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In Practice II: Visiting

What does it mean to experience a monospace? As humans in space, we move according to corridors, walls, and doors; doors which we can open and others, which we cannot. These corridors, walls, and doors guide and limit our experience. In an open space and a monospace in particular, these limitations are different. At first glance, an open space might suggest that everything is possible, but it is not endless, and there are some fixed points and anchors in experience. A building in experience is always different. It is never the same. When we approach people, what are the differences in their experiences, regarding engagement with space, concerning practices, trajectories, and attachments? Turning to experience, we follow a pragmatist understanding of this term (Chapter 2.3). The point here is not to discuss what experience is but to use it as a tool to gain access to specific spacings. Following the ‘process of experience’ we can approach human-nonhuman-interactions while circumventing the idea of subjective or objective experiences and hence of a subjective or objective space.¹

As we have focused on people who are permanently engaged with the building in the last chapter and learned about their working-with, this chapter is dedicated to people who are just temporarily entangled with the world of building. Both the visitor who stays for a few hours in the building and the curator who is

1 Turning to the process of experience, a concept leading back to Whitehead, we can address both *what* and *how* interaction takes place. As John Dewey points out: ‘We begin by noting that “experience” is what James called a double-barrelled word. Like its congeners, life and history, it includes *what* men do and suffer, *what* they strive for, love, believe and endure, and also *how* men act and are acted upon, the ways in which they do and suffer, desire and enjoy, see, believe, imagine—in short, processes of *experiencing*.’ (Dewey 1929, 8; original emphasis) Dewey here refers to William James’ *Essays in Radical Empiricism* in which James opposes the dichotomy of thoughts and things, saying that no dualism of subjectivity and objectivity ‘resides in the experience *per se*.’ And further: ‘In its pure state, or when isolated, there is no self-splitting of it into consciousness and what the consciousness is “of.”’ (James 1912, 23; original emphasis) In the process of experiencing who/what acts and who/what is/are acted upon stays indefinite.

engaged on a daily basis over an (potentially) extended period of time take part in the process of spacing. However, their spatial effect might be of different stability due to how they relate. Since particularly the nonhumans create stability and continuity, the capacity to change them implies a greater spatial efficacy. Yet, we saw that in the course of description new practices and experiences can be negotiated. So what are the mundane experiences of people?

‘Temporary actors’ in the Sainsbury Centre can be amongst others visitors, students, suppliers and temporary workers—people who are in and with the Sainsbury Centre ranging from a few minutes to a few days. We have seen that the way Winner and colleagues share agency with the building is diverse. Yet, how do visitors relate?

This will neither be a general story of visitor experience nor a comparative analysis of experiences in museums.² Some of them might be similar to other museums but this is not my point of departure here. Instead of comparing different individual perspectives or viewpoints to the Sainsbury Centre, which would keep us moving around the object leaving its physical reality ‘untouched’, as Mol argues (2002, 12), we turn to the activity in experience. Then again, how can we follow the many small movements and actions, decisions that take place, every day? Ordinary practices that happen and disappear, invisible to the one who did not take part in it. How can we as researchers learn about the uncountable and unobservable possibilities of the state of flux of spacing? Once more we will need to slow down and move into the world of the people in and with the Sainsbury Centre to see the richness of the ordinary—to see how the building is perceived, practiced and experienced. People themselves can tell the best about what the building does with them, what it does to those who temporarily connect. With a view to the walking interview (Chapter 4), which we have now confirmed is particularly useful for exploring the complex and rich world of a building, I chose to ask my interviewees to sketch (see also Chapter 2.5). As the walking interview prevented contextualising overview narratives and was (rather automatically) concerned with the earthly detailed reality of the building, so too I believe will the sketching interview offer an unconventional approach for exploring the lived reality of the building.

In the following, I briefly reintroduce the choice of method before we head off into the Sainsbury Centre and trace different encounters with the building through sketching interviews. For this chapter I furthermore draw upon the in-depth interviews with employees of the Sainsbury Centre, for example those involved with the visitor journey.

2 For the history of subjective experience in relation to the development of gallery display see Klonk (2009).

5.1

Sketching Experiences

Taking up a research methodology, the mental map interview, which is commonly used by geographers or psychologists to create mental representations to research aspects of spatial orientation or knowledge (Gould and White 1974; Downs and Stea 1977; Sommer and Aitkens 1982), I suggest sketching interviews as a tool to approach specific experiences in a pragmatist manner. Thus in the context of this work, asking visitors and other people who are engaged temporarily with the building to sketch while answering questions should not be misunderstood as a psychological experiment. Instead, it offers a way of learning about their activities and draws attention particularly to the nonhuman influence on them. Thus, it gives access to specific experiences of the people in brief interviews ranging from 10 to 20 minutes in duration. While I conducted these interviews also with people who work permanently at the Sainsbury Centre, this type of interview proved particularly helpful for witnessing activities, which I could not follow in full length (e.g. by shadowing visitors throughout their stay at the Sainsbury Centre). I will argue that the effect is like a joined virtual walk in the building, just like my walk with Winner. Sketching while answering the question of what they did and where they moved once again binds the interviewee to the very situation of interaction and allows the doing with objects to become visible. Thus, this chapter aims at both introducing the diverse spacings in experience and discussing the methodological challenges this implies while introducing the procedure. The interviews presented here were chosen after different activities that became visible. While the grouping of ‘arriving’, ‘exploring’ and ‘returning’ might suggest a linear trajectory in time and space, my focus rather stays with the networks that become visible when exploring spacing.

We start off, first, with Mr and Mrs Smith who just arrived at the building, and still feel disoriented.³ In their arrival, however, they are not alone but embedded in many networks—networks, which attempt to ease a visitor’s journey. We will see how some of the actors on the Smith’s trajectory towards the building impede an undisturbed arrival and we will witness human fragility when networks fail. Secondly, we explore the Living Area. Previously we gained an idea of the stability of this area (Chapter 4), yet, what does this mean for the processes of experience? What do people do over there? How and where? Which nonhumans do they interact with? Again, how is the experience in the Living Area different from the temporary exhibition area in the underground part of the building? Finally, there are those who return and visit the building more often and who are used to the monospace. We witness how their experience is different regarding engagement with space, in spacing.

3 All collected information about visitors were evaluated and used in a pseudonymous form.

5.2 Arriving

On a Sunday morning not long after opening Mr and Mrs Smith who had just arrived in the building a short time earlier, agree on participating in a sketching interview which is concerned with the question of 'how people perceive and use space.' We sit down in the East End Café. My temporary student assistant Maria Lisenko who joined me on this research trip interviews Mrs Smith while I sit down at a separate table with her husband. In the following Maria and I both stick to the same questionnaire; we explain the procedure as such first and ask if audio recording is a problem. It is not, and we start with initial questions, which try to clarify the nature and purpose of Mr and Mrs Smith's visit at the Sainsbury Centre, as well as the frequency and duration of their visit(s) before the actual sketch interview starts. Mr Smith and his wife visit the Sainsbury Centre for the first time. They entered the building and strolled through the East End Gallery. Mrs Smith explains to Maria that they do not plan to stay for long in the building but that the walks outside attracted them as well. Like questions at the conclusion of the interview on their profession, these first questions allow initial answers to be given and to learn about the duration of their engagement. For the actual sketching interview then Mr and Mrs Smith receive plain sheets of paper and pencils and we ask them to speak out loud while drawing their answers to the three questions posed to record their descriptions.

Let us have a look at the answers and sketches of Mr Smith first before turning to Mrs Smith. What does it mean to experience the Sainsbury Centre the first time as Mr and Mrs Smith did? Moreover, how do the drawings support the interview?

After the short introductory conversation about the context of Mr Smith's visit I start the actual sketching part of the interview and read out loud the first question: 'Could you please draw the Sainsbury Centre? In other words: Imagine you are telling a close friend about your visit here. What was/is important to you personally?'

'As I am a first-time visitor, and I haven't looked around the exhibition, at the moment, to me, [...] the Sainsbury Centre is just an empty box. We are about to explore to see what is inside it.'

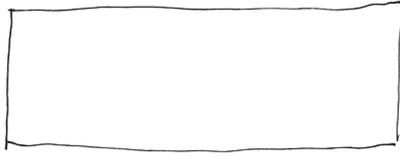


Fig. 5.1:
Sketch 1 by Mr Smith¹

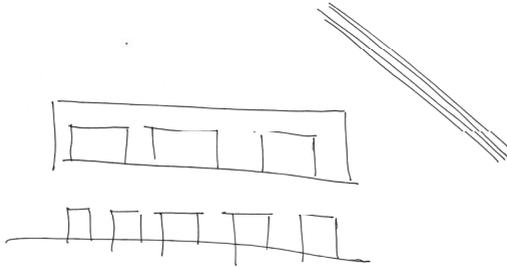


Fig. 5.2:
Sketch 2 by Mr Smith

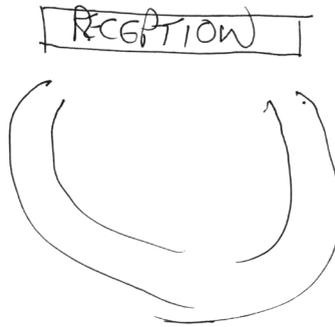


Fig. 5.3:
Sketch 3 by Mr Smith

1 Mr Smith/VL2Z. Sketching interview by Sabine Hansmann. Norwich, 6 November 2016. The numbering of the drawings in sketch 1–3 follows the three questions of the sketching interview. Where necessary, reference is made to indicate that one drawing contains the answers to several questions and was extended successively.

Mr Smith does not hesitate but answers right away, and draws an empty rectangle (Fig. 5.1). There is no context to his rectangle and no content in it. I pose the second question, which is the same for all participants: ‘Could you please draw the inside of the building?’ At the moment the most [...] visual thing is the actual structure itself. The inside is made up of a lot of empty space, but the ceiling is quite striking with the [...] blinds, and at one end there seems to be an interesting gallery, but I am not sure whether it is public or not. So that is something that we need to explore, down at the end of the building.’ First, he traces four oblique lines to symbolise the louvers along the ceiling. He then draws the mezzanine with boxes inside and a line with display cases above (Fig. 5.2) and recalls that he and his wife asked for a plan at the reception when arriving but apparently there is no plan and they were encouraged to explore the exhibition in their own way.

I ask him the third and last question of the sketch interview: ‘Think about the different ways you move around here. Where did/do you go? And what did/do you do there?’ Rethinking his previous movements throughout the building, he explains that he and his wife went to the reception first and thereafter to the circular shop (Fig. 5.3) to get their ‘bearings’ where to go and then they ‘started to explore the actual exhibits’ in the East End Gallery. He draws a bar for the reception and a double ring below.

Not all interviews proceed so quickly. Mr Smith’s answers are brief and focus on the most characteristic elements: A box from outside, the louvers along the walls and ceiling, the mezzanine, exhibition cases, the reception and the circular shop behind. I do not ask him about all the objects surrounding us but let his speed guide the interview. He does not draw the East End Gallery or any display items or art pieces that frame the shop to the left and right when entering the building, but restricts his drawings to the prominent visual features and instead puts them next to each other rather than in relation to each other and stresses that he needs to explore further.

Mrs Smith’s drawings are quite similar, but her narration concentrates on different aspects. Let us leave the interview with Mr Smith for now and listen to Maria and Mrs Smith who sit at the next table.

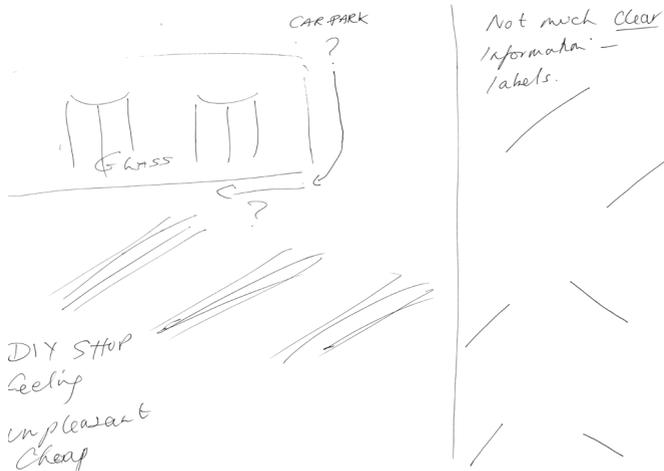


Fig. 5.4:

Sketch 1 by Mrs Smith⁴

Maria reminds Mrs Smith that there is no right and wrong in how to sketch the answers and asks her to draw the Sainsbury Centre. After a short period of reflection, Mrs Smith begins by describing the difficulties they had upon their arrival. Firstly, they could not find the car park, which is undergoing redevelopment at the time of the interview. Also, she continues: 'We were two minutes early, and nothing said when the opening times were so that we could check [...]'. She interrupts herself, 'I haven't drawn anything much yet, but do you want me to draw the actual entrance?' Maria encourages her to do so. 'Yeah? I just remember the two ... lots of glass.' She draws a box and writes the word *glass* in it and adds the doors (Fig. 5.4, upper left area). 'I am writing a lot.' 'That is fine,' Maria encourages her again. Mrs Smith draws arrows accompanied by question marks to symbolise their way towards the building. 'We were not sure which doors took us through, [...] we did not understand where we were supposed to go.'

Mrs Smith does not begin her answer with the building, but with their arrival at the building. An arrival marked by uncertainty and the same holds true of her drawing. She seems to be uncomfortable with drawing or at least has difficulties to accompany her narration with drawing simultaneously. While some interviewees become silent and focus on the drawing, take one, two or even three attempts

4 Mrs Smith/LN3F. Sketching interview by Maria Lisenko. Norwich, 3 November 2016.

to hit a particular angle, and only when asked to do so begin to explain what they have put on paper, others have a need to talk or enjoy sharing their experience right away and then hesitate when realising that the white sheet of paper in front of them is still waiting, empty. A direct map creation, asking the participants to draw themselves, holds a challenge for many people. 'I am a terrible drawer [laughing] no sense for proportion.' However, even if the participants are experienced draftsman this does not necessarily say something about the quality of the drawing, and above all, it does not say anything about the overall quality of the interview, which is characterised by a combination of sketching, including symbols and written words and oral explanations. Drawing and oral interview complement each other. It is part of this method that the sketches are simplifications; they are neither accurate nor complete.

Mrs Smith uses question marks and arrows to symbolise their path towards the Sainsbury Centre and continues when answering the second question to describe the inside of the building.

'[L]ots of space and walls,' which she symbolises with some rapid strokes on the paper and adds that there is 'not much clear information' (Fig. 5.4, right half). 'It is very educational because you really have to find out what you want to find out, so actually you are looking at stuff you really don't want to see. [...] I think it is again that people think it's a wonderful concept, well, they know what it is about but somebody walking in doesn't. Actually, we find it quite difficult because they are trying to step away from the traditional museum, trying to step away from the gallery, I can see that, but in that respect, it is not very helpful for somebody who doesn't know what they are displaying.' Also, this aspect of not belonging to the group of knowledgeable people comes with a feeling of unease for Mrs Smith: 'I found I've got a bit of acrophobia, this ceiling makes my legs go because I am very bad with heights. I am not acrophobic outside but looking up the building makes me quite dizzy, so I don't particularly like the interior. [...] I found it quite daunting, I don't really like the industrial ceiling.' She draws groups of oblique lines underneath the sketch of the building and explains that she does not find it very pleasing to the eye (Fig. 5.4, lower left area). She adds keywords, 'DIY shop feeling—unpleasant—cheap.' Once she stops and laughs out loud, 'I hope the rest aren't like me' and adds, 'I am so critical.'

Mrs Smith is critical, while Mr Smith is not. Clearly, both Mr and Mrs Smith show similarities in their drawings: The box, the ceiling with the louvers, the exhibition displays (by him in a view, by her in a plan). While Mr and Mrs Smith draw similar elements, their experience of arriving in the building does not seem to be a shared

experience. At least they focus on very different moments of experience in their narrations. Does this not show us that experience is always very personal—very subjective? Is this not proof of the division into a stable and *objective* world of objects and architecture (they draw the same elements) and an active *subjective* world, which is highly individual (their perception differs)? Moreover, does this method not seem to produce precisely the separation that I am aiming to avoid? How can we acknowledge the richness of experience without stepping into the trap of talking about a subjective experience in an objective world? What can these interviews show us beyond personal feelings and perspectives? Where is the building in practice?

5.2.1 Facing Practicalities

Now, what are we dealing with here? Let us have a second glance. Indeed, there is a sense or feeling that Mrs Smith has been 'excluded'; she does not belong to the knowledgeable and she also feels physical discomfort. While she finds it 'educative' to be put into a situation to 'find out what you want to find out', she does not like the industrial look. On the contrary, her husband sticks to a visual and sober world. He excludes any taste, any opinion from his narration and only points to some visually characteristic elements.

However, there are also events in their narrations and this is the path both Mol (2002, particularly 1–27) and Yaneva (2017, particularly 7–8) suggest pursuing in order to leave 'perspectivalism' behind and turn towards practicalities.

When entering the building, the Smiths find the reception desk prominently positioned behind the gallery entrance door. Giving them orientation, they walk to this point. To its left the East End Gallery and its right the Living Area. Here they are encouraged to explore. They do not know yet how to navigate this building. A plan could have helped him understand, to read the layout of the building, Mr Smith suggests. Instead he and his wife are encouraged by the visitor service to explore. At the time of the interview, their experience of the interior is primarily a visual one. Some elements that are easy to understand, the outer shape of the building, the reception, the mezzanine in the back, the field of display cases, occur in their sketches. In the short period they spent at the Centre, their experience is mostly driven by visual perception; thus far, as Mr Smith emphasises since they had no time to explore the building in a physical manner yet. They cannot yet make sense of the whole inner world and we can collect events that potentially happen to somebody not knowing the place: Getting lost on campus; walking through the wrong doors; standing in front of closed doors; not having a map or not having labels that guide you around and tell you where to start and where to stop your walk throughout the gallery. These are practicalities. Practicalities a person who enters the Sainsbury Centre for the first time might be more likely to face than a knowledgeable or a permanent actor. Mrs Smith herself points out that she has not been provided with sufficient knowledge on her arrival for her visit in order

to have her experience mediated appropriately, which may indeed be essential for making it run more smoothly. Thus, there are actors missing to form a successful network of arrival—an arrival without gaps—that left her in frustration. With spacing things happen to people.

Turning to mundane spacings we witness how individual and nuanced humans engage with the world of the Sainsbury Centre. We learn that things do not always run smoothly and that gaps in networks can re-direct courses of action (walk to the second door) or leave humans in frustration (and potentially not have them return). Clearly the Smiths are not in control on their arrival, many humans and nonhumans mediate their experience.

Furthermore, we can witness the doing of the monospace. While Mrs Smith expresses her feeling of discomfort Mr Smith refers again and again to the need to explore first. The aspect of disorientation when visiting the Sainsbury Centre for the first time is an aspect that Claudia Milburn, who works as Curator Head at the Sainsbury Centre and has worked in various capacities earlier, addresses:

When I was at the reception, I used to talk to visitors coming in, because they were often daunted by the big space and the fact that the Sainsbury Centre is quite unique in terms of the layout, with it all being under one area, and there being no particular walkthrough.⁵

The monospace, as simple and formally reduced and visually easy to grasp, is nevertheless not necessarily easy to engage with. The absence of corridors, of walls and labels in the Living Area, can pose challenges to people. Milburn would explain that this ‘is part of the building, and that’s how Sainsbury’s wanted it as their Living Area.’⁶ What Mrs Smith describes as a ‘step[ping] away from the traditional museum’ as ‘not very helpful for somebody who doesn’t know what they are displaying,’⁷ is driven by the Sainsbury’s wish that the collection should not be isolated but be part of everyday life (Rybczynski 2011, 93); a wish that is still actively enacted through the layout and objects of the Living Area (see Chapter 4.4). The loose grouping of the art pieces according to cultural regions, in absence of a defined trajectory, with European art of the 19th and 20th century non-hierarchically dispersed throughout and seating areas and study tables, all work towards a casual and relaxed experience and offer ‘a sense of intimate engagement with the objects’ (Rybczynski 2011, 137). To do so people have to move into the field and let the objects guide them around, as we will explore momentarily. But let us first re-trace the network of arrival to understand how gaps can occur.

5 Milburn, in-depth interview.

6 Ibid.

7 Mrs Smith, sketching interview.

5.2.2 Networks of Arrival

Getting lost. Walking to the wrong doors. Facing closed doors. These all are happenings or events that connect the Smiths to many actors. Arriving at the Sainsbury Centre is to arrive and be embedded in many networks. Yet, the term embedded *in* can be misleading. It suggests that they are embedded ‘inside’ some context.⁸ This implies a third dimension that might lead to the idea that something local, the arrival at the Sainsbury Centre is ‘inside’ something more global, the campus, the city. That would take us out of spacing back into Euclidean space. Let us instead travel along the network, and trace actors in the process of arriving at the Centre.

Indeed, Mrs Smith’s disenchantment about their arrival does not seem to be unusual. ‘[O]ften people cannot find the university or [...] even if they get to campus, they are quite disoriented by the physical layout of the campus, they sometimes get a bit confused. [...] And if they got here and can’t find parking, that’s another big frustration which they tend to meet,’ Rosie Evans, Visitor Service and Retail Manager at the Sainsbury Centre, explains.⁹ For creating a predictable and thus stabilised and smooth journey for (especially first time) visitors, there thus seem some actors missing. In November 2016 shortly after the interview with Mr and Mrs Smith a new parking place right in front of the main visitor entrance was opened. ‘[U]ntil 8 November, we didn’t even have a fully formed customer offer [...] customers won’t come here because they can’t park. And elderly people, 50% of our demographic is over 55, they’re not going to walk a long distance.’¹⁰ Penelope Lucas, Head of Marketing and Communications whose primary task it is to promote the Centre and the exhibitions, explains. A satisfied customer encounter thus also includes a smooth arrival that does not ask visitors to walk long distances. If a visitor arrives by car from 8 November 2016 on there is a parking lot that allows ready access to buildings with easily coverable distances. That said, whatever stabilises the network and fills a gap creates new disorders, new hurdles. As there is no barrier at the entrance to the car park, a parking ticket system has been introduced to restrict the group of users to the visitors of the Centre, as parking is free of charge, unlike in the university car parks. That requires people first to park their car, walk into the Centre, ask at the reception for a permit, walk back into the parking lot and lay the permit out visibly in the windshield of the car before they can start their actual visit. As Evans stated in her in-depth interview, ‘getting people through the door

8 See Latour (2005, 173–190) on how to avoid jumping between different frameworks or contexts, and to trace the connections ‘through which a local site is *made to do something*’ (173; original emphasis).

9 Evans, Rosie. In-depth interview 2 by Sabine Hansmann. Norwich, 10 August 2017.

10 Lucas, Penelope (Head of Marketing and Communications, SCVA). In-depth interview by Sabine Hansmann. Norwich, 17 May 2017.

is quite a complex process and the one-way system and where they can park, going back with their permits certainly does not help the situation.¹¹ Disorientation and confusion is a result of a complicated course of action mediated by many nonhumans: The physical layout of the campus; the network of the road traffic regulations with their signs telling people not to turn around on the one-way street once entered; signs indicating the direction to the Sainsbury Centre; street bumps forcing one to slow down;¹² a roundabout with only one exit indicating the direction towards the Centre; the network of the parking lot and the building with its two similar entrances, and the parking permit—amongst many others. The streets, the walkways, the parking lot and the doors they enable and direct, stop and filter flows of humans and nonhumans. They do not always work smoothly together and can leave a person arriving for the first time in disorientation. This can have the consequence of getting lost on campus or taking a course of action that leads one to walk through the wrong door. When we turn to spacing it is not about traveling in space to the Sainsbury Centre. Rather what we are concerned with instead is witnessing the nonhumans who allow and hinder, or facilitate the trajectory when arriving at the Centre.

However, the complicated process of bringing people in starts earlier. The Sainsbury Centre is at the edge, at the very end of the campus of UEA, which lies at the West of Norwich in the North-East of England. ‘We have this interesting issue of being in a field outside of a small city.’¹³ Bringing temporary visitors through the door to visit the exhibitions requires a joint effort. There is marketing, for example, ‘a railway poster in Peterborough, digital screens at Cambridge Park & Ride, train cards in trains between here and Liverpool Street London.’¹⁴ The public and private transport system, the station is ‘2 or 3 miles from here’¹⁵ is also involved, as is the content of the show: ‘in autumn we’ll have stuff for the royal connection.’¹⁶ Admission fees are also something to consider, ‘we’re free [the permanent collection], and to see the exhibition is £12.’¹⁷ The Sainsbury Centre is connected with all these networks; it is a node in the network of the university, in the urban network of Norwich, in the Museum network of England. These networks take part in spacing when the Smiths arrive. Some work better than others in creating a smooth journey, but they all add to the experience. Thus, when arriving a particular course of spacing *with* many networks is implied.

11 Evans, in-depth interview.

12 For the example of the street bump and the moral dimension that has been delegated to this mediator, see Latour (1994, 38–41).

13 Greenhalgh, in-depth interview.

14 Lucas, in-depth interview.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Greenhalgh, in-depth interview.

5.3

Exploring

People who visit for the first time are a minority group at the Sainsbury Centre.¹⁸ Accordingly, most people whom I met in the building had been there previously. I did not follow the Smiths or interview them again in the afternoon when leaving. It would have been an option to shadow people on their trajectories throughout the building. I did not do this kind of visitor research. My insights are based on my own experiences as visitor; furthermore I have joined the team at the reception and have done interviews with experts about the people temporarily visiting. Apart from that, people can still tell the best about their experiences with the world of the Sainsbury Centre. There are multiple experiences, and they allow us to witness spacing. Experiences are never the same, but similar events are more likely to happen to the same group of people.

A monospace (including the objects) that gives no clear guidance that does not specify a journey's start and end can be spatially disorienting. Everything looks the same in the first moment, 'you really have to find out what you want to find out.'¹⁹ So how is it to explore the Sainsbury Centre?

Mr Walker visits the Sainsbury Centre for the second time. It is early in the evening when Maria approaches him to take part in the interview. He agrees, and they sit down in the East End Café.

Mr Walker reports that he arrived at noon, met friends for lunch first and then went to see the Fiji exhibition downstairs on his own, which his friends had already seen. For the first question he draws the building from the outside, 'a large elongated box', with ends that are slightly reset. He explains that the wavy line indicates that there is 'more underneath' and that 'the interior space is quite open with a sort of division', which he marks with dashed lines, offices in the middle and the restaurant behind; a curled line stands for 'a couple of spiral staircases inside' (Fig. 5.5, left).

When asked to draw the inside of the building Mr Walker draws the view into a cut box with perspectival shortening to the back. He indicates the louvers along the ceiling and sidewalls and adds 'you have all these dividing panels', 'things on the plinths' and 'nothing on the walls'.

18 An internal visitor survey in summer 2016 revealed that only about 12% of the 279 participants of the survey visited the Sainsbury Centre for the first time (R. H. Smith and Lucas 2006).

19 Mrs Smith, sketching interview.

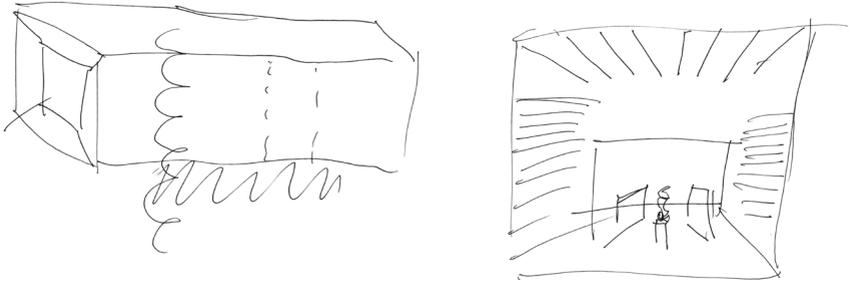


Fig. 5.5:
Sketch 1 and 2 by Mr Walker²⁰

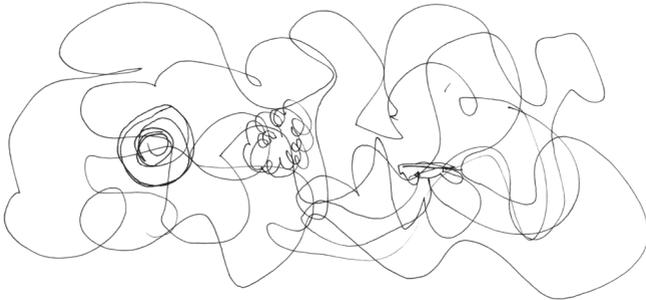


Fig. 5.6:
Sketch 3 by Mr Walker

We can observe that Mr Walker has a good understanding of the building, grasping the essential features and being able to identify and locate areas correctly. This does reveal something about his spatial knowledge and ability to spatially orient correctly. However, what does this tell us about his engagement with the building? Where are the events and practicalities? What can we learn from the experience of a visitor who apparently does not feel disoriented anymore? What can we learn about his trajectories? We turn to the third question:

'Ah, that's easy. [...] I just wander. I mean, the exhibition space down-stairs is much more kind of guided but up here—I mean there is a little

20 Mr Walker/VG4T. Sketching interview by Maria Lisenko. Norwich, 5 November 2016.

bit of clustering around objects that you like, so, the Hippo might be there, let's walk around the Hippo or the Eduardo Chillida drawing. You keep coming back to certain things—the shop for example—there is the shop, you walk around the shop in a more controlled manner, besides from that it is just meandering.'

Here they are. Here we can witness how the panels and exhibition plinths guide Mr Walker around, how the layout of the permanent exhibition, the clustering into loose cultural regions defines his movement behaviour, his trajectory. His walk is meandering, speeding up and slowing down. A little cluster of small moves around the Hippo (Figure of walking hippopotamus, UEA 306) and a second node in the region of a Chillida drawing let us witness how his walk temporarily intensifies (Fig. 5.6). It is not a linear movement, a guided movement from a to b as this is commonly the case with the underground temporary exhibitions. The permanent exhibition, the Living Area, is a non-hierarchical field. Once overcoming the first threshold of being disoriented, of not knowing, 'you are guided around space by the asymmetric and irregular partitions', Mr Walker emphasises.

Architecture mobilises people differently. While the shop creates a circular bodily movement along its outer edge, in the Living Area people follow the zigzag of the panels, rotate around freestanding plinths, stop, bend down and move closer, they move back and forth, turn around corners—meandering. They are guided around, and the view wanders from close up to the neighbouring, into the depths of the room and back, attracted by the objects.

Mr Walker says he was hoping to see more Eduardo Chillida drawings again, he knows from his last visit that there are quite a number of them in the collection. But there would be only one out at the moment, he notes. The arrangement of objects in the Living Area does not necessarily group works of one artist, especially not the art of the 19th and 20th century. The search for particular works of art can take people into different locations in the Living Area. Passing two or three times over some of the objects, one discovers new things, while maybe not finding what one intended to.

We see that there are different intentions and motivations when visiting the Sainsbury Centre. While the Smiths do not want to stay long since the walks outside also attract them, Mr Walker is searching for works from Chillida. This intentional human world meets the material reality of the Sainsbury Centre. And thus their trajectory and form of interaction is negotiated between their plan and the other actors necessary to realise it. The Smiths have to realise that there is no quick way of knowing what they want to see without exploring the depth of the monospace and Mr Walker might have walked the Living Area several times, without finding more works from Chillida. Spacing happens in these mundane negotiations in which we cannot tell who or what is in control.

5.3.1 Walking with the Objects

Another sketch by Séverine a young Erasmus student from France. Her mother visits her for the weekend and sits next to her at the table; sometimes they deliberate over a word. They have been around for about two hours and are finished now.

Séverine quietly draws. ‘I want to represent the little spaces we have in the museum with chairs and tables and you can just sit and observe the art. The Sainsbury Centre is more... you are more free to visit the museum, you can enter, you don’t have to pay, it’s free, and after you just walk around all the sculptures and paintings and if you want to rest you can just have a seat. [...] Lots of space just to think and to observe is what I enjoy here.’

With Séverine we enter an object rich world (Fig. 5.7): We find big free-standing sculptures under glass, tiny sculptures covered jointly, a painting on a panel, the boat in the Fiji exhibition in the East End Gallery,²¹ the circular shop (a part of it) in between, the chairs and tables. An arrow points towards the table where the interview takes place, another one toward the seats in the Living Area. We can see her meandering, moving around the objects, changing her direction again and again guided by the art, by free-standing plinths and panels. We learn that ‘not-paying’ takes part in ‘just walking around’ and ‘just sitting and observing the art’. The decomposition into smaller details and ingredients make it possible to see the objects at work, allowing, permitting, guiding and shaping trajectories.

While not all interviewees succeed sketching in such a detailed and rich manner, they may nevertheless be good observers of experiences and pick out a rather symbolic element to then tell in detail about courses of action taken and things discovered. The interview with Ms Abbey’s is such an example:

‘I came in the entrance, went straight to the counter and bought my ticket, which is very easy, and then went down to the exhibition I came to see. Down the stairs, I held on to the railing tightly, [...] it is very easy to use actually, spacious staircase, nice rubber floor, so it was kind of not dangerous or anything. And then downstairs I just followed the instructions and went around and looked at beautiful exhibits and I liked it and enjoyed it very much.’

21 The exhibition “Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific” on show from 15 October–12 February 2017 covered both the Exhibition Suite downstairs and the East End Gallery. An eight-metre-long double-hulled Fijian Canoe was one of the major exhibits positioned in the centre of the East End Gallery.

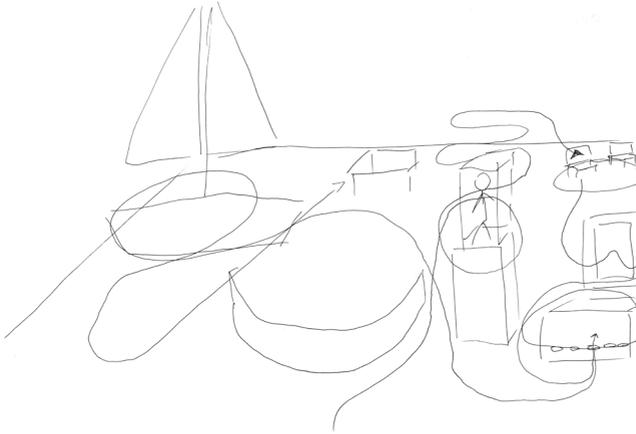


Fig. 5.7:
Sketch 2 and 3 by Séverine²²

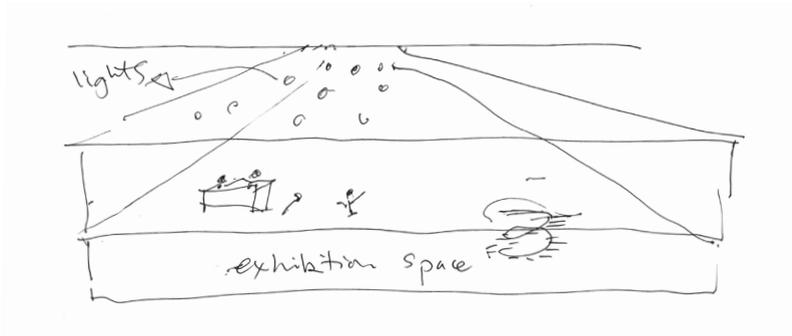


Fig. 5.8:
Sketch 2 by Ms Abbey²³

22 Séverine/PE6Z. Sketching interview by Maria Lisenko. Norwich, 5 November 2016.

23 Ms Abbey/AA2Z. Sketching interview by Sabine Hansmann. Norwich, 3 November 2016.

The spiral staircase connects upstairs, the main building, with downstairs where the temporary exhibition, in the Exhibition Suite, is located. The older woman, Ms Abbey (Fig. 5.8) explains that because the staircase is spacious and has nice rubber floor, she could walk it safely holding onto the railing. Her straight movement towards the counter is followed by a rotational, downwards screwing motion safely guided by the staircase. Downstairs, she says, she entrusted her movement to the instructions provided. What a detailed observation. While the Living Area upstairs is characterised by a meandering *with* the objects, in the absence of a narrative or explanatory text layer, downstairs a linear narration guides the visitors through the exhibition, texts on the walls and brochures offer in-depth information.

Listening to Mr Walker, to Séverine and Ms Abbey, we get an understanding how they actively engaged physically with the building and we learn that spacing happens with art objects (present and absent), panels, plinth, seating groups and tables, but also with the fact that it is free to enter, has nice rubber flooring and metal railings. The spiral staircase, the rubber floor and the railing not only guide people safely up and down, connecting the two building parts but walking up to its end, it elevates and allows to look out over the galleries.

5.3.2 Looking Down

A student of Art History and World Art Studies who is in the Centre on a daily basis (and here we leave the group of people visiting only temporarily and move on to the more permanent or regular actors) describes her usual route, down the stairs, into and through the Living Area. She draws the Sainsbury Centre ‘from above’.

‘I spend most of my time in the Social Area and not in the Living Area, so my perception of the Sainsbury Centre is a bit skewed. Most of the time I just cross the Living Area, or I go and sit where the Egyptian art is, [...] which is usually where I sit because the other table tends to be occupied and this one is usually free. So, I usually sit here, and obviously a space I use a lot is these stairs, because these are usually the stairs I take to go in and out of the Sainsbury Centre so in this part of the Sainsbury Centre these are the two most important things to me, in the sense of the ones I use the most. [...] Usually what I do is that I arrive from over there. I just go down the stairs, I will walk past the shop and through the Living Area, and then we have two cases: either I will go to the table ... Oh no, this is really wrong, this is not where the social area is, it is that way, oh yeah, completely wrong. I just realised, the library is that way, and so the social area is this way. Usually what I do is either go here through the artworks to this little table or go directly to them. Either it is case figure 1 or case figure 2 that I usually go to when I go to lectures.’



Fig. 5.9:
Sketch 1–3 by Lisa²⁴

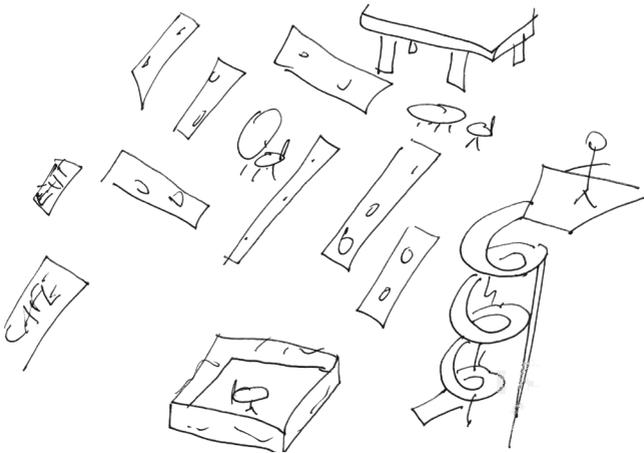


Fig. 5.10:
Sketch 2 by Bill²⁵

24 Lisa/BE7Z. Sketching interview by Maria Lisenko. Norwich, 2 November 2016.

25 Bill/BS7X. Sketching interview by Maria Lisenko. Norwich, 3 November 2016.

So, I cross the Sainsbury Centre and go to my lectures, which is on the other side of the building or just go into the Social Area to work. This is what I usually do. [Laughing] Do you think you can understand this [Pointing to the drawing]?’

Lisa usually enters the building from the bridge, which leads her down the spiral staircase. She then has two routes (Fig. 5.9): Either she enters the Living Area and walks to the table with the Egyptian art to sit down or she ‘crosses the Sainsbury Centre’ and walks into the school area. Lisa’s trajectory is purposeful and not explorative, nevertheless we can see that it is shaped in negotiation with other actors. She relates how she chooses this specific table in the Living Area because it happens that the other tables are regularly occupied.

Let us return to the spiral staircase before we take up Lisa’s sketch one more time. Bill, an exchange student from Australia who visits once or twice a week, also points to the entrance via the staircase.

‘When I think of the Sainsbury Centre, I always think of the gallery room, [...] and I would think looking down at it from that spirally staircase where you come through from the walkway. [...] You are going through the trees and then walk in to that little platform on top of the spiral staircase, and you can look out over all the galleries and all the different isles and artworks and things like that and yeah you’ve got this crazy roof above you [...].’

The platform is what facilitates looking out over all galleries. It leads through a large milk glass door out of the building. Here an elevated walkway runs through the top of birch trees and ends on a terrace with further attached walkways linking the Sainsbury Centre with the university buildings from Denys Lasdun. Only a second time visitor would use the bridge, Aaron from the visitor service at the front desk explains. First time visitors would not know if the door is open and it is a long walk to the door over the bridge.

When arriving the Smiths entered the building through the gallery entrance on the ground floor. They approached the reception in front of them, saw the field of art to the left and right of it, followed with their eyes the louvers along the ceiling and the walls into the depth of the building. They could not yet make sense of the whole, however. They did not know for example if the part behind the mezzanine is public and thus they needed, as Mr Smith emphasised, to explore. Exploring is a successive course of action. The etymology of the word ‘explore’ leads back to the classical Latin ‘explōrāre’ (‘to investigate, seek to ascertain or find out’) which consists of *ex* (‘out’) and *plōrāre* (‘to make to flow’) (Oxford English Dictionary 1989b). The world of a building is not experienced at once but successively in

interactions, in the flow. The people are ‘made to explore,’ are ‘made to flow’ by the many actors they interact with.

The platform facilitates a different experience. It removes people from physical interaction with the messy real world down there—it creates distance and overview. It allows for a visual impression of wholeness and creates a static spectator in distinction from a flowing surveyor. However, these experiences are not in opposition. They add to each other. The first potentially binds together what the second has left in fragments and details with different intensities.

Both Lisa and Bill sketch the Centre from above; Lisa, right at the first question and then inserting further details, and Bill, at the second question when explicitly asked to draw the inside of the building. Both their drawings end at the edge of the first mezzanine, a visual barrier that hinders their perception of what lies behind from the point of view standing on the platform. For Lisa also the paper adds to this: ‘Ok I don’t have enough space to draw the rest.’ However, she does not take a second sheet. She spends most of her time in the School Area—a part of the building that could not fit on the sheet of paper anymore—which, as her answer suggests, also does not necessarily belong to ‘The Sainsbury Centre’. She ‘crosses’ the Sainsbury Centre. Obviously, she describes the building based on her activities and role, as a student of the Art History and World Art Studies. This role includes a specific engagement with the building: lectures downstairs and in the seminar room and studying in the school area. So why does she not include these areas in her sketch? Is this only what the paper adds to the interview? Here we enter the world of meaning. And this is how mental map interviews are most commonly treated (May 1992). As drawings, which show representations of cognitive maps, they reveal spatial knowledge and the ability for correct spatial orientation. Some of the drawings manifest, indeed, very poor spatial orientation and Lisa also struggles and blacks out the library in the first spot and relocates it correctly in relation to the Living Area afterwards. Lisa’s drawing and Bill’s drawing are based on their experiences, activities, and engagements with the building. Indeed, we could interpret the maps, analyse what is given prominence and which elements or parts of the building are forgotten and why that may be, we could compare the layout of the building with the sketches and tell about topological aspects, all of which follows the traditional research methodology of mental maps, as used in geography and psychology. However, we can also take the drawings as a tool to complement the oral interview amplifying the description of experiences, showing the many nonhumans taking part in spacing and preventing interviewees from providing broader overview narrations. Hence, they aid in approaching ephemeral material practices and events and thus tracing the spacing.

5.4 Returning

Most people visit the Sainsbury Centre several times (R. H. Smith and Lucas 2006). They come back again and again. Let us stay with Bill, the Australian student for a moment before we draw a conclusion. He lives on campus and visits the Centre to sit down and relax regularly. He will take us to four spots within the building: his favourite places.

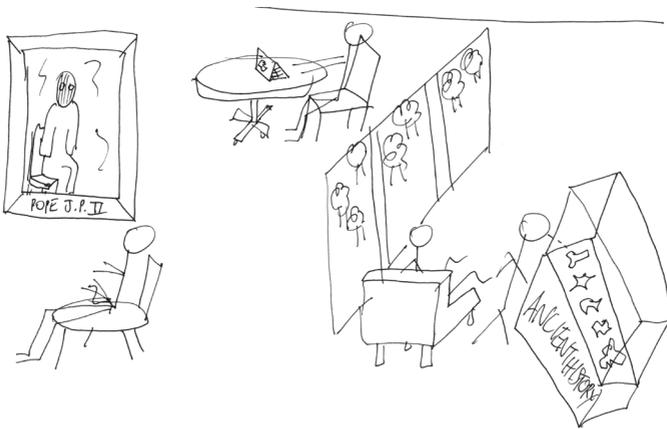


Fig. 5.11:

Sketch 3 by Bill, showing four places he keeps coming back to (from left to right): The painting by Francis Bacon; a round table in the school area; the lounge in front of the glass window in the school area; an exhibit with ancient artefacts in the Living Area.

‘[T]here is a particular artwork in there and it has got this really cool effect where there are lines down the face of the Pope, and it just marks out the eyes or glasses that he is wearing, sort of like a black and red painting, and there is this little seat just in front of that [...] I am not religious, I just like the artwork. So, I like to go in, and I’ll sit there.’ The second spot is located in the school area, ‘on that window there is a series of leather lounges there. On a nice sunny day if it is a bit chilly outside you go, and you can sit there, and you don’t get the breeze, but you just get the warmth of the sun. The autumn kicked it, all the oranges and browns come in from out there, so that is a nice spot to sit in the sun.’ He explains that if he feels lazy, he also sits down in the central school court at the round tables to get some work done. ‘But normally I go there or in the gallery—my two favourite places.’ Also, then there is another spot.

‘There is an exhibit in there with lots of interesting, various ancient, Roman or Greek artefacts, utensils, statues [...] I really love ancient history ... I always try to go past that section.’²⁶

Bill draws specific objects when asked to ‘think about the different ways he moves around’. He says, he goes in and sits there, in front of a painting of the Pope or the windows in the conservatory—especially when it is chilly outside, and the glass only lets in the sun and the colours. There is as well the round table where he sometimes works with his laptop, and then he mentions the showcase with the ancient objects that he always tries to go past because he loves ancient history. The first two he mentioned, the painting and the lounges, however, are *his* ‘favourite place’, as he emphasises. He keeps coming back to them. He has a personal relationship to these places.

The effect of coming back, of repetition, is one of *attachment* (see Chapter 2.3): the love of the art, the colours, and the ancient artefacts. With his theory of attachment, Hennion (2010) provides a concept to explore or ‘attune’ actors and the boundaries from within which they act. The world of attachment is one of the amateur. Bill is a student of history and sociology, and he currently deals with topics like consumer behaviour, market relations, crime, gender, race, early modern history and the Vietnam War, none of which is related to his particular attachments at the Sainsbury Centre. His interests are those of an amateur in contrast to a professional world of control (Hennion 2010). It is a specific capacity of the building, and more specifically of the Living Area, that allows for fidelity. Ben is faithful to his ‘favourite places’, ‘normally he goes there’.

Hennion suggests turning to the techniques and performances involved in attachments to unravel how the capacity to act emerges from within boundaries and how they ‘make us be’, as Latour says (1999a, 22ff.). Bill, however, does not tell in detail about the objects and techniques involved; we cannot witness his rituals and repetitions. Nevertheless, there are many actors that take part in his rituals we have already encountered: The painting he describes is by Francis Bacon, *Study (Imaginary Portrait of SS Pius XII)*; 1955, oil on canvas, 108.6 x 75.6cm, UEA 30) located in the Living Area. Not only because he is attached to this particular painting but also because it happens that precisely in front of this piece there is a little seat, he likes to come back and is able to sit down. Who is involved in this spacing? Francis Bacon, as with most of his works, ‘quickly and decisively’ painted this picture most likely within a few days in 1955 (Peppiatt 2006, 30). Lisa and Bob Sainsbury got into contact with Bacon via his friend and dealer Erica Brausen around this time. They proceeded to act as patrons, commissioning portraits and purchasing works from Bacon in a time when he was still within their

26 Bill, sketching interview.

'self-imposed annual expenditure limit' (ibid. vii). The canvas and oil paint Bacon used are more durable and allow the painting to stay in the Living Area and not downstairs for extended periods. The building envelope keeps rain and wind out; the condition reports who keeps track of all movements and material changes of this object. The conservator, the registrar and the curators jointly discuss when and how the painting travels or does not travel, and the 'Bacon's travel a lot because of loans'.²⁷ The light (See Chapter 6), the maintenance network, etc. all contribute. The question here is not who or what is in control, but who and what contributes to the specific ritual.

The display, which stays more or less the same, allows Bill to return to this particular artwork. And this adds another aspect to understanding the relation of stability and spacing. The static display guides people to return and find *their* object again. '[I]t can be an incredible place for people to feel that they have ownership of it, and once people feel relaxed here, [...] it kind of promotes incredible creative responses, incredible independent research and interest',²⁸ Croose Myhill, Education Officer, explains and adds that in this relationship one starts discovering the small changes of light and shadow for example. Thus, in stability lies the possibility to experience multiplicity.

Bill, who is sitting down and enjoying the Imaginary Portrait, is a receptive or attuned actor (Mol 2010). His engagement with the world of the Sainsbury Centre is not one of an explorative 'flowing with the objects', but a specific arrangement of ritual with the art. The place becomes a connector of different spaces and times and courses of action weaving them all together and allowing Bill to return (Latour 1997). Bill is not a 'user' of the setting but he encounters these multiple connections and adds to them in the event of encountering the art. Hence, with attachment we can address the issue of control in the process of spacing, but also the issue of fidelity.

27 Ledinskaya, Maria (Conservator, SCVA). In-depth interview 2 by Sabine Hansmann. Norwich, 18 October 2017.

28 Croose Myhill, in-depth interview.

5.5 Conclusion: Multiplicity and Experience

Investigating ephemeral and mundane practices in the context of a building has its challenges and limitation. As researcher, we are not possibly able to give an overview of the abundance and variance of daily experiences that occur with a building. There are many cases that have not been considered here, visitors who explore in groups for example. Then *she* might not only follow *her* nose, attuned by the objects and guided by the rich material world but also a fellow explorer's nose. Walking attached to each other then adds to the complicated spacing of the walk a greater degree of complexity. The Sainsbury Centre not only is a place for art lovers. 'A large part of our agenda is research and study and education',²⁹ director Paul Greenhalgh emphasises. All of which tests, shifts and broadens experiences, practices that can dramatically change how people encounter the building or art. All this has not been addressed here. Following the people throughout the building never gives the full picture, but rather a mosaic of experiences, as we have similarly observed with the walking interview (Chapter 4). After collecting biographical notes, and understanding the constant flow that the building is in working-with and how agency is shared in different ways between humans and nonhumans here we turned to the modality of mundane experience with the building. The rich and diverse or eclectic reality of the building appears and we witness that various experiences coexist.

In the introduction, I explained that this chapter is dedicated to discovering the experiences of people who visit or engage temporarily with the world of the Sainsbury Centre. That said, while we approached people who spoke about and drew their experiences, these experiences are not tied to active subjects, while the material world stays passive and functions as background. Instead, following the practicalities we moved inside, into the course of action, and saw how both humans and nonhumans share experiences.

We followed people through their sketches and narrations into their engagement with the world of the Sainsbury Centre. As mentioned earlier, I could have chosen to do participatory observation or shadow my interviewees. I did this in the case of some employees, however, approaching particularly visitors, this seemed to interfere too much with their private visit, and furthermore a short anonymous interview met with the agreement of the institution. Sketching while re-thinking their path throughout the building, the material world, the many objects that facilitate, guide and impede certain activities, become visible. Like in a

29 Greenhalgh, in-depth interview.

walking interview, where the objects ‘do the remembering’ (Guggenheim 2009), here the empty sheet of paper or empty areas in the course of the narration ask the participant to evoke things otherwise forgotten. In this sense the sketches complement and enhance the oral part of the interview and let us witness even better the diverse experiences, practices, and attachments with the building and its material world.

From experience, every time the Sainsbury Centre is approached it is different—consisting of multiple actors. In this sense, there is not one building, not two parts, but multiple. If we have witnessed with the previous chapter that the building is always on the move, constantly changing, with this chapter we understand that in perception the building is similarly mobile. Buildings ‘can be perceived only in a cumulative series of interactions’, Yaneva stresses (2017, 37). We followed a series of interactions: the arriving and entering, the exploring and meandering, the climbing up and overviewing and the enactment of attachment. The journey taken however should not be misunderstood as a move from outside to inside, from global to local. As we do not move *in* space but *with* space, we did not approach the building as an object in a given context. Instead we followed individual people with diverse roles and knowledge, some of whom visited for the first time, who feel disoriented and daunted, who cannot yet make sense of the spatial layout and thus hold on to some tangible anchor points. And others who come regularly, some who come to let the objects guide them around to explore new aspects and again others who move purposefully to specific sites to enjoy a particular set of attachments. To follow the trajectories of people throughout the building is revealing since, firstly, we witness diverse and nuanced humans and secondly, we witness how they interact with the building—visually, bodily and in specific course of action—and thus create specific spacings.

The building is used on different occasions, with different intentions and purposes by different people at the same time and each person creates a specific trajectory in negotiation with the building. Buildings are manifold in their possibilities. Guggenheim speaks of ‘a scattered array of interfaces that neither specifies an order nor a hierarchy of use’ (2009, 6). They ‘lack a clearly specified interface, such as a play button’ (ibid.). The spiral staircase connects the main campus with the building; it connects downstairs and upstairs, which we can describe as its function. However, people do not only *use* it to walk up and downstairs. They use it also to gain or offer (in case of the guides) an overview, to take a brake and lean on the handrail looking down. While the concept of use is already broader than that of function (Hill 2003, 14), it does not reflect the multiple and reciprocal connections involved and furthermore it does not acknowledge the quality of connection. We witness how Ms Abbey is well connected in her physical participation, walking down the stairs focusing on the rubber floor on the steps. We learn that the Smiths in their encounter with the building lack some actors in their network

for a smooth arrival which adds to her insecurity and which further increases when entering the large interior confronting the field of art objects. While others meander *with* the art object, travelling from here to there encountering multiple spaces in flux, this poses challenges if not mediated by adequate knowledge. The monospace confronts people directly with art, it does not provide guidance by corridors, it does not structure the journey along rooms; it does not portion the trip into manageable and predictable smaller steps. Although the way to the visitor counter seems to be an important first anchor, the building shows itself rather indifferent to any fears of unmediated contact with art. Thus, while some people can enjoy negotiating every turn left or right with the objects creating a unique trajectory that speeds up when an object caught their interest and intensifies when delving in an attachment with a specific piece of art, this constant unpredictability in negotiation can also be overwhelming and demanding. Yet for people who visit the Sainsbury Centre more often, and who move accompanied with a detailed knowledge of the different negotiations at every turn, predictability emerges through the stability of the setting allowing for heterogeneity every time the doors are opened.

Approaching spacing through the experiences of visitors we witness systems of mediated interaction. Each trajectory is unique and emerges out of the entanglements with different ingredients. Turning to spacing particularly allows including non-authoritative voices and acknowledging the people who engage with architecture in a mundane way. Thus, spacing does not only help us to overcome a general dichotomy between materiality and the social but also the subtler dichotomy of architect and the people using a building.

While we do not witness courses of action that could be called an anti-programme in a functional understanding, approaching spacing we become aware that there are countless courses of action which coexist and which produce countless coexisting spaces. The sketching interviews reveal how people connect in diverse experiences with the building and clearly show that these experiences are never about the whole building as a static object but rather about the possibilities that develop in action with different intensities and frequencies—in and through and with the building.

