



CAITLIN FRANZMANN

Chasing Infinite Junctionures

Attention without feeling, I began to learn, is only a report.
- Mary Oliver

Immediately before seeing Caitlin Franzmann's, at that point unfinished installation, *Chasing Infinite Junctionures*, for the first time, I watch a Hollywood blockbuster. Making a last minute decision on a rainy day, I hurtle to the city to gorge on the latest installment of a big studio "man-chise": two hours of machismo-laden, car race-heavy, clutch fluid-soaked hyper stimulus and gloss.

For an artist whose work seeks to foster fragility and intimacy, a yielding to slowness and the welcoming of mystery through sensorial experience, it seems a jarring contrast. Like gobbling junk food before attending a tea ceremony.

Yet Franzmann has always invited those who experience her art, not as mere "audiences" or "viewers", but as active participants. In doing so, her work affords individuals time to both invest in and remain autonomous to, what might transpire, embracing the long tail of each person's experience, even as it might knock against the delicacy of the work at hand.

Franzmann trained originally as an urban planner, and there is a nod to the external environment in *Chasing Infinite Junctionures*, positioned as it is on one of Brisbane's busiest intersections, the Normanby Fiveways. There is no eliding over the fact that to experience the work, you will have navigated your living being through the acoustic din of cars and trucks; the dissection of space with impervious surfaces and impenetrable materials; and engaged in the kind of complex sensory processing that enables the body to effectively synthesise inputs such as movement, sight, sound, touch, smell and even taste, to successfully cross a road.

Entering the gallery space, therefore, is a pointed experience, particularly in daytime; the typically homogenous white gallery space, darkened by blackout curtains, is barely lit and immediately interrupted by the architectural intervention of an imposing black, rectangular structure - part enigmatic monolith as in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, part Kaaba, part road block, filling the centre of the unadorned space. If we are indeed chasing something, then it seems we have come to an impasse.

Yet as the eyes undertake their dark adaptation, adjusting to the low light intensities in the space, the reflex dilation of the pupil and the preferential activation of rod cells, the seemingly singular building block of Franzmann's work permits a different attention. What appears at first as a closed box, is in fact an open structure. Above this, a mirrored surface at an oblique angle allows us to see openness, meeting another mirrored surface on the gallery floor, engaging us in the tantalising practice of looking, of being looked at, the reduction of absence through refracted images, and the trading of contained gaze.

Eschewing the primacy of the visual and symbolic, *Chasing Infinite Junctionures* invites the participant who finds the small, circular hold that opens the structure, to enter the work's inner space. What lies within is not just a question of concrete realities - is there more "art" inside the box? - but a phenomenological invitation to experience space, reflected in the created environment and the bodily relationship to it. After two hours of outrageously enhanced audio effects, I am acutely aware of the echo chamber of *Chasing Infinite Junctionures*, as it sucks in a passing truck with a lush emotional intimacy that dilutes none of the verisimilitude. Suddenly, I am bathed in truck. The same input that, only two hours ago was employed to frighten me, and a half hour ago was cursory input to traffic navigation, is now almost sensual, as much from the remnants of my own experience as the deliberative intent of the architecture.

Yet Franzmann also contemplates the participant who would prefer not to "participate" - viewer, voyeur, observer, witness - instilling the space with a kind of terrain vague, the seeming obsolete and unproductive surrounding space, where we welcome the unresolved form of absence. Here, perhaps most of all, Franzmann empties the narrative out of her work, opening up to the oxymoronic quality of chasing infinite junctionures, accepting that infinity's ultimate mystery is its unassignable and therefore unattainable quality. Any "body" within the space can act as the + 1 in the equation of $\infty + 1 = \infty$ and so we have again failed in our pursuit.

Rather than despairing in the futility of that chase, however, it is fitting that the "junctionure" is Franzmann's happily elusive goal: those moments, the points in time, the places where things join. Time is the transparent and delightfully constant material of *Chasing Infinite Junctionures*. Time, with its formal intervals and seductive paradoxes. To deepen this dialogue between the work and time, Franzmann has invited several artists whose practices also engage with the ephemeral materials of time, sound and performance, to articulate the work with moments of gathering, intervention or response (and non-response) to the work.

Writing these exhibition notes before the completion of the built intervention and indeed the proposed interactions of these collaborating artists is an interesting and seemingly difficult task. Often, we seek to comment on a work, its value, its intent, its purported dialectic, only after the work is "finished". The exhibition experience purports then to be the realisation of the great Voilà - a revelation of genius and insight to an astonished public. There is comfort in conclusions.

Yet the titular stress on the "infinite junctionures" of Franzmann's work removes the typical bookends of gallery-mounted installation work - work that starts, endures and then ends - opting instead for an open-ended, recursive experience, where the participant is integral to both the execution and completion of the work. This devolution of artistic authorship invites reflection and interpretation. In *Chasing Infinite Junctionures*, each body is allowed to provide their unique emphasis and inflection to the tender/tended space, interlocutors are welcomed to navigate their living beings through the noise or silence; to interpose themselves in the dissected space with its surfaces and its materials; to engage in the complex processing of their collaborative senses as they chase, create, hold, dissipate or disrupt successive moments, feeling colluding at last with attention.

- Eleanor Jackson

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