SOFTWARE-CINEMA
CINEMA IN SOFTWARE ART: VISUAL TACTILISM, REMEDIATION, CODE AESTHETICS

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Software-Cinema represents the final result of a doctoral research on the specific interactions between cinematic forms and contemporary digital art conducted at the University of Udine in the Ph.D. program in Audiovisual Studies (2003-2006). In examining the concepts of "digital materialism" of computer code, de-virtualization of digital information and "realism of software," my dissertation investigates the relationship between digital code and pre-digital computational and algorithmic codes, and affirms the emergence of a new aesthetics of software and new media art, that is procedural and based both on the process (series of translations) and on the significant output (surface).

The aim of the thesis is not to analyze the impact of digital technology on cinema. On the contrary, it strives to underline the modalities, through which film becomes a set of elements used as rough matter by new artistic practices, and to investigate and trace the flourishing of new audiovisual forms that use the network as a privileged place of production, distribution and consumption.

The historical analysis of the inclusion of the concept of "software" into contemporary visual arts gives rise to a series of considerations about the role of the so-called historical *net.art* (1994-1998) and of the contemporary "software art" in art markets and cultural systems. Within this broader framework, special attention will also be given to the concept of "network" as the origin of a new production, reception and distribution system.

Software-Cinema focuses on the concepts of remediation, meta-remediation and re-contextualization of filmic form and structure by digital works and interactive installations. At the same time, it underlines the necessity of a new hermeneutic for the interpretation of digital artworks and the re-evaluation of the role of the image, which would allow for a better understanding of the working logics of intermediation processes.

By focusing on particular case studies, the thesis also highlights and emphasizes the points of contact between software art and avant-garde audiovisual forms and discourses, as well as the relationships between digital artwork and pre-cinematic forms.

The third chapter of *Software-Cinema* focuses on the role of output in the art of software. Even in software artworks, which base their peculiar aesthetic value on procedurality and on the processing of codes, the final output is still the only place that can be actively explored by the viewer/user. The so-called *cybertexts* (according to the definition of ergodic literature given by Espen Aarseth) can be interactive, if they permit the user to enact the *interpretative* function, and also to act on the message and not just on the channel of a medium – configurative function, or simply dialogic (only the interpretative function can be activated). In this sense, not all software art is interactive, but it is always dialogic.

The image still plays an important role in audiovisual software art: it is the *locus* in which the user meets the creative and machinic process that lies under the surface of the graphical interface. Software images never completely hide the procedurality of code: they are neither completely transparent nor completely opaque. Images in software art enable a code to emerge in different ways. Taking its cue from this assumption, the essay proposes a taxonomy of images in software art, according to the modalities in which a code is allowed to emerge: image diagram, image code, image body, image system and image sound.