
Shaping the In-Between

Curatorial Strategies for Sensory, Emotional, and Intellectual Engagement in Contemporary Exhibition Spaces

This paper explores the “in-between” as a curatable condition within contemporary exhibition making. Through a case study of Mark Wallinger’s *The Russian Linesman* (2009), it examines how spatial, conceptual, and perceptual thresholds can structure conditions for sensory, emotional, and intellectual engagement within exhibition practice.

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Introduction

“For a long moment I lost track of the difference between myself and the room, between the boxes and my body moving among them.” This passage from Ben Lerner’s 10:04 (2014) describes the protagonist’s visit to Donald Judd’s *110 Untitled Works in Mill Aluminum* (1982–1986), installed within former artillery sheds at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas. Conceived by Judd as integral to the work itself rather than neutral containers, the buildings form part of a site-specific environment that merges sculpture, architecture, and landscape (Judd 2016, 137–141).

The excerpt captures a moment of perceptual and spatial dissolution, in which the boundaries between viewer, artwork, and architectural setting blur. Such experiences raise critical questions about the nature of exhibition encounters and challenge object centered models of display. They suggest that meaning may emerge not solely from individual artworks, but from the relational conditions produced between bodies, objects, and spaces.

This article investigates how curatorial strategies can activate these *in-between* conditions of exhibition making: spatial and conceptual thresholds that intensify sensory, emotional, and intellectual engagement. It asks whether, at certain moments, the artwork itself may recede in importance in favor of the experiential relations that unfold around it. Recent curatorial discourse has increasingly reframed the exhibition not as a neutral container for autonomous artworks but as a critical medium through which meaning is actively produced. While this shift was articulated in the 1990s through texts such as *Thinking About Exhibitions* (Ferguson, Greenberg, and Nairne 1996), subsequent scholarship has significantly expanded and nuanced these positions. Curatorial practice has increasingly been understood as a form of research and knowledge production, attentive to relationality, embodiment, and the experiential conditions through which audiences encounter art (O’Neill and Wilson 2014; Walsh 2014). Rather than merely staging objects within space, contemporary curatorial strategies foreground the dynamic interrelation between artworks, architecture, textual mediation, and audience agency, recognising exhibitions as environments that structure perception and interpretation over time. Within this expanded discourse, an exhibition emerges less as a frame and more as a situated encounter, shaped by affective navigation, spatial choreography, and the negotiation between curatorial intention and interpretive engagement. From this position, the article proposes the “*in-between*” as both a critical curatorial condition and a methodological framework through which contemporary exhibitions can be analysed and conceived.

This article develops this argument through a focused case study of *Mark Wallinger: The Russian Linesman: Frontiers, Borders and Thresholds*, 2009, exhibited at Hayward Gallery, London. Wallinger’s curatorial approach treats space not as a passive container but as an active, affective agent in the production of meaning. By examining how

materiality, audience agency, and spatial arrangement intersect within this exhibition, the article proposes how *in-between* curatorial spaces generate conditions of emergent interpretation rather than fixed narratives.

To analyze these strategies, the discussion is organized around four thematic models, each aligned with a distinct theoretical framework. **A Constellation**, explores associative proximity and constellatory thinking as curatorial mechanisms through which meaning remains open, relational, and contingent, emerging through the viewer's participatory engagement rather than being fixed by curatorial intent. **A Conversation** develops this approach by focusing on dialogic pairings that shape the conditions of interpretation, exploring how exhibitions address and construct anticipatory structures of meaning and response. **Repetition** explores recurrence and variation as curatorial strategies that generate difference through structured conditions of encounter. Examining how repetition produces both recognition and disruption within the exhibition experience. Finally, **The Space** addresses spatial disorientation and embodied navigation as operative curatorial mechanisms through which architectural form expands the field of exhibition making, transforming space from a backdrop into a generative medium. Taken together, these frameworks enable a nuanced reading of *The Russian Linesman* as a curatorial proposition that activates affective, conceptual, and spatial forms of participation, positioning the *in-between* as a central site of the contemporary exhibition experience.

The analysis developed is informed not by empirical visitor research, but through sustained curatorial and phenomenological engagement with the exhibition itself. Rather than claiming a universal viewer response, the article reflects a situated interpretive position shaped through personal encounter, theoretical reflection, and close attention to the exhibition's spatial and relational strategies. In this sense, the discussion approaches *The Russian Linesman* less as evidence of fixed audience experience and more as a curatorial proposition through which conditions for interpretation, affect, and perceptual negotiation are constructed. The concepts identified build upon curatorial theory that challenges the neutrality of the exhibition space.

These interstitial zones function as thresholds where interpretation is activated, rather than suspended. They prompt the viewer to pause, reflect, and navigate the associative field of the exhibition. This relates to Philosopher and Art Historian Juliane Rebentisch's description of the aesthetic experience as relational and durational, unfolding in the gap between artwork and viewer (Rebentisch 2012, 34-36). Art Historian and Critic Claire Bishop also evaluates the how, of these *in-between* spaces, positioning installation and participatory practices as forms that draw attention to these very moments of embodied encounter, turning spectators into co-creators (Bishop 2005, 6-10).

The *in-between* also resonates with Philosopher Umberto Eco's concept of "the open work," where meaning is not imposed but arises through the audience's active engagement (Eco 1989, 8-9). More recently, Professors at Utrecht University Iris van der Tuin

and Nanna Verhoeff have articulated “serendipity” as a mode of knowledge production in which environments are deliberately configured to enable unexpected connections across disciplines, temporalities, and forms (van der Tuin and Verhoeff 2022, 61–63, 66–67, 90–92). Building on these frameworks, this article adopts the term *structured serendipity* to describe a curatorial strategy in which exhibition design is carefully orchestrated to evoke the experiential qualities of chance encounter and discovery, while remaining conceptually intentional.

Beyond its focus on *The Russian Linesman*, this article contributes to contemporary curatorial discourse by proposing the “in-between” as both an analytical and practical framework for understanding exhibition-making as an experiential and relational process. The thematic models developed here are therefore intended not only as readings of Wallinger’s exhibition, but as transferable curatorial strategies through which exhibitions may structure affective, perceptual, and intellectual forms of engagement.

The Case Study

Presented at the Hayward Gallery in 2009, *The Russian Linesman: Frontiers, Borders and Thresholds* was curated by Artist Mark Wallinger and has since become a significant reference point in discussions of curatorial practice concerned with perceptual and conceptual thresholds. The exhibition assembled a heterogeneous selection of artworks, historical artifacts, and visual materials, arranged in a manner reminiscent of a Renaissance *Wunderkammer*. As Art Historian and Educator Dr. Ben Street observes, rather than advancing a linear or didactic narrative, Wallinger constructed a field of open-ended associations that invited viewers to move across disciplinary, temporal, and sensory boundaries (Street 2009).

The exhibition’s title derives from the controversial goal awarded during the 1966 FIFA World Cup final – between England and West Germany – by Azerbaijani linesman Tofiq Bahramov. When later asked to justify his decision, Bahramov reportedly offered a single word, “Stalingrad,” invoking a politically charged and historically loaded reference. Within the exhibition, this anecdote operates as a curatorial metaphor: interpretively unstable, contingent, and dependent on context.

Art Critic Paul Ardenne observed, the exhibition was not governed by a unifying theme but by what he describes as an “aesthetic choice” that foregrounds manipulated or unreliable perception (Ardenne 2009). Within this framework, the *in-between* emerges not as a void or absence, but as a vital curatorial condition through which meaning is negotiated via ambiguity, proximity, and participation.

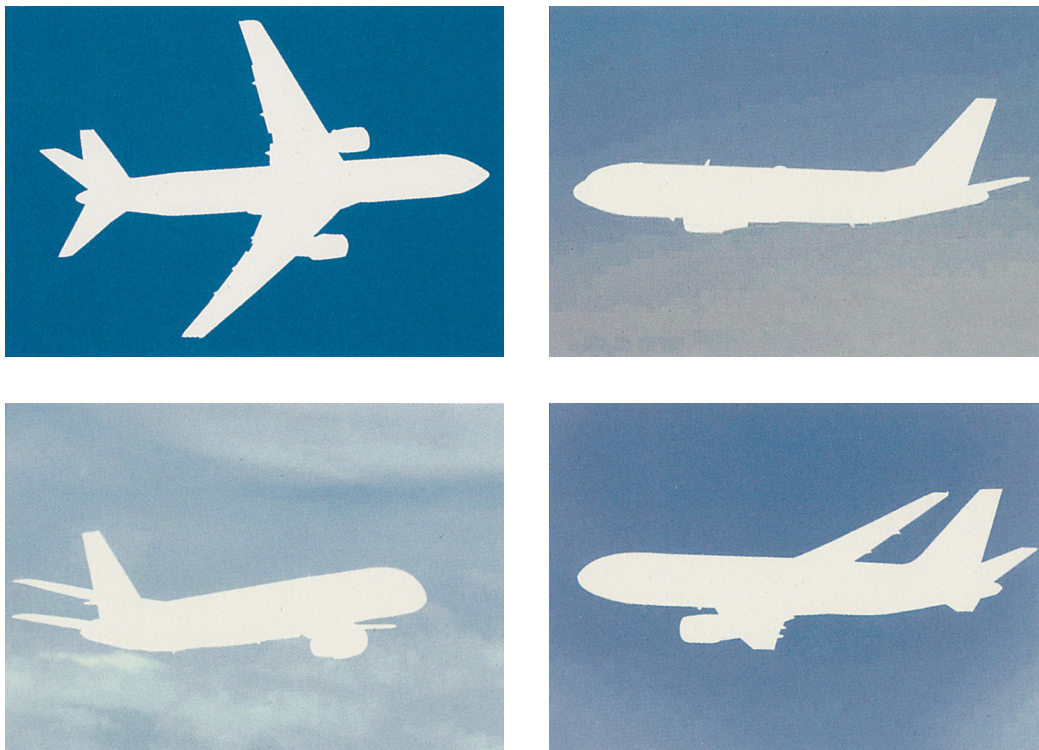
Wallinger’s selection of works – including his own – deliberately blurred disciplinary boundaries and historical categories, drawing attention to what exists at the edges of classification. By juxtaposing disparate materials and registers of meaning, the exhibition

foregrounded thresholds between fact and fiction, politics and aesthetics, and perception and interpretation. In doing so, *The Russian Linesman* establishes itself as a productive site for examining how exhibitions can activate interstitial spaces as mechanisms for experiential, affective, and intellectual engagement.

A Constellation

By *Constellation*, I refer to a curatorial structure in which meaning emerges through associative proximity rather than linear narrative. This will draw loosely on constellatory thinking, Wallinger positions artworks within shifting relational fields, allowing interpretation to accumulate across visual, historical, and affective correspondences rather than through singular thematic resolution.

Early in the encounter with *The Russian Linesman*, one of Wallinger's own works, *4 Postcards*, 2001 (ill. 1), is positioned at the exhibition entrance. Originally produced in Berlin, the work consists of four postcards purchased from an aviation center on Kantstrasse. In each postcard, the aircraft has been removed with a scalpel, leaving expanses of blue sky punctuated by voids where the planes once appeared.



ILL.1 — Mark Wallinger, *4 Postcards*, 2001. From the book *The Russian Linesman*, 2009.

Although minimal in gesture, *4 Postcards* is charged with the weight of subsequent historical events. Created prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, the work acquired a transformed resonance in the aftermath of this event. Wallinger recalls the moment he “took the postcards down from the walls,” acknowledging the profound shift in the work’s interpretive register (Wallinger 2009, 9). This transformation underscores the relevance of Eco’s theory of the open work, in which meaning is not fixed but evolves through context, temporality, and the active participation of the interpreter (Eco 1989).

Within the exhibition, *4 Postcards* operates as an entry point into a broader constellation of works and artefacts that collectively explore thresholds of perception, absence, and interpretation. These works are linked through shared associations of memory, loss, and spatial rupture, with the image and cultural memory of the Twin Towers functioning as a widely recognisable point of emotional and historical reference through which these relational connections emerge. Adjacent to Wallinger’s piece is a photograph documenting Philippe Petit’s 1974 tightrope walk between the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, an image suspended between spectacle and precarity. Nearby, Joseph Beuys’s *Cosmos and Damien Polished*, 1975 — a framed lithograph depicting the World Trade Center accompanied by a drawing rendered in shoe polish — introduces a symbolic and ritual register associated with themes of healing, sacrifice, and material transformation (Tate 1980–1982).

This grouping is further extended through the inclusion of two additional photographic works: *View after the Collapse of the Campanile at St. Mark’s Basilica, Venice, July 14, 1902*, and Wallinger’s own *Zone*, 2007, produced for the Münster Sculpture Project, which traces a painted boundary line encircling the city as a subtle act of spatial and political demarcation. Though temporally and formally disparate, these works are deliberately positioned in proximity, generating an intertextual field in which each reframes and is reframed by the others. Absence in Wallinger’s postcards becomes entangled with bodily suspension in Petit’s performance, symbolic restoration in Beuys’s work, architectural collapse, and geopolitical demarcation. In placing these somewhat disconnected pieces Wallinger’s arrangement foregrounds emotional and associative resonance over categorical coherence. What emerges is a network of *in-between* spaces, between image and absence, between historical event and personal myth, and between institutional framing and interpretation. These thresholds exemplify the *open work*’s capacity to operate, or what Rebentisch might call an aesthetic of participation (Rebentisch 2012). One that does not rely on direct involvement, but rather on an affective, cognitive, and spatial attentiveness to curatorial composition. Through this assemblage, Wallinger cultivates a moment that transcends singular readings, allowing meaning to accumulate through relationships and “interpretive labor” (Eco 1989, 3-4, 30).



ILL. 2 — *Double Headed Herm with Heads of Dionysos and Bearded Silenus.*



ILL. 3 — Renato Giuseppe Bertelli, *Profilo Continuo (Testa di Mussolini)*, 1933.

A Conversation

Continuing through the exhibition, Wallinger’s curatorial sensibility leads to a compelling connection between two sculptural works whose temporal distance underscores their conceptual resonance. Positioned in close proximity, the *Double Headed Herm with Heads of Dionysos and Bearded Silenus*, from the early Roman period (ill. 2), and Renato Giuseppe Bertelli’s *Profilo Continuo (Testa di Mussolini)*, 1933 (ill. 3) construct a tension-filled in-between space, one in which ideological, aesthetic, and historical contradictions are made tangible.

The *Herm* – drawn from a classical tradition of polycephalic busts – embodies a dialectical form: the youthful Dionysos, divinity of transformation, ecstasy, and transgression, shares a single stone bust with Silenus, his older, prophetic companion. In this single sculptural unit, the work forces a contemplation between duality, transition, and the coexistence of opposing forces. The *Herm* performs the conceptual “labor” of boundary dissolution. It resists fixed readings by embodying contradiction, qualities that mirror Wallinger’s curatorial interest in threshold experiences and liminal perception. Set against this, Bertelli’s *Profilo Continuo* offers a diametrically opposed vision of the sculptural body. Cast in sleek, black ceramic, its continuous, cylindrical rendering Mussolini’s profile reflects a hyper-stylised futurist aesthetic. As Art Critic and Writer Robert

Hughes has noted, this object simultaneously functions as a high-modernist cultural artefact and as a potent instrument of fascist propaganda (Hughes 1991, 97). Its refusal of internal contradiction – rendering Mussolini as a singular, omnipresent axis – stands in stark contrast to the layered ambiguity of the *Herm*. Where one invites engagement and perspectival movement from the audience, the other imposes a singular, totalising gaze. The viewer is thus caught in a transitional space of oscillation between multiplicity and unity, play and control, ancient ritual and modern spectacle.

Wallinger's decision to situate these works within the same visual field, points to a deliberate curatorial strategy that embraces unexpected proximity as a means of provoking intellectual and perceptual friction. Such a strategy aligns with van der Tuin and Verhoeff's understanding of serendipitous knowledge production: a curatorial method of creating environments in which connections emerge across seemingly disparate contexts, inviting active interpretive labor across disciplines, ideologies, and temporalities (van der Tuin and Verhoeff 2022, 64–66). As they also indicate this act of encounter also resonates with Philosopher Gilles Deleuze's formulation of thought in *Difference and Repetition*, wherein he writes:

“Do not count upon the thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or passion to think.” (Deleuze 1994, 139).

In Wallinger's pairing, the *in-between* space is rendered not only as a literal spatial condition but as a philosophical provocation. One that demands consideration of the ideological methods embedded in form, power, and display. Through this, curatorial practice can become not simply the organization of objects, but a dynamic method for staging aesthetic and ethical inquiry.

Repetition

Wallinger's use of repetition is present throughout the exhibition, but the slight nuances differ each time, not merely as visual rhyme or historical echo, but as a strategy that invites contemplation. Whereas the juxtaposition of *The Herm* and *Profilo Continuo* foregrounds contrast within repeated sculptural typologies, similar structures recur throughout the exhibition in more subtle material and aesthetic approaches.

Vija Celmins' *To Fix the Image in Memory XII*, 1977-82 stages a quiet confrontation between nature and replication: a found stone paired with its meticulously hand painted bronze double. This doubling resists easy resolution: it does not offer a measurable difference or patterned repetition but instead evokes what Deleuze calls “repetition for



ILL.4 — Anon, *Dying Gaul*, 1822. Installation picture at Hayward.

itself” (Deleuze 1994), where recurrence generates difference rather than identity. The installation can be read as producing a liminal space between object and representation, where certainty falters and meaning arises through interpretive labor, mirroring Wallinger’s curatorial interest.

A related logic unfolds in the pairing of, *Dying Gaul*, 1822 (ill. 4) and William Pink’s *After Agostino Carlini, RA, Smuggerius*, 1834 (ill. 5). Both are casts, imitations, in different records of human forms embedded with cultural memory. However, in this instance, *The Dying Gaul*, an idealised expression of noble suffering, stemming from classical antiquity. *Smuggerius*, in contrast, is a re-enactment of the same pose using the cast of a criminal’s dissected body. The repetition of posture, muscle tension, and sculptural treatment generates a formal sameness that lays bare the radical difference in reference – like that of *The Herm* and Mussolini busts previously discussed – heroic death versus executed body, mythic abstraction versus scientific observation.

In Deleuzian terms, this form of repetition becomes generative, provoking a reflective engagement that confronts layered notions of history, justice, beauty, and representation. Crucially, Wallinger’s decision to separate the two works intensifies this effect. Encountered apart, they ask to be held in memory rather than in direct juxtaposition, prompting a moment of perceptual dissonance: *have I seen this before?* This temporal



ILL. 5 — William Pink, *After Agostino Carlini, RA, Smugglerius*, 1834. Installation picture at Hayward.

and spatial gap allows the viewer to forge a new associative link through recognition, but one that resists resolution. Rather than offering a fixed comparative reading, the curatorial choice sustains a productive ambiguity.

Wallinger's strategy of placing these repetitions in dialogue, across time and ideology, evokes a curatorial methodology of *structured serendipity*, where encounters between objects are orchestrated to provoke difference – not closure. In doing so, elements of the exhibition enact a spatial version of Deleuze's theories: repetition is not about returning to the same, but about tracing how meaning morphs, ruptures, and refracts through recurrence (Deleuze 1994, 90-94).

In concluding this exploration of curatorial repetition, Thomas Demand's *Poll*, 2001 introduces a subtler, more cognitive variation on the theme. Unlike the formal pairings of *Profilo Continuo* with *The Herm*, or *The Dying Gaul* with *Smugglerius*, *Poll* requires a different kind of interpretive engagement. At 180 × 260 cm, it is the largest photographic work in the exhibition, rendered as a richly saturated C-print in disc format. Its vibrant color stands in quiet contrast to the show's largely monochromatic tone, giving it a conceptual weight. What appears to be a banal polling station – scattered with pens, sticky notes, and telephones – is revealed, upon closer inspection, to be an illusion: a life-sized model painstakingly constructed from paper and cardboard.

The work exemplifies a repetition without origin, echoing Deleuze's notion that repetition can be generative rather than mimetic, a singularity opposed to the general, a nuance opposed to the stereotype (Deleuze 1994, 83-84). *Poll* functions as a copy of a scene whose political weight is quietly implied rather than directly stated, refracting the viewer's attention from documentary image to the constructed nature of both politics and perception. This ambiguity calls into question the reliability of visual evidence, challenging the viewer to confront what Demand himself has referred to as the "uncanny neutrality" (Demand 2013) of politically charged spaces.

Furthermore, *Poll* operates within what I interpret as *structured serendipity*: an encounter that seems casual but is precisely orchestrated to provoke critical reflection. Its presence in *The Russian Linesman* gains additional resonance through its juxtaposition with other works concerned with doubling, absence, and artifice. Thematically, it bridges the material repetition found in Celmins' work and the ideological repetition evoked by *Smugglerius* and the *Dying Gaul*, extending the logic of curatorial repetition into the conceptual realm of simulated environments and mediated memory.

By constructing a photograph that reproduces a political space with painstaking neutrality, Demand stages the *in-between* not as a visible interval but as a psychological one, between fact and fabrication, recognition and doubt. In this sense, *Poll* is not only a work about repetition, but a repetition that reveals the constructed nature of experience itself, marking a fitting culmination to the exhibition's curatorial logic of perceptual thresholds.

The Space

The Hayward Gallery's brutalist architecture – defined by concrete geometry, fragmented floors, and meandering circulation – actively shapes the experience of *The Russian Linesman*. Far from being a neutral backdrop, its irregular volumes and sharp sightlines extend the exhibition's themes of ambiguity, transition, and perceptual rupture, particularly in works that echo or manipulate architectural form to disrupt spatial coherence.

Bruce Nauman's *Revolving Upside Down*, 1969, shown on a single monitor, explores spatial awareness through bodily repetition. Echoing Wallinger's *Word in the Desert I* 2001/2008 – where the artist hangs upside down at the English Romantic, Percy Bysshe Shelley's grave – the piece as described by critic and author Martin Hubert reflects a shared interest in inversion and viewer orientation (Hubert 2011, 204). Art critic, theorist and Professor, Rosalind Krauss, writing on Nauman's *Corridors* 1969, frames such works as part of sculpture's "expanded field," where object, performance, and environment converge: "*the possibility explored in this category (marked site) is a process of mapping axiomatic features of the architectural experience*" (Krauss 1979, 41). Wallinger's inclu-

sion of *Revolving Upside Down* invites a reconsideration of spatiality through time and movement attuned with the gallery's fractured architecture.

Comparatively to Bruce Nauman's *Revolving Upside Down*, Monika Sosnowska's *Corridor*, 2006/2008 amplifies spatial disorientation by physically manifesting psychological constraint. While Nauman's video creates a facilitated, mental experience of surveillance, Sosnowska manipulates architectural form to confound bodily navigation. Initially resembling a conventional institutional corridor, the carpet peels off the floor and ascends the wall, suggesting a surreal, Escher-like distortion. Her interventions frequently collapse the functional logic of space, what she terms: "psychological architecture," reconfiguring familiar forms into perceptual traps. As Sosnowska describes it, *Corridor* is a "shrinking and disorientating passageway" (Sosnowska 2007, 60-61), that turns the architectural extension against itself. This manipulation invites engagement with a typically mundane element, first beckoning passage before denying it, as scale collapses and carpet climbs the wall, generating a visually legible yet physically uncanny environment.

This spatial defamiliarization aligns with Bishop's emphasis on the political potential of installations to disrupt normative ways of seeing and moving. Rather than passive observation, the audience must physically negotiate the work, echoing Bishop's assertion that installation art constructs "a situation into which the viewer physically enters, and which insists on the viewer's literal presence in the space" (Bishop 2005, 6). The corridor, typically designed for seamless movement, becomes obstructive and theatrical, forcing a renegotiation of how the work relates to built environments. Far from merely an architectural sculpture, *Corridor* is a curatorial provocation that shifts audiences from passive observers to embodied participants. Within the Hayward Gallery's fragmented architecture, the work amplifies the disjunction between expectation and experience, thus curating affective, sensory, and intellectual engagement through altered perception and spatial association.

Waller's own *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space*, 2001 (ill. 6) introduces another layer to this spatial inquiry. His full-scale, mirrored police-box, a replica of the TARDIS from BBC Television series *Doctor Who* references a paradoxical space – one that is famously "larger on the inside than outside." Positioned within the brutalist maze of the Hayward, the work operates as both an architectural intervention and a temporal rupture, straddling science fiction and political memory, nostalgia and unease, which was "latently symbolic of the show" (Hubert 2011, 204). As Wallinger has explained, he was acutely aware of how the geometry of the Hayward would affect viewer perception, referencing the TARDIS he stated: "because it was square in plan, if you sat it in a square room – or at least equidistant to its corners – at a certain point the reflections would appear transparent" (Waller 2011, 139). The work's title evokes a folding of space-time that aligns with Philosopher and Social Theorist, Michel Foucault's concept of *heteroto-*



ILL. 6 — Mark Wallinger, *Time and Relative Dimension in Space*, 2001.

pia – a “real place” functioning as a counter-site where “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault 1984, 24).

This idea of *heterotopia* – of layered, contradictory space – offers a useful framework for understanding how *The Russian Linesman* engages with the architecture of the Hayward Gallery. Wallinger’s curatorial logic doesn’t merely respond to space but manipulates it, refracting viewer perception in ways that echo the exhibition’s broader interest in the *in-between*.

Together, these works position the Hayward Gallery itself as an active participant in the exhibition, echoing O’Doherty’s argument that gallery space is never neutral (O’Doherty 1999, 14). *Revolving Upside Down* 1969 transforms the act of movement into an inquiry into spatial awareness. *Corridor* 2006/2008 extends this disorientation into physical space, bending architecture into a psychological encounter and *TARDIS* 2001, in turn, literalises the folding of internal and external dimensions, making the gallery both a mirror and a portal.

Rather than passively inhabiting the space, participants are drawn into a sequence of navigational and perceptual openings – zones of inversion, estrangement, and architectural play. As Bishop states, “the experience of viewing” becomes “part of the work’s content.” (Bishop 2005, 6). In this sense, Wallinger’s curatorial strategy becomes architectural in its own right: shaping affective and sensory engagement. The gallery becomes a structure charged with meaning, where the boundaries between installation, environment, and encounter are purposefully blurred.

Summary

The Russian Linesman offers a richly layered curatorial inquiry, where disparate objects are assembled not merely for aesthetic or historical resonance, but as catalysts for exploring the in-between. Those liminal spaces where categories blur, boundaries collapse, and meaning is activated through proximity, comparison, and context. Across the four themes I have identified in this article, Wallinger employs a diverse set of curatorial strategies that together construct a conceptual frame of encounter and estrangement.

Collectively, these four curatorial themes articulate a powerful thesis: that meaning and experience in exhibition-making emerges not from isolated encounters with objects, but from their interdependence, juxtaposition, and spatial choreography. Wallinger’s curatorial voice doesn’t instruct or explain, it positions, frames, and invites. Through Curatorial interventions recipients become active co-creators of meaning, navigating a landscape where illusion and perception intersect. This dynamic engagement is not incidental but central to Wallinger’s curatorial framework. The experience and provocation that shaped the exhibition illustrates how curating can operate as a critical and conceptual practice beyond the objects and artefacts alone. This article, in many ways, articulates that impact and to better understand how Wallinger’s curatorial strategies harnessed the *in-between* to generate meaning that is contingent, affective, and enduring. As Roger Malbert, aptly observes in the exhibition catalogue:

“And what punning is to language, illusions are to visual perception, compounding sense and nonsense, turning reality inside out. Mirror images, inversions, pairing and doubling, trompe l’oeil, thresholds, frontiers and borders are subjects of *The Russian Linesman*.” (Malbert 2009, 130)

Malbert’s observation crystallises the core ethos of the exhibition. Through intentional acts of doubling, inversion, and recontextualisation, Wallinger reveals how curatorial strategies can manipulate *in-between* spaces – not only spatially, but intellectually and affectively – to foster new kinds of engagement. Here is how curatorial strategies structure conditions for interpretation and embodied encounter.

The Russian Linesman becomes more than a curated exhibition – it is a curatorial proposition: that to truly engage with art is to dwell in its liminalities, to embrace ambiguity, and to recognise that every act of looking is also an act of interpretation, entangled in space, time, and context. In this sense, the “*in-between*” is proposed not simply as a descriptive characteristic of exhibition experience, but as a curatorial methodology through which exhibitions can structure relational, affective, and interpretive forms of engagement. •

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