Cyclic Repetition and Transferred Temporalities

Video installation as performative matrix

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Introduction

This chapter raises questions about mediated presence within performance studies, based on a research project’s nexus of theoretical investigations and practical exploration. I will elucidate the theoretical underpinnings for my video installation project, *Cadences*.¹ The exhibition project recomposed separate art components – video footage of two different dancers (Ros Crisp and Dean Walsh, performing for a video camera), recorded vocal performance (Ruark Lewis’s reading of a poem by Nathaniel Tarn), and digital images of an installation work (Ruark Lewis’s public art work) – in a new context, a video installation. The installation aimed to suggest a new way of conceiving artistic interdisciplinarity, focusing on the transference of live performance to mediated forms and the particular temporal and textural repetitiveness of video installation. It aimed to generate a tension between video and dance, between sound art and oral poetry, and between animation and digital photography.

While the video art – looping video on an LCD monitor or through a data projector, and a sound file on an iPod – was a closed system in the sense that it was non-interactive, it permitted a ‘playing out’ of repetitive modes that resonated within the spectator, highlighting the opposition between the live and the mediated. Similarly, digital effects operated between the original and the ‘photoshopped’ (or the digitally manipulated sound). This video installation project aimed to stress the interconnectedness of these divides. The idea of ‘performance’ within a repetitive video installation developed concurrently during this exhibition project. In this chapter I will discuss the question of the interconnectedness of presence and representation in video installation, and the role of repetition, within the context of debates on performance and mediation in performance studies.

¹ This chapter expands upon a preliminary investigation discussed in the exhibition catalogue and at a seminar related to the exhibition.
Figure 14.1 Two agents in Cadences (2009), Video installation, Performer: Ros Crisp, Photo: Effy Alexakis

Figure 14.2 Three agents in Cadences (2009), Video installation, Performer: Dean Walsh, Photo: Effy Alexakis