



Transactional Seeing and Becoming Flesh

China Medel

To cite this article: China Medel (2016) Transactional Seeing and Becoming Flesh, Third Text, 30:5-6, 420-436, DOI: [10.1080/09528822.2017.1357896](https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2017.1357896)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2017.1357896>



Published online: 03 Aug 2017.



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Transactional Seeing and Becoming Flesh

Repurposing Militarised Vision in Jordan Crandall's *Heatseeking*

China Medel

In the mid to late 1990s, during the first flushes of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and consolidation of the militarisation of the US–Mexico Border with the deployment of two distinct border enforcement strategies – Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego–Tijuana and Operation Hold the Line in El Paso–Juárez – a series of bi-national art events collectively called InSITE took place in the San Diego–Tijuana area. These art events worked to address transnationalism through the site-specific lens of the US–Mexico border at San Ysidro and Tijuana. The curators, artists and projects addressed contradictions circulating within the rhetoric of transnationalism in the late 1990s, looking specifically at the dematerialisation of borders by commodities and capital and the accompanying utopian promise that we were entering an age of global citizenship. InSITE's projects examined how the rhetoric of dematerialisation was compounded by the simultaneous materialisation and hardening of borders for actual migrants from the global south. Looking at rhetorics of globalisation through the lens of a highly militarised border zone, they ask us to consider how the neoliberal desire for producing a universal market through an obsolescence of the national entails other means of re-enforcing differentiation and maintaining a division of labour. The projects theorise globalisation through borderisation.

One of the artists involved, Jordan Crandall, a media artist interested in the new vectors of pleasure and control generated by surveillance and militarised vision, was commissioned to produce a piece for the InSITE 2000–2001 convergence. *Heatseeking* was a multichannel video installa-



'Border', Jordan Crandall, *Heatseeking*, 2000, 16 mm film, stealth camera, infrared thermal imaging, surveillance cameras, commissioned by InSITE2000, a bi-national project of twenty-seven cultural institutions in the US and Mexico, image: courtesy of the artist

tion that repurposed border surveillance technologies to capture image sequences interrogating the syntaxes, aesthetics and erotics of military surveillance. Looking at the role of pleasure in militarised seeing, Crandall's project theorised the domestication of military vision and its permeation into everyday perceptive registers. In his statement in the *InSITE 2000–2001* catalogue Crandall describes the militarised vision as 'An erotic imaginary of technology-body-artillery fusion, fueled under the conditions of war'.¹ Taking up the erotics and desires of what Crandall theorises as the militarised 'technology/image/movement cluster', the project looks at how the 'conditions of war' at the US–Mexico border require the production of visible bodies as military targets or insurgent threats.² The post-human eroticism of bone-deep intimacy with technology underlies the economies of seeing at the US–Mexico border, making it a technology of the 'war on illegals' and clandestine movement at the border, distributing that technology through the structures of everyday seeing.

Not just a boundary line, the border functions as rhetorical space articulating the conditions of war, performing the extent of state power, creating a deportable workforce and generating a crisis of racial

1 Osvaldo Sánchez and Cecelia Garza, eds, *InSITE 2000–2001: Fugitive Sites*, Installation Gallery, San Diego, California, 2002, pp 49–50

2 Ibid



'Heatseeking 1', Jordan Crandall, *Heatseeking*, 2000, 16 mm film, stealth camera, infrared thermal imaging, surveillance cameras, commissioned by InSITE2000, a bi-national project of twenty-seven cultural institutions in the US and Mexico, image: courtesy of the artist

invasion.³ Political scientist Peter Andreas shows that the escalation of border policing functions less to actually deter undocumented migration and instead performs the appearance of a 'more secure and orderly' border, making the border a site for articulating enemy, insurgent and illegal bodies necessary to the performance and rhetoric of national security.⁴ For Joseph Nevins, increased policing in Operation Gatekeeper meant

The US–Mexico boundary became a stage with a national audience... a boundary that represents a stark, linear demarcation between a strongly differentiated 'us' and 'them', both territorially and socially.⁵

3 See Nicholas De Genova and Natalie Puetz, *Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2010; Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond: The War on the Illegals and the Remaking of the US–Mexico Boundary*, Taylor & Francis, New York, 2010; Peter Andreas, *Border Games: Policing the US–Mexico Divide*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 2012

4 Andreas, *Border Games*, op cit, p 85

5 Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond*, op cit, p 114

The escalation of border policing has entailed an increased emphasis on visual surveillance that militarises vision at the border, making all visual relations ones of potential surveillance of enemy combatants or invasive threat. The militarised vision is also ultimately a racialised vision, making brown bodies visible as a condition of their illegality. Kumarini Silva's work on 'the brown threat' demonstrates how processes of racial identification have become central to policing in a post-9/11 world, and that while predominantly targeting South Asian and Muslim peoples, they are predicated upon border and immigration policing at the US–Mexico border. Aiming to 'identify the unidentifiable', logics of racial recognition in conditions of war work across ethnicity, religion and culture to police diverse peoples caught under the capacious umbrella of 'brown', a category that collapses into one of insurgent threat to national security. The racialisation of brownness becomes an integral tool in the policing, enforcement and spectacle of border security in post-NAFTA and post- 9/11 US culture. The use of militarised vision at the

border to police what Nicholas Mirzoeff points out is ultimately ‘a racialised distinction’, functions as a space to think about the necessity of racialisation to border enforcement and about the technologies neoliberalism requires to enforce them in an age of empire.⁶ *Heatseeking*’s inclusion in InSITE 2000–2001 reflects on a moment in the history of the militarisation of the border within growing discourses of globalisation: a moment when racialised seeing becomes militarised and the distinctions the border enforces become inseparable from juridical logics of ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’.

In addressing the domestication of war and its technologies of visibility at the US–Mexico border, *Heatseeking* asks us to consider the racial politics embedded within the workings of visibility at the border that produce regimes to capture, categorise and control the bodies of migrants. Rereading Crandall’s *Heatseeking* in 2017, during the Trump administration and its plans to build a border wall and establish a Muslim registry, offers us the opportunity to look again at the interdependence of the everyday, the militarised and the racialised conditions of war that is performed through technologies and structures visibility in the borderlands, and also at how we might become fugitive in our visualising and spectatorial practices. *Heatseeking* marks a moment when the conditions of war at the border became distributed domestically, allowing for the passage of Secure Communities policing and policies like Arizona’s SB 1070 that sanctioned alliances between immigration and domestic police forces. Reassessing this project and its aesthetic interventions allows us to imagine not only how we are asked to participate in militarised modes of seeing, but also, I argue, how we might become fugitive by reckoning with movement and migration not as something to be tracked, profiled and captured, but as something to be felt in its passing.

Heatseeking’s intervention hinges upon the notions of repurposing and transaction; of exploring the capacities afforded by something when it is removed from its expressed purpose in situational, embodied engagements. Crandall repurposes military technologies and surveillance tools intended to codify the flesh and traces of migrant movement into racialised, and thus illegal, bodies. ‘Flesh’, for thinkers from Maurice Merleau-Ponty to Hortense Spillers, names the transindividual qualities, experiences and possibilities of bodily relation. An ‘element’ for Merleau-Ponty and a ‘zero degree of social conceptualisation’ in Spillers’ theory of racial grammars, flesh is a general substance that prefigures the body, which instead functions discursively as social category and rhetorical figure.⁷ Taking visualising technologies that have the express purpose of capturing and controlling the movement of racialised and ‘illegal’ bodies, *Heatseeking* repurposes them to generate opportunities for glimpsing the flesh of kinaesthetic movement rather than racialised bodies. Bringing together approaches to embodiment and contingency inspired by Brazilian Neoconcretism of the 1960s and Crandall’s own interest in performance, *Heatseeking* repurposes military technologies and cinematic syntaxes beyond the possibilities for capture and instead within the kinaesthetic possibilities of performance. Crandall’s project addresses the erotic means by which militarised seeing becomes domesticated while also imagining the opportunities for fugitive watching and transactional spectatorship that interactive

6 Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2011, p 280

7 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 1968, p 147; and Hortense Spillers, ‘Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book’, *diacritics*, vol 17, no 2, 1987, p 67

performance and embodied spectatorship might provide. *Heatseeking* generates a fugitive visibility predicated not on the captive legibility of the racialised and ‘illegal’ body, but instead on the variegations and movements of flesh.

GLOBALISATION AS BORDERISATION: MAPPING RACIALISED BODIES

In his uncannily prophetic essay from the early nineties entitled ‘A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation State’, Masao Miyoshi discusses the dawning hegemony of transnational capitalism as the new formation of colonial power, articulating the contradictions that InSITE artists would also go on to address almost ten years later.⁸ Arguing that the current neoliberal trends in global capitalism and governance were betting on the obsolescence of the nation-state in a way that, rather than carving out a post-colonial futurity by abolishing the colonial formation of the nation, reinvented colonial power as the production of an open, unregulated global market. But colonialism requires borders and the demarcations of inside and outside in order to establish a division of labour and spaces of exploitation. Dematerialising borders to enable the flow of capital risks the coherence of colonial, spatial divisions of labour, wealth and race, and those borders have to be maintained in other ways. Maintaining the racialised distinction embedded within the national border of the US and Mexico became the way to spatially produce and enforce a global division of labour and wealth for transnational capitalism’s limitless reach. Rather than doing away with borders, neoliberalism requires them to police a racialised division of labour. The universal market can only be achieved through an ordering of differentiation. Globalisation becomes borderisation.

In geopolitical terms, the border has been constituted by the ‘colonial frontier’, a mode of distinguishing the inside of the colony from the as yet not, but potentially colonised outside, as Sandro Mezzandrea and Brett Neilson demonstrate.⁹ Their work positions the border as an ‘epistemological device’ that functions to ‘shape the lives and experiences of subjects who... are configured as bearers of labour power’.¹⁰ Borders, as a technology for refiguring globalisation’s contemporary colonial frontier, work to ‘multiply’ the ‘diversification and heterogenization of workforces’.¹¹ At the US–Mexico border such workforce production is conditioned by the racialised distinction that the border enforces. As Kelly Lytle Hernández shows in her history of the US Border Patrol, Mexican American men were recruited to the Border Patrol at the height of the expansion of agribusiness. Targeting and capturing Mexican immigrants who ‘were poor, dark-skinned, and did not speak English’ so as to ensure a deportable workforce allowed Mexican Americans to ‘be included in the margins of white ethnicity’ and to participate in agribusiness’s economic and social worlds.¹² An enforcer of racial differentiation, the border is a site of what Sarah Ahmed terms ‘sedimented history’, a place where race is generated as ‘a solidifying, a congealing: history that becomes concrete, a physical barrier in the present’.¹³ At the border this sedimentation

8 Masao Miyoshi, ‘A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation State’, *Critical Inquiry*, vol 19, no 4, 1992, pp 726–751

9 Sandro Mezzandrea and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2013, p 15

10 Ibid, p 20

11 Ibid, p 21

12 Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 2010, p 43

13 Sarah Ahmed, ‘Race as Sedimented History’, *Postmedieval: a Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, vol 6, no 1, 2015, p 95

becomes quite literal, taking shape as the walls, fences, surveillance equipment and the pursuit of clandestine bodies.

Race as a visual strategy demarcating bodies as inside or outside, legal or illegal, defines the sedimented history of the US–Mexico border. In marshalling visioning technologies to capture and demarcate that racialised workforce, the US–Mexico border relies upon regimes of racial recognition transcoded into different visual schemas that read racial difference on to bodies. Race as a mode of subjectification is a visual strategy, as Jennifer González shows. Racialisation positions bodies as legible surfaces for inscription, what Fanon called ‘epidermalisation’, the visual entrapment of bodies within racist histories and mythologies.¹⁴ The history of policing at the US–Mexico border reveals the production of racialised bodies for the sake of maintaining distinctions between labour forces through regimes of visual recognition that remain consistent even as technologies of visual capture change.

Crandall’s *Heatseeking* offers many ways of visualising bodies, all of which are white bodies caught up in the pleasure and violence of militarised vision – as seers and seen, they are racially produced in their access to what Nicholas Mirzoeff terms ‘the right to look’. The ability to become visualising, rather than only visualised, the right to look confers power through oversight.¹⁵ The six-channel video installation shows shadowy, infrared vision bodies; X-ray bodies; bodies under medical examination; idealised, athletic bodies; erotic bodies of cinematic spectacle; angry bodies; distant, figural bodies; and extremely close, haptic bodies. *Heatseeking* combines military and medical images with images of violence and seduction to visually explore the erotic production of bodies as weapons in conditions of war. The sequences and images are captured with different surveillance technologies and sixteen-millimetre cameras, each sequence moving between different aesthetics, from the hyper-green saturation of infrared capture to the textural black and white of closed-circuit cameras, from close-up proximity and obscure figuration to distant tracking of movement. Shifting between space, movement, machinery and bodies, the installation nonetheless focuses on bodies, both watching bodies and bodies watched, as they are variously produced and captured by the military technologies that are used to police the US–Mexico border, and yet not a single one of those bodies is brown. Instead, *Heatseeking* ‘turns the camera on the surveillers’ and makes visible the racialised, white bodies produced in their access to the right to look.¹⁶ Crandall’s project forgoes participation in the militarised project of making brown bodies visible in conditions of war; instead its aesthetic interventions emerge from the ways in which the right to look and processes of visualisation generate captive, racialized bodies from the traces and sensations of flesh. The piece experiments with a continuum between visible body and sensible flesh and reverses visualising directions. *Heatseeking* repurposes technologies in order to move from the bodies we see to the indistinct flesh that we sense.

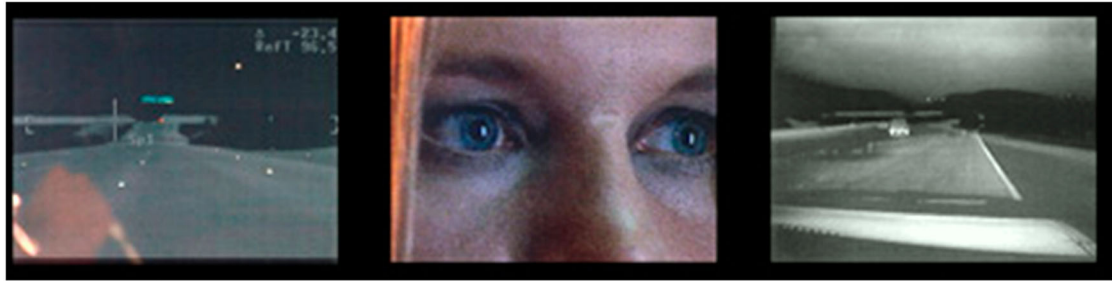
14 Jennifer González, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2008, p 4; and Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*, Grove Press, New York, 1967, p 111

15 Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, op cit

16 Susan Buck-Morss, quoted by Jordan Crandall in <http://jordancrandall.com/main/+HEATSEEKING/index.html>

FROM CAPTIVE BODY TO FUGITIVE FLESH

While *Heatseeking* makes visible the ways in which conditions of war enlist our complicity in the production of legible, ‘illegal’ bodies and dom-



'Heatseeking 3', Jordan Crandall, *Heatseeking*, 2000, 16 mm film, stealth camera, infrared thermal imaging, surveillance cameras, commissioned by InSITE2000, a bi-national project of twenty-seven cultural institutions in the US and Mexico, image: courtesy of the artist

esticates the militarisation of vision, it also generates a fugitive kinaesthetic, spectatorial experience. Improvising and disturbing cinematographic aesthetics through performative disturbances within narrative and movement, Crandall's project generates a kinaesthetic and rhythmic engagement with the images that upsets the hegemony of the optical in the process of visualisation. Crandall claims that his work is influenced by two different and equally important strands: mathematics and architecture, and performance and embodiment. The artist's concern with performance and embodiment in the moving image becomes a way of experimenting with the possibilities for visualising and generating movement. As a second approach to visibility, it offers an alternative to the predictive and capturing logic of militarised vision; 'the scrim of movement, is intended to find a way out of the semiotic bunker'.¹⁷ *Heatseeking* generates this performative alternative and embodied interruption of the militarised vision through the kinaesthetic energy of rhythm and movement generated at different levels of the project. Movement becomes another heat that the project seeks.

Mirroring the abilities of infrared technology with its own modified cinematic aesthetics, *Heatseeking* uses rhythm and movement to trace what we might call, borrowing Spillers' term, the 'hieroglyphics of the flesh'. Flesh in Spiller's work emerges as way of describing the pre-racialised and vestibular qualities of embodiment and embodied being together that is also, as Alexander Weheliye says, necessitated by racial violence's 'deprivation and deprivation'.¹⁸ Crandall's piece similarly seeks these qualities and experiences of vestibular and embodied flesh that are only accessible as hieroglyphic, opaque and transitory figurations. The pursuit of heat in this project seeks the traces of flesh, rather than body, traces that conjure presence but elude signification. *Heatseeking* takes up the relationship between militarised imaging systems and performative possibilities in order to think not only about how militarised vision becomes habitual and requires grammars of racialised seeing, but also about the ways in which our watching practices might exceed it by focusing less on the object of vision and more on vision's embodied experience.

The *Heatseeking* installation was shown at two different but simultaneous locations in Tijuana. One iteration projected the sequences on a wall in a busy intersection in downtown Tijuana, and the other was dis-

17 Jordan Crandall and John Armitage, 'Envisioning the Homefront: Militarisation, Tracking, and Security Culture', *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol 4, 2005, p 18

18 Spillers, 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe', op cit, p 67; and Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2014, p 39

played in a gallery on handheld video devices. Positioning the installation at these two different points worked to disrupt habits not only of viewing but of moving and commuting through the city. The held video devices offered an individualised experience, allowing spectators to isolate themselves within the act of watching. The devices encouraged viewers to fully immerse themselves in a new technological focalisation of Laura Mulvey's theory of the visual pleasures of scopophilic watching and fantasies of domination. While passé to us now, in 2000 the devices also brought the body into an unusual, non-habitual viewing relation as spectators held the object and engaged their hands differently in the act of watching. Holding the device and spectating in a busy, public environment, the spectator moves between habit and experiment.

Simultaneously, *Heatseeking* plays with embodied habits of viewing through a disruption of narrative. The multichannel projection interrupts the temporality of narrative and spatialises it across many different frames.¹⁹ The spatialised montage of the six-minute video project opens with one image, in the top right-hand corner; a close-up of a bullet is brightly lit in the deep green hues of infrared vision. Just as we become aware of the content of that image, it is replaced with another: a rapidly moving black-and-white aerial surveillance shot. The project first orientates us in an oscillation between surface and depth, haptic proximity and optical distance. Even as we move between close and distant perspective, the content of these opening images is unclear, a mess of texture, contrast and shadowy figures. We watch these introductory images in silence, invited to focus on the optical. Yet while the installation opens with the image occupying only the upper right-hand corner of the frame, over time other images and image sequences take their places within the other six channels of the frame. The multichannel aspect, fragmented editing and surface–depth oscillation all actively disrupt the voyeuristic absorption and sense of visual mastery that cinematic aesthetics and individualised spectatorship invite. Instead, the object of focus is fractured, disrupted and split between the many images, which moreover move between different segments of the frame. Even if one focuses on one image sequence within the frame, it will eventually move to another frame and be replaced by another image sequence. The object of vision is always on the move, and thus so are we.

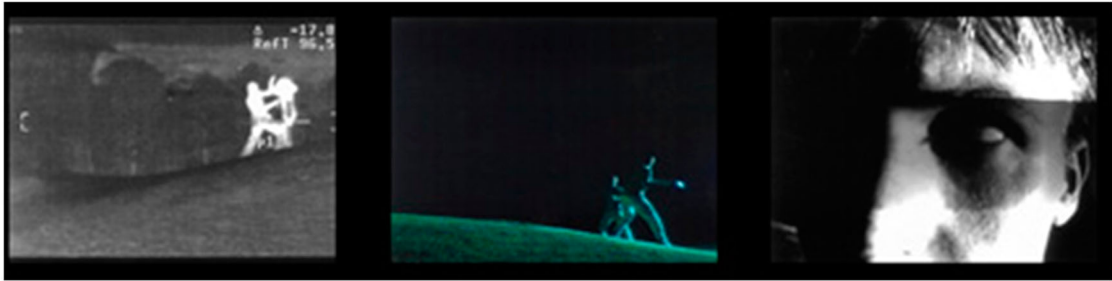
In habit, the project articulates the captive, disciplined body trained to behave in certain formations, to expect certain arrangements and temporalities. Experiment meanwhile opens on to the flesh of corporeal spectatorship. In the tension between habit and experiment, embodied spectatorship engages with the contingencies of its own fleshiness. This flesh is, as Merleau-Ponty described, 'not a thing, but a possibility, a latency, and a *flesh* of things'.²⁰ It is an experience. Flesh, for Merleau-Ponty, was characterised by contingency, by the incident and intertwining of corporeality and worldliness that adheres to the specificity of location and time.²¹ An 'element' or generality of being, as he described it, was both site-specific and also transindividual.²² Flesh cannot be seen, it can only be felt and experienced as an 'invisible' and latent possibility. *Heatseeking* makes sensory glimpses of the flesh possible by focusing on sensation as possibility and experience, as latency accessed by experiment and disruption. The awkward environments and bodily viewing

19 Spatialised montage and logics of space are, according to Lev Manovich, central components of the new media aesthetics. See Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001

20 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, op cit, p 133

21 Ibid, 140

22 Ibid, 139



'Heatseeking 2', Jordan Crandall, *Heatseeking*, 2000, 16 mm film, stealth camera, infrared thermal imaging, surveillance cameras, commissioned by InSITE2000, a bi-national project of twenty-seven cultural institutions in the US and Mexico, image: courtesy of the artist

habits become a way of recentring the embodiment of the spectator as focal point in the project. It is not so much what we see that matters, but what we feel. At play in the distribution of spectatorship is a tension between domestication and individualised body, contingency and flesh.

Yet while it disrupts our visual pleasure, decentring vision in order to recentre embodiment, *Heatseeking* also draws us in to the narrative pleasure of watching events unfold. It seduces us back towards grammars of visual pleasure, allowing us to enjoy the building of cause and effect and the denouement of images. In offering the promise of narrative, the piece invites us to enjoy a sense of impending revelation; if we only watch long enough something, some logic, will be revealed. But this pleasure is interrupted, fragmented, never culminated; the spectacle of images are never condensed or collated into a legible narrative of cause and effect sequences or associative syntax. The images seduce us with the potential to see and to cohere, but that visual pleasure is continually thwarted. The different image sequences refuse immersion and cohesion, distracting and scattering our attention as our eyes and awareness dart and fragment across the screen. In an installation about the pleasures and erotics of surveillance vision and capture, the images become not so much *of something*, but *in something*; they shift from a capture function to a performative function- embodying fugitive, elusive movement. The images instead become images in movement, oscillating between surface and depth, interrupting one another, manically changing locations, remaining always on the move, creating the kinaesthetic experience of movement and oscillation.

SEEKING THE HEAT OF SPATIALISED MOVEMENT

Of course, sensations and spectacles of movement are central to cinematic aesthetics.²³ However, Crandall's piece introduces movement in a distinct fashion, one in which the piece *performs* the spatial and not just temporal qualities of movement. Through its spatialised montage *Heatseeking* takes up space, it moves through space, while the reciprocal interaction and response of spectating bodies fleshes out the space of the performance piece.

23 As Tom Gunning's work on the early 'cinema of attractions', especially the moving ghost train in which a camera located at the front recorded, demonstrates, these experiences of movement are part and parcel of how cinema attracted and thrilled audiences: see Tom Gunning, 'An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)credulous Spectator', *Film Theory and Criticism: An Introductory Reader*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, pp 818–832

The spatialised montage of *Heatseeking* creates images in movement, rather than images of movement, that resonates with Deleuze's concept of the movement image. Deleuze understood the movement image to act primarily upon the sensory-motor schema, the perceptive and affective awarenesses that knit together images of movement and bodily senses of movement. Movement images, for Deleuze, arise not so much in the function of movement within the frame, but rather in the succession of shots known as montage that attribute duration and representational space.²⁴ Montage takes place as temporal cohesion through segmentation. According to Deleuze, montage was central to producing movement images by playing upon the affective interval between stimulus and cognition that leads to the impulse to respond, to take action, to feel and to generate meaning. The affective interval was aroused in movement images through the possibilities for temporal recognition made possible by the 'indirect image of time, of duration' enclosed in different types of montage: time as interval and time as an open spiral, or totality.²⁵

Crandall's spatialised montage plays upon the interval, 'the smallest unit of movement or action... the numerical unit of movement... Time as interval is the accelerated, variable present'.²⁶ Scattering the montage across six channels and undoing the narrative, *Heatseeking* widens the interval, repeats it, contracts it, bridges it and syncopates it across multiple frames. Rather than movement through time that montage is typically known for, *Heatseeking* instead generates the sensation of spatialised movement. We glimpse the syncopated, incremental, variable productions of space and embodiment. In spatialised montage we glimpse two foregrounding influences of Crandall's work in synchronicity with one another: performance and mathematics. Crandall spatialises the interval, drawing spectators' embodiments into the performance of 'the numerical unit of movement' that it experiences not as natural, normal and continuous movement, but rather as incremental, experimental and mechanical movement.

The spatialised montage of *Heatseeking* stretches out the interval, enhances the break and the interval in order to accentuate the incremental movement that the body senses before it knows. It places emphasis on and stretches out the moment in watching when we sense and feel, before we feel compelled to categorise, control or know. In its undone narrative and spatialised montage, it breaks apart the sense of continuity between vision, image and body in the context of border surveillance and the control of bodies moving through geopolitical space. Mobilising and enhancing montage of the interval as a spatial dynamic, Crandall denaturalises spectatorial participation in the capture of racialised bodies in what he terms the 'technology/image/movement cluster'.²⁷ Drawing attention to the 'possibility, the latency' of perception and sensation of movement in the moment of spectating, spatialised montage and the performative images in movement linger on sensation rather than observation, and recentre flesh rather than body.²⁸

While montage functions as a way for film-makers to manipulate time, Crandall spatialises it to manipulate space and to produce movement in and through the space of the projection and exhibition. Simultaneously, fragmented narrative and spatialised montage function together to disrupt and scatter the centralised perspective that grounds cinematic aes-

24 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, trans, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, p 29

25 Ibid

26 Ibid, p 32

27 Sánchez and Garza, eds, *InSITE 2000–2001*, op cit, pp 49–50

28 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, op cit, p 133

thetics' productions of continuous space. As an entire generation of film theorists has demonstrated, filmic perception and representation are rooted in the innovation of quattrocento perspective, the centralised perspective that revolutionised representation during the Renaissance. One of the key insights of nineteen sixties and seventies Marxist and apparatus film theory was the claim that the centralised perspective of the quattrocento and its reproduction in cinematic representation produced subject effects that hailed the spectator as subject based on mastery of their visual environment.²⁹ By seeing, the spectator could constitute themselves as an agent, a master of their experience. The visual syntax of images in cinema, the function of continuity editing and its careful production of spatial coherence, all work to bolster up and protect the spectator from the fractures of desubjectification. Suture and narrative continuity in cinema work to prevent the spectator from losing ground in the visual experience and entering the unmoored drift and uncertainty of non-I camera perception.

As Mirzoeff has shown, the quattrocento and its subject effects were born, like so many other figures of the Renaissance, out of the colonisation of the Americas and are rooted themselves in structures of racial domination.³⁰ Plantation production required a centralised perspective – not just a centralised observer to see all, but also the concomitant subject effects of mastery, power and domination that were needed to manage slavery's racialised division of labour. The subject effects produced through optical mastery were rooted in the production of a racialised order of things. This paradigm enables the gendering of looking that Mulvey goes on to outline. *Heatseeking* disturbs this process, thwarting the visual certainty of Renaissance perspective and narrative coherence through the movement and oscillation of images. Spectators are never tied to a perspective, not even to a sequence of images or a viewing location, but rather drift and dart from image to image. Crandall's installation refuses immersion and centralisation, becoming not a just progressing narrative of images of bodies in movement but rather an experience of *movement itself*.

The movement we witness is not limited to the screen, but is expressed in our own, spectating bodies. While cinema has always been specific in its ability to capture and show movement, *Heatseeking* shifts that experience of movement from one of watching to one of feeling. As Crandall puts it while in conversation about another project, *Drive*, which similarly spatialised the montage through multiple channels, 'You don't only see it – you *feel* it.'³¹ The spatialised effect of the six-channel installation generates the movement within our own bodies as we mimetically follow the images across the screen(s). *Heatseeking* displaces the erotics of dominance that take place in cinema's scopophilic techniques of fetishisation and narrative revelation, and that centre on the eye's ability to see. In disrupting those channels of visual pleasure, the installation cultivates other, less normative modes of spectatorship that undercut the desire to render captive body from embodied flesh. Inspired by the ability of infrared technology to make visible the temperature registers of moving, hot, vital flesh in the darkness, *Heatseeking* seeks the heat of flesh in movement and response that remains opaque and fugitive, rather than racially classified targets.

29 See Jean-Louis Baudry and Alan Williams, 'Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus', *Film Quarterly*, vol 28, 1974, pp 39–47; and Stephen Heath, 'Narrative Space', *Screen*, vol 17, 1976, pp 68–112

30 Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, op cit, p 50

31 Crandall and Armitage, 'Envisioning the Homefront', *Journal of Visual Culture*, op cit, p 25, italics original

SEEKING THE HEAT OF OTHER SENSES: THE KINAESTHETICS OF SOUND

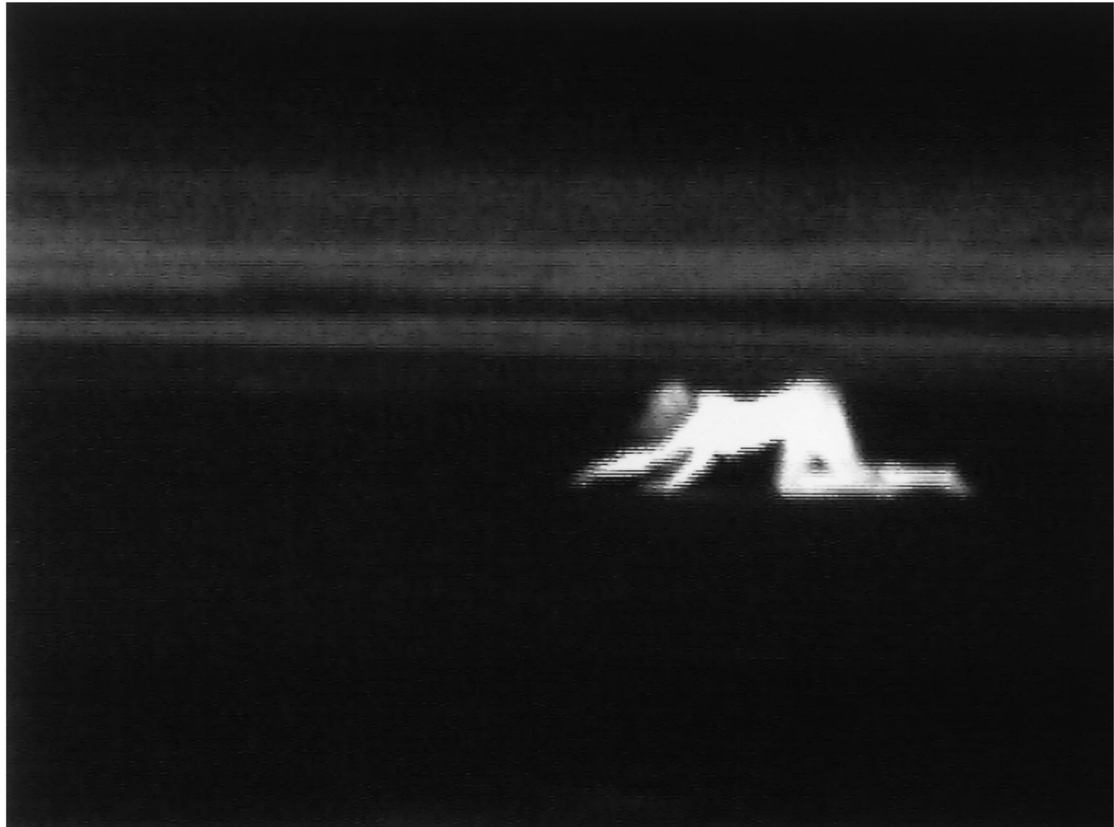
Heatseeking also aesthetically recentres spatialised embodiment and extension to generate kinaesthetic energies of movement through the presence of sound and rhythm, further intensifying the images in movement of the spatialised six-channel installation. A sense of embodied awareness of the possibilities of spatial extension and relation, proprioception makes kinaesthetic sensations of bodily movement sensible as a kind of potentiality. Latent and possible movements sensed by kinaesthesia are made actively possible to proprioception. Initially silent, sound interrupts suddenly around a minute and a half into, initially, a single channel of the installation. Up until this point the image has allowed us to partially immerse ourselves in, to focus eye and attention on the single-channel film in the upper left-hand corner, even as the images within that channel change. Suddenly the counterintuitive sound of water and rushing air interrupts our partial visual immersion. The sound appears to have no source in the image, contradicting and complicating our optical input. The intrusion of elemental sounds corresponds with a change in image, to a black-and-white still shot of the side of a jet. Moments later a second image sequence takes its place in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

The multiple sounds disrupt our focus on the visual experience and also usher in the presence of multiple sequences. Not only is our attention fragmented by the multisensory and dissonant pairing of sound and image, but also by the projection of multiple image sequences. Like the images on the move, sound does not remain constant. The rushing air and water end as abruptly as they began and we once again sink into silence. Sound interrupts suddenly again, corresponding with a loud crack of impact when the young man filmed in infrared thermal visioning swings the golf club. This crack sets in motion the projection of other image sequences aside from the two that are being projected, and immediately diverts our attention away from the source of the sound. The interaction between moving images and sound then take on a rhythm; they stop and start suddenly and repetitiously, echoing and rhyming in syncopation with the shuffle of images in the different image sequences. This consistent but irregular rhythm is supported by the accompanying rhythmic clatter of a running film reel. This accompaniment paces us through the rest of the film, giving skeletal structure to the irregular rhythm of sound and of sound and image.

In his book, *Drive*, Crandall writes of pacing as ‘a way of mapping one medium or realm upon another’.³² Ultimately a physical, kinaesthetic energy of movement, pacing performs virtual spaces within an actual space while also mapping its dimensions and boundaries. In making spaces within or on top of each other, these spaces and motions remain ‘unresolved’, in contact but also in tension that potentiates space rather than capturing it.³³ The performative images in movement generated by the spatialised montage and sonic pacing deprive the presumed objectivity of vision and the centralisation of perspective. Crandall writes:

32 Jordan Crandall, *Drive*, Hatje Cantz, Berlin, 2002, p 95

33 Ibid



'Colonia', Jordan Crandall, *Heatseeking*, 2000, 16 mm film, stealth camera, infrared thermal imaging, surveillance cameras, commissioned by InSITE2000, a bi-national project of twenty-seven cultural institutions in the US and Mexico, image: courtesy of the artist

At the same time, it de-emphasises the visual, because pacing suggests a rhythm, a beat, which underlies and undercuts the optical – as when one suddenly jumps to one's feet to pace about a room, generating a rhythm that upholds and informs thought... Boundaries of space and body are abstracted through this movement, while at the same time reinforced, because pacing generates a map-able pattern and reinforces physical presence. It is highly carnal. Through its rhythm, bodies, spaces, and representations are converted into one another.³⁴

Pacing and its repurposing of mapping correspond with the contact and tension between different sensory modalities, like sight and proprioceptive kinaesthesia, that transmute and blur the distinction between them. Ultimately, pacing produces rhythm and a kinaesthetic sense of potential movement that appeals to multiple sensory modalities. In *Heatseeking* this pacing produces a sense of movement in the viewing body by, as Crandall says, 'reinforcing physical presence'. It operates from a simultaneously optical, aural and proprioceptive modality and displaces vision's centrality by mapping other mediums and realms on to the image. The installation cultivates both visual and aural rhythm, generating kinaesthetic energies and senses within the act of watching and listening.

34 Ibid

Crandall points out that rhythm and pacing, by cultivating awareness of physical presence, are ‘highly carnal’ and disrupt the boundaries between not only potential and actual spaces but also between what Spillers refers to as the ‘vestibular’ quality of flesh and the discursive schema of the body.³⁵ Within the militarised visuality of the US–Mexico border, the semiotic capture of the visible body maps the insurgent enemy on to the racial recognition of brown bodies. However, in *Heatseeking*’s kinaesthetic energies it is the flesh that is invoked and made sensible. The disruption of boundaries between virtual and actual spaces is rooted in the proprioceptive awareness of the possibilities of extension lingering in this kinaesthetic potentiality. Disrupting boundaries between potential and actual spaces is also a disruption of the boundary between the visible body and invisible flesh, the actualised corporeal body existing in space and the latent potentiality of flesh’s movements and becomings. Rather than the recognition of bodies at the border, or bodies on screen, spectators reorientate themselves towards the mutability and relational contingencies of corporeal fleshiness, the potentialities of proprioceptive extension made possible by the kinaesthetic rhythms generated in the project’s performative pacing.

Pacing and rhythm, taking us back to the vestibularity of sensation and the corporeal schema, generate kinaesthetic awareness through proprioceptive recognition in which the outer edges of the body become aware of dimension and externality. Gayle Salamon’s dialogue with the corporealities invoked by Merleau-Ponty and Fanon positions proprioception as a key mode by which bodily internality and externality, that is flesh and visual body, are negotiated and which racialisation weakens.³⁶ According to Salamon, interiority is effectively closed off in Fanon’s analysis because of the way in which racialisation captures, fixes and limits the kinaesthetic, vestibular dimensions of proprioception. In *Heatseeking*, kinaesthetic energies of movement and extension within spatial dimensions generate proprioceptive awarenesses that focus spectatorial attention on the process of shuttling between interiority and exteriority that proprioceptive awareness performs. Taking us back to vestibularity, rhythm and pacing articulate spaces and movements of the body that linger in the latent possibilities of proprioceptive flesh.

THE CONTINGENCY OF ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSACTIONAL SEEING

Heatseeking rhythmically disrupts the organisation of vision and visibility by conjuring a kinaesthetic of sound, rhythm and movement within the production of bodily images. This installation becomes not so much about the content of the images and the story they tell, but about the experience of watching them, even down to the handheld video devices that allowed viewers to both handle and create a physical connection to the object, even as it also stimulated the individualised perspective of the scopophilic, cinematic drive. In *Drive*, Crandall draws on theories and projects of Brazilian neoconcrete artists of the nineteen sixties and reflects on the transmutation they proposed between what they called ‘the eye body’ and ‘the eye machine’.³⁷ As he points out, neoconcrete artists proposed a form of visibility that, unlike the centralised,

35 Spillers, ‘Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe’, op cit, *Diacritics*, p 67

36 Gayle Salamon, ‘“The Place Where Life Hides Away”’: Merleau-Ponty, Fanon, and the Location of Bodily Being’, *Differences: a Journal of Feminist Studies*, vol 17, no 2, 2006, p 109

37 Crandall, *Drive*, op cit, pp 108–109

totalising perspective of Renaissance vision, was ‘not covetous and controlling, not oriented to ocular possession’ but instead operated from a place of transitivity, creating a series of transactions between multiple locations, bodies and senses that all hinged on audience interaction and engagement with the object.³⁸ Crandall engages specifically with Hélio Oiticica’s interactive and performative *Parangolés*, in which the audience and performers donned brightly coloured capelike garments and moved, danced and walked in them. They transformed spectator into participant, participant into performer, body into object, and ultimately worked to create a transformation of object into art only through its wearing and performance. Their pieces produced a kind of reversibility and transmutation between self and other, individual and communal, through interactivity.³⁹ The *Parangolés* transmuted social spaces as the wearer danced from *favela* to high-class gallery.

The *Parangolés*, unlike the capture function of visibility or categorisation, did not aim to produce ‘new identities’ and define ‘specific types of spectator and participant’ as critic Renato Rodrigues da Silva suggests.⁴⁰ Instead they worked to unleash bodies and open spaces capable of transformation and transmutation through corporeal and kinesthetic co-operation. It is the action of ‘trans’, of betweenness and process, that the *Parangolés* and Brazilian neoconcrete art offers to Crandall’s theory of the body–image–technology nexus. Crandall writes about the reversibility of body and machine and of how the neoconcrete movement offers a theory of vision and visibility:

It thus escapes the totalisations of the eye and its binary, vector relationships, and instead results in a kind of circuitous, interstitial seeing. Such a seeing opens the channels between body and environment such that ‘sight’ is not originary, Cartesian, and linear, but rather a phenomenon arising within a transactional network: a decentralised, configurative site of ongoing negotiation where bodies, bodies of codes, and environments are actively interlinked.⁴¹

While militarised visuality works to condition bodies to erotically comply with transitions between positions of watcher and watched, Crandall explores repurposing the technologies to allow for the transmutation of the body into the vestibular sensations of flesh. It is within the ‘transactional network’, the transitive and transmutational spaces, that he allows for an inter-determinancy of flesh to emerge that eludes the categorising effects of visibility. Drawing from Neoconcretism’s interest in what happens in the physical and sensory interaction with the object, Crandall’s project repurposes the technologies of capture and disrupts cinematographic aesthetics to explore potentials for the performance of flesh to emerge from our transactional relationships to technology, media and image. Orienting the spectator less towards what they see and more towards what they feel, kinaesthetics of the image generate a fugitive visibility predicated on the corporeal experience of flesh and vestibular sensation, rather than on the discursive recognition of body. *Heat-seeking* asks us to linger in vestibular sensations, to play in the interval before categorisation and recognition. Lingering in these vestibular sensations, we elude the targeting function of racialisation. Focusing our

38 Ibid

39 Renato Rodrigues da Silva, ‘Hélio Oiticica’s *Parangolé* or, the Art of Transgression’, *Third Text*, vol 19, no 3, 2005, pp 213–231

40 Ibid, p 220

41 Crandall, *Drive*, op cit, p 109

attentions on the prior to and transitioning vestibularity turns our gazes away from the ‘sedimented histories’ that racialisation and the border enforces and enlivens, and instead towards what it seeks to control: the flesh of movement and becoming.⁴² Embodied interaction and kinaesthetic stimuli become ways of transitively engaging an audience’s embodiment directly, while also remaining undefined, multiple and fugitive.

CONCLUSION

Crandall’s installation, like works by other InSITE artists, recentres space and the processes of movement within the site-specific location of the Tijuana–San Diego borderlands. Repurposing technologies of capture, *Heatseeking* draws attention to the controls on space and mobility made possible through visuality in this geopolitical location. Centring space and the bodies moving within it as something that is visually produced, and yet simultaneously complicated and continually exceeded by those bodies’ movements, his piece offers experimental images in movement that access the sensorial moment before racial capture. Instead we feel the latent possibilities and hieroglyphics of prediscursive flesh. Reframing the way in which space and movement are controlled and produced by the cinematic aesthetics and disciplined modes of watching that condition border surveillance, *Heatseeking* mobilises space and movement to invert its use at the border. Rather than legitimating the boundaries and illegal bodies necessitated by neoliberal, geopolitical governance, it mobilises space and movement to generate new modes of embodied engagement and vestibular sensation.

In a 2005 interview Crandall described the domestication of militarised seeing that his works take up: ‘It’s a powerful rhetorical frame and a machine of territorialisation, indoctrination and recruitment. But again, we’re not just talking about the Pentagon.’⁴³ For Crandall, militarised visuality requires the performance of watching to be distributed across soldiers, police forces, citizenry, humans and machines, drawing everyone into the process of policing the boundaries of the nation and fighting the ‘war on illegals’. All are drawn into the performance, becoming the horizontally distributed embodiment of militarised visuality in which oversight is everywhere and nowhere. The structure of oversight underpins the centralised viewing of cinematic aesthetics and conditions the domestication of militarised vision. As part of a neoliberal project of dissolving borders for commodity and capital, the border brokers the racialised division and division of labour by making racialised bodies visible as conditions of their illegality. As militarised visuality becomes domesticated the borderlands stretch beyond the geopolitical border, taking shape wherever the policing of Secure Communities and the racial profiling of Arizona SB 1070 is being exercised. Policing the border, here and wherever legality and racial visibility are bound up together, requires the capture of flesh into a racialised body. The becoming body that conditions visibility as racialised subject becomes the loss of vestibular sensation, the violence of what Spillers termed ‘high crimes against the *flesh*’.⁴⁴

What gets lost is the ‘corporeal schema’ of ‘vestibular sensations’, as Fanon puts it, or what Merleau-Ponty calls the flesh that grounds relational being in the world.⁴⁵ *Heatseeking* brings the corporeal schema

42 Ahmed, ‘Race as Sedimented History’, op cit, p 95

43 Crandall and Armitage, ‘Envisioning the Homefront’, op cit, p 63

44 Spillers, ‘Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe’, op cit, p 67, italics original

45 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*, op cit, p 111

and its mutability back to the process of seeing and watching, creating a more ethical spectatorship that seeks not to capture but instead to feel. This mode of watching at the border acknowledges a presence – the presence of migration – but does not seek to capture, define or control. Instead, the movement of migration becomes the shared flesh of movement in the spectator's body – enacting relational reciprocity and co-presence through the transactional seeing of spectator and moving image, or body and screen. Bringing the transactional embodiment of performance spectatorship to bear on the moving images of militarisation becomes, as the curator of 'Military Vision', an exhibition which recently featured *Heatseeking*, writes, a matter of rewiring how we watch: 'the point, rather, is to rewire all available machines of sensation and vision. Including – if we can – military vision'.⁴⁶ Repurposing itself becomes a transaction between militarised technologies of vision and modes of performance and intervention. In taking these technologies' unique aesthetics while applying the movement methods and contingent possibilities of performance, Crandall's piece examines the categorising and controlling logics written into the purposes of these technologies and generates modes of looking that are not predicated on the optics of racialised bodies as insurgent threats, but rather are about feeling through the relational and vestibular experiences of flesh. In doing so, *Heatseeking* repurposes the function of visualising and visibility itself, making it not about capture and categorisation but instead about the glimpse, the felt and the physicality of imaginative acts of seeing.

⁴⁶ Adrian Martin, 'Undefined Killed Someone', *Military Vision: Denis Bauboi, Matthiew Cherubini, Jordan Crandall*, ed. Baden Pailthorpe, Screen Space, Melbourne, 2013, p 48