



transidency

Laboratory for Perfecting Fear (working title)

Proposal for the II Moscow International
Biennale for Young Art

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Proposed Installation

The door opens creakily, heavy on its hinges. You step into a long, shadowy corridor, the end of which is shrouded in darkness. Wallpaper lines the walls, but it's old and peeling away in parts. The floorboards squeak under your feet. There is a general feeling of abandoned-ness, perhaps this part of the building used to be used, but certainly not any more. Walking alone into the gloom, after a few footsteps you suddenly encounter a cold, unexplainable chill. The temperature has rapidly dropped, but only in this spot. To the left and the right are doors, all closed but not locked. As you enter a room, you hear the vague yet discernable sound of the wind blowing through rustling leaves. Images of still forests at night flood your mind, but the room is empty. Back out in the corridor, you try another door. There is pitch darkness behind this door, too, yet a different sound emerges... this time, there are muffled voices. Far away, or so it seems, a fox cries with that piercing sound that makes your hair stand on end. You are not really sure whether to feel spooked out, or bemused. These young artists, you think, always trying to shock. I can't be scared so easily. You are right, too. You live in a time where there is a whole economy built on fear, perhaps you even try to scare yourself for fun, hiding behind cushions while you watch horror films. But what makes something scary, actually? Is it proximity to human likeness, something alien, yet somehow strangely familiar? Or is it the unidentified 'other' – something outside the boundary of experience? You walk on, your footsteps echoing eerily. More doors, more unnerving apparitions... but the horror seems to be getting a bit more, how shall we put it? More pathetic, or at least more mannered. It really seems, the further you advance, the more someone is trying to scare you, pulling out all the old tricks of the trade. Of course, you knew all along that this was just an installation, but somehow, for a minute there, these artists had you going. Now you are confronted with bloodcurdling cries and zombie faces, and the corridor comes to an end. You open the last door, and step into a brightly lit room, blinking as your eyes adjust to the light. But what's going on in here? There's a completely different atmosphere, this looks more like a laboratory.

In the lab, the white-coated 'scientists' are beaver away. You come to realise that all the experiences you had down that weird corridor are being created here. Look! There's a scientist trying to create the optimal scary noise, and another testing out the spookiest temperature, and a third researching the most terrifying visual. There are graphs, charts, and various selections of measuring equipment.

Background Theory

Since the faith in the existence of a metaphysical universe was invented, a universe which transcends the borders of the sensuous and mental faculties of man, the imagination of the human being has been occupied with occult creatures and elements. Moreover the installation of this detached world in a hegemonic position, in antithesis to the terrestrial cosmos, especially when it comes to religious superstitions or scientific speculation, led to the fabrication of various demons that impersonate the agenda of horror and upon which a merchantry of fear is constructed and postponed. From the religious supernatural demon to the science fiction alien, and from the undying vampire to the malevolent haunted zombie, all of them epitomize the notion of a common threat to the terrestrial being. Notwithstanding the various b-movies of the 50s and 60s, which in hindsight illustrate a ridiculous image of these outlandish creatures, one can trace serious policies undertaken by national, international as well as private initiatives to intercept a possible invasion in earth's territorial integrity. From the massive budget expeditions of NASA to unveil life in other planets to the no budget use of garlic against vampires (just to mention a few examples) man was always concerned with defending himself by adopting all sorts of possible tactics. The various tactics reveal an immanent curiosity and peril, which give birth to (often) fictional interpretations of the possible disaster scenarios and the amplitude of the catastrophe, sketching once again the moral bipolarity of "good" and "evil", where the terrestrial creatures are united for once together against a common enemy.

Transidency, with its on-going research on the different modalities of borders and limits, both spatial and temporal as well as physical and metaphysical, is proposing a two part installation which deals with the ideas about the border between the unknown other and the self. Transidency is interested in looking at the mechanism of fear which arises from a confrontation with the unknown, but we want to handle this issue (which also has political connotations, i.e.: governments which manufacture fear in order to give the public a common enemy) in a playful way.

Possible problems and Possible Solutions

For the purposes of the installation Transidency will employ one person per day in shifts to perform in the laboratory. At the biennale openings however, we would like to employ a team to undertake the task of performing in the laboratory. At the entrance of the installation there should be an invigilator moderating the number of people that enter. For the purposes of the installation visitors should enter one at a time. Due to the low visibility of certain rooms in the installation Transidency will provide low level lighting in order to insure public safety.

Methodology

The Transidency members will travel to Moscow well in advance of the Biennale, and they can guarantee the construction of the installation. This is subject to the Moscow Biennale for Young Art sourcing the necessary materials for the installation. The Estimated time of construction is a maximum of six weeks. Transidency would expect the Moscow Biennale for Young Art to provide adequate tools. A detailed list of the tools required can be provided upon request.

Locations

Transidency is willing to reduce the costs of the project significantly by making use of an existing building, which can be decided upon acceptance of the proposal. Transidency believes that buildings such as the former confectionary factory Krasny Oktyabr in Bolotny Island or buildings in and around the WINZAVOD - Contemporary art center's district could very possibly house an aforescribed space of a long, shadowy corridor with rooms opening to both sides.

Support

Transidency will apply to the following private and state organizations, upon approval of the proposal:

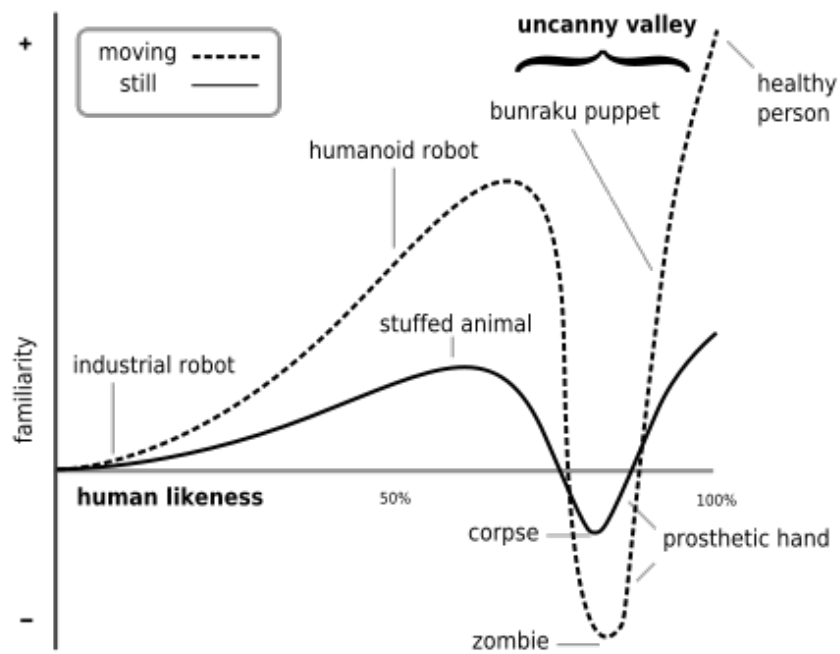
FRAME (www.frame-fund.fi)

The Ministry of Education and Culture, Cyprus (www.moec.gov.cy)

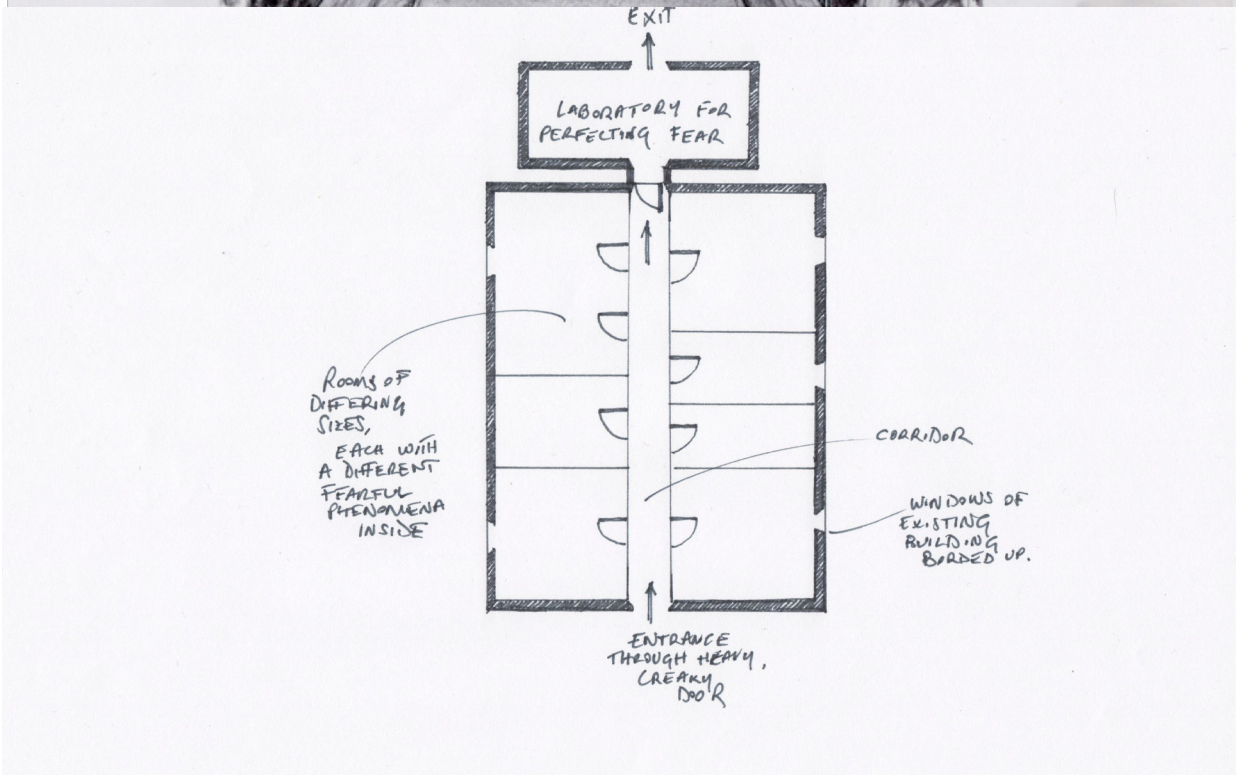
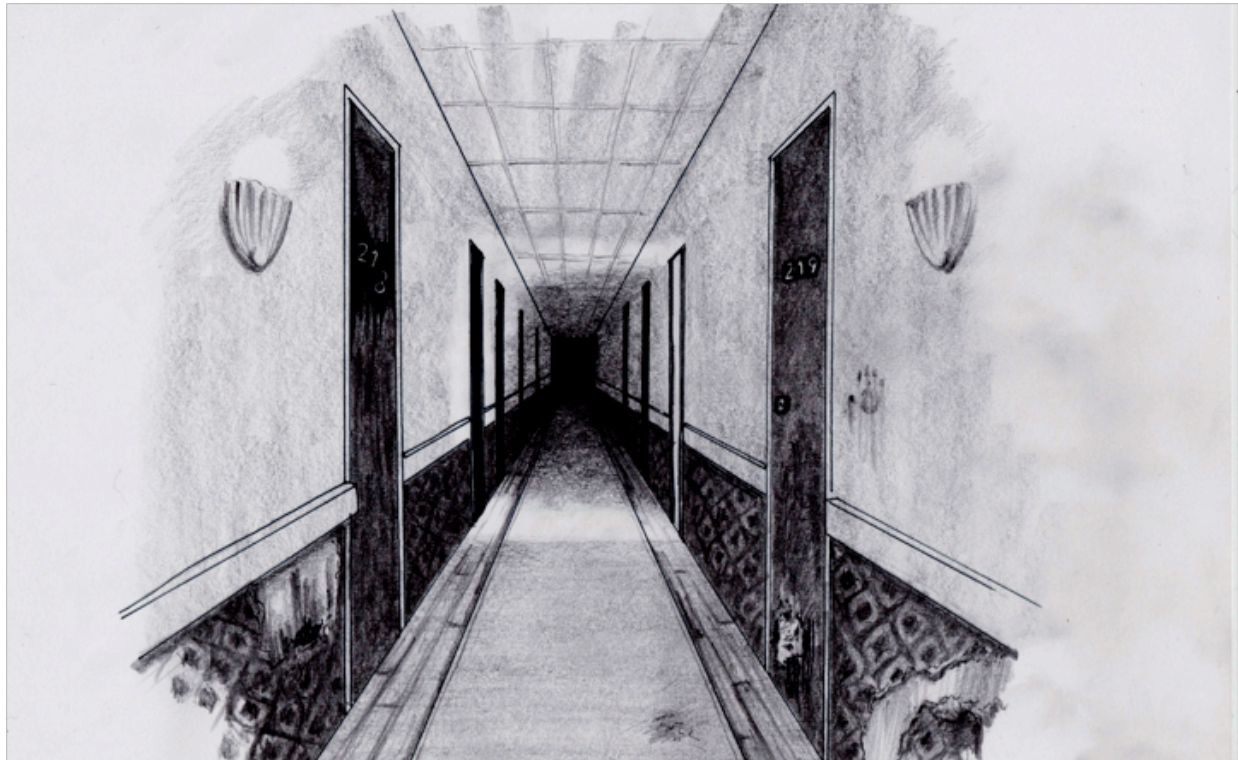
ArtAngel (www.artangel.org.uk)

About Transidency

Transidency is an artists collective, comprising six artists who initially met at Chelsea College of Art, London, in 2003. The artists involved in the collective build on an initial idea through discussion; sharing images, stories, jokes and sometimes nonsense in order to build a body of ideas, the outcome of which manifests itself across many different medias. The collective tends to produce a mixture of separate and interconnected artworks that arise from the excitement of discovering associations between fleeting shared interests, which are then captured and expanded.



“The Uncanny Valley” - a region of negative emotional response towards robots that seem “almost human”. Movement amplifies the emotional response.



Sketches of the proposed installation.

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