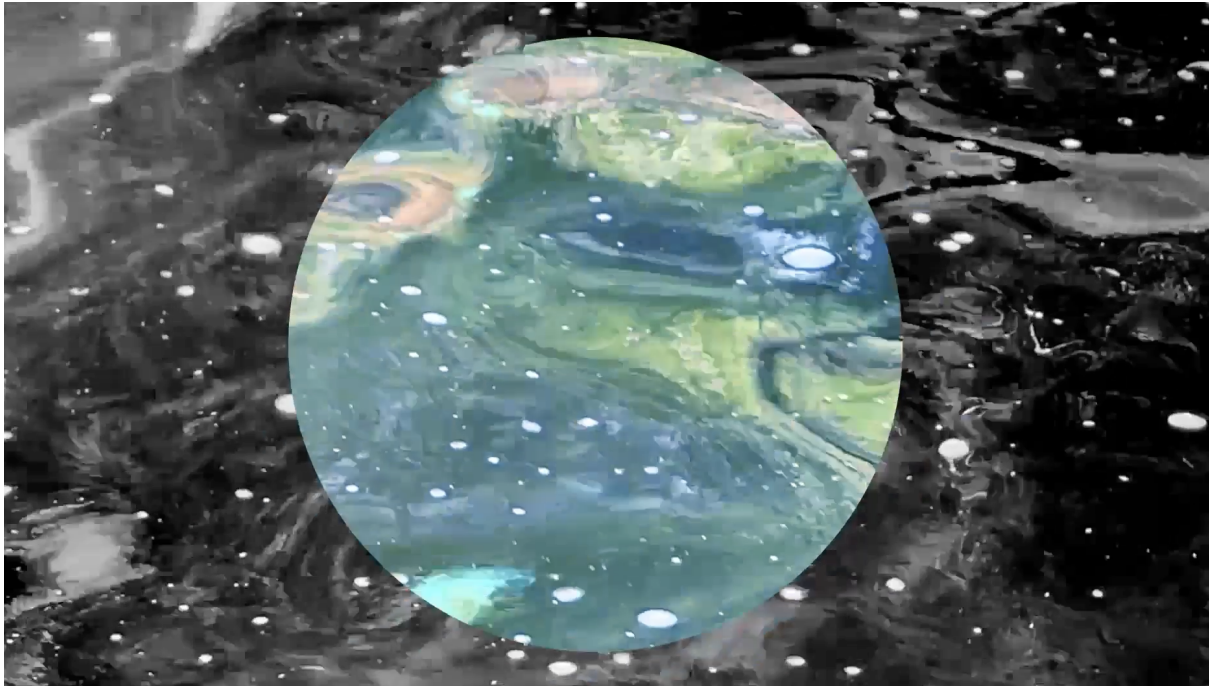


# ARTEFACT

## *FINDING DIFFERENCE*

Kim Percy, Federation University



HD Video, sound, 5:00 mins

Keywords: Video art, metamodernism, affect, structure of feeling

### STATEMENT

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term that spearheads inclusion of difference within parameters of cognitive processing (Doyle, 2020). Neurodivergents often feel slightly off-kilter within society (Harris et al, 2020) as embodied visually in this video. The colour sphere syncopated from the black and white background, while the water creates a conduit for an allegory of emotions. Describing how differences may feel can be challenging without establishing a common language. This set of abstracted videos act as a method to build a visual understanding to connect an emotional semantic difference to build awareness and trust through an artistic voice. This video artwork reveals the nuance of thinking differently using abstract vision of a universal element - water. Through meditative abstracted images and a drone-like humming sound, the viewer is asked to contemplate differences and find commonality within themselves to others. The contribution will encompass a vesicle opportunity for viewers to experience an emotional response to difference. Influencing attitudes towards neurodiversity and different ways of thinking requires empathy (Parikh, 2019). Art has the capacity to connect to audiences in ways that words or texts cannot

(Bergbom and Lepp, 2021). This set of videos aim to cultivate empathy through immersion of moving image, sound, and texture. The abstract quality of the image eliminates the narrative to submerge the viewer into an emotive reaction. In this case, the significance of using abstraction is to bypass the demand for a cognitive response and to solicit an unconscious and personal understanding of difference.

## REFERENCES

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Parikh, N. How To Promote An Empathetic Work Culture That Supports Neurodiversity Inclusion, Forbes, 2019. accessed 12 December 2022

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## PEER REVIEW 1

The statement from ‘Finding Difference’ makes the claim that the artwork is a ‘method to build a visual understanding to connect an emotional semantic difference to build awareness and trust through an artistic voice’. I would counter this claim by suggesting that this is one aspect in the motivation of a practicing visual researcher but the artefact and the written reflection claims differences in three noted ways. The first way is that the aesthetic of the video does not translate these ideas but rather gives an immersive experience of a round portal symptomatic of a postmodern design structure and then leads into a video collage format. It seems to me that the author is intending to make artwork about one set of values but then makes a completely different artwork that without the note of neurodiversity would not be entirely clear in terms of its style and form. Where I feel the author needs to reflect on is to be more literal in how a neuro-diverse dialogue can be placed rather than relying on fragments of visualities to determine what the audience must feel about the work but would be required to read a research statement beforehand to assess this information. I note that there would be a clear destination point in reconstructing this work in terms of how it is framed as I do not sense that it lives up to its promise and indeed its claims at all. This is not to say that the artwork itself was bad or problematic. It's more that the research statement and the artwork were not conversing together. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the artwork likewise there is nothing wrong with the research statement. Both arguments are valid and strong. Both the artwork and the written dialogue are of high quality and merit. They both embrace a very distinctive style, and they also share a unified quality. The commonality in this approach reveals that the video is intelligently created and resolved. The claims made in

the research statement are of sound merit. They both separately congeal a sense of communication about neurodiversity. It also provides clarity in terms of an argument. There is nothing wrong with either of these approaches but it's just they don't communicate in the same way as a collaboration of text and artefact. There is no point in trying to create any form of visual research if it can't visually and instantaneously prompt an audience into articulating exactly what the research statement about the work is saying. My observation here is that the communication between the research statements and the research artefact need improvements in clarifying but neither the statement nor the artwork needs further clarifying for they themselves are perfectly fine as they are. Where I would like to see a more robust conversation is in the research statement and how it can connect a research method, methodology and outcome in the visual work as interconnected in a duality of descriptive and reflective forms.

## PEER REVIEW 2

'Finding Difference' is a 5-minute, high-definition video with sound expanding a contribution about difference through neurodiversity. In this research there are two components - the first being a video and the second being a research statement. The video shares a stylized design aspect facilitated by aesthetic differences whether this be colour or black and white or shape and form or square all round. Some suggestions to make this video stronger and more liken to the research statement is to either add more information into the video or take out the last twenty seconds of video. If the research statement concludes that the video is about differences, then would it not make sense to have more types of differences in the artwork? Commentary about the video suggests three observations that connect neurodiversity to video practice. Drawing from late '80s and early '90s video art from the United States of America, the video would be well placed to connect to the latter works of Nam June Paik and Klaus vom Bruch. It's as if this artefact isn't of this era at all. There is a pre-internet sensibility that makes watching the video like it should be – in a gallery and away from YouTube. There is a very big problem that the era of YouTube has desecrated video art into even what younger fine arts students make these days called 'content' guided by likes, branding, and hits. The researcher's artefact is none of this. It gets back to what video art should be – a poetic second act of art rather than what design has contaminated into a contemporary 'other' of capitalist driven junk culture. Not even the MTV culture of the late '80s could have achieved what 'content' brandification of art has done so in the last decade. Thankfully the researcher is immune from such communication. But is this everything that the research statement claims it to be? I'm not so sure. In fact, it's not. My suggestion is to place visual prompts into everything that the research statement claims it is and be obvious about such motivations. If there is supposed to be a command of difference, then show it. Be more overt and more obvious otherwise it leaves an audience guessing. I would also question the mention in the research statement that the video has an emotional response to difference – where is this component in the video? It might mean that to the researcher, but it doesn't to me watching the video. I would like to see this, but I can't because it's not there, or at the very least, it's not obvious. It's subjective, somewhere, to the researcher, but not to me. I want

to see it, but I can't. And if I can't see it then this is a problem. That's a good place to start in revisiting the video in a later edition or version 2.0 so to speak.

## RESPONSE STATEMENT

Thank you to the two authors for taking the time to review my video project. I appreciate the feedback and construct critique.

### Artefact Response to Peer Review 1A

The goal of *Finding Difference* was to create a video art project to visually describe the feeling associated with being neurodiverse<sup>[1]</sup>.

The peer review author noted that there is a disconnect between the written reflection and the video art as both are conversations on its own, but to the author, does not share a common intent. The reflection claims that the video art is about an emotive expression of neurodiversity yet this sentiment does not translate into the artefact itself. It was also commented that the video is an immersive experience of a portal with postmodern design in the style of video collage. As the artist I have duly noted the disconnect between the written reflection and video artefact and can appreciate the concerns raised. Another interpretation of the disconnect, could be viewed as a depiction of neurodiversity, as it encapsulates an off-kilter response. When presented to a problem such as a workplace incidence, a neurodivergent may respond inversely and provide an answer that sways the initial question, prompting an innovative result. In my research, the way that neurodiverse people think is different to neurotypical people and therefore they may not see the same similarities that others may perceive. In the case of the written reflection and video artefact in question, as the artist, the common thread between the sentiment behind the reflection and the artwork was clear, yet I can see in retrospect, that it is not. I have made assumptions that the viewer of the video wants to interact with the art with the minimum of visual interference, and without the hindrance of my personal agenda. I also assumed that the visual content would include enough information for the viewer to assimilate the meaning; that, as a neurodiverse person, I experience the world somewhat differently and this can cause me to feel disconnected. As two distinct pieces, the reflection and the artwork, the author comments that separately have merit, but together are not conversing. To bring additional visual prompts into the video would need careful consideration so as not to dilute the tone, or rhythm, of the abstract quality. The reflection could be rewritten to respond closer to the expected outcome of the video but again, this may alter the purpose. The last attribute that has not been mentioned and could be the key, is the sound overlay, which could be edited to bridge between the video, the intention, and the viewer.

### Artefact Response to Peer Review 1B

The peer review author remarks on the video *Finding Difference* as a refreshing departure from content driven art and reminisces of a time when video art was created to be viewed in a gallery, rather than on YouTube. The intended purpose of this work is exactly that, a reaction against short narrative videos created for the purpose of likes and views rather than honouring the aesthetic of moving images. As a young student in the late 80s and early 90s, I made film and video art that enjoyed non-linear exploration of the medium, allowing abstraction to reign through repetitive rhythm and tone. Returning to video as expanded lens-based art, I have come full circle, seeking to extend my gratitude of abstract imagery into movement.

The question of whether *Finding Difference* communicates the experience of being neurodiverse, has been scrutinized by the reviewer, as too subtle for the audience to grasp. It was suggested that if I am speaking about neurodiversity to be more overt, so as to enhance the feeling of difference. My response is that it is the subtlety of the slightly out of kilter footage within the circle that speaks of difference, not the sequences themselves. My experience of difference is understated and can feel like I am slightly out of time with the people around me. Watching the video should affect the viewer imperceptibly, like a faint itch, rather than telling a story. Perhaps, it is too abstruse and may require further clues to connect the work back to the written reflection. In this case, I would consider adding visual or auditory traces that enhance the expression of difference or install the video as a projection within a physical environment.

The comment that the work is subjective has been noted and agreed upon. Yes, what I experience is different to what the viewer will experience, and this is the value of art rather than design or storytelling. The objective is to offer an opportunity for the viewer to bring their own interpretation, yet I also hear that the author feels that to connect the video closer to the reflection would strengthen the resolve of my intention and therefore create a more successful project.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Neurodiversity, neurodiverse, neurodivergents, neurominorities are terms that describe a person who is cognitively different from the majority, neurotypical, people. These differences include: autism spectrum disorder, ADHD and dyslexia.