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Aesthetic Embodiment of the Visual and/or Non-Visual: the Becoming of a Spatial Installation Exhibition Influenced by Shamanic Healing

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Abstract: In urban settings worldwide, artists and researchers have drawn from shamanic healing, providing insightful responses to the environment. This project is a transdisciplinary creative research project where architecture and art practice draw from shamanic healing and provide the potential to expand knowledge of public space and inspire more aesthetic explorations of public spatial visions. The research started from the encounters with the Ewengki/Evenki shaman tribe in settlement areas of northern China in 2019 and extended through the partnerships with Maori artists in Poneke Aotearoa, New Zealand, in 2023. Based on the learnings and collaborations with female indigenous tradition practitioners and the healing that the researcher received from the land, a spatial installation exhibition was developed in this project. Indigenous practices are intricately woven with contemporary technology, merging visuals, soundscapes, and other non-visual aesthetics influenced by the researcher's personal experiences of embodied shamanic healing with brainwave generative technology. This synthesis seeks to ritualize and reimagine future public spaces, encompassing streetscapes and greenscapes from China to Aotearoa, and fostering connections between urbanized human body, mind, spirit, and land. In doing so, the project presents a feminist posthuman inquiry into how individuals perceive materiality within the context of a future city. Grounded in creative research and embodied methodologies, this paper focuses on the conceptual and autoethnographic aspects of visual-non-visual aesthetics and their creative representation. Through the exploration of aesthetics beyond the visual realm within urban and spatial contexts, this project showcases the spatial installation exhibition as an example of shamanic influence and related response to public space through embodied artistry and transdisciplinary creative inquiry.

Keywords: aesthetic, embodiment, visual and/or non-visual, spatial installation, shamanic healing, public space

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