

Sebastian Cimpean  
thesis project / proposal  
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/ working title

## **WHAT**

My objective this academic year is to create a live audio-visual performance, focusing on light, projected or as illumination source. More specifically, I'm interested in designing and developing the performance space, the content that will be projected and the scenario that outlines the progression of the performance. The ultimate goal is to construct a performance space in which the audience is immersed, where, through visuals, I will be able to play with their sense of perception. I plan to document this with a thesis in the form of a project report.

## **WHERE WHEN**

Additionally, the documentation of the performance is envisioned to take a more elaborate form, where it can also be presented individual of the performance itself. The goal is for this documentation to shed light on the technical, practical but also conceptual aspects of the performance. In order to do this, it is my intention to document every stage of the project, create scale models of the performance space, document the performance itself and wrap everything into a small installation for presentation.

## **ABOUT**

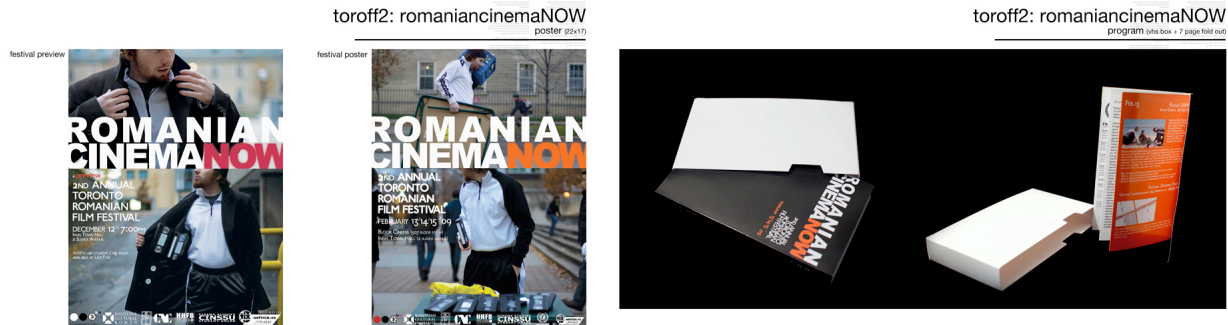
The driving agent behind the content of the performance is the notion of dreams. The reason why I picked dreams is because, in describing them, I was using similar keywords/characteristics that I found in describing my projection work. They both deal with space in a very particular way, the time continuum can vary, there's repetition and the way one perceives his/her surroundings are a few of the notes I jotted on a piece of paper. Additionally, it is the absurdness of dreams that is intriguing to me, the absurd being a topic which I'm starting to be more interested in. From these initial keywords, I have developed questions and interests that could also be applied to visual work, and the goal is to connect these two realms, through the specifics, in order to create a feeling of immersion.

## **WHAT?!**

To clarify, my goal is to make the audience feel as if they are dreaming - and not to visualize a dream in the way cinema does.

## WHY WHY WHY

In my previous work, I have often worked with bands, in creating branding for them. Another key aspect of my work is developing one concept across multiple mediums, this is specifically exemplified in my work with a not-for-profit company I run in Toronto, Canada, where the design, or rather the creative wrapper is applied across all the elements of the product - poster, advertising strategy, program, theme and so on.



/ toroff2, festival posters and program

Following this idea, my work with bands, especially when it comes to albums, usually stopped at only developing a visual identity for the album, but I strongly believe that this visual identity could be expanded, for example, to the album release tour, more specifically to the concerts themselves by adding visual work in the form of projection. This is one of my interests moving forward, and through this project, I am intending to come to grasp with the intricacies of developing the visual end of a performance.

In my research I have also come across one quote, that stirred my interest even more in regards to the possibilities of live performance. It says “[the] transmission from the live to the mediated to the live [...] continually effects the interruption and contamination of separate ‘works’ to produce ‘spontaneous’ and unintended outcomes.”<sup>1</sup>

On a more related note, projection has been a growing interest that I have been especially developing in the last few years. Over two trimesters I worked on a video installation that dealt with space and its perception, which helped me recognize my interests in projection. In addition, I have been more aware of similar artists and projects, specifically that work with light, across multiple mediums.

Lastly, I believe this proposed project will allow me to present my findings (research, technical implications, concept and presentation) in a more refined manner, both visually and conceptually.

<sup>1</sup> Kaye, Nick. Multi-Media: Video-Installation-Performance. pg. 17

## HOW

As mentioned in the opening statement, my interest is to design and develop the space, the content and the script for the performance and here I will go into more detail in describing each of these parts. First, regarding the space, I would normally refer to it as screen, but I actually think that in this case, space, is a more relevant term - but I am not referring to designing a space in an architectural sense. Rather, this word came about because “screen” is misleading, and its too readily associated with a two-dimensional screen. This was my starting point, but I knew I would like to extend into three-dimensional space, to include objects and create a stage, and finally, in the current situation, where concerned with the immersive element, I have started thinking that there could be objects (surfaces/screens) scattered through the audience as well, and it is for this reason why I refer to the design of my projection surfaces as the performance space. On a more technical level, my goal is to make this performance as adaptable as possible, and therefore I will be designing my screens so that they can be folded away and easily transported. To do this, one solution would be to create the framework and wrap it with a more malleable material, such as cloth, which is also suitable for projection.

The content and the script are more connected - the first refers to what it is about while the second outlines the progression of the performance. Here, the driving agent is the notion of dreams and one important differentiation is that I would like to create a dream-like experience rather than visualizing a dream. In my process of learning about dreams from Freud, I had one starting idea that exemplifies this differentiation. Namely, dreams are sourced in short term memory, therefore I could insert elements or ideas in visual material in anticipation of the performance, in order to then bring them up again during the performance. This replicates short term memory dreaming, where you dream about something that you unconsciously saw or overheard over a few days before the dream. But dreaming is a very individualistic act, making it very difficult to be synthesized to affect everybody, this is a point with which I’ve been struggling to cope with. To counter this, I would like to make use of guided meditation, because, in the beginning stages of the performance, I can entice the people to let themselves go. Guided meditation is a strong word, but in a way I already saw it applied to the performance of the Blue Man Group where they are speaking directly to the audience. At the beginning of their performance, LED text screens spent a few good minutes to comically tell people what to do, such as turn your phone off, cheer and so on. Talking directly to the audience is an interest of mine, and I think it could be very suitable in this case, while it sits on the boarder to the abstract both in terms of the words used and the methods of communicating with the audience (ie. not with a person talking in a microphone). To outline the progression of the performance, I would like to look at the stages of sleep (there are five of them) and replicate them into stages of the performance. For example, it is said that in the first stage “the body is preparing for deep sleep,” and in this stage I could include the guided-like meditation element. The last stage is “deep sleep”, where you almost consciously dreaming (meaning that it is the dreams in this stage that you remember). This again can be transcended to the performance, as in the last stage it is the culmination of the whole performance, and could be, that it is the part the audience could potentially remember afterwards.

My working methodology will be split up in three main parts, research and development, development and documentation/production and I'm hoping to split up these three parts equally across the time frame I have to complete the project. The research and development stage I see as the most important right now, because I really want to be more thorough in this area of my practice and my goal is to analyze all the work and documents that I propose to research on. During the stage dedicated to development, I will be focusing on creating the space of the audio-visual performance as I described it before. Furthermore, I will be developing all the content of the projection and working with the musician to create the rundown of the performance itself. During this stage I will be putting all of theory to test, and the whole process will culminate with the performance itself, which will be documented, and with this I will be stepping into the last phase of the production of this project. It is in this phase where I will be doing last adjustments and will be refining the actual presentation of the project, creating a form in which the audience can (re)look at the performance and how it was put together.

The work plan, as described in the previous section will consist of three parts. The main milestone is the audiovisual performance which should take place somewhere around the months of April or May, allowing me with plenty of time to document and prepare that part of the project, but will also allow me to research, develop and prepare for the performance itself. Also, my intention is to really make the performance a part of something bigger, to have an audience and to have the right conditions and pretense for the presentation, an option being to present it as part of a film or music festival. For a performance in May, I would like to give myself about one month time to test and tweak the performance itself, to work with the DJ or who ever will provide the music and so on. Basically refine the performance itself, and prepare the capturing of the performance as well.

### *Timeline*

<i>month 1 -</i>	Oct 3 - Oct 30	- <i>proposal &amp; research (concept &amp; background)</i>
<i>month 2 -</i>	Oct 31 - Nov 27	- <i>research (concept &amp; background)</i>
<b><i>month 3 -</i></b>	<b>Nov 28 - Dec 25</b>	- <b><i>research (materials + hardware) &amp; concept</i></b>
<i>month 4 -</i>	Dec 26 - Jan 22	- <i>research &amp; concept w/ production</i>
<i>month 5 -</i>	Jan 23 - Feb 19	- <i>production (space)</i>
<i>month 6 -</i>	Feb 20 - Mar 18	- <i>production (content) + test</i>
<b><i>month 7 -</i></b>	<b>Mar 19 - Apr 15</b>	- <b><i>test + performance</i></b>
<i>month 8 -</i>	Apr 16 - May 6	- <i>documentation</i>
<i>month 9 -</i>	May 14 - Jun 10	- <i>documentation + umbrella project</i>
<i>month 10 -</i>	Jun 11 - Jul 1	- <i>finalize</i>
<b><i>month 11 -</i></b>	<b>Jul 9 - Sep 6</b>	- <b><i>finalize + graduation show Budget</i></b>

For the budget a few things will have to be considered, including where the performance will take place. The bigger issues that I see coming up in the budget will include hardware and materials for the audiovisual performance. Hardware will include projectors and the materials which I will be building my stage/set and screens from. So far contributing to the funding of this project will mainly be myself, but I will also receive 300 euros from the Willem De Kooning Academy.

## WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN... ABOUT

My research will take me across three different fields. First, on dreams, I intend to understand dreams from a psychological point of view (their interpretation) and the scientific point of view (how they happen). I'm hoping these will allow me to better understand what dreams are, and what to extract from them. Furthermore, on dreams, I intend to uncover more information about their visualization, in film, so that I can see things like space, time, rhythm and their design, in order to be able to better relate them to my field of work in this project.

Secondly, I will be looking at the medium itself - visual work, performance. This will allow me to better understand the history of the medium, and be able to better react to it in the context of today, as well as in reaction to contemporary visual work, performance and so on.

Finally, I will be looking at fabrication, in terms of architecture, in order to build my performance space. Here I'm interested in looking at materials and fabrication methods to allow me to create my design while making it adaptable and suitable for projection.

### Topics/People/Collectives/Artworks/Tags

Akira Kurosawa - Dreams (film)  
 Alfred Hitchcock - Spellbound (film)  
 Amon Tobin - I.S.A.M  
 Andy Warhol and The Velvet Underground  
 Anti-VJ  
 Blue Man Group  
 Concert video projection  
 Experiment in Art and Technology  
 James Turrell  
 John Cage  
 László Moholy-Nagy  
 Nam June Paik  
 Post-cinema/expanded cinema  
 Salvador Dali - dreams

### Bibliography

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein - Films and Dreams: Tarkovsky, Bergman, Sokurov, Kubrick, and Wong Kar-Wai (2007)  
 Sean Cubitt - Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture (essay)  
 Thomas DeQuincey - Confessions of an English Opium Eater (1821)  
 Stan Douglas and Christopher Eamon - Art of Projection (2009)  
 Sigmund Freud - The Interpretation of Dreams (1913)  
 David Joselit - Feedback: Television Against Democracy (2007)  
 Leslie Halpern - Dreams on film: the cinematic struggle between art and science (2003)  
 Mark Hansen - New Philosophy for New Media (essay)  
 Lisa Iwamoto - Digital Fabrications: Architectural and Material Techniques (2009)  
 Nam June Paik - Afterlude to the Exposition of Experimental Television (essay, 1963)  
 P. Adam Sitney - Visionary Films: The American Avant-Garde 1943-2000 (2002)