

# THREE RECOLLECTIONS

gathered scenes

*Reminiscences, even extensive ones, do not always amount to an autobiography. For autobiography has to do with time, with sequence and what makes up the continuous flow of life. Here, I am talking of a space, of moments and discontinuities. For even if months and years appear here, it is in the form they have in the moment of recollection. This strange form – it may be called fleeting or eternal – is in neither case the stuff that life is made of.*

WALTER BENJAMIN



**Three Recollections** is a quietly shifting audiovisual piece that deals with space and memory and the history of incidence. The installation occupies three adjoining walls, each of which are filled (at least vertically, optimally in both dimensions) with a video image (the images join at the intersection of the walls). Cameras in the occupied space capture three distinct perspectives of the visitors present, and those images are projected on to the walls. Visitors to the piece should feel surrounded by the projection walls – the images form three-quarters of a room.



As the installation progresses, the system makes a discontinuous recording of the activity in the space: triggered by motion detectors, the software takes short recordings of 'moments' in the space, and stores them. **Three Recollections** then recalls and mixes these cuts into the live audio and video coming from the projectors. Still images are also sometimes used. The cameras are fixed, and the background of their respective images does not change. Thus, visitors will view, and hear, themselves as well as various others previously present in exactly the same space, simultaneously. Both the live video and the recalled imagery are presented in a washed out, ethereal manner, such that all of the people found in the composite image have a somewhat ghostly character. Live and recalled visitors may be found side by side, or perhaps occupying the very same space. Similarly, the system mixes the sound of previous and current activity within the exhibition. Mid-range frequencies – the vocal range – are suppressed, revealing the high and low accents that define activity and rhythm in the space.

Think of a room, one inhabited for long periods by different people; the walls are the same; the floor, increasingly worn; the available light casts a recurring glow upon changeable, transitory forms. This is the atmosphere of **Three Recollections** – an attempt to give shape to the sense of having shared a very particular space with others who have come before, or may come after. It is an accumulating visualization of the layered, disparate perspectives that form the history of a place, as well as a record of the curiosity and expectation which visitors bring to such an environment. The sensed presence of those who previously transited a space, the knowledge of walking in a close area whose encompassing atmosphere has shifted many times due to the movements of itinerant viewers. The piece builds a quality of shared moment in imagined meetings of temporally distant individuals.