time, and sound in an urban context deploys energy in all three elements. Space in an urban landscape is constructed with energy, time is calculated with clocks and bells, and sound is a byproduct of the consumption of this energy in space and time. This being said, we can return to how Lefebvre links each of these elements and contests their presence in isolation.

'When we evoke 'energy', we must immediately note that energy has to be deployed within a space. When we evoke 'space', we must immediately indicate: what occupies that space and how it does so: the deployment of energy in relation to 'points' and within a time frame. When we evoke 'time', we must immediately say, what it is that moves or changes therein, space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction; likewise energy and time.' (Lefebvre, 2001, p. 12)

Space, time and sound, are *empty abstractions* if considered in isolation. Space is measured with relation to the occupant of that space, whether it is a physical entity residing in an actual space or an abstraction like time that contours a space. Likewise, time is calculated with relative space and situation that inhabits that time. It is incomprehensible to consider time without the idea of where it is spent and for whom? Lastly, sound is abstract in all sense, if there is no space for it to exhibit and no time for it

encounter, there remains no conception of sound. We will go further and explore space, time, and sound independently, and witness how space, time and sound design the elevator experience in reality and in fiction.

1.3 Lefebvre's Engagement with Space in Urban Architecture:

If someone were to ask, Henri Lefebvre, What is space? He would reply and say,

‘Space is social morphology: it is to lived experience what form itself is to the living organism, just as intimately bound up with function and structure’

(Lefebvre, 2001, p. 94)

Lefebvre was a Marxist, a sociologist, and a philosopher celebrated for his original and pioneering work on everyday life. He spoke about the right to the city, the production of space and social encounters. He critiqued the urban landscape that designed structure of power, authority, and violence. In one of his most important work, ‘Production of Space’ he discusses the ‘pathology of space’ and calls architects, urbanites and planners ‘doctors of space’. Before we discuss space and spatial encounters and Lefebvre’s detailed analysis, it is necessary to discuss the importance of space. Why space is important and what does space determine about social encounters that we must pay such close attention to its construction. Lefebvre discusses this notion in the beginning of his book Production of Space, he states,

‘Space implies, contains, dissimulates social relationships, space is not a thing, but rather a set of relationship of things, objects and products.’ (Lefebvre, 2001, p. 83)

Space is not a stationary construction with walls and bricks. Space is a determining factor of social encounters and relationships between objects and products. ‘...It subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationship in their coexistence and simultaneity, their (relative) order and for (relative) disorder...’ Such a description challenges the ordinary perspective of space as a stationary and fixed construction. This description introduces how space effects the relative order of products in a space, the relative encounter of people inside a space, and how space curates the encounter and engagement of its inhabitants.

1.3.1 Horizontal Architecture:

The urban space is constructed with buildings, malls, apartments, shops, streets, and routes that display and design the physical interaction. The streets, roads, and sidewalks design the layout for horizontal travel and transportation.

‘Thus urban space is comprised, first, of wide avenues leading to the temples and palaces, secondly of medium-sized squares and streets which are the transitional and connecting spaces, and, thirdly and lastly, of the charming flower-filled alleys that afford access to our houses. (Lefebvre, 2001, p. 154)

1.3.2 Vertical Architecture:

Vertical architecture is the stretch of space and its construction in a linear order. This was primarily possible because of the elevator, vertical transportation made it possible for architects and planners to design and construct vertical structures. Today high-rise buildings are prominent and essential part of big cities; buildings stand in competition to one another. The idea of having the highest building is a matter of pride and

achievement. However, there is something about verticality in architecture that Lefebvre is critical about,

“The arrogant verticality of skyscrapers, and especially of public and state buildings, introduces a phallic or more precisely a phallocratic element into the visual realm; the purpose of this display, of this need to impress, is to convey an impression of authority to each spectator. Verticality and great height have ever been the spatial expression of potentially violent power.” (Lefebvre, 2001, p. 98)

Today the big cities of the world are in fierce competition with each other for the highest building, while cities like Chicago and New York held the title for many years, it is now the Burj Al Khalifa in the Middle East that stands as the tallest building in the World.



Figure 1. Burj Al Khalifa [Photo] Retrieved from:http://www.grayline.com/tours/dubai/dubai-with-burj-al-arab-and-burj-khalifa-5884_35

1.4 Authority and Power in Height:

The modern trend in building construction is the ever increasing height (George R. Strakosch). Height has a sense of power and authority. Ask any woman, few inches of height acquired through those –difficult to balance– heels, boosts her confidence. A tall heighted man will generally have more poise and self-confidence, than a short heighted person, who will usually struggle with low self-esteem. This same height in architecture becomes powerful and authoritative, especially in the recent few decades as buildings are competing in ‘building beauty contests.’ Lefebvre without any hesitation declares it as ‘violent architecture’.

While elevators facilitated height in architecture, they also became part of an expression of power and authority. Height divided the space into a standardized homogenous scale, for living or work. Consider the example an apartment building that gains height by repetition of the same space, piling on top of each other.

In an apartment building comprising stack after stack of boxes for living in, for example, the spectators-cum-tenants grasp the relationship between part and whole directly; furthermore, they recognize themselves in that relationship. By constantly expanding the scale of things, this movement serves to compensate for the pathetically small size of each set of living-quarters; it posits, presupposes and imposes homogeneity in the subdivision of space; and, ultimately, it takes on the aspect of pure logic and hence of tautology: space contains space, the visible contains the visible - and boxes fit into boxes. (Lefebvre, 2001, p. 98)

One such box is the elevator, which is a small room suspended in air and designed for motion, following the same logic of space, providing the continuous to and fro movement

to each division of space in a vertical building.

1.5 The Miracle of Levitation, A God Like View:

Levitation is a tempting experience, that has attracted man to build objects and machines, that facilitate the flying experience. The ability to rise and ascend from the ground to a higher level has been always been an attractive venture. The elevator offered this flight, to travel in a vertical direction.

“The elevator made loftier planes literally accessible, providing riders with God like , panoramic views of His creation, a view that according to Barthes, allowed people to ‘transcend sensation’. Two million people ascended the Eiffel Tower in its first year of opening” (Hall, 2003, p. 61)

1.6 Ascend and Descend and Transcend:

‘Madam,’ said Mr Wonka, ‘it is not a lift any longer. Lifts only go up and down inside buildings. But now, that it has taken us up into the sky, it has become an ELEVATOR. It is THE GREAT GLASS ELEVATOR.’ (Dahl, 1972)

Roald Dahl’s Great Glass Elevator made its first appearance in 1964, as part of children’s fiction collection, it is one of the most iconic elevator ride in fiction, that inspired actual elevators. Almost a few years later, a similar concept of a glass elevator is open to public at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. John Portman’s design of a transparent glass elevator becomes a great hit as it visually displays the ascent and descent for the passengers, similar to Charlie’s journey in the great glass elevator. The elevators at the Hyatt Regency not only rose through the atrium lobby but also ascended through its ceiling to the saucer shaped blue glass revolving restaurant at the top of the building. The

ascension is described like this by Portman himself, 'It was like a ride for people in the elevator; it was like a kinetic sculpture for those sitting and watching' (Patton, 2003)

These elevators contributed tremendously not only to the hotel but also to the experience of a vertical ride, ascension accelerated to a more transcending experience.

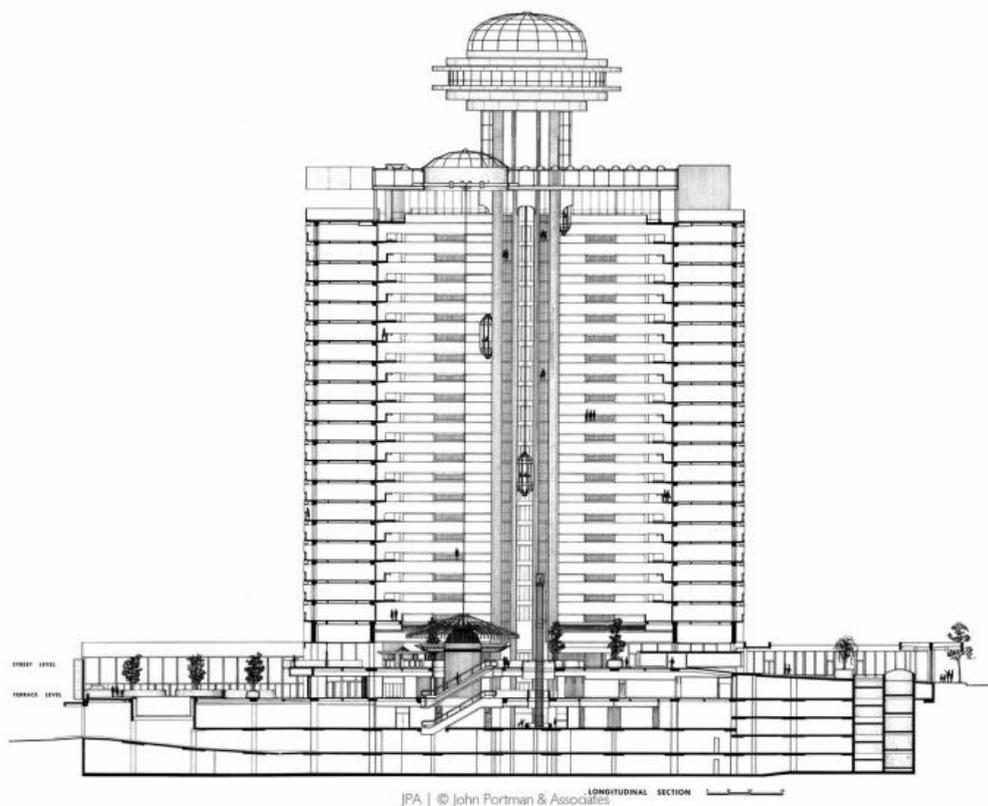


Figure 2. *Hyatt Regency Elevator* [photo] Retrieved from: <https://wdanielanderson.wordpress.com/2014/06/08/polaris-atlantas-favorite-ufo-to-return-tuesday/>

Perhaps Keaton Maxwell, of *"This Is It Atlanta"* describes the it best,

"After traveling up the Hyatt, there is a millisecond of nothing, then boom, a beam of light and the city of Atlanta. The elevator ride itself is a swift and dramatic hint of the Polaris experience. Do not get me wrong, the decor, atmosphere, music, subtle touches, are all immensely sexy, but it doesn't take itself too serious. Remember, you're in an iconic but ever so playful venue that is known for being the 'blue spaceship thing'. You look out at the streets and see the hustle and bustle of Atlanta" (Georgia Globe Design News, 2014).

1.7 A Brief History Of Elevators:

The elevator history begins with lifts, all the way back to the copper and bronze age in 4000 B.C. The primitive lifting mechanism used in the Great Pyramids or Temples of Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians were built brick by brick, through the lift. The lift went through a history of changes, innovation, and advancement as man progressed in technology. The invention of the wheel to the steam pump, to the steam engine and electro magnetic waves, all contributed to making the modern day elevators. In 1833 men were lifted and lowered to ground through shafts and ropes, and with John Roebling's wire rope the elevator industry got its first boost. In 1846 The first hydraulic industrial lift driven by water pressure appeared. However, the most famous name in the Elevator industry is Elisha Grave Otis. Otis' achievement was that he convinced people he could make an elevator that would go not only up, but also down without going into a free fall. In 1854 he demonstrated the first safety elevator at the New York exposition in the

Crystal Palace proving elevator travel for passengers was safe. (The Elevator Museum, 2012)

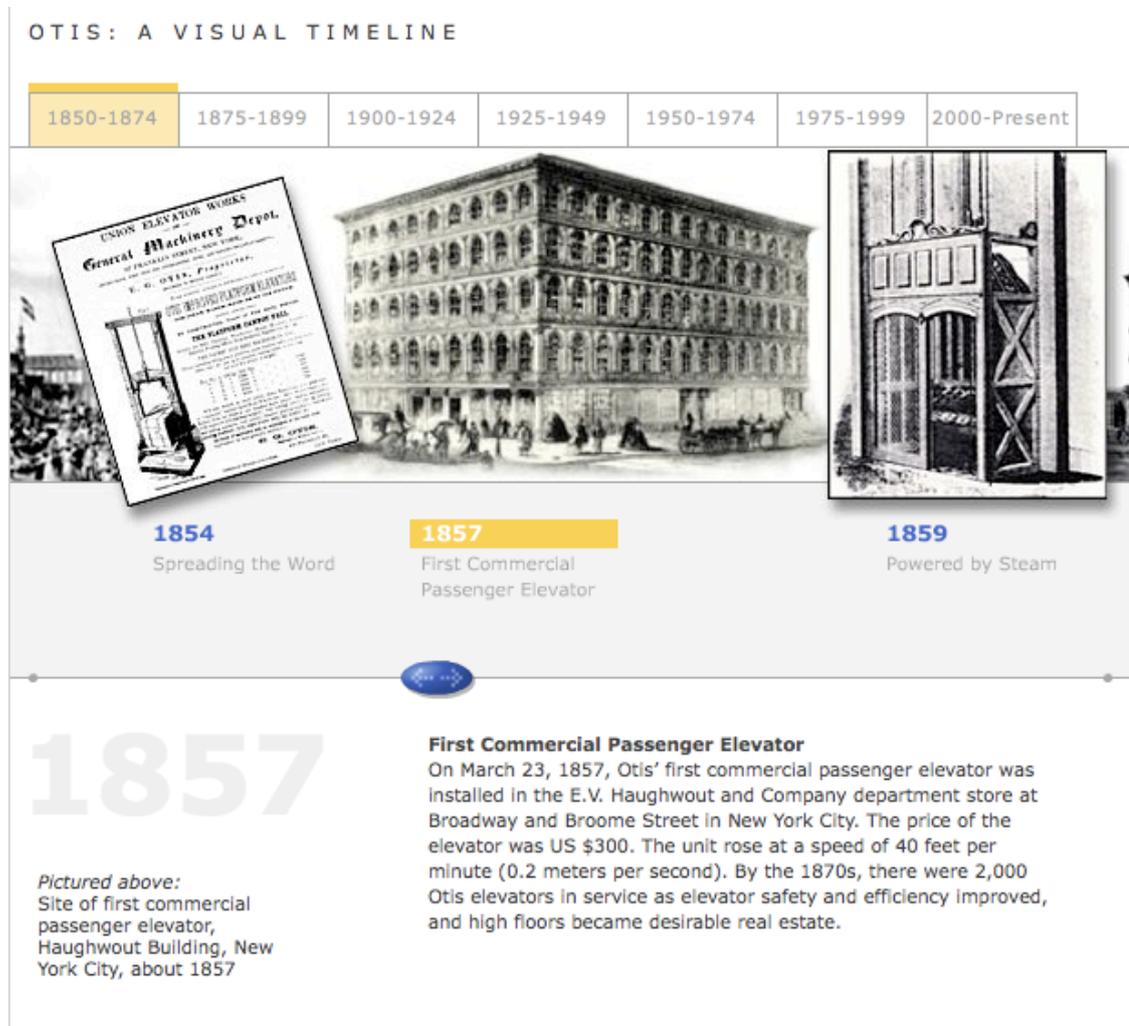


Figure 3. Otis Elevator Timeline [picture] Retrieved from: <http://www.wired.com/2010/03/0323otis-elevator-first/>

1.8 Inside Geometry, Inside An Elevator:

The question is how do people correspond to this space, its design, and its function. The function is evident, the purpose of this machine is to elevate. The order is vertical, elevators ride in ascending and descending order. The geometry of space has a set number of features. Once inside the elevator, you can choose to ride to the desired floor in the

building. The doors have an automatic task to open and close on each floor. Once inside the elevator, the doors close and you must now position yourself in correspondence to the space.

Space produces its own conditions of existence, this means that spatial configuration, and adjustment is not dependent entirely upon the occupant. It is the design and intended features of the particular space that curates the interaction with that space.

‘Each work occupies a space; it also engenders and fashions that space. Each product too occupies a space, and circulates within it. The question is therefore what relationship might exist between these two modalities of occupied space.’
(Lefebvre, 2001, p. 77)

Lets look at this relationship of space with its occupant in the paradigm of vertical architecture, and in particular the case of elevators, which is the backbone in making high-rise structures possible. What is happening inside an Elevator?

1.8.1 Fear vs. Vanity:

“More than any decorative embellishments or surface treatments, awe and fear have defined the space since its invention” (Hall, 2003, p. 59)

Elevators in their design are geometric; they are boxes with a particular height, length, and width. The capacity of carrying load is determined by the count of people or the load in kilograms. Since it is a crowded space, light and mirrors facilitate in enhancing the concept of space virtually. Mirrors give the illusion of space, to reduce the tension of the

area once it is occupied. It was important to counter the passenger's frustration inside the enclosed space. Also the tension of waiting, because for those with increasing appetite for speed, waiting contributed to anxiety. According to the author James Gleick, 'people began to get upset just after 40 seconds inside an elevator' (Hall, 2003). To reduce this tension, something had to be done, it is an apocryphal tale that after hearing of this George C Sziklai, who was responsible for the high speed elevators, installed wall to wall mirrors opposite the elevator doors to distract the passengers. *What better way to distract a human being than vanity?* Hall quotes the following,

“After hearing the complaints that the elevators were too slow, Sziklai suggested that the riders can be easily pacified with the help of vanity” (Hall, 2003, p. 71)

Mirrors work perfectly in diverting the fear of this flying car. Even today, it is either transparent glass that gives a panoramic view to the passenger or mirrors that distracts the attention.

“Walls and ceilings of stainless steel or mirrored bronze can make cars look larger” advised one contractor of New York Times report of 1992, “Women can primp. I myself straighten my tie” (Hall, 2003, p. 71)



Figure 4. *The Elevator Ride* [video still]

However, mirrors can also reflect back, mirroring the behavior, echoing the plight. Psychologist Andrew Baum makes this observation and is quoted in the Times story suggesting that, ‘since the amount of personal space in the elevator is ‘inadequate’ the elevator presents a ‘*violation of intimacy*’. This is primarily because the ride inside the elevator is conspicuous. Everything in the closeness of the shared space is amplified, exaggerating every noise, move, and gesture. In the discussion of time and sound, we will see how time is amplified and sound isolation impacts human psychology inside an elevator.

Thus, the interior of the elevator became important just as much as the function of the machine. It had to be a space that invited the audience, which diverted the fear of being suspended in air on wires and ropes. Early elevators had seats, this was also due to the speed of the ride, the slow motion allowed the rider to sit down and experience the

elevation. However as the speed excelled the seats went out of fashion. The odd psychological ambience, the isolation of sound, the limited control and the idea of not knowing where you are going created anxiety and fear for the people.

1.8.2 Direction vs. Directionless:

“Enclosure turned the rider’s attention inward robbing him or her of a sense of direction and accentuating the mystery of vertical transportation.” (Hall, 2003, p. 65)

It is hollow in its sense of direction, but very directed in its mechanical function, which makes this ride all the more unusual and mysterious. This phenomenon remains true today; the enclosure of the four walls of this room robs us of our sense of direction..

Although it is a known fact that the elevator ascends or descends, vertically, ascending or descending expression inside an elevator ride is void of direction. One way of looking at it is that the elevator does not discriminate one’s choice of travel, going up feels just like going down and going down is no different than going up.

The most vivid extrapolation of the elevator’s tangled psycho-spatial theme is to be found, inevitably in fiction (Hall, 2003). Haruki Murakami’s novel “Hard Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World” describes the near-future Tokyo’s cityscape, with the main character’s ‘journey’ inside an elevator

‘The elevator continued its impossibly slow ascent. At least I imagined it was ascent. There was no telling for sure: it was so slow that all sense of direction simply vanished. It could have been going down for all I knew, or maybe it wasn’t moving at all. But let’s just assume it was going up. Merely a guess. Maybe I’d gone up twelve stories, then down three. Maybe I’d circled the globe. How would I know?’ (Murakami, 1993, p. 2)

All sensation of the vehicular motion is absent. His character coughs hoping to hear an echo but it slicks off the concrete walls, and is dampened to a ‘dull thud’. The complete antiseptic, sterilized steel structure is almost like a vault once the doors are closed.

Murakami’s description of the elevator is of a soulless, empty, automated system, making the ride a surreal experience for the rider. He makes more observations of the space and finds it, ‘antiseptic as a brand-new coffin’.

Colson Whitehead’s protagonist makes a similar observation in the novel ‘The Intuitionist.’ On one of her rounds for elevator inspection, she shares this thought with her readers.

“There is an old inspectors maxim: ‘An elevator is a grave’ such loss and devastation is there. That’s why the inside walls of the car never sheer; They are broken up into panels, equipped with a dorsal rail. Otherwise it would be a box, a coffin.” (Whitehead, 1999)

The darkest reality of the low-cost residential elevator is not its morbid ambience, but its social context (Hall, 2003, p. 71). Urbanist Jane Jacobs, in his book *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) points out the hazards of elevator serviced apartment buildings and describes them as the ‘most dangerous way of packing people on given

amount of land'. (Hall, 2003, p. 71). While some may observe forced intimacy that fuels the riders frustration, it is most importantly the fear of entrapment or death.

Some of this is also instigated by fiction, film and media. Tower of Terror by Walt Disney, is an example of such designed fear. This tower's elevator ride, driven by computational configuration could ascend and drop with automated control, creating the most haunted and daring experience of a vertical ride. Disney invites you to enter the, 'Maintenance Service Elevator' in the Tower of Terror, with an unknown destination, known as the Twilight Zone; the entire experience is designed with simulations and projection of light and sound to amplify the horror. There are also stories of children falling into shafts with crushed limbs and heads that circulate around the elevator ride, making it a truly horrifying experience.

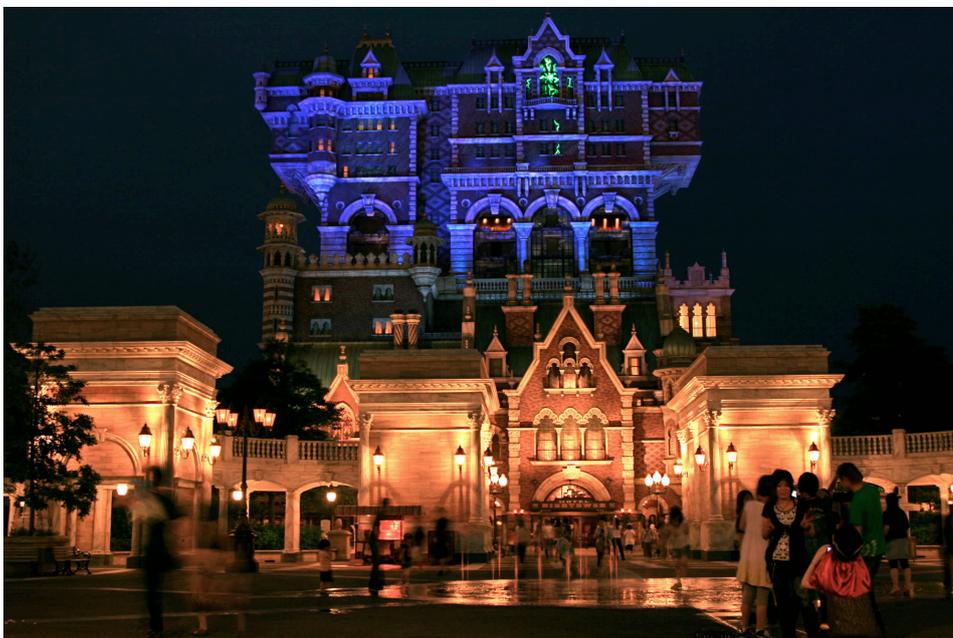


Figure 5. The Tower of Terror

[photo] Retrieved from: <http://www.wired.com/2010/03/0323otis-elevator-first/>

1.8.3 Attendant vs. Automation:

‘The contrast between a staffed space and empty, automatic space cannot be over emphasized’ (Hall, 2003, p. 67)

Today anyone can ride an elevator on their own, however early elevators were run by attendants, they would be trained to understand how the ‘push’ buttons work and would press them for the passengers. This was also because elevators could not stop on floors, they would make their vertical ride once the button was pressed, and therefore, elevator operators were required, to make the most efficient journey. The speed of the nineteenth century elevator was also 100ft per minute, at such a speed and with no stops; attendants were required to manage the car. (Hall, p. 67) The interpretation of the role of the attendant and why they were important is described in the following excerpt from an elevator design website.

‘It was almost an art and acquired skill to correctly operate an elevator. The elevator was controlled by a hand operated controller for speed and direction. The operator had full control over the elevator car, and was responsible for stopping it so the elevator aligned with the floor. If not done correctly, the passengers would be in for a bumpy up and down ride until the elevator was aligned properly for a safe exit.’¹

The elevator became a space of performance for the operator. They became characters inside an enclosed space with specific personalities. Novels, cartoons and films portrayed the operator as quirky, sometimes belligerent character whose persona defined the mood

¹ <http://www.elevatordesigninfo.com/why-elevator-operators-went-extinct>

of the car space. The Otis in 1949 published a leaflet that advised the passengers of “elevator etiquette” saying that they should avoid long conversations with the operator “to avoid missing stops”. (Hall, 2003)

The attendant and the elevator ride was significantly part of the urban experience in the 1960’s. One popular television show called “Mad Men” features many scenes focusing on the interaction with the attendants and office employees. The creator, Matthew Weiner, makes the following comment about his use of elevator in this TV series

‘It’s a public place where private things can happen, and there’s a lot of potential there’ (Jurgensen, 2015).

With the elevator scenes, the show also depicts the social hierarchy of the 1960’s in New York City. One such scene is the reaction of the secretary Peggy to the uniformed Black attendant driving the elevator car. The show inside the elevator is full of symbolism; the elevator becomes the simplest of sets, a simple cube with each character-facing straight, a direction that would otherwise seem senseless. The ascending and descending feature of the vertical ride also addresses a social hierarchy in profession and life. It becomes a ride that confronts issues like gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class.



Figure 6. Scene from Mad Men [video still] Retrieved: from: http://madmen.wikia.com/wiki/File:Peggy_elevator.jpg

Weiner suggests that “Mad Men” is about rises and falls, professional and existential.

Like everything else in the show, the elevator moments are meticulously staged and freighted with symbolism. But elevators function in a way that none of the show’s offices, homes and other period-perfect sets really can: “As a neutral zone where characters cross paths, and where time, physical space and tension get neatly compressed” (Jurgensen, 2015). Wired Magazine states the benefits of elevators in creating new jobs and helping empower the United States’ most oppressed citizens. “You may not see them much anymore, but there were once tens of thousands of elevator operators, most of whom were black.”



Figure 7. The Elevator Attendant, 1900, Zurich, Switzerland [photo] from *Up down Across Elevators Escalators and Moving Sidewalks* pg.65

In contrast, although automation began very early in 1892, it was only in the 1960s that it prominently eliminated the operators from the car space. This was due to the accelerated speed and the automatic doors that facilitated the elevator flight and made possible independent ride. It also extended the space, as the absence of the driver made space for more passengers. However the awe and fear of the ride was augmented, it was now a mystery, how this driverless machine operated.

‘The gradual elimination of humans from the machines operation has only added to its mystery and confirmed our suspicions that someone else, not present inside the car, is really in control, be it artificial intelligence or supernatural or corporate entity’ (Hall, 2003, p. 75)



Figure 8. *Otis Elevator Advertisements, Electronic Call button* [photo] Retrieved from: <https://tr.pinterest.com/pin/247135098275197350/>

CHAPTER II

ELEVATOR RIDES: A SITE OF STRANGE ENCOUNTERS

‘They ride in a box on a rope in a pit...’

-The Intuitionist

2.1 Introduction:

Architects understand the future is up; the future is in how high you can go. Elevators facilitate the construction of high-rise buildings; it is an essential requirement of the modern-day urban landscape. In a city, elevators make possible the construction of super tall towers and in fiction; it is a box of imagination and invention. The focus of this chapter is to observe the function of elevators in fact and fiction. The actual physical experience of elevators will offer us facts about this mechanical ride, and the fantastical use of elevators in the fictional realm of literature and film is a story of endless imagination. This chapter also aims to answer questions about the function of elevators in the urban city landscape. How does an elevator design space, and time inside a building? In addition, how does fiction reinvent this mechanical ride into a magical experience?

2.2 Rides in Reality and Fiction:

Rides have always been an important part of everyday life, in reality and fiction. While an ordinary ride is mechanical, a fictional ride is magical. An ordinary ride is built with human engineering, a fictional ride is solely dependent upon human imagination and how far, and beyond it can go. A ride in this world is designed, it occupies space, and it

travels a distance over time. A fictional ride reinvents time, and breaks the conventions of a designed space. If rides have the sole purpose and function of transporting load, luggage, and people, fictional ride lifts our imagination. One example of an actual ride is an elevator, and if real-time elevators ride in a vertical direction, fictional elevators travel in all possible directions and across all realms and kingdoms. Another particular fact about elevators is that they are driverless rides, and in fiction, they can be driven on endless paths across time and space.

The following table neatly sets apart the factual and fictional elements of elevators.

Table 1. Fact And Fiction

Facts	Fiction
Machine	Magic
Human Engineering	Human imagination
Design of space and time	Reinventing space and time
Transporting load and people	Carries imagination
Vertical ride (ascending & descending)	Movement in all possible direction, realm, space
Driverless ride (limited route)	Endless ride (magical route)

A detailed analysis of this table will be presented further in this chapter, discussing each one of these points of distinction, that make elevators possible in reality and in fiction.

2.3 Elevator Ride in Fact:

We can first focus on some factual information about elevators. What are the elements of design and function for the elevator? This factual information is derived from my personal observation and my readings on the elevator mechanism.

2.3.1. Human Engineering:

Elevator is basically a machine, a construction of human engineering. Which means,

‘an applied science that coordinates the design of devices, systems, and physical working conditions with the capacities and requirements of the worker.’²

This concept is particularly true for elevators, the design, the construction, and the function of elevators is important and in coordination with the rider—the general public—in the case of city elevators. It is important that the design and mechanical movement of the elevator coordinates with the capacities and requirements of the user. This would broadly include the design of space, the speed of movement of the elevator and the system in place to use the elevators. All of this is controlled in the design and construction phase of an elevator space.

2.3.2. Geometry of Space, Time, and Sound:

The most prominent feature of an elevator is the geometric design of space. The first interaction of the rider is with the space, as the user enters the elevator and observes the geometry of the new environment. The basic design is a box, a quadrilateral. A four cornered metal box that rides in a vertical direction. This box is a closed space suspended

² <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/human-engineering>

in the air, with ropes and electric wires making linear trips across various floors.

Therefore, the scheme of space is very important, usually mirrors are placed on one side of the elevator wall to create an illusion of space, reducing the tightness of the area, as passengers aboard this machine. The second element at play inside the elevator is the time. Suddenly time is in slow motion inside the elevator, the interval of motion and pause on each floor is an important part of the elevator ride.

We experience in our daily lives that every environment has its own speed of time.

Seconds on a busy street pass by without any notice but these same seconds inside an elevator pause and have their own particular duration. We observe and experience these seconds in this vertical journey. Another important and noteworthy element of design inside some elevators is the music. Music is there to eliminate the isolation of sound. This is particularly true because of the elevator effect on human behavior that pauses speech and movement. The elevator effect will be discussed in detail later in the paper.

2.3.3. Linear Transportation:

Elevator is a metallic box suspended by ropes that makes only vertical journeys. Before elevators, there was vertical transportation, like ladders and staircases. Elevators are a production of the requirement of tall buildings that make use of minimum land, and elevate space in a vertical direction, providing an efficient and fast mode of vertical transportation. The Elevator regulates traffic up and down floors in a building, managing the traffic of people on a two-way ride.

This is the basic function of the elevator, to carry load and people up and down floors in a building. It is this function that facilitates and accelerates movement in a tall building.

The invention of elevators is pre-historic, and the basic mechanism was used to lift goods and heavy objects from the ground floor to higher floors but today elevators are prerequisite of the urban architecture. Elevators have made possible super-tall towers and mega high-rise buildings like skyscrapers, without an elevator, it would have been absurd to construct such buildings.

2.3.4. Driverless Ride:

Another accurate evidence about elevators is that it is a driverless ride, almost automatic. It has a preset number of functions and it works in that limited preset. The preset system is because of the limited function of this machine; it can only travel along the designed route. When a person enters the elevator, he or she deposits trust into this machine. One can say that although it is a driverless ride, the ride is possible because of the trust it receives. Trust in the mechanical reliability and the need to travel between floors, encourage us to ride.

2.4 Elevators In Literature:

To explore the fictional side of elevators, the best place to look at is literature, and in particular books and novels that contested reality with imagination, and we can begin with the definition of fiction in literature, taken from the Encyclopedia of Britannica:

‘Literature created from the imagination, not presented as fact, though it may be based on a true story or situation’³

Although the exploration of elevators in fictional literature is limited, it is a contrasting and creative approach to actual elevator machines. In literature elevators are a ride of the author’s imagination.

A few examples of elevators in books of fiction are as follows:

1. Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator by Roald Dahl (1972)
2. The Ersatz Elevator by Lemony Snicket (2001)
3. The Fountains of Paradise by Arthur C. Clark (1979)
4. The Intuitionist by Colson Whitehead (1999)

The iconic Wonkavator that not only attracted children to a wonderful ride out of the factory but also inspired actual elevators made from glass. Snicket’s elevator befitted the allegory of the horrors of this mechanical ride, that repulsed the use of the space. The fountain of paradise is a widely read novel that introduced the idea of a space elevator to a wider audience, building a narrative on how it is actually possible to create a ride that is connected from space and travels on a designed vertical path. However from above selected novels, Whitehead addresses the social and economic setting of the early elevator

³ <http://global.britannica.com/art/fiction-literature>

ride. He wishes to represent social and racial injustice that is constructed in this space. He has mediating intuitionist, a black woman who struggles with racial discrimination in an urban setting.

2.5 Elevators In Film:

My research also briefly looked at how film has approached the elevator ride. The use of elevators in film depicts both factual and fictional experiences. I will briefly analyze a few selected sequences from five films and how the allegory of elevator constructs each scene. I have given titles to each elevator scene in the film depicting the most common experience. It is sometimes a brief awkward glance at the other person when you enter the elevator, at other times, there is tension and drama inside an elevator with amplified silence and empty conversations. Some experiences are encounters of surprise, as you accidentally run into someone, while were trying to avoid.

The compact and geometric design of space, delivers an ideal space for constructing a diminutive scene. The space inside the elevator is imperfect and it is understood that with little movement, there is the possibility of creating more tension among the characters. For “Mad Men” creator and executive producer Matthew Weiner, the elevator served as a cinematic jewel box that he returned to repeatedly throughout the influential cable-TV series. (Jurgensen, 2015). Elevators are an entrance and an exit, a place for a resolution and a site of conflict.

2.5.1 The Awkward Look (Spiderman 2, 2004)

A common social experience while riding an elevator is flavored with fiction in this scene from Spiderman 2. An ordinary guy waiting for the elevator is surprised as the doors to the elevator open, inside is a guy dressed in a Spiderman suit. Little does he know that it is the actual Spiderman. They exchange an awkward glance, the ordinary guy hesitantly enters the elevator, and they settle themselves inside, until the doors close. There is small talk accompanied with hesitation, surprise, uncertainty and the unsettling feeling of entering the elevator with a stranger. A common experience of everyday life, and the person who is the *socially different* character of the society has no option but to admit his difference and avoid any eye contact with the common man.



Figure 9. Scene from Spider Man 2 [screenshot] Raimi, S. (Director). (2004). Spiderman 2 [Motion Picture]

2.5.2 The High Drama (Drive, 2011)

This elevator sequence is a depiction of intense emotional drama and intimacy that is amplified inside an elevator. Elevators have that capacity to slow down time and its distribution, making it possible to magnify simple gestures. The Driver takes his heroine Irene kisses her, with warmth and passion and right after he immediately counter reacts and brutally takes down the villain. Intimacy and ferocity are neatly fitted together in this scene. Those same hands that passionately embrace the beloved, in a few seconds are full of anger and rage. The same space that witnesses compassion and love is a site of a brutal murder. The important elements in this scene are the dressing of light, and the enhanced time sequence for events. If the kiss is an exaggeration of time, with a slow speed of time, the murder happens in flashes of real time.

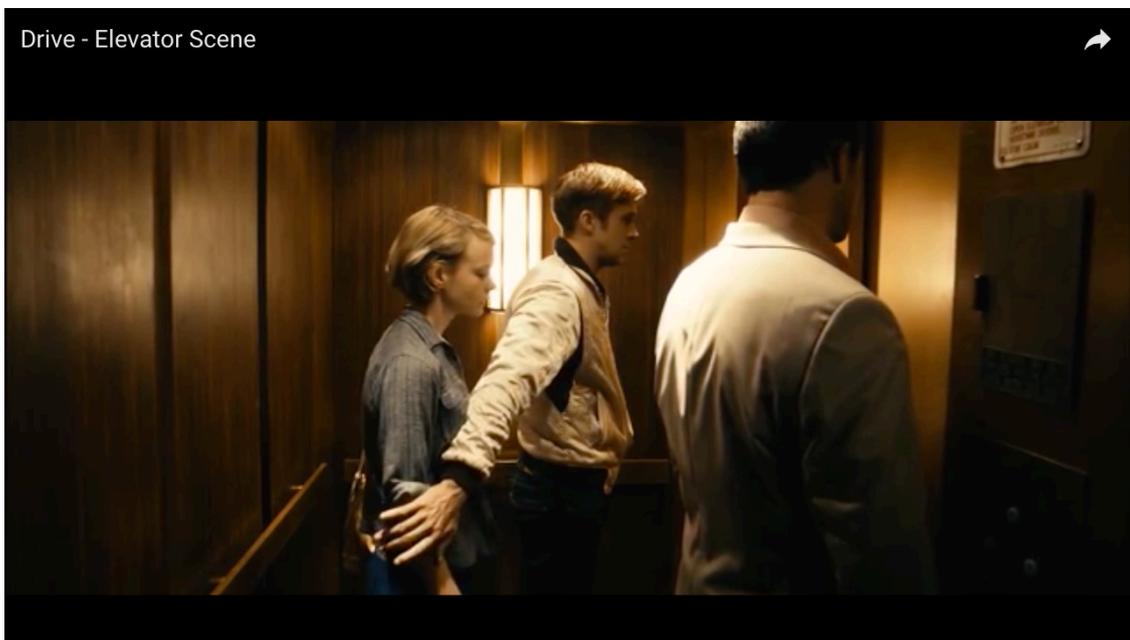


Figure 10. Scene from Driver [screenshot] Refn, N. W. (Director). (2011). Drive [Motion Picture]

2.5.3 The Hangover Effect (The Hangover, 2009)

Phil, Stu, and Alan ride the elevator with Mr. Chow, who tries to calm them down by singing alongside the elevator song *Time in a Bottle*. The scene has the other characters annoyed by the song in the elevator especially after experiencing an insane hangover from a bachelor party gone horribly wrong. The annoyance is turned into a surprise once one of their own, Alan tunes in with Mr. Chow in singing the elevator song. The scene is constructed upon hangover effect, of an elevator. Elevators are an unusual ride, and like any ride there is the potential lag, pause and discomfort from your surroundings. The tiniest things amplify this discomfort, and in this scene, it is the relaxed tone of Mr. Chow and his idea of singing along the elevator song.

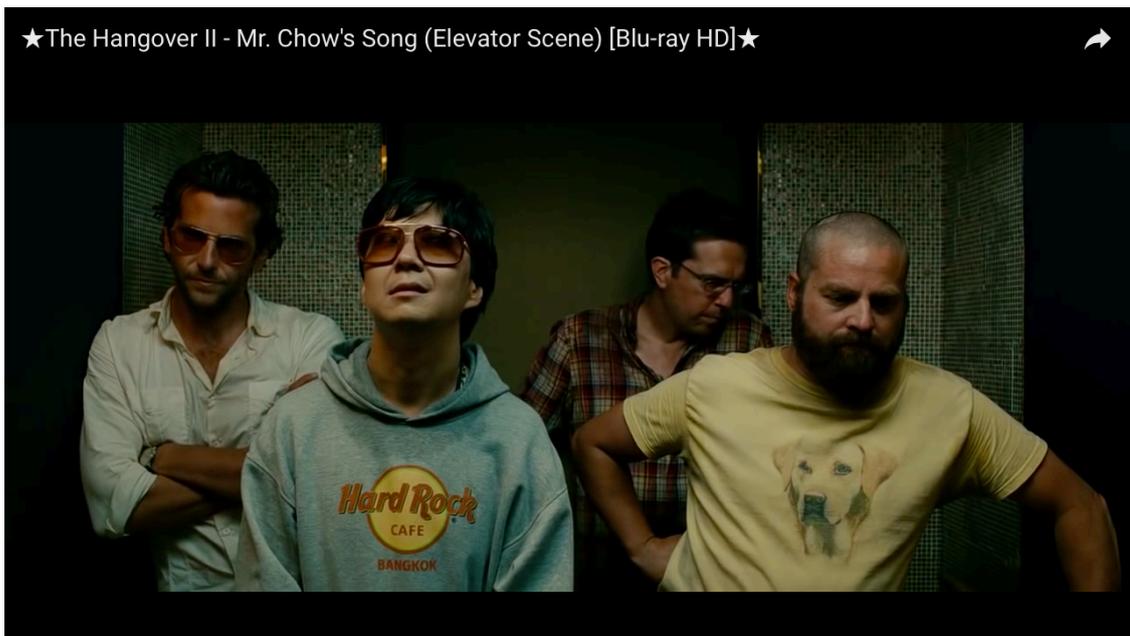


Figure 11. Scene from Hangover II [screenshot] Phillips, T. (Director). (2009). Hangover [Motion Picture].

2.5.4 The Star Wars Ride (Star Wars: The Return Of Jedi 1983)

This elevator ride might now be ancient but it does remind us of a star wars experience. The clung sound as the elevator door shuts slowly in front of you, followed by a funny happy music, ignoring the seriousness of this suspended space. The never-ending motion, as the elevator is dawdling in travelling between floors, until finally you reach your stop and exit with a sigh of relief and anxiety. This particular scene engages the characters in awkward pause from their conversation and their mission. The stand in solitude facing the elevator doors, anxious to meet their freedom from this enclosed mechanical space.



Figure 12. Scene from Star War (Marquand, 1983) [Motion Picture]

2.5.5 Elevator Violence (The Departed 2006)

Violence and horror has been associated to elevators since their invention. Sometimes it is the fear of falling elevators, or the inescapable closing doors. The elevator scene from the departed is intense with blood, anger, revenge, and gunshots entangled with surprise that

makes it an exciting scene. The doors open and the hero meets his fate with a bullet in his head.



Figure 13. Scene from *The Departed* Scorsese, M. (Director). (2006). *The Departed* [Motion Picture]

2.6 Elevator Ride in Fiction:

'Ride' has been an important part of fiction; sometimes it's a magical carpet or wardrobe that is actually a magical portal, a flying car, or an enchanted doorway. Fiction is driven by ride, which takes the reader away from the real world and to a land of magic and mystery. Ride is sometimes through objects and other means of transportation and sometimes it is through a magical portal that teleports the characters of the story. By definition, "Teleportation is the name given by science fiction writers to the feat of making an object or person disintegrate in one place while a perfect replica appears somewhere else."⁴ Following are some fictional elements of elevator rides.

⁴ http://researcher.watson.ibm.com/researcher/view_group.php?id=2862

2.6.1. Magical Ride:

Fiction has made the elevator ride a magical experience, a ride that is not controlled by the mechanical configuration, but by the wheels of endless imagination. It is this magical experience of elevators that stimulates imagination for the reader. The famous and iconic Wonkavator, in the Chocolate Factory of Mr. Wonka is an example of how fiction makes this ride supernatural. The conversation between Willy Wonka and Charlie tell us about how this particular elevator works.

Willy Wonka: This is the great glass. Wonkavator.

Grandpa Joe: It's an elevator.

Willy Wonka: No, it's a Wonkavator. An elevator can only go up and down, but the Wonkavator can go sideways, and slantways, and longways, and backways...

Charlie Bucket: And frontways?

Willy Wonka: ...and squareways, and front ways, and any other ways that you can think of. It can take you to any room in the whole factory just by pressing one of these buttons. Any of these buttons. Just press a button, and *zing*! You're off. And up until now, I've pressed them all... except one.

[gestures to a button near the top of the Wonkavator]

Willy Wonka: This one. Go ahead, Charlie.

Charlie Bucket: Me?

[Willy Wonka nods as Charlie presses the button]

What transpired next are the adventures of the second book of this series called Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator. The Wonkavator is an elevator of unlimited possibilities

and this is what Dahl introduces to his reader. The idea of a metallic box travelling on a limited and controlled route is re-envisioned. This is what makes it an ingenious invention.

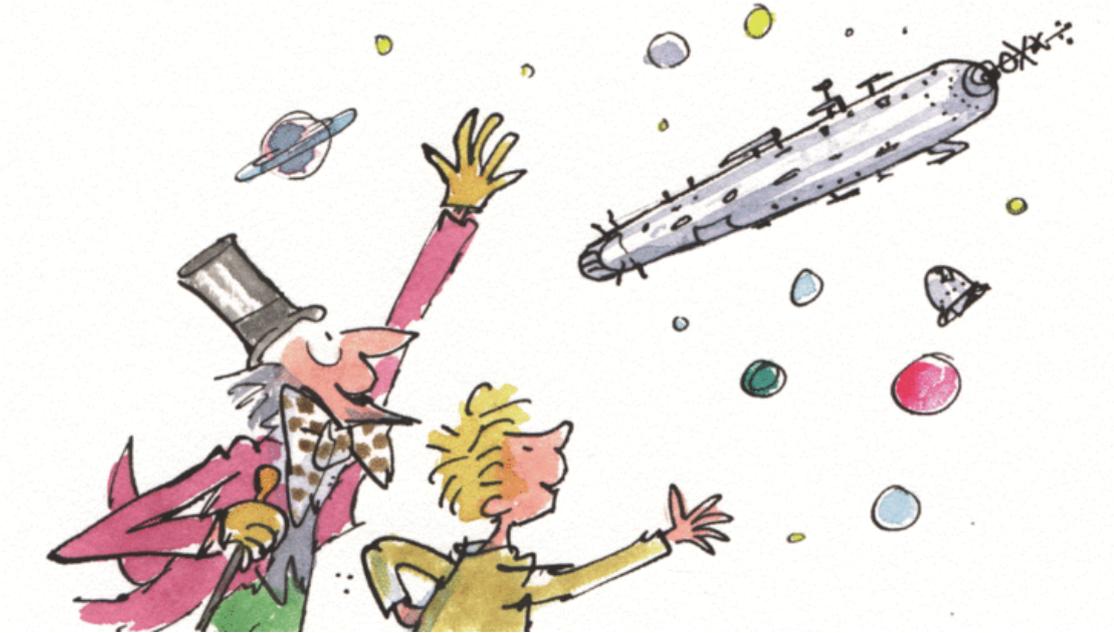


Figure 14. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, illustration by Quentin Blake

2.6.2. Human Imagination:

In contrast to human engineering, what drives the elevator in fiction is human imagination. This is what Mr. Wonka tells Charlie, that this Wonkavator will go in any direction he can think of. A metallic cube transforms into a ride of endless possibilities. All that is required is that you set your imagination free and let the elevator take you on a ride.

2.6.3. Reinventing Space and Time:

“What in the world keeps this thing up in the air?” croaked Grandma Josephine.

“Skyhooks” said Mr. Wonka

“You amaze me,” said Grandma Josephine. (Dahl, 1972)

In fiction the elevator is imagined. Roald Dahl’s “Great Glass Elevator” was up in the air because of *skyhooks*, it had all sorts of buttons making it possible for it to travel out of the factory and into the space. Another example is the elevator from the novel *The Intuitionist* by Colson Whitehead, he introduces meditation and intuitionism as a mechanism to check elevator maintenance; the inspector would ride the elevator and feel the vibrations of the space, and the time travelled by the elevator, to determine its efficiency. Even the famous Harry Potter series had the elevator (or the Lift) at the Ministry of Magic that travelled “levels” inside the building but it was never really disclosed the precise space and time it was travelling.

2.6.4. Ride In All Possible Directions:

Space elevators have been extensively imagined in science fiction novels, Arthur C. Clarke was not the first person to think of a space elevator; however, he was responsible for introducing the concept to a far larger audience in his book. Clark takes the elevator to space and also explains how that may be possible.

"If the laws of celestial mechanics make it possible for an object to stay fixed in the sky, might it not be possible to lower a cable down to the surface – and so to establish an elevator system linking Earth to space" ⁵

⁵ <http://www.technovelgy.com/ct/content.asp?bnum=720>

CHAPTER III

ELEVATOR RIDES IN CONTEMPORARY ART

3.1 Introduction:

Contemporary art has contested the ordinary, the usual, and the everyday spaces, and transformed them into extraordinary, unusual, and unexpected places. One such place that has been the site of exploration for artists is an elevator. It is a site of strange and bizarre encounters, every time the doors of the elevators open, the element of surprise is at your footstep. It is a compact and confined space that contributes as the point of intersection for everyday walkers of the city. It is the source of transportation for a resident of a high-rise building, an employee of a corporate institution, or visitors to commercial shopping mall. Hence, it is very rare for an urbanist to avoid an elevator ride in his or her travels in a city. This chapter will look into the different contexts in which an elevator has been a site of exploration and observation for artists and how they have incorporated it in their practice as a filmmakers, visual artists, and performers. Three major works of inspiration for me was Mark Isaac's film "Lift", Larissa Sansour's Science fiction short "the Nation Estate" and Shia LaBeouf, Luke Turner, and Nastja Ronkko's performance called "#Elevate". Drawing inspiration from these contemporary artists I installed myself inside an elevator and attempted to explore the happenings inside an elevator.

3.2 Lift by Marc Isaacs:

One documentary film that inspires my study of elevators is the film "Lift" (2001) directed by Marc Isaacs. Isaacs takes a camera to a normal London residential building

and installs himself inside the elevator. Over the next few days, he spends hours inside the lift and records the residents as they ride the elevator up and down with him. This is a participant observational documentary film, in which the presence of the filmmaker is evident. He entertains his audience with small talk with the residents of the building. The film includes senior citizens, retired employees, housewives, Asian migrants to London, and various other characters. Isaac builds a narrative by focusing on a selective number of people that ride the elevator with him. This film has the filmmaker as an observant and participant who's case is of the fly on the wall. There is minor intervention by Isaac as he lets his subjects in the elevator deliver their stories. This becomes the portrait of the way of life in London.

“It is fascinating to see how the residents react to him being there – some are suspicious or even hostile at the beginning. Others open up about their personal lives and their daily life in the building. And then others bring him something to eat, a chair to sit down on, or even little presents. The result is a moving and “quietly fascinating meditation on the mundanities of London life.”⁶

⁶ <http://www.openculture.com/2011/06/lift.html>



Figure 15. The Lift by Marc Isaac [screenshot] The Lift 2001)

3.3 Nation Estate by Larisa Sansour

Sansour is born in Jerusalem, lives, and works in London. This is a short science fiction film that presents the deadlock in the Middle East. Sansour envisions the future where Palestine is in a building and the major cities and sites can now be accessed through an elevator. This is a 9 minute short film. She describes it as,

‘Palestinians have their state in the form of a single skyscraper: the Nation Estate (2012) . One colossal high-rise houses the entire Palestinian population - now finally living the high life.’⁷

This project became the vision of the future for the artist, concerning the problematic situation the region has always had. The elevator became the facility that makes this prediction possible, a ride that supposes the future of Palestine, as a vertical state, composed and constricted inside a building.⁸

⁷ http://www.larissasansour.com/nation_estate.html

⁸ Nation Estate’ from website http://www.larissasansour.com/nation_estate.html



Figure 16. Nation Estate by Larissa Sansour



Figure 17. Nation Estate by Larissa Sansour

3.4 #ELEVATE by Shia LaBeouf, Luke Turner, and Nastja Sade Ronkko:



Figure 18. #Elevate by Shia LaBeouf, Luke Turner, Nastja Ronkko [photo] Retrieved from : <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-3454868/Shafted-Actor-Shia-LaBeouf-occupies-Oxford-University-lift-24-HOURS-students-queue-quiz-ahead-student-union-address.html>

Shia LaBeouf, the celebrity turned performance artist is invited by the Oxford Union to address the students, he instead offers to turn this into a performance art project. With the help of two contemporary performance artists, LaBeouf hijacks the elevator at the Oxford Union for 24 hours. The ride begins at 9 a.m. GMT Feb. 19th and goes on until 9 a.m. Feb. 20th with a brief pause, during which LaBeouf, Turner and Ronkko give a talk at Oxford Union.

When asked how the project came about, LaBeouf responded

“How do we do this and not feel douche about it?” LaBeouf replies during the stream. “How do we make this egalitarian like the Internet? Let’s just move the talk to the elevator.”⁹

The Elevator occupied by the three artists has a camera fixed outside, on the door of the elevator. It is only when the doors of the elevator slide open, the viewer sees what is happening inside. Although there are microphones inside which record the entire conversation of the artists among them selves, and with students as they enter to meet and greet the celebrity. This entire performance of 24 hours is live streamed on the YouTube with the hash tag #Elevate, corresponding to the artistic intention of making it egalitarian. The topics of discussion broached so far to include how his parents feel about his art, which animal he would want to be and which movies he wants to see.

Using the elevator as the intimate and one on one site of interaction, the artists engage in conversations that spread over various issues. Politics, education, entertainment, racism, culture, celebrity, films, diversity, drugs, desires, fantasy, violence, poverty, spirituality, religion, faith, death, loss, family, relationships, friends, and art, and so many more topics are the conversations that take place inside the elevator. LaBeouf breaks the conventions of elevator encounters and university lectures, which addressed to students from behind the pedestal.

The elevator, which usually is a space of silence, brief, and awkward, interactions, becomes a box of confession, a hiding place from the public, a closet of secrets. Although the students are aware that they are being filmed and recorded, they still are able to adapt

⁹ <http://variety.com/2016/digital/news/shia-labeouf-elevate-elevator-1201710651/>

to this awkward site and have a comfortable conversation. The idea of egalitarian interaction is successfully achieved making the interaction pleasant and candid. The live streaming of this performance on YouTube makes this performance a site for a wider audience, all enclosed inside the condensed space of an elevator.

3.5 My Art Practice:

My art practice begins with research and is followed by experiments. I work with a camera, I find the moving image a more exciting and revealing form, especially for the subjects of my interest. I also like to study a space not only through observations but also with a philosophical understanding. I believe an academic insight enriches the process of creativity and enlightens our perception.

I have been working with elevators since 2011, I find the elevator space, an intersection of time and space that is unique and full of surprises. Every time the elevator door open to a new floor, with new people and new stories. There is so much unpredictability in this space, that it becomes the most unexpected and daunting way of travelling. There are many conceptual motivations that led me to do this project, and as I began my journey inside an elevator I developed more curiosity for the everyday happenings.

3.6 Conceptual Motivation:

“Elevators are to buildings like veins and arteries to the body” (Hall, 2003)

My artwork explores themes like, migration, transcendence, and departure. The question is how do people correspond to the elevator space, its design, and its function. The function is evident, the purpose of this machine is to elevate, the order is a vertical ride in

ascending and descending order. The system in place has the set number of features.

Once inside the elevator, you can choose to ride to the desired floor in the building. The doors have an automatic task to open and close on each floor. Once inside the elevator, the doors close and you must now position yourself in correspondence to the space.

For this project I started with silent observations inside various elevator, I would ride for hours and take notes of my observations and experiences. I studied elevators for about six months, sometimes I would ride by myself with a note book and at other times I would carry a camera. Eventually I installed my self with a camera and tripod in the Electrical Engineering building at Bilkent University main campus, this elevator had the most traffic of people and the light and space inside, was ideal for filming.

Following are few of the conceptual motivations that drove this project. Eventually they became part of my observation and interaction with the space.

3.6.1 Elevator Etiquettes:

What are the ethics of encounter that one must observe? What are the *elevator etiquettes*? How does one wait for the elevator? Enter the elevator and how do you behave until you reach your point of exit? These are the questions that must be attended to, for they predict the elevator ride for the person. Various online sources, magazines, and elevator companies advertise and advise about the elevator etiquettes. This is very important, although the elevator ride is brief, only a few seconds it is an important ride. An inescapable, public and private ride that welcomes strangers and friends.

From my personal observations I encountered that people were automatically adapting to the elevator ride. It was always understood that if the elevator is crowded one cannot engage in a personal conversation. People would avoid continuing the conversations they were having outside the elevator, as soon as they entered the elevator, so that they did not disturb the passengers already inside the elevator. The decorum of the space remained intact, interruptions in the silence of the elevator was habitually avoided.

3.6.2 Boarding The Elevator:

The elevator itself is a space that is a recipient of trust. Trust that encourages a person to enter, to ride this box in a pit suspended in air by ropes. The very first step is the wait. Waiting for the elevator car to arrive at your floor, once you have pressed the arrow for the direction you wish to go, it is now a matter of a few seconds before you board the elevator. As the doors open you should first allow the people inside to leave, for only once there is space, one can enter. Since my elevator of focus was inside a university, with students and professors, the protocols for entering and exiting an elevator were observed courteously.

3.6.3 Ethics Of Encounter:

All riders adapt to spatial harmony. The distribution of space is automatically understood among riders, as they settle themselves inside an elevator. It is understood and now a normal practice to face the doors, psychologically it hints towards the desire of escape. As the doors close, you may press the button of your desired floor and wait patiently for the magic to happen as the elevator makes its descent or ascent. Usually people never stand this close to each other, but it is only inside an elevator, that standing this close is allowed

and ethically understood. However, the reduction in distance to a stranger does not permit any other closeness. By this I mean, closeness in communication or looking is despised, generally a crowded elevator is a ride in silence, with an invisible gaze into the distance. The permission to stand close is not a permission to touch, speak, or look. All such activities are deactivated due to the elevator effect on the human psychology.

My observations of the encounters in an elevator revealed all these behaviors. Strangers standing side by side, who would never get close in any other place but an elevator. It is only their desire to travel across floors and inside this metal box that has drawn them close, as soon as they exit it is a withdrawal.

3.6.4 The Elevator Effect:

This is an interesting theory that helps understand that strange elevator experience we all have. The silence, the hush, the isolation of sound, the awkward gaze and a moment of freeze from regular interactions. Primatologists, or people who study primate behavior, have a term for this. It's called the "elevator effect" though it doesn't occur only on elevators, it can occur in any space where escape is impossible, where presence is necessary but temporary.

"It happens whenever a group of primates, like humans, is brought into a situation where escape is temporarily impossible. It's thought to be a kind of safety mechanism: as long as nobody talks, nobody is going to risk getting in a fight when there's no way to spread out. The elevator effect keeps a lid on potential problems before they start."
(Orem, 2012)

The elevator effect is what creates that uncanny ambience inside an elevator. This same elevator effect is encountered in a classroom by students, when they are trapped in a space for given period of time. They are aware that they cannot escape, they will remain here until the bell rings, so they avoid looking into the eyes of the teacher so they are not questioned and somehow manage to pass the time until it is time for release and they can depart the space safely.

I frequently observed the elevator effect on the passengers that would ride the elevator with me. This elevator effect remained even when I placed the camera, it was only when I interject a camera with a tripod, I am able to break the elevator effect. The intervention of the camera is point of distraction and curiosity that leads to a conversation.

3.5.5 Democratic Platform of Travel:

One of the most interesting experiences about travelling in an elevator is its democratic design for all its passengers. The number of floors one wishes to ascend or descend is same for every individual that enters the elevator. There is no mark of dominance in class or designation, which entitles a person to a better vertical ride. An elevator is a democratic space for all genders, race, ethnicity, and members of a society. This is very visible in Isaacs's film, *The Lift*, where Londoners from different class, backgrounds, and ethnic origins ride the elevator. This is an observation I also made in my elevator project, filming in a space that belonged to academia. This elevator had teachers, professors, students, janitors, and administrative staff riding along side each other, breaking the walls of professional and social boundaries that separate them to categories. The hierarchy of

qualification and profession is discredited as they ride together, making it a egalitarian and democratic space, available to all.

3.7 The Elevator Project:

Following are photographs from the exhibition of the project. The final film is of 13 minutes, projected alongside a second film with scrolling text. The design of the exhibition space also accommodated a sitting for the audience. This project presented the elevator experience to an audience in a gallery space. The projection of the videos is designed and curated to bring the elevator commotion to a stationary space. The video itself is the documentation of the encounters and artistic perception of the elevator ride. I installed this project with side by side projection, onto two walls. The projection size was 240cm by 170cm. This paper is accompanied with the visual artwork. It would be unfair to see this research of space, without the video documentation. This video is the visual manifestation of the ideas discussed in this paper.



Figure 19. The Elevator Ride. FADA Exhibition Hall



Figure 20: video installation

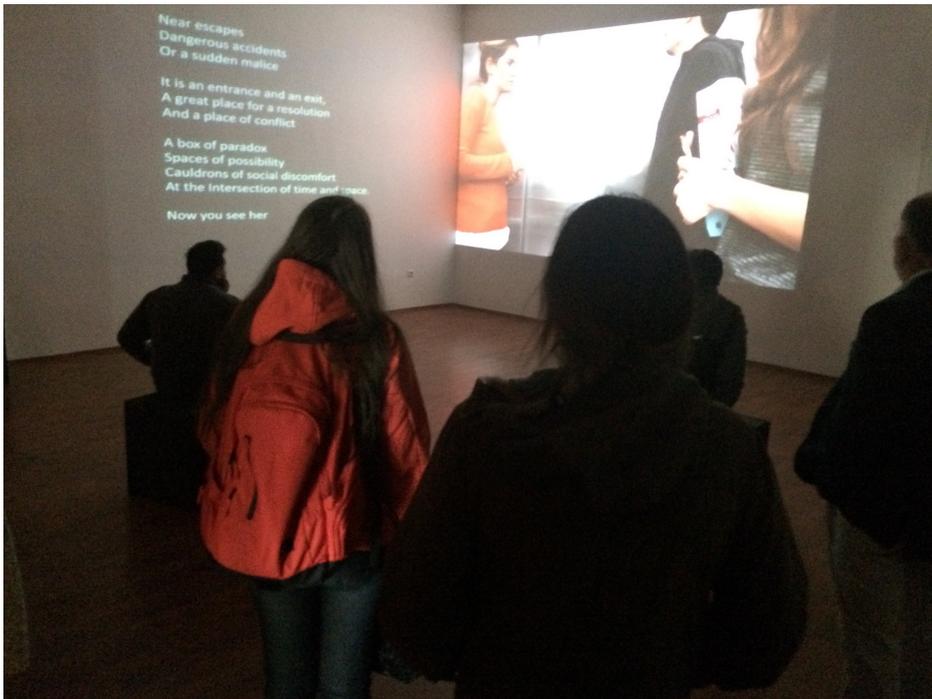


Figure 21: video installation

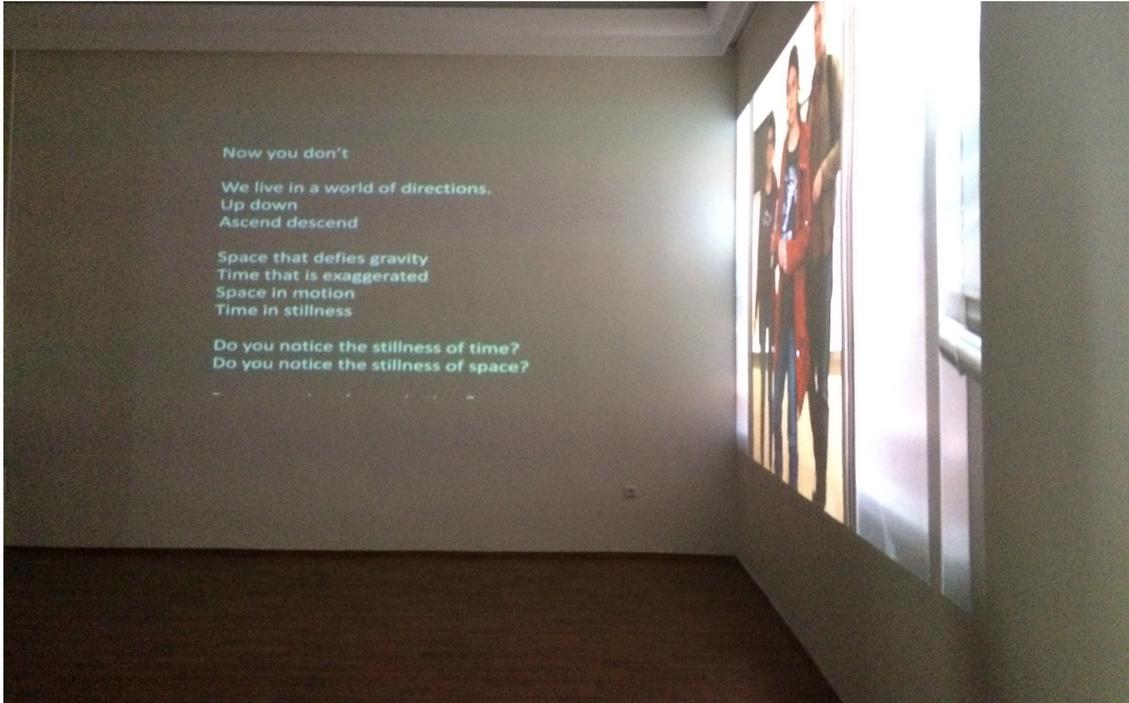


Figure 22. Video installation

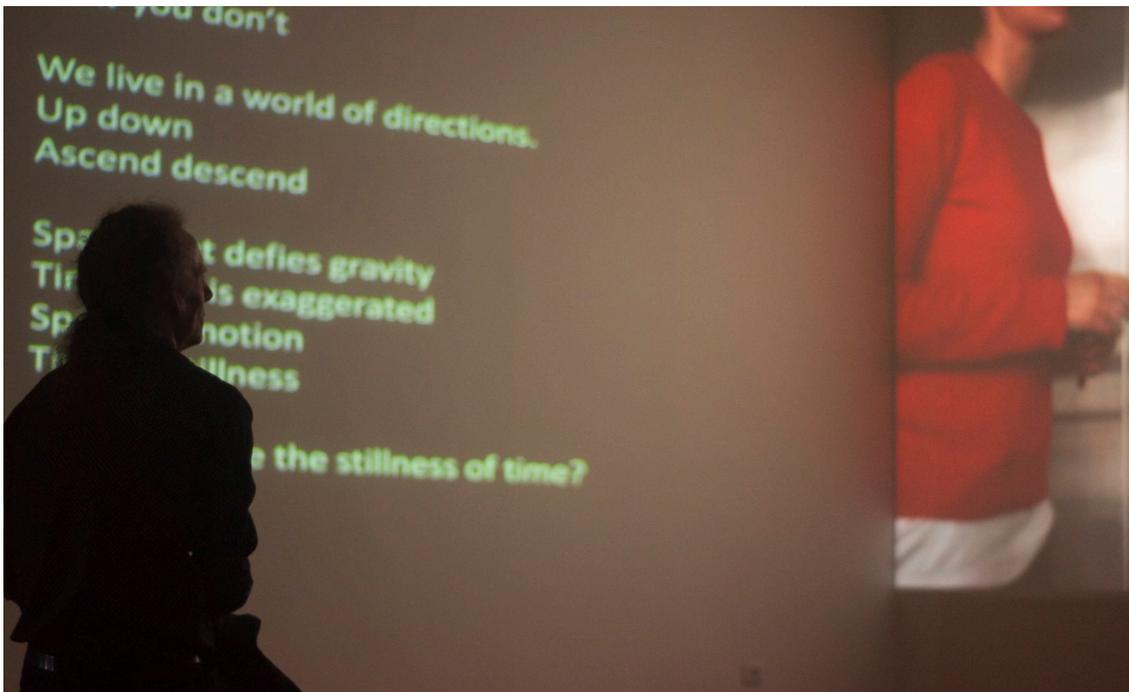


Figure 23. Video Installation



Figure 24. Video Still



Figure 25. Video Still



Figure 26. Video Still



Figure 27. Video Still



Figure 28. Video Still



Figure 29. Video Still

3.7.1 A List of Equipment:

Table 2 . List Of Equipment

Used	Required for Exhibition
Conon 650 D	Screen 150 x 210cm (minimum screen size)
Tripod	2 standard Projectors
IPhone 5s	Speakers
Adobe Premiere CS5	Dark Space
Adobe After Effects	

3.8 The Elevator Narrative:

This is the text I used to build an elevator narrative for my second video in the installation. . Projecting the text alongside The Elevator Project was a deliberate choice. Although the Elevator project is an independent work that can be viewed on its own, the text only compliments the experience of the viewer. It is a poetic approach to the strange and uncanny elevator experience. This narrative is my personal artistic observation of the elevator space. It talks about the awkward encounters, the ambience of the space, the commotion of people and the stories inside the elevator. I choose to make this second video in the form of text, to depict a more abstract approach to elevators. Screening these two videos together also created a blend of actual experience with a fictional narrative

This is a metal box

An urban invention

A box of memory, space and time

With a feast of sound

The silence

The hush

A site of strange encounters

Unusual coincidences

Near escapes

Dangerous accidents

Or a sudden malice

It is an entrance and an exit,

A great place for a resolution

And a place of conflict

A box of paradox

Spaces of possibility

Cauldrons of social discomfort

At the Intersection of time and space.

Now you see her

Now you don't

Now you see him

Now you don't

We live in a world of directions.

Up down

Ascend descend

Space that defies gravity

Time that is exaggerated

Space in motion

Time in stillness

Do you notice the stillness of time?

Do you notice the stillness of space?

Do you notice change in time?

Do you notice the change in space?

We live in world of directions

We live in world of directions

We live in world of directions

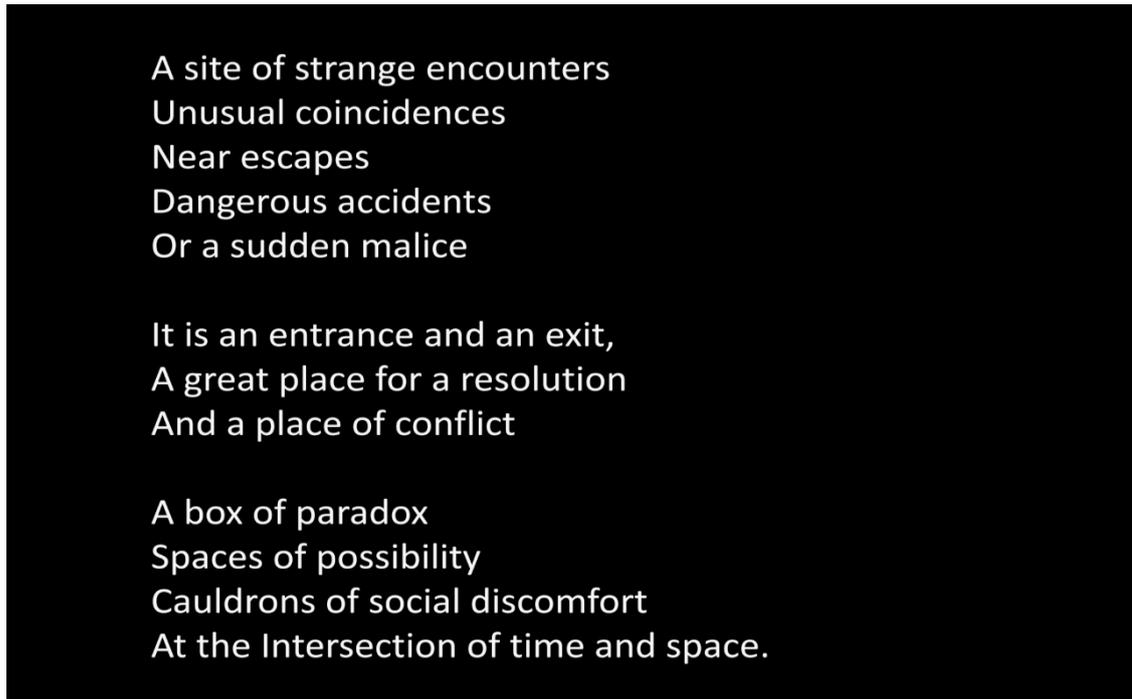


Figure 30. Video Still

Following is the QR code to the video available on Vimeo.



Figure 31. QR code

3.9 Vimeo links:

The Elevator Project Videos are available online for public viewing.

<https://vimeo.com/166021426>

<https://vimeo.com/164980209>

3.10 Conclusion:

“Is she filming?” He asked.

“Yes” She replied, “and we are the lead actors” [The elevator project]

These are the words of the passengers that ride the elevator with the camera. This project was about the intervention of the artist and the camera inside an elevator. I personally enjoyed working on this project. The elevator is to me, the intersection of space, time, and sound. Space that designs a democratic communication and interaction among people from all walks of life, time that is amplified and in motion, and sound, that is in isolation.

The elevator ride is an allegory of life itself; that is always on the move. There is the possibility to ascend or descend, and that is your choice as you press a button and sometimes it is your company that decides your journey. Shooting the elevator film revealed to me simple etiquettes of this ride, in addition to social interactions with the intervention of the camera. I shot for two weeks inside an elevator on campus. I would film the outdoor space, the closing and opening elevator doors, the entrance, and the exit. While riding the elevator, my presence with the camera did not cause much disturbance. As an international student and because of the elevator effect, not many people engaged in any conversation despite curiosity. It is only when the camera is placed inside, on its own without a guardian the viewer's start to engage.

“What are you filming? What are you filming??” He said as he made his exit from the elevator. [The elevator project]

The presence of the camera for some was a sight of curiosity and fun, but for others, it raised questions of ethics and privacy. Although elevators are a public space, there is also the private life of the space, which becomes vulnerable due to the camera.

“It's recording,” He says

“I know, it was recording before as well” He replied. [The elevator project]

The presence of the camera over time becomes receptive for the audience, although the mystery of who owns the camera remains unknown, As I never reveal myself, however when the camera is placed on its own, it creates an enigmatic experience for the elevator rider. The exhibition of the elevator project was also an experience of reflection of these everyday encounters. The review I received from my audience was overwhelming, as they saw themselves mirrored inside this unusual space. The element of surprise with each cut in the film kept the audience engaged and absorbed.

I hope to continue and explore more stories inside an elevator. I believe an elevator is a site of surprise and experience. The compact space has its democratic effect, which has not been explored and requires more research. The project can be extended to more elevators located in public areas, like shopping malls, government buildings, and high-rise hotel buildings. The ride in each space has its particular audience, encounters, and stories, yet to be told.

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ARTWORK

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‘Nation Estate’ (Snicket, *The Ersatz Elevator* (A Series of Unfortunate Events, Book 6), 2001) From Website [Http://Www.Larissasansour.Com/Nation_Estate.Html](http://www.Larissasansour.Com/Nation_Estate.Html)

#ELEVATE by Shia LaBeouf, Nastja Rönkkö, and Luke Turner occupy an elevator at the Oxford Union debate society for the two 24-hour periods

