Louise Lehman
103946203
DESMA 101
Final Assignment

In creating a monument honoring László Moholy-Nagy, I used light projections as the basic medium and projectors as the material. I will first go into detail describing the format and structure of the monument. For reasons that will be evident later, I will refer to viewers of the monument as visitors or participants. It is placed inside a room in order to provide enough darkness to see the light projections. There are several projectors placed around the room high above head level. The projectors can be seen, and aren't meant to be hidden from the visitor. The projections are of normal, everyday-life objects such as people, flowers, a dog, etc. These projections are all at ground level to appear just as they would in reality. The projections move normally with respect to what objects they are. For instance, the flowers will sway as if in a breeze, the people will walk around, check their watch, fold their arms, etc. This effect creates almost a virtual reality that the participant is walking in. One difference in the actions of the projections from that of the objects in the real world is that some of the projections' movements can be sped up or slowed down in comparison to their speed in reality. For example, a projection of a plant can be shown to grow from a seed to a blooming flower in a few minutes. The participant can walk around the room, going from one projection to the next, or can choose to walk at a distance from any projections or even through them. They can treat this virtual world as real or fake and change their minds at any time.

There is a level of interactivity that the visitors can have with the projections. Whenever the visitors block the stream of light that produces the projection, this will be detected, and the projection will react as if something is nearby. The response of the projection is limited to changing its movement, course of action, or its facial expressions. The projection does not know which direction the participant is in, so its response is not always directed towards the participant. The main idea is that it responds in some way to a participant's interaction.

Another component of the monument is the use of mirrors, strategically set up so as to send reflections across a number of them until the reflected image ultimately "travels" to another location in the room. This location could be right next to the image, or on the other side of the room. Some of these mirrors are aimed to reflect projections, sending them to a different location in the room, projecting the projection. Visitors can also stand at certain points in the room and have themselves be projected to a different location. This creates some sort of structure - if you stand in certain places, you are sure to appear in others. The small walls of mirrors are also serve to confuse through the use of illusions, and psychological effects "in a game of redefining the relationship between the self and the surroundings by creating a new identity, or rather, identities" (Huhtamo, *Mr. Duchamp's Playtoy*). This can also be described as "*architecture* plus *not-architecture,* some kind of intervention into the real space of architecture ... through the use of mirrors" (Krauss).

The last component of this monument are everyday sounds that are scheduled according to what projections there are and sometimes to what the projections are doing. For instance, if there is a projection of a dog playing, a dog barking noise will be heard even if the dog doesn't look like it's barking. If a man checks his watch, an approaching train sound might be heard, even if there's no projection of a train. Sounds are also triggered when an visitor blocks a projection's path. These triggered sounds don't relate to the projections - they are random noises. Since more than one noise can be heard at once and there are many people interacting in the room at once, all the noises combine into a cacophonous symphony of noise. This is purposefully a little overwhelming, "to excite and exalt our sensibilities", producing "the most complex polyphony and the maximum variety, seeking the most complicated successions of dissonant chords and vaguely preparing the creation of musical noise" (Russolo).

László Moholy-Nagy's artworks focused on the use of light as a medium. An example of this

is his creation Moholy-Nagy: "Light-Space Modulator" (Licht-Requisit), which was a machine which displayed a light spectacle. He also focused on the idea of integrating technology, especially the use of machines, in artwork. Based off of these two themes, my monument will heavily involve the use of light and machines as its materials. Another quality of my monument is that it is aimed more towards the experience of the monument rather than the monument itself. Similar to how light is not tangible - it can only be seen, or experienced - the point of my monument is how it is seen and experienced rather than it being a physical object.

      The monument has qualities characteristic of the kinetic art movement, the cybernetic art movement, and Constructivism. The use of light and moving projections relates to the kinetic art movement. The response of the projections and triggering of random sounds, prompted by visitor interaction, is characteristic of cybernetic art. Constructivism, which aims at fusing art and technology, is evidenced in the use of projectors and the technology used to make the projections and sounds detect and respond to interaction by participants. Because the projections are of everyday living things, there is a humanistic relationship is participants' interactions with the projections. However, there is a paradoxical relationship between humans and science or technology, because the projections aren't real but created from technology. Therefore, the theme in Constructivism of bridging the gap between the scientific and humanistic cultures is metaphorically represented in the participant and projection interactions. This constructivist theme is also present in the aims of auto-destructive and auto-creative art, which integrate "art with the advances of science and technology. The immediate objective is the creation, with the aid of computers, of works of art whose movements are programmed and include 'self-regulation'" (Metzger).

      The use of projections question "the traditional identity and categories of the art object" (Huhtamo, *Media Art(s)*). Another art movement that this monument relates to is the "mixed-media art of the sixties [which] fused motion, sound, and light, physical fact and psychic effect, in an environmental spectacle that encompassed the viewer and engaged his senses directly" (Huhtamo, *Media Art(s)*). The movement of the projections classifies this as auto-creative art, "art of change, movement, growth" (Metzger). . It further relates to auto-creative, and also auto-destructive, art The viewers of the monument are enclosed in a room and surrounded by sound and projections made of light and movement. The real world quality of the projections give the visitors a physical context, but since the projections are just made of light, the psychological trick of appearing tangible but being virtual creates "an irresistible temptation [to touch], which is denied" (Huhtamo, *NeMe: Freedom, Control and Confusion in the Art Gallery*). When participants attempt to make physical contact with a projection, they end up blocking the light of the projection, ultimately destroying the image. This seems to be destructive, but actually is what brings meaning to the monument. "A physical-tactile effort from the part of the visitor was required to ... reveal their potential for generating meanings" (Huhtamo, *Trouble at the Interface 2.0*). According to Moholy-Nagy, "technical progress is a factor of life which develops organically" (Moholy-Nagy). The "natural", life-like qualities of the furturistically virtual projections suggest that the future of technology is based on natural, or "organic", life.

      The format of the monument could be classified as an installation, considering "that an artist must actually come and install the elements" (Morse). By taking up the entire room, "the visitor is enclosed within an envelope of images, textures, and sounds," an artificial environment (Morse). Although this virtual world reflects the real world, the inability to grasp and fully interact with it on the same level as the real world suggests the influence of technology on life in the future and the efforts characteristic of Bauhaus "to establish an organic tie betwen creative forces and industry" (Moholy-Nagy).

References:

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