

Pablo Fernández Velasco: The Aesthetics of Being Lost: Disorientation as a Catalyser of Aesthetic Experience in Immersive Environments
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In this paper, I develop a phenomenological analysis of how disorientation can enhance the aesthetic experience within immersive environments. I use as a case study the “Movement Gallery,” a VR environment designed at the Interactive Architecture Lab. The Movement Gallery has a slowly evolving spatial structure: over time, walls became larger, fade away or recede, often as unpredictable responses to the viewer’s movements. On the one hand, this gives the viewer the experience of a reactive quasi-alive environment. On the other, it creates an uncertainty as to how the space has changed behind the viewer’s back.

The above case study serves as the starting point for a theory of how disorientation can serve as a catalyser for intense aesthetic experiences. I argue that disorientation can serve to elicit a suspension of belief, which results in a more engaged and unconstrained interaction with the artwork and in a more gripping aesthetic experience.