University of North Carolina Asheville
Journal of Undergraduate Research
Asheville, North Carolina
Spring 2026

Between Walls and Windows: Navigating Memory, Exposure, and Sanctuary in Adolescent Space

Jeremiah Meyer

Department of Art and Art History
The University of North Carolina Asheville
One University Heights
Asheville, North Carolina 28804 USA

Faculty Mentor: Suzanne Dittenber

Abstract

Rooted in my experience of adolescence in suburban Greensboro, *Between Walls and Windows* examines how intimate and liminal architectural spaces such as bedrooms, cars, and parking lots oscillate between sanctuary and surveillance, shaping emotional experiences of isolation, vulnerability, and exposure. The project investigates how these spatial dynamics destabilize perceptions of safety and control, and how interdisciplinary art practices can translate these pressures into narrative, image, and sound. Drawing on Michel Foucault's account of disciplinary surveillance and Gilles Deleuze's expansion toward decentralized systems of control, this work considers how the gaze has shifted from centralized observation to internalized and diffuse mechanisms that govern behavior and memory. Windows, walls, and thresholds function as material and symbolic interfaces that mediate visibility and concealment. Situating painting within theatrical and installation-based space and building on Symbolist and Nabi attentiveness to psychological interiority alongside contemporary practices of fragmentation, the project re-stages domestic architecture as a site where protection and exposure coexist. Through

large-scale painting, sound, and performance, it constructs an immersive environment in which memory is fractured, unstable, and inseparable from the spaces that contain it.

Introduction: The Room as Beginning

The performance begins with a question: how do intimate and liminal architectural spaces such as bedrooms, cars, and houses shape emotional experiences of vulnerability and surveillance, and how can performance-based art translate these spatial pressures into narrative and sound?

This inquiry emerges from a specific place, my childhood bedroom in suburban Greensboro. Reconstructed within a theatrical environment, the room appears familiar: a bed, enclosing walls, and the expected boundaries of a private interior. Yet this space never fully functioned as a site of privacy. Instead, it operated as a threshold, where interior life was continuously exposed to the possibility of observation. The room faced a residential street with steady evening foot traffic; neighbors walking dogs, passing cars, and the occasional figure lingering on the sidewalk moved just beyond the glass. My bed was positioned parallel to the exterior wall, within proximity to the window, situating the body within a field of potential visibility.

At night, the window became reflective, layering interior and exterior into a single unstable surface. A recurring memory, possibly a dream, persists: men fighting outside the window. The event loops without resolution. The room does not protect from this moment; it frames it. The window functions as a proscenium, transforming lived experience into something staged, observed, and internalized.

This condition aligns with Michel Foucault's assertion that "visibility is a trap" (Discipline and Punish 5). Surveillance does not require constant observation; it operates through the possibility of being seen. In this space, that possibility was not abstract but materially reinforced: the proximity of the house to the street and the regular rhythm of passersby produced a persistent awareness of outward exposure. More significantly, however, the architecture of the room introduced a second, more intimate form of surveillance. A window positioned high on the interior wall connected my bedroom to my parents' room. From my perspective, the glass remained visually opaque; I could not see into the adjacent space. Yet I was aware that visibility operated asymmetrically, that they could potentially see into my room without me knowing when or if that observation was occurring. In my bedroom, this dynamic was intensified by the architecture itself. Much like Foucault's panoptic model, the observer remained unseen, yet their presence was structurally implied. This produced a condition in which privacy became performative; something enacted under the assumption of visibility.

This project expands outward from that room, examining how architectural environments such as parking lots and cars also shape emotional and psychological experience during adolescence. These spaces, often understood as sites of refuge or independence, reveal themselves instead as unstable environments structured by visibility, exposure, and control.

The work is also informed by Bertolt Brecht's theory of theater, particularly his emphasis on revealing the mechanisms of representation rather than concealing them (Brecht 187–188). In this project, spaces are not presented as seamless or illusionistic, but as constructed and unstable. Their frameworks remain visible.

As the performance unfolds, the nature of surveillance shifts. Gilles Deleuze's concept of "societies of control" describes a transition from fixed systems of observation to continuous, decentralized forms of regulation (Deleuze 3–5). This shift is reflected in the paintings as revealed through the performance, moving from contained environments to diffuse and internalized forms of visibility.

Personal and Cultural Foundations

This project is grounded in lived experience. The landscapes of my upbringing - driveways, cul-de-sacs, bedrooms, and parked cars, were defined by contradiction. These spaces felt simultaneously safe and exposed, intimate, and observable.

Growing up in a post-9/11 United States, surveillance culture was both explicit and ambient. Media, politics, and technology reinforced a heightened awareness of visibility and security. At the same time, suburban environments promote an ideal of openness - homes with large windows, interconnected neighborhoods, and minimal physical barriers. These conditions created a paradox: spaces designed for comfort often felt permeable.

The car emerged as a particularly significant environment within this context. It functioned as a liminal space, simultaneously private and public. While it offered moments of intimacy and isolation, it remained visible within broader systems of observation. This duality made it a central site for exploring the tension between sanctuary and exposure.

These experiences are not purely individual. They reflect broader cultural patterns within suburban American adolescence: boredom, experimentation, intimacy, and quiet instability. The informal culture of house parties, parking lot gatherings, and unsupervised spaces formed a shared social landscape.

This dynamic is reflected in the work of Musician Karly Hartzman, whose depictions of Greensboro capture the tension between freedom and underlying unease. Her description of the city as a place where "people are trying not to be bored" (Hartzman) resonates with my own experience of adolescence as a mixture of restlessness, experimentation, and

latent tension. Like her work, this project seeks to document and preserve the emotional complexity of youth within a specific cultural and geographic context.

Conceptual Framework: Surveillance and Perception

The theoretical foundation of this project lies in the relationship between space, visibility, and power.

Foucault's concept of the panopticon describes a system in which individuals internalize the gaze of authority, regulating their behavior in response to potential observation. This framework provides a lens through which to understand the psychological impact of architectural visibility.

Deleuze extends this model, arguing that contemporary societies operate through continuous systems of control rather than fixed sites of surveillance. Visibility becomes diffused, embedded within networks of movement, technology, and social interaction.

Hal Foster's concept of the "return of the real" further informs the project, particularly in its emphasis on repetition, fragmentation, and the re-emergence of lived experience within contemporary art (Foster). Memory is not presented as stable or linear, but as fractured and reconstructed.

These frameworks intersect with art historical traditions that engage in psychological space. The Symbolist movement, and particularly the Nabi painters, treated domestic interiors as sites of emotional and spiritual complexity. As George Mauner notes, these artists transformed everyday environments into spaces of subjective intensity, emphasizing mood and perception over realism.

Together, these influences inform a conceptual approach in which space is understood not as neutral, but as an active participant in shaping experience.

ACT I: The Room — Surveillance and Structure

The first act establishes the bedroom as a site of constructed visibility, in which privacy is not inherent but continually negotiated. The window dominates the space, functioning simultaneously as an aperture and a point of exposure. It allows light and vision to enter, while also rendering the interior potentially legible from the outside. This dual function destabilizes the room's status as a refuge, reframing it instead as a stage.

This dynamic finds a clear parallel in the work of Todd Hido, whose photographs depict suburban homes as illuminated interiors viewed from the street. His images position the viewer as an outsider, implicating them in an act of looking that is both observational and intrusive. The houses appear anonymous and often uninhabited, yet they carry a strong emotional charge. Their stillness suggests absence, while the glow of interior light implies

presence, producing a tension between intimacy and distance. Encountering Hido's work provided a critical framework for understanding my own fascination with houses at night. His ability to evoke narrative through emptiness, through what is withheld rather than revealed, has been particularly influential. The quiet alienation embedded in his images reflects a broader condition of suburban life, where proximity does not necessarily produce connection, and visibility does not guarantee understanding.

Figure 1. Untitled #2154-a, 1998. Todd Hido

Within Between Walls and windows, video overlays further destabilize the bedroom environment, fragmenting perspective and disrupting spatial coherence. These projected layers introduce shifting images that blur the distinction between interior and exterior, fixed and transient space. This approach aligns with the work of Abelardo Morell, particularly his Camera Obscura and Rooms with a View series. In these works, Morell transforms enclosed interiors into optical devices, projecting the external world onto the surfaces of private rooms. By blacking out windows and allowing only a small aperture of light to enter, he collapses spatial boundaries, merging inside and outside into a single visual field.

Morell's work introduces a subtle yet powerful sense of voyeurism. The occupant of the room remains physically concealed, yet gains visual access to the outside world, observing passersby who are unaware of being seen. This inversion of visibility complicates traditional distinctions between observer and observed. The room, while enclosed, becomes a site of mediated surveillance. This interplay between concealment and access, separation and connection, resonates strongly with my own investigation. It suggests that architectural boundaries do not simply divide space, but actively produce conditions in which visibility is refracted, redirected, and reinterpreted.

Figure 2. Abelardo Morell, Camera Obscura Image of Times Square in Hotel Room, 1997. [© Abelardo Morell, Courtesy Edwynn Houk Gallery]

The influence of the Nabi painters further reinforces this psychological approach to interior space. As discussed by George Mauner, the Nabis approached domestic environments not as neutral settings, but as sites of symbolic and emotional intensity. Emerging from the broader Symbolist movement, their work rejected strict naturalism in favor of abstraction, intuition, and the evocation of unseen realities. Rather than depicting interiors as stable, perspectival spaces, they flattened and compressed them, emphasizing surface, pattern, and mood.

Symbolism, which originated in late nineteenth-century French poetry before expanding into the visual arts, sought to move beyond empirical representation toward a more spiritual and psychological understanding of form.

Figure 3. "Roseland Street", Oil and Acrylic on Paper, 7x24 feet, 2025

This lineage informs my treatment of the bedroom as more than a physical location. It becomes an affective environment, structured by memory, perception, and the conditions of visibility that define it. Through the interplay of architectural elements, projected imagery, and painterly fragmentation, the space resists coherence, instead operating as a

layered and unstable construct in which interior and exterior, observer and observed, continuously collapse into one another.

ACT II: Parking Lots — Liminality and Youth Culture

The second act shifts into parking lots, spaces defined by transition, openness, and impermanence. These environments embody a central paradox of adolescence: the desire for escape emerges with intensity at this stage of life, yet the means to fully achieve it remain structurally unavailable. In response, adolescents seek out alternative sites of refuge beyond the domestic sphere, attempting to evade the familial or institutional gaze. However, these spaces, rather than offering true isolation, often operate as points of convergence. Individuals gather for similar reasons, producing environments that replicate the very conditions of visibility they were meant to escape. What initially appears as refuge becomes a funnel, concentrating bodies, attention, and observation. As a result, genuine privacy or sanctuary remains elusive.

Within this context, the parking lot functions as an informal social stage. It is a space of lingering rather than arrival, where time is unstructured, and activity emerges through collective presence. Adolescents gather, perform, and observe one another, constructing identity through acts of visibility, through posture, gesture, conversation, and display. Although these environments may appear unregulated, they are shaped by diffuse systems of control. Overhead lighting, surveillance cameras, and the implicit pressures of peer observation produce a field in which behavior is continuously monitored, even if no single authority is present.

This condition aligns with Gilles Deleuze's description of control as continuous and decentralized, operating through ambient rather than fixed mechanisms. At the same time, Hal Foster's concept of fragmentation offers a useful framework for understanding the experiential quality of these spaces. Experience within the parking lot does not unfold as a coherent narrative, but as a series of discrete moments – brief conversations, passing interactions, glances, and gestures that accumulate without resolving into stability (Foster). Memory, in turn, reflects this structure: it is composed of partial images and impressions rather than continuous sequences.

The parking lot thus becomes a site in which freedom and regulation coexist in tension. It offers the appearance of autonomy while remaining embedded within systems of visibility and control. Surveillance persists, not as an overt imposition, but as an ambient condition, constant, normalized, and often unacknowledged.

Figure 4. "Lindley Pool", Acrylic on Paper, 7x24 feet, 2025

ACT III: The Car — Freedom and Control

The car introduces mobility and the promise of autonomy. It marks a significant threshold in adolescence, a transition from fixed, supervised environments into spaces of self-directed movement. The ability to drive suggests freedom: the capacity to leave, to navigate, to exist beyond the immediate oversight of family or institutional authority. Yet this sense of independence is, from the outset, structured and constrained.

As Gilles Deleuze argues in his "Postscript on the Societies of Control," contemporary systems of power no longer operate primarily through fixed enclosures, but through continuous modulation (Deleuze 3-4). The car exemplifies this shift. While it appears to offer a private, self-contained interior, it remains embedded within expansive regulatory networks: traffic laws, surveillance cameras, insurance systems, GPS tracking, and policing. It is both vehicle and container, facilitating movement while simultaneously rendering that movement legible, trackable, and subject to control. In this sense, the car does not escape systems of surveillance; it extends to them.

At the same time, the car operates as a distinctly performative space. Its interior becomes a stage upon which identity is constructed and projected outward. Music, often played at high volume, signals affiliation, mood, and taste. Gestures, posture, and interaction within the vehicle are visible through glass, transforming private behavior into a semi-public display. The car occupies a liminal position: enclosed, yet transparent; intimate yet exposed. Within it, the subject becomes both performer and observer, enacting identity while simultaneously monitoring how that identity is perceived. This dynamic resonates with Bertolt Brecht's conception of performance as self-aware and constructed, in which the actor remains conscious of their own role within a visible system of representation (Brecht 194-198).

Mirrors intensify this condition. Functionally, they serve as tools for navigation, devices that allow the driver to perceive what lies beyond direct vision. Conceptually, however, they produce a continuous feedback loop of visibility. The subject is constantly checking, adjusting, and recalibrating their position in relation to others. One is never fully alone within the car; one is always accompanied by reflections, of oneself, of others, of potential threat. Surveillance becomes internalized, embedded within the act of perception itself.

This heightened awareness of visibility carries weight within marginalized contexts. In *Close to the Knives*, David Wojnarowicz reflects on the experience of navigating public space as a queer individual, where acts of movement such as cruising are shaped by both desire and danger. He writes of "looking in the rearview mirror for the headlights of a police car or a stranger who might follow," describing a condition in which visibility is inseparable from vulnerability (Wojnarowicz 55–57). Here, the mirror becomes not only a tool of navigation, but a site of vigilance, an interface through which the subject scans for threat while simultaneously managing their own exposure.

Within the gay community, cruising operates as a coded practice of seeking connection in public or semi-public space, often under conditions where explicit expression of desire is constrained or criminalized. It relies on gesture, glance, and timing - forms of communication that are at once subtle and highly attuned. In this context, visibility is not simply about being seen, but about being seen correctly, by the right person, at the right moment. The act is structured by risk: misrecognition can lead to rejection, exposure, or violence. As a result, cruising produces a heightened spatial awareness, where bodies move through environments with an acute sensitivity to who is watching, who might be watching, and what forms of attention are safe to return.

At the same time, cruising can be understood as a search for temporary refuge within otherwise surveilled or hostile environments. These encounters do not necessarily produce permanence or stability; rather, they carve out brief intervals of recognition and intimacy within spaces not designed to hold them. The anonymity of public space becomes paradoxically generative, allowing for fleeting connections that exist outside of fixed identity or institutional constraint. In this way, cruising reflects a broader negotiation between exposure and concealment, where the subject continually calibrates their visibility to access moments of possibility. The rearview mirror, then, does not only register threat; but it also frames the conditions under which desire can be pursued, however precariously, within the margins of the visible world.

This perspective complicates the notion of the car as a neutral or universally liberating space. For some, it may offer a degree of autonomy; for others, it intensifies risk, producing a heightened awareness of surveillance and potential violence. The car thus becomes a site where freedom is unevenly distributed, contingent upon identity and context.

Within the framework of this project, the car functions as a critical transitional space, one in which the illusion of independence is both enacted and destabilized. It embodies the tension between movement and restriction, performance and observation, intimacy and exposure. As with the bedroom and the parking lot, it ultimately reveals that autonomy is never absolute but always negotiated within systems of visibility that both enable and constrain it.

Figure 5. "Edge of the Evening", Acrylic on Paper, 6x24 feet, 2026

ACT IV: The Crash of Intimacy — Violation and Stillness

The fourth act marks a rupture in both spatial and psychological continuity, disrupting the structures established in the preceding sections of the performance. Until this point, space, though unstable, retains a degree of navigability. The bedroom, the parking lot, and the car each operate as environments in which visibility is negotiated, even if never fully controlled. In this act, however, that negotiation collapses.

An unwanted sexual encounter transforms the car from a site of sanctuary into one of confinement. What had previously functioned as a vehicle for movement and autonomy becomes fixed, restrictive, and inescapable. The very elements that once suggested openness such as windows, doors, proximity to the outside, now intensify the sense of entrapment. The car's interior, defined by its enclosure, becomes claustrophobic; its boundaries are no longer permeable but absolute. Space ceases to offer the possibility of exit; instead, it enforces stasis.

In the aftermath, memory does not resolve into a coherent narrative. Rather, it fragments. This fragmentation is not a failure of memory, but its defining condition is under trauma. The subject does not remember the event in its entirety; instead, they are repeatedly confronted with its unresolved remnants.

This disorientation extends beyond memory into perception itself. Space no longer behaves according to stable or predictable logic. It becomes unstable, shifting, and

difficult to orient within. This condition finds a parallel in the work of Jan Švankmajer, particularly in his 1994 film *Faust*. In this work, environments do not remain fixed; they collapse, transform, and reveal their own constructedness. Live-action performance, puppetry, and stop-motion animation coexist within a single, unstable visual field, producing a world in which distinctions between reality and artifice are continually blurred.

Revisiting Faust recently after having first encountered it in childhood, I became newly aware of how deeply its logic has informed my own artistic thinking. What is particularly striking in Švankmajer's film is its emphasis on process and materiality. The mechanisms of production are not concealed, but exposed: puppets are visibly manipulated; sets appear provisional, and transitions between states of being are abrupt and disorienting. Rather than maintaining the illusion of a coherent narrative world, the film foregrounds its own construction, drawing attention to the instability of both representation and perception.

This approach resonates strongly with the conceptual and formal concerns of this project. In Act IV, the destabilization of space and memory parallels Švankmajer's refusal of narrative continuity. Just as Faust collapses distinctions between interior and exterior, animate and inanimate, real and imagined, this act dissolves the boundaries that previously structured experience. The car is no longer simply a physical environment, but a psychological one, an unstable container in which perception, memory, and embodiment are fractured.

In this sense, Act IV operates not only as a narrative rupture, but as a formal one. It marks a transition from spaces that can still be navigated, however imperfectly, to a condition in which orientation itself becomes unstable. Memory, perception, and space no longer align. What remains is fragmentation: a series of disjointed impressions that resist resolution, echoing the ongoing and unresolved nature of traumatic experience.

Figure 6. "Church Street", Oil and Acrylic on Paper, 7x18 feet, 2025

ACT V: Looking In — Regression, Voyeurism, and Ethical Rupture

The final act returns to a domestic interior, echoing the bedroom of Act I while fundamentally transforming its ethical structure. A house party unfolds bodies move through dimly lit rooms; conversations overlap, and intimacy circulates in fragments. Windows glow from the outside, framing the house once again as a site of partial visibility. The architectural logic remains consistent with earlier acts, yet the subject's position within it shifts.

Throughout the performance, the subject has largely occupied the position of the observed. The gaze, whether architectural, social, or internalized, has structured movement, behavior, and perception. In earlier acts, this condition produces vulnerability, culminating in the violation of Act IV, where the subject is rendered acutely aware of their own exposure and lack of control.

In Act V, this structure collapses. The subject does not move toward resolution or recovery, but toward regression. Within the house party, he becomes an observer. He drifts through space, detached from participation, occupying a position defined by looking rather than being seen. This shift marks the beginning of an ethical rupture.

This transformation can be understood in relation to Olivia Laing's discussion of artistic identification and moral complexity in *Everybody: A Book About Freedom*. Laing describes how Philip Guston, after years of depicting violence from an external perspective, underwent a profound shift following his engagement with the work of Isaac Babel. In Red Cavalry, Babel, who is a Jewish writer, embedded himself within a Cossack military campaign that enacted violence against Jewish communities, producing a narrative voice that is simultaneously witness, participant, and victim (Laing 270-279). This unstable positionality generates a form of ethical tension in which the boundaries between observer and perpetrator collapse.

Laing argues that Guston's later paintings, particularly his depictions of Ku Klux Klan figures engaged in mundane activities, emerge from a similar impulse toward self-implication (Laing 270-270). Rather than maintaining moral distance, Guston inserts himself into the position of the figure he condemns, confronting the possibility of his own capacity for violence. The result is not resolution, but a more complex articulation of complicity.

A parallel dynamic unfolds in this final act. The subject, previously positioned as the object of surveillance, becomes its agent. Within the house, he enters a bedroom that mirrors the one from Act I, another intimate interior, another site of supposed privacy. However, this time it belongs to someone else.

Inside, he begins to look. Drawers are opened. Objects are examined. The space is scanned not for comfort, but for information. Eventually, he discovers a diary and reads it.

This moment constitutes moral transgression. It is not driven by necessity, but by access and curiosity, the desire to know what is not offered. In reading the diary, the subject replicates the very violation that has structured his own experience throughout the performance. The gaze, once oppressive, becomes enacted.

The act is quiet. Nothing is taken. The diary is returned. The room is left physically unchanged.

Yet the damage is irreversible.

As in Laing's account of Guston and Babel, the subject now occupies multiple roles simultaneously: observer, participant, victim, and perpetrator. These positions do not alternate, they collapse into one another, producing an unstable ethical condition.

Foucault's assertion that power "produces reality" becomes particularly resonant here (*Discipline and Punish* 193-194). The act of observation itself alters the space. The room is no longer what it was prior to the intrusion, even if no material trace remains. Knowledge cannot be undone; the boundary between interior and exterior has been irrevocably crossed.

The performance concludes in this state of contamination. There is no resolution, no restoration of innocence. The subject's attempt to leave the room "as it was" reflects a belief that physical restoration can undo ethical consequences. The work rejects this premise.

Instead, it suggests that surveillance does not require force to enact harm. It operates through access, proximity, and the seemingly minor act of looking. In this final gesture, the project turns inward, implicating not only the subject, but the viewer as well. The audience, having occupied the position of observer throughout, is left to confront their own participation in the dynamics of looking that the work exposes.

Methodology: Fragmentation as Structure

The material process of this project is inseparable from its conceptual framework. Rather than serving as a neutral means of image production, the act of painting becomes a method of investigating perception, memory, and their inherent instability. The works are constructed through layered compositions that combine personal imagery, digital collage, and processes of distortion.

A hierarchy of memory operates within the paintings and directly informs them of their formal construction. Elements that persist with greater clarity in recollection, specific objects, architectural features, or spatial relationships, are rendered with increased resolution and attention. In contrast, spaces or details that remain vague or indistinct in

memory are treated more loosely, often appearing washed out, fragmented, or unfinished. This differentiation produces a visual field in which varying degrees of clarity coexist, mirroring the uneven texture of remembered experience.

Fragmentation, in this sense, serves as a dual function. On one level, it operates as a strategy for representing perception itself. The use of hard and soft edges, the layering of multiple viewpoints within a single composition, and the partial concealment of earlier painted layers all reflect the way visual experience is accumulated rather than apprehended instantaneously. Seeing is not singular or stable; it unfolds over time, shaped by movement, attention, and recall. On another level, fragmentation acts as an index of memory's instability. The image becomes a site where visibility is negotiated, with certain elements emerging while others recede or remain obscured.

This approach resonates with the writings of David Wojnarowicz, who articulates perception as something deeply contingent and embodied, shaped by both external conditions and internal states. It also aligns with David Hockney's exploration of temporality in vision, particularly in his photographic "joiners", where multiple perspectives and moments are assembled into a single composite image. In both cases, vision is understood not as a fixed viewpoint, but as an accumulation of shifting observations, an idea that informs the compositional logic of this work.

The integration of painting into a kinetic installation further extends these concerns. By introducing movement and temporality, the paintings are no longer static objects but components of an evolving spatial environment. Their visibility changes over time as they are revealed, obscured, or recontextualized within the performance. This destabilization of the image mirrors the instability of memory itself, which is not fixed but continually reshaped through repetition and reinterpretation.

Conclusion

Between Walls and Windows examines how space shapes perception, memory, and identity, tracing a movement from exposure toward complicity. What begins as the experience of being seen gradually transforms into the recognition that surveillance is not only external, but internalized and, ultimately, reproduced. The project does not resolve this tension. Instead, it leaves a residue: an understanding that visibility is never neutral, and that the spaces we inhabit continue to structure how we see, remember, and understand ourselves.

This investigation is grounded in a sustained engagement with theory as a visual language. Drawing on Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, I approach narrative, metaphor, and symbolism as extensions of conceptual frameworks already embedded in spatial and material form. The panopticon, for instance, operates simultaneously as architecture and

allegory, a structure that makes visible the mechanisms of power it enforces. Likewise, Deleuze's "societies of control" manifest through everyday objects, cameras, screens and networks that function both practically and symbolically, shaping behavior through continuous, often invisible modulation.

By embedding these metaphors within the imagery, the work establishes a dialogue between abstraction and lived experience. Familiar spaces and objects become conceptually charged, allowing the visual field to operate as a site of inquiry rather than illustration. Metaphor, in this sense, does not simply communicate theory; it extends it. The image becomes a mechanism through which systems of visibility and control can be both recognized and destabilized.

The work asks viewers to consider how these systems operate within their own environments: how observation is structured, how behavior is conditioned, and how the sensation of being seen or potentially seen, shapes movement through space. At the same time, it offers a more intimate lens. Drawing from the textures of adolescence, it invites recognition of shared experiences, moments of uncertainty, heightened self-awareness, and quiet exposure that exceed individual narrative and enter a collective emotional register.

Situated at the intersection of painting and performance, the project engages a broader artistic lineage. It draws from Symbolist and Nabi traditions that treat interior space as psychologically and spiritually charged, as well as from contemporary painters such as David Hockney, whose fractured temporalities and layered compositions inform my own approach to memory as unstable and spatially embedded.

Through this convergence of theory, material process, and lived experience, Between Walls and Windows contributes to ongoing conversations about how built environments mediate vulnerability and exposure. It suggests that the forces shaping perception - surveillance, memory, architecture, are not abstract systems, but conditions embedded in the everyday spaces we move through.

The walls and windows do not disappear.

They remain - internalized, reconfigured, and carried forward, continuing to frame how we see.

Acknowledgments

This project was made possible through the generous support of the University of North Carolina Asheville community. I am deeply grateful for funding provided by the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Program and the Humanities Department, whose contributions were essential to the realization of this work.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the faculty of the Art Department for their guidance, encouragement, and critical insight throughout this process. I am grateful to Brent Skidmore, Suzanne Dittenber, Eric Tomberlin, Megan Wolfe, Matt West, Robert Dunning, Carrie Tomberlin, and Jackson Martin, along with many others whose support shaped the development of this project.

I am also especially appreciative of the assistance provided by the STEAM Studio. Sara Sanders, Leslie Rosenburg, and Jacob Misch offered invaluable expertise and support in the fabrication of the set, helping bring the physical environment of the work to life.

Finally, I would like to thank the broader community of collaborators, peers, and supporters who contributed their time, energy, and care throughout this process. This project would not have been possible without them.

References

Brecht, Bertold. “Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic: Brecht, Bertolt, 1898-1956: Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming.” Internet Archive, New York: Hill and Wang, 1 Jan. 1964, archive.org/details/brechtontheatre0000unse.

Deleuze, Gilles. “Postscript on the Societies of Control.” October, vol. 59, 1992, pp. 3–7. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/778828. Accessed 7 Apr. 2026.

Foster, Hal. The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century. MIT Press, 1996.

Foucault, Michel. “‘Panopticism’ from ‘Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison.’” Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts, vol. 2, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1–12. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25594995. Accessed 7 Apr. 2026.

Hido, Todd. House Hunting. Nazraeli Press, 2001.

Laing, Olivia. Everybody: A Book About Freedom. W. W. Norton & Company, 2021.

Mauner, George. “The Nature of Nabi Symbolism.” Art Journal, vol. 23, no. 2, 1963, pp. 96–103. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/774504. Accessed 7 Apr. 2026.

Morell, Abelardo. Camera Obscura. Bulfinch Press, 2004.

Švankmajer, Jan, director. Faust. Krátký Film Praha, 1994.