

# A Puzzling Space

-Aubrey Reeves, TSV Programming Director

Montreal-based photographer Isabelle Hayeur and new media artist Éric Raymond were in residence at Trinity Square Video for two weeks in late March. During their stay in Toronto, they adapted their video installation *Tunnel Vision* to the specific architecture of the TSV Gallery using 3D computer graphics video, surround sound and lighting effects. *Tunnel Vision* was first created in early March 2007 for the Network Center for Contemporary Art in Aalst, Belgium, which is located in a converted factory building similar to the 401 Richmond building.

In *Tunnel Vision*, Hayeur and Raymond have reversed the convention of video installation. They state that “usually an installation inhabits the space, but here the work disappears, or rather, it is the space itself that manifests through the work.” From the outside of the gallery, visitors hear a low rumble. As they enter the space, they are presented with a dark, sinuous corridor created with a video image. The walls, floor and ceiling depicted in the video match perfectly to the actual walls, floor and ceiling of the gallery space so the room seems to extend infinitely. The image begins to move, creating the feeling that the viewers are traveling through the passageway. Slowly, the rumble becomes louder and the video image grows brighter. When both the sound and video image reach peak saturation, the room is suddenly illuminated by bright spotlights creating an intensely brilliant moment. Here the artists overwhelm the senses with light and sound, causing a rupture in our understanding of the space and leaving the viewer with a disoriented, but not unpleasant sensation.

The installation draws our attention to how stimuli – such as light and sound – affect our emotional state and our understanding of an immersive environment. Hayeur and Raymond use these basic elements to place the viewer within a more primitive level of awareness to focus on the limits of human sensory capacity. As the title suggests, we have been given a limited view, yet what we can see is focused in its intensity.

While this is their first collaborative video installation, Hayeur and Raymond have long shared a common interest in depictions and perceptions of space and landscape. In their individual practices, each have investigated ways to skew representations of space and slightly shift our perception of environments.

*Tunnel Vision* is a natural evolution of Hayeur’s video installation *Issue* (2004), which was installed in an abandoned waste incinerator in Montreal. Here the video was projected at the end of an actual 75-meter tunnel creating the illusion that the tunnel opened onto a desolate landscape that slowly morphs into a landfill, then into a suburban neighbourhood. The video for *Issue* transpires like a time-lapse version of Hayeur’s large-scale photographs that represent what she calls “possible worlds”. In her photographic montages, Hayeur “grafts digital fragments of landscapes in order to create an imaginary, yet coherent environment, a chimerical landscape that has all the impact of a real document.”<sup>1</sup> For instance, she has fused advertising images of resort beaches with shots of North American suburbs to create a credible, yet slightly bizarre world.

Similarly, in his new media installation *Scanlines*, Raymond fractured the topography of the Grand Canyon and re-oriented the viewer’s relationship to this monumental landmark. In this work small robotic trolleys roved about the gallery, each with a flat-monitor depicting sections of satellite images of the famous canyon. In a related piece, *Scribe*, Raymond has populated the gallery with miniature robots that make cartographic drawings based on non-visual information received by radio wave. The information is derived from cellular phones, television broadcast signals, solar storm waves and other local natural emissions, resulting in a complex “map” depicting landscapes transformed by technology.

These earlier works reflect Hayeur and Raymond’s understanding that the contemporary experience of space is no longer a purely lived-experience but an amalgam built out of multiple images such as maps, satellite images and advertisements. Hayeur and Raymond draw our attention to these constructions by presenting visual puzzles where the pieces don’t fit perfectly together. This technique is used again in *Tunnel Vision* where they present the viewer with a space that the sensory perceptions indicate is real, yet the rational mind knows is impossible, leaving the viewer in a puzzling space.

## bios

**Isabelle Hayeur** is a Montreal-based photographer. She completed a BFA in 1996 and a MFA in 2002 at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). Since the late 1990s, she has been known for her large-format digital montages and her site-specific installations while she also produced public art works, videos and net art projects. Her works have been presented across Canada, in Europe, in the United-States, in Latin America and in Japan. She exhibited at Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoCA), Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art (Toronto, Canada), VOX contemporary image (Montréal), Centre des arts visuels Skol (Montréal) and at the Rencontres internationales de la photographie à Arles among others. A major solo exhibition *Inhabiting: the works of Isabelle Hayeur*, organized by Oakville Galleries and le Musée des beaux-arts du Québec, is currently touring across Canada.

**Éric Raymond** is a sculptor and new media artist based in Montreal. His work combines scientific research with large-scale sculptures and installations composed of industrial objects. Since 1994 he has shown his work extensively in solo and group exhibitions and in media festivals across Canada including Toronto Photographer’s Workshop (Toronto), Dazibao Center (Montreal) and Media City video festival (WindSOR), and internationally at the Outer Limits video festival (New York), Ars Electronica (Linz, Austria) and Off/ Off Gallery, (Copenhagen, Denmark), among others. From 2003 until 2004, he was the Scientific Director of Hexagram Institute for Research-Creation in Media Arts and Technologies and is currently a Professor at the École des arts visuels et médiatiques, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).

1. *Artist Statement*, Isabelle Hayeur and Éric Raymond, 2007.

2. *Destinations*, “a Conversation between Hugues Charbonneau, Isabelle Hayeur and Patrice Loubier”, Centre de recherche urbaine de Montréal, 2004, p32.



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**Master Class**

March 31, 2007, 1-4pm

\$25 for TSV members and \$30 non-members

This is an in-depth workshop on video installation where participants will take part in a discussion about the technical aspects of Hayeur and Raymond's works, video's expansion beyond the single-screen projection and the international context for video installation. Participants are invited to bring their portfolios for feedback from the instructors. The class size is limited to ten and is recommended for artists and students with some knowledge of video art.

To enroll contact TSV at (416) 593-1332.



20th Annual Images Festival  
 April 5-14, 2007  
 www.imagesfestival.com

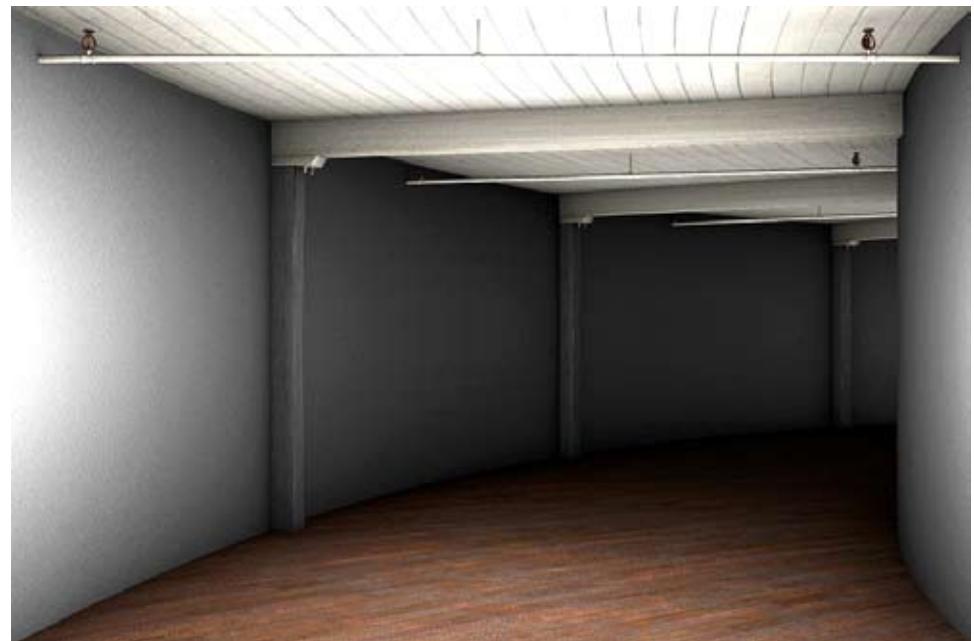
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TSV and the Images Festival gratefully acknowledge the generous support of: The Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, the Trillium Foundation and Heritage Canada. TSV and the Images Festival also would like to thank the Drake Hotel for their generous contribution of accomodation for the artists.

Trinity Square Video, the Images Festival and the Drake Hotel present

Isabelle Hayeur and Éric Raymond  
*Tunnel Vision*



Exhibition: March 29 - April 28, 2007  
 Master Class: March 31, 2007, 1-4pm