



The project *this voice; this life; this procession* emerged through Brass Art's long-term engagement with light as a material, their interest in Virginia Woolf's writing and the potential of light-based capture to work affectively in recording resonant sites. The resulting immersive two channel video projection brings together highly detailed LiDAR data with live performances by the artists 'captured' using Kinect sensors on location at the site of Virginia Woolf's writing room, Rodmell, UK. Working with stream of consciousness methodologies and rendered data, the resulting symbiosis of 3D and 4D data-clouds, offers a cosmology of entangled thoughts, performing bodies, atomised organic forms and intimate architectures. The accompanying electroacoustic soundscape by Annie Mahtani makes the spectral quality of the visuals seemingly more solid, simultaneously extending the acoustic register of the work vertically in space.

Brass Art

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The project *this voice; this life; this procession* emerged through Brass Art's long-term engagement with light as a material, their interest in Virginia Woolf's writing and the potential of light-based capture to work affectively in recording resonant sites. Working with two different forms of scanning and capture technologies, the project focused on the site of Woolf's writing room, in the grounds of Monk's House, Rodmell, where all her major writing from 1922 took form. Establishing the affective journeys through the cloud-data, enabled the artists to harness the transformative feelings of genesis, death, decay and metamorphosis so necessary to Woolf's writing.

The two-channel immersive video projection brings together virtual journeys through highly detailed LiDAR scan data of Virginia Woolf's writing room and garden with performances captured by Kinect sensors in this intimate space. The artists created the LiDAR video in Blender by inserting mobile cameras into the cloud-data and controlling the viewpoint, pace and trajectory. The Kinect video uses hacked 'live' data as a form of motion capture, caught by sensors on location and rendered in Processing.

Brass Art's fascination with the Kinect sensor's ability to capture both motion and shadow occlusions was the imperative to bring these moving performances and shadowy realms into a synergetic relation with the fixed-point LiDAR data. This collision produced a sweeping survey of the garden site alongside more intimate journeys through the writing room, permeating thresholds of colour field pixels and portals made by ornamental ponds and circular scanner occlusions, all of which is occasionally interrupted and overlayed with glimpses of performing figures.

Brass Art invited electro-acoustic composer Annie Mahtani to collaborate with them on a new multi-channel composition for the installation of *this voice; this life; this procession*. Mahtani is known for work that is sensitive to site, and explores the inherent sonic nature and identity of environmental sound, amplifying sonic characteristics that are not normally audible to the naked ear. Her music explores abstract and recognizable sound worlds and all the spaces in between – which resonated with the artists' own inclination towards the liminal. Mahtani created a rich palette of sonic material inspired by incidental sound recordings made by the artists at Monk's House and their wider material concerns.

In *this voice; this life; this procession*, Woolf's own creative approach and writing strategies – streams of consciousness, atemporality, de-



Fig. 1. *this voice; this life; this procession* 2024. video still. Image credit: Brass Art.



Fig. 2. *this voice; this life; this procession* 2024. Installation view, image credit: Michael Pollard (<https://vimeo.com/1056773104>).

familiarization – are strategically adopted by the artists in the transmission of fluid and speculative ideas, both on site and in production. In narratological alignment with her 1925 novel *Mrs Dalloway*, the scanning took place over the course of a single winter's day, revealing extraordinary hues which pulsate with colour as the 'camera' travels above and below the garden, through trees and the writing room. The artists did not foresee how the gradual colouration of daylight into darkness would be captured by the LiDAR and how it would look when processed – the sunken garden became a study in deep chiaroscuro and rich purples, elsewhere the grass appeared unnaturally bright, and the shed itself glowed warmly. Bare trees became white-haloed skeletal structures, ponds were transformed into dark portals and weather-wrapped statues were made sinister through the touch of the laser capture. Achieving this range of colour was largely the result of the natural diurnal cycle with limited daylight. The artists encouraged scanning to continue beyond the usual timeframes deemed acceptable to achieve 'accurate' data, allowing for crepuscular tones in the farther reaches of the garden.

Conversely, Kinect scanning operates best in low light levels, but the captured data is not immediately visible for live reviewing. The Kinect data requires proprietary code in Processing to reveal what has been captured, which offers multiple possibilities for the final visualisation by the artists and their collaborators. The digital incompatibility of the two data sets required an innovative approach to blending the two forms of cloud-data in post-production. Traditionally, one set is designed for domestic motion-capture in gaming, the other for highly detailed, millimetre-accurate architectural site mapping. These differences necessitated an experimental approach to the planning, production and execution of the final work. This misuse of scanning technologies, to explore uncharted and serendipitous outcomes, is an important trope in the exploratory practice of the artists.

The resulting two-channel video projection involved painstaking key-frame mapping to coalesce the fixed data and the live performances in a single cinematic screen. The Kinect performances allow the artists to interpose themselves as impossible sprites; unstable forms composed of shimmering pixels, seemingly moving freely within, yet tenuously moored to, the virtual site. Apparitions rise, fall, dance and spin as dizzying optical illusions are created by the dissonance of the camera's motion, shifts in scale, and the placing of the figures. Jasmine Linklater, writing in *Corridor8*, reflects on this defamiliarizing and disorienting encounter in the gallery:

The screen is a mass of swarming dots that now gather to resemble the ghost of a sturdy, leafless tree, but now dissolve and coagulate as something else I can't quite name. It is just as Woolf describes the mystery items in her looking glass: "unrecognisable and irrational and entirely out of focus...." (Linklater 2024)

The symbiosis of rendered 3D and 4D data offers the viewer an embodied and temporal entanglement; a cosmology of light and data connected to the nature of all things, as bodies (the artists and the viewers) seem to float, both within the digital space and the immersion of the projected moving image, yet remain intimately connected to the dispersed atoms of branches, trunks, bushes and mosses of the garden. Tuning in to Woolf's sensibilities, Brass Art's attention to the thresholds above and below the data, between visible and invisible, reveals the permeability of all things; a composition of moments; one thing after another. As Woolf writes in *Modern Fiction*:

The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there[...]. (Woolf 1925, 189)

Being able to 'move through' the resulting digital data layers that we see in the video, enables us to visualise aspects of the multiple, fragmented versions of reality and time that Woolf herself articulated. John Beagles, in *Sight and Sound* magazine, describes the unsettling impression of geometry and space folding in on itself to create, "a conceptually and aesthetically spellbinding tension between reality and illusion." He observes that:

The infrared scanning transforms all matter into fragile, spectral veins and atomised pixelated dots of colour. All that is solid really does seem to melt, and like much of Woolf's writing there is that sense of multiple oscillating realities simultaneously coexisting. (Beagles 2024, 87)

In opposition to this atomisation, Mahtani's immersive multi-channel soundscape makes the non-optical, spectral quality of the visuals seemingly more concrete, simultaneously extending the acoustic register of the work vertically in space, and solidifying the relation-

ship between the material, temporal, and cinematic dimensions of the creative space in which Woolf worked.

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