

# Skills, Techniques, and Processes



The first experimentation with projection was conducted on an **overhead projector**; this was a fitting choice as it is the **traditional** way of projection. The overhead projector does not transfer or convey solid colours directly, thus, I focused on the arrangement of **shapes** and **texture**. The film and cotton were placed on the **stage glass** whereas the circular glass was placed at the **front surface mirror**. The shadow of the glass and the obscure orange light it casts mimics the sun while the cotton parallels clouds. The **refraction** of light **recontextualizes** the items placed on the stage glass and give them new meaning.

The second experimentation was conducted, in contrast to the first, with a **digital projector**. The benefit of a digital projection is that it conveys the image **lucidly**, displaying a great variety of **hues**. However, this clarity and directness betray the free-spirited nature of light; the only way to make the art one's own instead of the laptop's or the phone's is to mask the image or **layer** it with different media and canvases. In this piece, I continued the discussion from the last unit regarding **body image**. Wire was used to imitate the fluid **movement** of the human body, and its simplistic **shadow** stands in stark **contrast** to the colourful figure of the projection. The wire frame and the painted body echo each other and produce a sense of unity. This was inspired by **Pablo Picasso's** light paintings in 1949, in which he used air as the canvas and produced **minimalistic** yet brilliant layering artwork. The greatest beauty of human body is when the adornments and details are peeled off, and it is returned to its most **natural** state.



The final experiment was conducted with an **overhead projector** again, because it makes the light the protagonist and gives light the **liberty** to produce art - an extremely magical process. It allows the artist to realize the inherent beauty of light and that humans are mere **instruments** that assist it in presenting its beauty. This piece has an abundance of **forms** and **texture**. On the **stage glass** are bubble wraps, film, cotton, and a triangular piece of glass. The circular shapes **contrast** the angular shapes; the softness of the cotton contrasts the sharp edges of the glass; yet those differences work **harmoniously** with each other. However, the most miraculous effect appeared when a triangular **prism** was rotated in between the **front surface mirror** and the **condenser lens**. The result was no less fascinating than when Sir Isaac Newton discovered the **refraction** of light with a similar triangular prism. Not only did the shapes from the stage glass begin to move, duplicate, and layer on top of each other, a **rainbow** of colours also appeared, as the white light has been broken up into its constituent **spectral colours** by the prism. Light, which originally comes from the sun, casts a "**sky**" onto the canvas: the audience witnesses an entire day - from the murky blue of dawn to the blazing orange sunset.

# Critical Investigation

## Elements and Principles

Even though “Vision of Wonder” is unlike traditional paintings, it utilizes similar elements and principles of art, and challenges the definition of convention. The plasma light magic lanterns, bodies in **movement**, and mysterious luminous images produce a situation of **happence** for the audience, a gentle human sentiment unfamiliar and riveting. The tone of the artwork also contributes to the **mood**: the artist positions the dancers against the light so they form silhouettes and make use of **contrejour**. This obscurity contributes to the mysterious and suffused, aloof yet intriguing atmosphere. Furthermore, the artist made use of **form** and **space** - the shapes from the projection overlap with the dancers in the foreground; yet they merge with each other and produce a sense of **unity**. Most importantly, the artist employed a rainbow of hues to convey the harmony of the performance. Even though the artist focused on the primary colours, the free-spirited nature of light created a plethora of **colours** under the distortion of glass and prisms. The **contrasting** hues in the artwork mimic the variety of environmental elements that sustain our existence.

## Amy Huestis: Vision of Wonder: a piece of movement and the magic lantern (Morbid Anatomy Museum, Brooklyn. May, 2016.)

This durational performance with choreographer Jody Sperling and Time Lapse Dance, artist Suzanne Dery, and composer Omar Zubair conjured the technological transformative ghost-energy of Loie Fuller



## Material, Conceptual, and Cultural Significance

Amy Huestis promotes a **collaborative** creative style in her work. In addition, Huestis re-introduces the “**magical lantern**” to the art world: an extraordinary replacement of the prevalent digital projection. The “magic lantern” is an optical medium first documented in the 1420; it enjoyed a centuries long history, only to be supplanted by film in the 20th century. But there were reasons for the magic lantern’s four centuries of longevity: its general **usability**, the **jewel-like quality** of its projections, its startling **hand-operated** charm, and its delightful effect. Huestis distinguishes the “magic lantern” from digital projection - the dominant mode of viewing today - to foster more **intimacy** between the artist and the light itself. Her use of this unique material mirrors the theme explored by “Vision of Wonder”: the connection between humans and the magical **malleable** nature of light. Her installations and performances have occurred in Vancouver, New York, Los Angeles, etc.

## Function and Purpose

This performance was a **documentary** that not only explores the themes of **magic** and **astrology**, but also portrays the connection between the **human spirit** and nature. The projector casts images of moons and planets on the dancers, who were the **canvas** and part of the performance. Throughout the history of time, humans have always exploited nature; however, in this case, the aforementioned idea has been **juxtaposed**, and nature “dances” on humans. The **free-spirited** and formless nature of light, much similar to nature, may be manipulated, but can never be completely controlled by human beings.

Citations: "Morbid Anatomy Museum." *Amy-Claire Huestis*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Mar. 2017.

<http://www.amyhuestis.com/index.php/performance/morbid-anatomy-museum-brooklyn/>





# Ideas and Intentions

As the eminent philosopher Mahatma Gandhi once claimed, “earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed”. The order of nature has been knocked **off kilter** by the **exploitation** of man. Before long, the earth may turn into a bleak and desolate environment as illustrated by Marc Zimmermann’s short film “Natural Attraction”.

Therefore, Joanna and I intended to produce a short video which **appropriates** “Natural Attraction” to not only serve as a **warning** for society regarding the **deterioration** of the environment, but also explore the inseparable **connection** between the earth and the human spirit. The short film “Natural Attraction is played in the background of the installation in a **loop** to demonstrate the **cycle** of life and death through the blooming and withering

of the flowers. Furthermore, plants are placed in front of the projector as **masks** that take an organic shape. They provide more **shapes** and **forms** to the installation and enhance the audience’s appreciation for beauty in nature. In a previous experiment, the projector **encircled** the flower, and its **scope of light** gave **movement** to the flower, and made it more interesting and lively (As shown in the pictures below). Pitifully, this was unattainable during the final video, due to the **limitation** of a panoramically clear canvas.

To compensate for the loss of this movement, **dancers** were invited dance in front of the projection. This was inspired by Amy Huestis’ “**Vision of Wonder**”, especially her collaborative creative style. The dancers choreographed their performance in accordance with the occurrences in “Natural Attraction”, and further emphasizes the close association between man and nature.

Citation: "Natural Attraction | Short Film." *Vimeo*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Mar. 2017. <<https://vimeo.com/202245355>>.

The final work was inspired by and appropriated the short film “Natural Attraction” by Marc Zimmermann. Zimmermann believes the environment can be a **protagonist**; thus he creates or extends the environment for motion pictures, either fully **computer generated** or as **digital matte paintings** - different techniques like painting, photo manipulation, digital sculpting, 3D modelling, texturing, rendering, and lighting. However, he is also passionate about creating short **audio-visual** artworks or spots entirely on his own; “Natural Attraction” is one of such pieces.

