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SYNCHRONICITIES 4:4

Video & Audio Installation

BY

EMILY M. SPERRY

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Art in Imaging Arts

Rochester Institute of Technology

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SYNCHRONICITIES 4:4

Video & Audio Installation

by

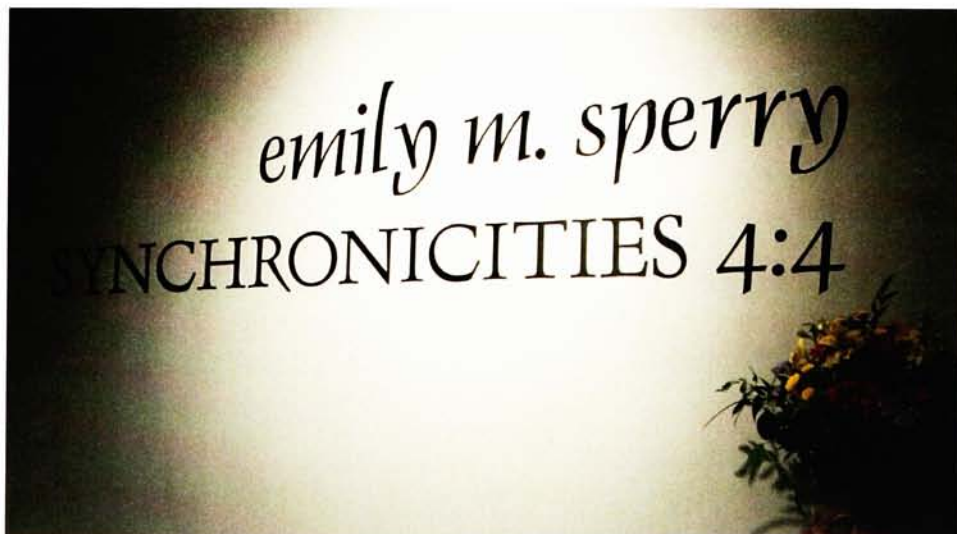
EMILY M. SPERRY

MFA THESIS PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Art in Imaging Arts

Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York, 2007



This thesis project is dedicated to my father, Glade Sperry Jr.,
who inspired this work from a variety of perceptive realms.

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SYNCHRONICITIES 4:4 by Emily M. Sperry

ABSTRACT

This thesis paper examines the work presented in my M.F.A. thesis installation *Synchronicities 4:4*. The paper explores the aesthetic and theoretical concepts compiled within this project, in order to reveal the mindset and motivations of the artist. Elements covered in this text include installation design, research of its conceptual history, and citations of various artists working in similar methods to achieve equivalent creative goals. This thesis project uses the mediums of sound and video to elucidate a greater understanding of the realms of human awareness, particularly in relation to the mystical characteristics of invisible sensory information.

This thesis describes theories of synchronicity by investigating themes of psychic perception, spiritual communication, sensory awareness and anomalies including cross-sensory experiences, hallucinations, and enhanced insight related to a deepened focus of concentration. These topics are depicted and fused as various aspects of the experience of synchronicity, or subjectively meaningful coincidences. This installation seeks to create synchronicities within its visual and audio structure as an indication of the phenomenon of synchronicity in the world at large.

As an artist I have always been drawn to experiences that can be categorized as paranormal. I have spent years researching, opening my mind to new possibilities, and creating artwork that deals with the perception of reality and the existence of unseen realms. While at one time I may have considered these concepts fictitious, I have now come to regard them as truths within the fabric of existence. This thesis project is an appropriate culmination and reflection of my personal art history.

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INSTALLATION

Synchronicities 4:4 is a multiple video and audio installation housed in a darkened gallery space. Walls block off the area around the installation, and at the open entry point, sheer curtains hang from floor to ceiling. These signify a transition into an ether-like arena, where a curved, thirty-foot long by eight-foot tall screen fills the space. Four video projections illuminate the screen in a horizontal row, and rows of chairs allow viewers to sit and listen using headphones, which highlight the dense layers of audio.

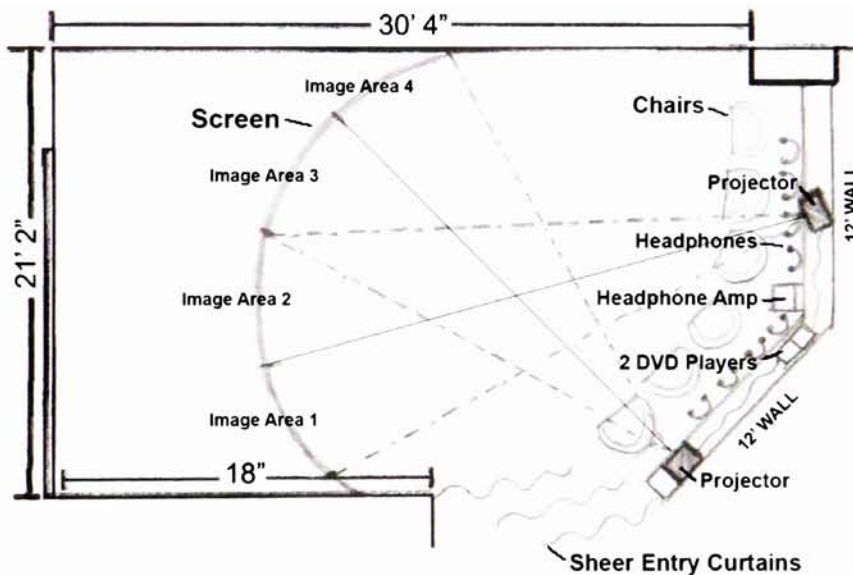


Figure 1. Floor plan of *Synchronicities 4:4*.

The video and audio components loop in cycles that are slightly over four minutes long. The four video projections run simultaneously and repeat. Each time the visual patterns recur, one of four different soundtracks plays in tandem with the images, establishing greater synchronous associations as the work progresses. The run time of the overall project is just under seventeen minutes, whereupon the cycles resume from the beginning. *Synchronicities 4:4* utilizes the ephemeral mediums of sound and video to

illuminate the transformative realms of psychic awareness as it manifests in sensory-perceptual and spiritually connective states of being.

This installation generates the perception of synchronicity by articulating meaningful coincidences. The word synchronicity was first used by philosopher and psychiatrist Carl Jung to describe “an acausal connecting principle”ⁱ linking many connected but unrelated events that he noticed in his life and in the lives of others. Jung theorized that there must be a logical plane allowing events to relate beyond obvious sensory and temporal conditions. He defined synchronicity as “the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state”ⁱⁱ. Jung did not believe in simple coincidence, stating, “Chance must obviously be susceptible of some causal explanation and is only called ‘chance’ or ‘coincidence’ because causality has not yet been discovered”ⁱⁱⁱ. He believed synchronicity to indicate a larger psychic system that supported his theories of the Collective Unconscious, a facet of the subconscious that is ubiquitously present among all sentient beings and affects all things at once.

Synchronicity is a medium that delivers and transmits coded messages through patterns of coincidence that possess subjective meaning to an observer. The process of decoding synchronous messages depends upon the perceptions of an individual based on experiences, memories, and worldview. Awareness of synchronicity relies both on perceptual conditions of the observer and environmental signals that trigger sensory circuits in the mind. External cues can be any events that capture one’s attention, including sounds, visual stimuli, and other sensory impressions. Personal interpretations are established by the way the mind fuses these signals to its own idiosyncrasies.

Synchronicity is a common experience, existing within a multitude of perceptual layers, and is increasingly evident with enhanced concentration. Many people have experienced the following sensation: a person you have not thought about recently will suddenly spring to mind, and soon afterward you encounter that person. This is one of many ways synchronicity may manifest. The widespread existence of synchronicity illustrates a vast interconnection between all things. The subjective details of synchronous experiences can shed light on individual lives and establish valuable channels into one's psychic awareness. Psychiatrist and clairvoyant Judith Orloff explains in *Awakening Second Sight* that synchronous events are full of meaning and it is important to seek out their significance: "to search for the kernel beneath the external events that is really fueling the chance meetings or the situations that are brought together seemingly by coincidence... Often if you are not aware that synchronicities are happening in your life, you will miss them. But if you begin to look for them your awareness expands and you can take in much more in your psychic sight than ever before"^{iv}. By quieting the clutter of one's mind, awareness is tuned to the arcane realms of perception where deeper patterns of relationships emerge, so that when psychic information appears it is obvious and meaningful.

Many people probably relate to experiences of the psychic. Perhaps things are felt or sensed for no apparent reason, which can later be confirmed as true. Although these senses seem mysterious and outside of reality, they are in fact a natural part of intuition. Rupert Sheldrake, an author and biologist who has done extensive research on psychic phenomena explains that these mysterious senses are "not paranormal but normal, and part of our biological nature"^v. He considers the term "sixth sense" to be a

good description for “extrasensory” perceptions, because it maintains the idea that the psychic is a sense like any other: “it implies a kind of sensory system over and above the known senses, but in a sense just the same. As a sense, it is rooted in time and place; it is biological, not supernatural”^{vi}. Animals in the wild rely on “extrasensory” perceptions on a daily basis. Humans are not exempt from the same perceptive abilities; they are simply left underdeveloped in many people. This can be attributed to the mass of information technology in modern times. So much external information is forced upon people that the internal, meditative realms where psychic awareness flourishes are deprived. But like many skills, psychic awareness can be strengthened with practice, and by no means do people who experience psychic phenomena experience it all the time.

Contemporary cultural taboos have distorted and sensationalized what is meant by the term “psychic.” To a general audience, the word ushers in visions of carnival palm readers, fortunetellers, psychic hotlines, and the like. *Synchronicities 4:4* demystifies the idea of the psychic, and presents it as an approachable concept, describing a state of focused intuition. The psychic state is a perceptual blend created within the complex structure of traditional senses. It is achieved when sensory cues combine with information that is invisibly transferred via synchronous means outside of the obvious environmental factors. Psychic awareness defines the foundation of what one can potentially be made aware.

The experience of synchronicity is mysterious because its significance emerges only within an individual perspective. This phenomenon is similar to the subjective experience of schizophrenia and other psychological anomalies that are directly relevant to an individual while simultaneously appearing normal to others. Perceptual and

psychological irregularities which are milder than schizophrenic hallucinations also remain ripe territory for the manifestation of psychic and synchronous awareness, because sensory cues are initially introduced as colliding, immediately establishing channels to the unseen. For example, in instances of sensory deprivation when a void is present in the perception of one or more senses, an enhancement of the remaining senses is produced in the mind. People who are blind or deaf frequently report a vivid mind's-eye landscape of "sight" and "sound" based on abstract imaginative patterns, which guides their awareness and keeps them focused in their environments. The heightened sensitivity to sounds and visual stimuli associated with the autistic spectrum as well as characteristics of synesthesia also function on the systems of perception found in synchronicity.

Synesthesia is intriguing because of the varied effects it has on perception. A basic definition of the experience of synesthesia is "the neurological condition in which stimulation of one sensory modality triggers involuntary sensation in another"^{vii}. Sensory cues from one's environment are crossed inside the brain with sensory information that does not exist externally. For example, when some individuals encounter written or verbal language as well as non-language sounds, they experience a sense of color and pattern that corresponds to the words they see or hear. Sometimes cues of touch, taste, and smell are combined with sound and color. For example, surrounding black or any

SYNESTHESIA
0123456789

Figure 2. Synesthesia in written language conveys a field of color around solid text.

solid text appears an aura or a sense of color. The way that the text is actually written is not unseen by a synesthetic individual; however, this additional layer of visual information is perceived in the mind. The associations of colors are consistent; each symbol is always associated with the same color. However, the pattern of colors is not logically progressive and is different for every individual. In the experience of synesthesia, signals are literally misguided within the circuitry of the brain, producing these unusual effects on sensory receptors.

Synesthesia emphasizes the perception of synchronicity by utilizing a wide range of sensory possibilities to transfer coincidental messages, therefore linking otherwise unrelated aspects of the mind. In the *Synchronicities 4:4* project, as well as in some of my older work, senses of synesthesia are explored in order to externalize phenomena that are usually experienced only inside the mind. Connections between sensory experiences and corresponding synchronicities are created by sounds, colors, and textures that contain values of synesthesia.



Figure 3. Still image from the video / audio *Synesthesia*, Emily M. Sperry, 2006.

Twentieth Century painter Wassily Kandinsky used his experience of synesthesia to direct entire bodies of work. His paintings are composed of many abstracted shapes and color fields. The aesthetic structure of Kandinsky's work is based on synesthetic musical associations he experienced with color. The relationships he created in his pieces, in his own words, are "not necessarily ones of outward form, but are founded on inner sympathy of meaning"^{viii}. Kandinsky came to regard "painting and musical composition as essentially the same activity"^{ix}. His method is described noting, "He has broken down the barrier between music and painting and has isolated the pure emotion.... The lines and colours have the same effect as harmony and rhythm in music"^x. Kandinsky's goal was to apply his experience of synesthesia in his paintings to harness his sense of spirituality. By extracting imagery he gathered from realms of deepened psychic awareness, Kandinsky believed that his painted visual structures allowed pathways for spiritual awareness to arise and affect the senses of viewers who gazed upon his pieces.



Figure 4. *Black Spot I*, Wassily Kandinsky, 1912.

Spiritual planes are a continuation of the realms that define synchronicity. An awareness of spirit expands the boundaries of psychic perception to information that is clearly not contained within physical realities. Spiritualist philosophers believe that the spirit continues to live beyond bodily death and that spirits or energies of the dead may be contacted and continue to affect the living. The belief in spirit acknowledges an interconnection among all realms of the visible and the unseen, and questions the boundaries of reality.

The design of *Synchronicities 4:4* is structured around the influence of these various fused sensory anomalies and bridges that connect to the invisible realms of psychic and spirit, and is based on research and my personal experiences of synchronicity. These perceptual states inspire associations between the visual and audio elements in this piece, which create meaningful coincidences and enhance the perception of hidden realms of consciousness. There are numerous layers of visual and audio information where synchronous messages are embedded within the interconnection between elements. The piece is designed to transcend through different perceptive states and layers of consciousness. The overall pattern of the image-to-audio relationship moves between disorientation to clarity and back. Members of the audience should feel as though they have entered a different realm to experience this piece. As they sit in the installation space, viewers should gather awareness of their senses and absorb the patterns of image and sound that flow around them, adopting a meditative and inwardly focused state of viewing and listening. By turning their consciousness inward, viewers will access deeper realms of perception, where synchronous information can be sifted through.

Viewers should be carried along with the current of images and sound, engaging in multiple experiences of synchronicity. The repeating audio and visual themes develop greater meaning with increased attention. There are many variables for viewers to focus on so that different patterns will be perceived with multiple viewings. The significance of the patterns is not necessarily literal or specific. In the experience of synchronicity exact messages may not always be understood, but there is a strong sense of communication taking place. An analysis of these abstract communication points as they combine will ultimately reveal a larger impression of understanding in the synchronicity of one's life and in the experience of this artwork.

IMAGES

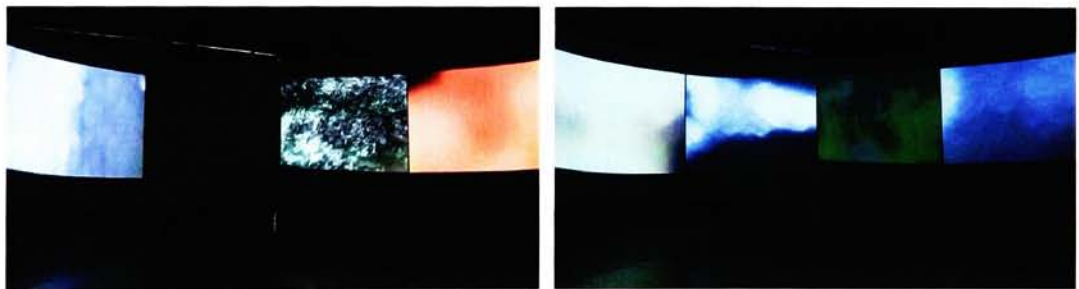


Figure 5. Installation images of *Synchronicities 4:4*, Rochester Institute of Technology S.P.A.S. Gallery, 2007.

The four large video projections dominate the installation space. The images are all projected on the same plane and work together as one visual piece; however, they are not usually illuminated all at once. At times all four are dark for many seconds at a time, drawing full attention to the sound. The four images create interrelationships between their individual elements, and the visual patterns depend on which images are lit at what time, creating a dreamlike choreography among the images. There is a sensation of

cycling between on and off in rhythmic patterns which are at points chaotic and at other times meditative and peaceful. The images are abstracted shapes of light, and are interwoven through movement, texture, color and shadow. Their abstract form is an impetus for viewers to focus on the patterns created among them, rather than dissecting their specific photographic sources. The color palette pulsates from neutral tones to bolder shades of orange, green and purple as the rhythms increase, then breaks into metallic shades of blue, silver and gold to represent a transcendence into unseen realms. The images are a medium that carries the power of the audio, a reflective surface that allows for deepened awareness to take place. The screen acts as a place for viewers to settle their eyes and hold their attention while they listen.

A strong influence for the style of images in *Synchronicities 4:4* is the work of filmmaker Stan Brakhage. He structures and edits many of his works by crafting directly onto the celluloid surface using painting, scratching, and other methods. The result when screening his work is often a morphing color field of “associational narratives directed

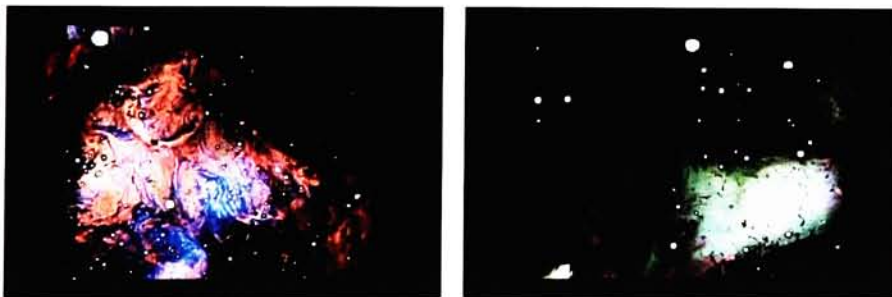


Figure 6. Still images from the film *Stellar*, Stan Brakhage, 1993.

by abstract sequences”^{xi} where patterns and shapes emerge and ebb and flow among one another. These patterns of movement and shape are the key to Brakhage’s work because they create a subliminal presence, opening the same kind of meditative channels into

heightened awareness as is utilized by *Synchronicities 4:4*. Brakhage's interpretation of audio also establishes a subliminal presence, because although his films are mostly silent, there is a transformative sense of sound that emerges within the mind of the viewer. This is a synesthetic white noise that corresponds to the fluctuating visual edits and patterns. Subliminal perception is a key step involved in shaping the manifestation of synchronicity to an individual mind.

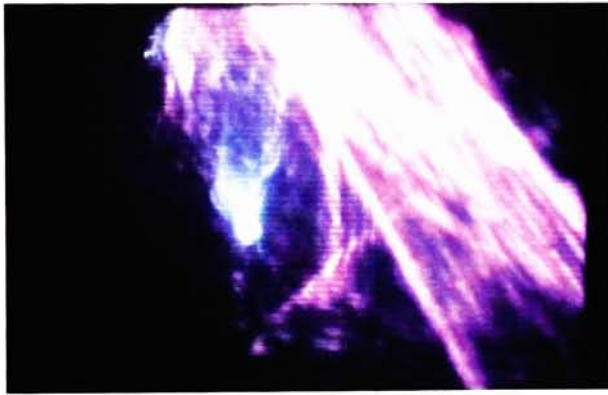


Figure 7. Still image from the film *Mutations*, Lillian Schwartz & Jean-Claude Risset, 1972.

Another piece which interprets the sound to image relationship in a similar way to *Synchronicities 4:4* is the collaborative work by Lillian Schwartz and Jean-Claude Risset, *Mutations*. Risset composed the electronic sounds using an abstract, underlying mathematical structure, and Schwartz choreographed the images based on the movement of sound. The design of images, which are abstracted patterns of light, appears to create the sounds heard by the viewers. This is a similar fusion between sound and image as that which structures *Synchronicities 4:4*. Synesthetic and synchronous relationships are created between the sensory experiences of seeing and hearing.

Within the *Synchronicities 4:4* installation, the image patterns take on different relationships that evolve based on the audio, developing deeper senses of awareness as the cycles progress. Each of the four soundtracks uses the same visual composition to illuminate its set of synchronicities within the overall structure. The audio segments are presented one after another in a linear progression, and are each self-contained and distinct from the other soundtracks. At the same time, however, all of the sounds are interrelated and dependent on one another to create and convey meaning. The image sequence takes on different trigger points for each section of audio, tying all aspects together into a web of sensory information. Every time the images repeat, the sound builds upon the audio transmitted during previous cycles, creating increasingly complex synchronous patterns.

AUDIO

Like the images, the audio is abstracted, in that there is no traditional narrative taking place. The first soundtracks in the cycle feature an abundance of confusing and overlapping sounds, including fragments of dialogue and a combination of electronic static, mechanical, musical and natural sounds. These types of sound are found at points within each of the four soundtracks, connecting all of the audio tracks together to symbolize transcendence between realms of consciousness. As the audio tracks move forward the commotion of sound subsides, isolating the individual elements rather than overlapping them. The four-minute audio cycles build upon one another by connecting various sound themes found throughout the piece. The full audio sequence ends with the minimal sound of trickling water that gives way to a series of high-pitched pulsations.

The audio symbolizes the act of turning one's focus inward, replacing disorder with introspection gained from the development of synchronous relationships.

Human voices can be deciphered to varying degrees in each soundtrack. These narrative voices are not often clear, but contain fragments of sentences that weave together to imply greater meaning using synthesis of the mind. They speak directly to the listener, acting as liaisons to deliver messages, and symbolize a listener's inner monologue, establishing a connection to unseen realms. There are moments when so many of these voices blend together that chaos erupts, and other moments when there is such quiet that the silence between voices ripens with meaning. The audio tracks also include phrases that are more unintelligible, such as the voices of children, whispers, animal sounds, as well as "voices" or messages heard in the noise of non-sentient entities (such as water). Since there is no specific message transmitted within these audio elements, the "sense" of their ambiguous messages creates an indirect narrative, channeling synchronous messages that delve beyond the apparent sound. Their meanings arise from the inner awareness of the listeners' minds.

In meditation, a common technique used to center oneself is the exercise of toning, which means concentrating on a single vowel or syllable (commonly *ohm*, but it can be any sound) and emitting it through sustained cycles of breath. Sandra Ingerman, a shamanic practitioner who studies meditation, explains that "almost all creation myths begin with the idea that the world was created by a sound or word...[In many ancient practices] it is very important to correctly pronounce each syllable and vowel, for whenever a syllable or vowel is pronounced, a vibration is set up that accesses the power of the universe and then manifests back on earth."^{xii} She explains that toning allows

people to maintain a state of consciousness that connects them to the divine nature of their soul. When sounds are broken down into basic vibration, bridges into unseen realms can be established.

The tonal and musical aspects of *Synchronicities 4:4* help to create emotional sensations that bear the weight of deeper awareness. This is also true for the static, high-pitched and other sharp noises placed within the audio of this piece. These intense vibrations signify transitions among states of consciousness. There is a duality between the sensory overload that these sounds create and the smooth intensity over a range of frequencies that also characterizes them, which is related to patterns or voices construed amid disordered but consistent noise (which some believe to be communication from spirits outside the perceived limits of reality). At the end of the audio cycles all sounds fade out of hearing range, representing consciousness as it becomes completely engulfed by invisible planes.

Janet Cardiff is an artist who explores similar aural realms. In her *Walks* series, she blurs the lines between reality and fantasy, interior headspace and the environments in which her audience experiences her pieces. These recordings, issued in portable audio players, are designed for use in specific settings. They are presented under the guise of typical museum audio tours, instructing listeners to move certain directions and take specific paths, often outdoors. They quickly become complicated, however, as Cardiff's narrative and sound elements play upon what listeners see as they walk, mixing into their real environments fantastical layers of audio that relate to the space, but incorporate alternate times, realities, and characters. Cardiff's voice speaks directly to the listener as a confidant, enticing one's perceptions and emotions. She writes of her *Walks*, "In this

type of work, synchronistic events play with the listener's understanding of reality.

There is a sense of wonder and shock when events and scenes described on the audio tape coincidentally happen in the physical world. On the other hand, when something you hear is not there, the viewer is given a sense of displacement, as though they have been transported into someone else's dream."^{xiii} These pieces shape sensory awareness to access the realms of the unseen.

Another piece by Cardiff entitled *Whispering Room* features speakers mounted on stands throughout a gallery, each one uttering stories spoken by different voices. The effect of walking through the gallery space is disorienting, like overhearing fragments of multiple conversations at once, so that none of the pieces make clear sense, similar to the audio overload in *Synchronicities 4:4*. However, by employing the same means of meditative concentration, listeners may begin to comprehend information as it synchronizes with their awareness. Together, the voices become something more than what they are speaking about individually. Meaningful connections may be deciphered within the jumble of narratives, as synchronous fusions emerge from the initially overwhelming environment. Cardiff's work is similar to *Synchronicities 4:4* not only in aesthetic structure, but also in its exploration of content: the impermeability of what is "real," the disassociation of perception and time, and tension between natural states of intuition and the sensory-saturated environment of contemporary life.

A prominent voice found in each of the audio segments in *Synchronicities 4:4* belongs to the poet Jeanette Karhi, who reads sections of poetry from her collection *EVE RECEIVE&*, also referred to as DEAD POEMS. Karhi's poems guide the abstracted narrative connecting the audio segments. The selections of Karhi's work recorded for my

installation deal with sensory-psychic transformation and communication with spirit. Since her poems allude to the same conceptual philosophies explored in this work, Karhi's pieces fit well aesthetically with other sound elements and fragments of dialogue in *Synchronicities 4:4*.

The strange accentuation of Karhi's voice is a result of the way the poems are written. DEAD POEMS contain two simultaneous poems: that which is printed on the page, and that which emerges when read aloud. The poem makes little sense when read silently, using only the visual cues of the print. The true voice of the poem does not exist on paper, but is summoned only when the words are articulated in sound. The following is a sample section of one poem from *EVE RECEIVE&* found in the audio of *Synchronicities 4:4*. In capital letters is the poem as it appears in print, and in the next column is the "translation" of the poem – the words formed in sound when the poem is voiced:

EYE WAS HOUND
BEEF OR I'D I'D
& OFTER

I was sound
before I died
and after

MICE HOUND ACE ACCORD
WHIFF YOU'RE IS

My sound makes a chord
With yours

Karhi writes of her work, "The DEAD POEMS cleave the sound of a poem from its printed text, reverting poetry to its place among the auditory arts... A reader who voices [a DEAD POEM] despite its motley appearance finds himself speaking the sonic level of the poem. Through listening to the sound, meaningful communication or 'sense-

making' takes place."^{xiv} In a style similar to the layering of sounds that must be sorted within the mind, the significance of *EVE RECEIVE&* is found in the invisible underpoems, which emulate spirit voices taking possession of the speaker. Karhi explains, "the reader becomes not just a listener to the poet or the poetry or the page but a listener to himself... From each poem lifts a spell, a ritual chant, a disembodied voice using the voice of the reader as a medium to channel through."^{xv} These poems illustrate a forced separation of what is seen and what is heard, creating a passage into invisible realms of perception. This structure which concurrently spans multiple realms also coincides with the premise of *Synchronicities 4:4*, accentuating the similar concepts between Karhi's work and my own.

Ann Hamilton is an artist whose work resonates with similar ideas regarding awareness, interconnection and invisible realms. Hamilton's video and sound installation *Ghost...A Border Act* is similar to *Synchronicities 4:4* in terms of installation and conceptual design. Hamilton's piece consists of two 30' square "rooms" created by sheer curtains hanging inside a dark, otherwise empty warehouse. Inside each of the two curtained spaces, projectors are mounted to a moving track. The projectors circle on these tracks, shining their images along the square curtains that surround them as they move. Their light spills through the sheer material onto one another and also projects out onto the far walls of the warehouse. The effect of this constant movement is ghostly and somewhat frightening, summoning impressions of poltergeists or looming searchlights in the dark. Like my work, *Ghost...A Border Act* creates a disorienting, transformative space. The audio in Hamilton's piece is also reminiscent of *Synchronicities 4:4*. Minimal, amplified whispers fill the area around the curtained

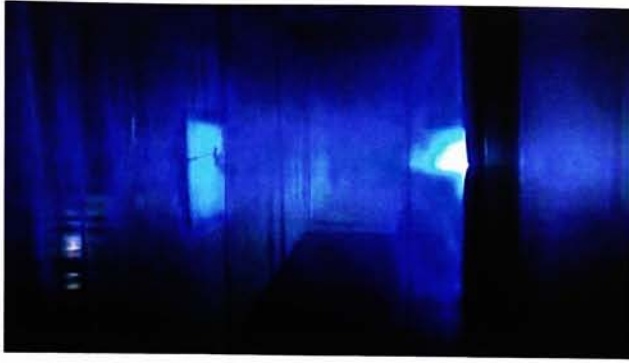


Figure 8. Installation image of *Ghost...A Border Act*, Ann Hamilton, 2000.

rooms, resounding lucid pronunciations of fragmented, ambiguous words such as “echo” and “sierra.” The sound enhances the eeriness and mystification of the space. The projected images portray a pencil dragging a think line behind it, which Hamilton intends to symbolize a connective thread running between perception and spirit, utilizing written and verbal communication as its medium.

John Cage is an audio artist who uses synchronicity to a large degree in the structure of his work, while incorporating his studies of Chance Operations. Cage embraces a random structure in his musical compositions, which is ideal for the materialization of synchronicities. Chance music is not produced by traditional planning and composing, but instead allows unpredictable elements to intrude, embracing coincidental relationships. Cage’s pieces are always experimental and innovative, and generally include jarring, non-musical elements that sometimes combine with sparse melodies. Often Cage is credited much more highly for his philosophies on chance and synchronicity than for his actual music. Cage has said that he would rather listen to the sound of a city street than attend a concert, because the synchronous sounds of the street are musical to his ears. Of his philosophies, he says, “Wherever we are, what we hear is mostly noise. When we ignore it, it disturbs us. When we listen to it, we find it

fascinating. The sound of a truck at fifty miles per hour. Static between the stations.

Rain. We want to capture and control these sounds, to use them not as sound effects but as musical instruments.”^{xvi}

Throughout his career, Cage used many different methods to come up with his chance formulas, including mathematical equations, philosophical theories, and more. In some cases, he selected existing pieces of music and re-explored them using chance. For example, he would count “the number of notes in a given [musical piece], and then used chance to select from these...He would take the first note from the original score and extend it until the seventh note (removing all the intervening notes); all the notes from the seventh to the eleventh would be removed, leaving a silence.”^{xvii} By applying random numerical formulas to the existing compositions and rearranging their structure based on these formulas, Cage created new pieces of music. He did not know how they would sound until the Chance Operations had been applied. However, instead of obsessing over what traditionally pleased the ear, Cage was fascinated with inviting “randomness into

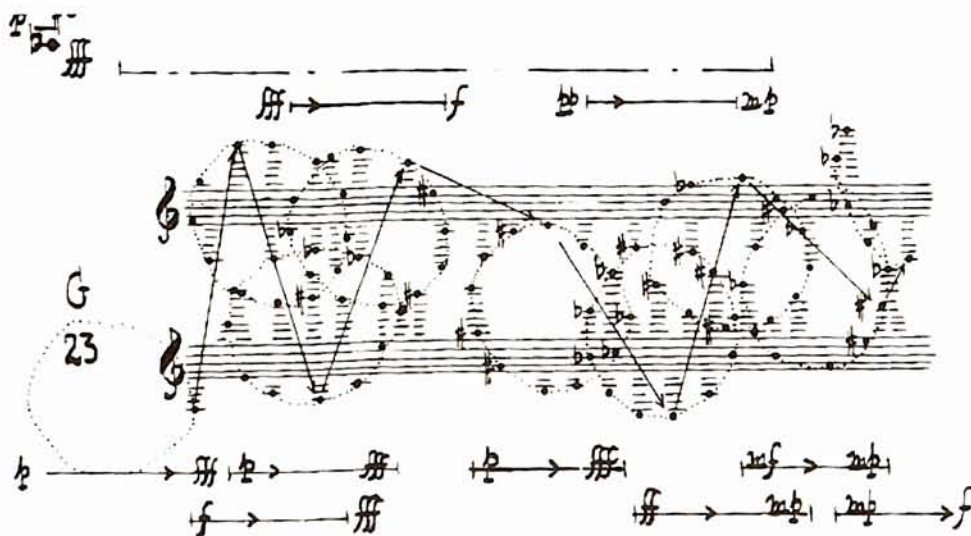


Figure 9. Possible music based on Chance Operations, from *Concert for Piano & Orchestra*, John Cage, 1958.

his work. The pieces are thus about the idea of chance and are not concerned with anything even remotely musical. These are ‘conceptual’ works in which...the philosophical underpinnings are clearly more significant than any mere sound.”^{xviii}

Magical transformations arose when the structure of these compositions synchronized with musical sounds that were indeed aesthetically interesting. Cage would then consider the pieces successful.

CONCLUSION



Figure 10. Installation images of *Synchronicities 4:4*, Rochester Institute of Technology S.P.A.S. Gallery, 2007.

By utilizing characteristics from these wide ranges of influences, *Synchronicities 4:4* illuminates the transcendent realms of awareness as they manifest in sensory-psychic and spiritually connective states of perception. This installation calls attention to the phenomenon of synchronicity, opening doors for possibilities of greater understanding in those who experience this piece. Synchronicity reveals the interconnection between all things, and provides a current for expanded awareness and mindfulness of the ways in

which all things relate to one another. *Synchronicities 4:4* pays homage to the mysterious perceptual capabilities harvested within the continuum of consciousness. As biologist and author Rupert Sheldrake argues, “It is more scientific to explore phenomena we do not understand than to pretend they do not exist. I also believe it is less frightening to recognize that the [psychic] sense is part of our biological nature, shared with many other animal species, than to treat it as weird or supernatural.”^{xix} In modern culture, people are exposed to constant over-stimulation and internalize much without questioning the effects of this toxic state of being. Distractions fill people’s lives so they do not notice areas of their minds leading to greater sensory awareness and passages for psychic and spiritual information to guide their actions. This thesis project seeks to open awareness to the synchronous messages that exist not only within this piece, but also within the world in general: to re-sensitize in a culture of desensitization. The experience of synchronicity affects everyone at some point, it is simply a matter of when. To those individuals who learn to become increasingly sensitive to synchronous patterns in their lives, this current of information can be used as an invaluable tool toward a greater understanding of existence.

ENDNOTES

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- ⁱⁱ Jung, Carl. *Synchronicity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 25.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Jung, Carl. *Synchronicity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 7.
- ^{iv} Orloff, Judith. *Awakening Second Sight*. Boulder: Sounds True, 1997, part 3, section 4.
- ^v Sheldrake, Rupert. *The Sense of Being Stared At*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2003, p. ix.
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- ^{vii} Cox, Christoph. "Lost in Translation." *ArtForum*, Vol. XLIV, No. 2, October 2005, p. 238.
- ^{viii} Kandinsky, Wassily. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1977, p. 34.
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- ^x Kandinsky, Wassily. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1977, p. xix.
- ^{xi} Barrett, Gerald. *Stan Brakhage: A Guide to References and Resources*. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., p. 27.
- ^{xii} Ingeman, Sandra. *Miracles for the Earth*. Boulder: Sounds True, 2004, part 1, section 5.
- ^{xiii} Christov-Bakargiev, Carolyn, *Janet Cardiff: A Survey of Works*, New York: Distributed Art, 2001, p. 80.
- ^{xiv} Karhi, Jeanette. "The Dead Poems." <http://www.jeanettekarhi.com/DeadEssay.html>, 2007, p. 1.
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Synchronicities 4:4

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