

## The Scale of Clusters V3 Interpretive Essay by Dylan Ranney

You are approaching the gallery, anticipating its contents- you spy inside a window, eager to consume a fresh experience. What is the scale with which we measure human experience? Could an art gallery be such a scale?

Through the sensorial milieu of this space, such self-observation feels encouraged. These first moments inside the gallery seem innocent and evoke a conversation around sterility in the art gallery: White walls, the drone of fans pushing air through an industrial space. This is a familiar environment with a singular picture frame on the wall, appropriately dressing another 'waiting room' experience. Only two or three steps later, Bellavance catches your full attention: A glint of silver, a small distant motion, and all at once you realize the illusion; the picture frame is in fact a portal to another space! How often do we ignore our surroundings, or take for granted our routines through space and time? The picture is in fact a window looking into a metallic bubble, reflecting our curiosity back at us.

A fan, a window, a door, there is still something banal about this room. If you do not give yourself permission to open the door, then the room stands still, a vacuum, and you will miss out on that experience you were craving just now. What is this place? What is this bubble? Subconsciously the mind gathers the audacity to answer these questions.

Opening the door, the air from the room rushes past and the Mylar balloon deflates, as if at once holding its breath and then releasing a slow sigh of relief at having been understood. Everything you thought you knew about the exhibit is at once shifted. In the first space, experiencing themes of unknowing and curiosity. In the second space, being empowered by making the decision to enter, you may then watch others struggle with their own decision.

The crackling of an exhaling Mylar balloon breaks the sounds of humming fans. You close the door, the air pressure returns, and once again the balloon inhales deeply. This balloon has become the very lungs of the gallery, immersing the space in sound and light and breath, you are immersed in it, a part of it now. Bellavance paints the room with whimsy; fractal patterns of light dance from floor to ceiling, reflected from the now rotund metallic balloon like one of Jeff Koons' esoteric chrome fantasies.

You all at once become self conscious in that the Mylar balloon allows you to view others still in the first room, and that you yourself might have been watched. Distorted by light and motion your own reflection taunts you.

Reminiscent of James Turrell's Skyspace. You aren't just observing the installation; the installation is now observing you. From one organism to another, you share another breath and return to the first chamber. The once esoteric and industrial space has exposed itself to you and revealed its true colours. Going back to the car you take some whimsy home, one experience richer.

*Multidisciplinary artist Alexis Bellavance works within time. His findings, sometimes loud, sometimes silent, are concrete observations of his surroundings. Cycles, positions, laws, echoes, materials, become the segments of conceptual scaffoldings that leads to multiple disciplines: audio art, performance, installation, photography. The consequences of his work are empirical results emerging from his attention to reality and certain of its accidents. He is co-founder of the Montreal based performance event VIVA! Art action, an active member of the art center Perte de Signal and a board member of Centre des arts actuels Skol. Alexis Bellavance's work has been presented in numerous events, festivals, galleries and artist-run centres in North America, Europe and Asia. He lives in Montreal, CA.*



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