CINÉMA&CIE

INTERNATIONAL FILM STUDIES JOURNAL

Overlapping Images. Between Cinema and Photography

Edited by Luisella Farinotti, Barbara Grespi and Barbara Le Maître

Cover image: Linda Fregni Nagler, *Pour commander à l'air*, 2014
A Moment of Suspense
Gelatin silver print on Matt Baryt Paper; Selenium Toner.
Dimensions: 132.1×115.8 cm
Courtesy of the Artist

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Suspended Evidence: Rethinking the Photographic

Luisella Farinotti, Università di Lingue e Comunicazione IULM, Milano
Barbara Grespi, Università degli Studi di Bergamo
Barbara Le Maître, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre

Abstract

Though the post-media condition erases their specificity, cinema and photography, in their mutual dynamic, have reappeared overwhelmingly in contemporary media practices and theoretical reflection, specifically since a renewed interpretation of the still-moving dialectic has become a crucial dimension of the contemporary image. Therefore exchanges, overlaps and bonds between the filmic and the photographic categorize the prevailing paradigm not only in the analysis of the new forms of the image, but also in reinterpreting the history of the two media and of their earliest and perpetual intersection. The historical reconsideration of the connection between cinema and photography demands clarity in some grey areas that so far have been neglected, such as film stills, analysed in the following essay. They constitute a complex *dispositif* of exchange between cinema and photography, and not by chance are central to much innovative research on the photographic. Historical analysis and visual experimentation have progressed in parallel, both interested in a 'return to the past': to the origin of our gaze, but also to a different relationship with images. Hence, having first identified the necessity to adopt a perspective on media relations based on confluence instead of influence, the essay deals with two symptomatic forms of confluence between cinema and photography. First, a form of 'compressed cinema' that gives up on time and on the flow of the images and instead is condensed within a single photograph (like in Gregory Crewdson's works); second, a sort of suspended photography, that takes on the incompleteness, the dynamism and the temporality of cinema, thus transcending its boundaries (as in Linda Fregni Nagler's *Pour commander à l'air*).

Influence, Confluence, Overlap

Three special journal issues published in almost direct succession in the 1980s are

now broadly acknowledged as marking the starting point of reflection on the relationship between photography and cinema, or at least an essential moment in the theoretical formulation of the question.[1] In these volumes, and others of roughly the same time, the photography-cinema relationship is addressed primarily in terms of reciprocal *influence*, multiple influences more or less manifest as effects. The predominant issue at hand was grasping how certain photographic images are haunted, animated, affected by the cinematographic mechanism and the plasticity of film. Thereafter, the writers consider most of the ways photography simultaneously takes up and displaces problems that derive *a priori* from the medium of film, such as in the 'photographic movement sequences' discussed by Raymond Bellour in *L'Entre-Images*,[2] or the use of montage by Marc-Emmanuel Mélon in certain photographic albums.[3]

But these reflections also sought to distinguish between the various ways films themselves comprehend — in both senses of the term — not only photographs as narrative operators and/or figurative instruments, but also effects originating in photography. Thus the freeze frame could be conceived at once as the creation of a sort of 'photo-effect' that is specific to the moving image and as 'dazzling evidence of the photographic subsumed in film'.[4] Emblematic of these approaches is a text by Philippe Dubois, *La Photo tremblée et le cinéma suspendu*, which, by providing a 'panoramic image of the great figures in the convergence of the principal text-effects of photography and cinema',[5] ultimately described most of the structures that allow the two media to exchange their respective properties.

This brief account of some of the major research trends in the field also covered in the present volume is by no means intended as exhaustive. That would necessitate citing a great many early and recent works, and adding at least the Anglophone research context to that of the French.[6] But this preliminary outline

[1] See *Revue Belge du Cinéma*, 4 (special issue ed. by Philippe Dubois, Summer 1983); *Photographies*, 4 (special issue *Photo et cinéma*, ed. by Raymond Bellour, April 1984); *La Recherche photographique*, 3 (special issue *Le Cinéma, la photographie*, December 1987).

[2] Raymond Bellour, 'La durée-cristal', in *L'Entre-Images, Photo, Cinéma, Vidéo* (Paris: La Différence, 1990), pp. 96–99.

[3] In addition to the article published here, see M.-E. Mélon, 'Les Formes historiques du discours photographique : contribution à une archéologie des rapports entre photographie et cinéma' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Université de Liège, 1994).

[4] Bellour, 'L'Interruption, l'instant', *La Recherche photographique*, 3, pp. 50–61 (p. 53).

[5] Philippe Dubois, 'La Photo tremblée et le cinéma suspendu', *La Recherche photographique*, 3, 19–29 (p. 20).

[6] To cite briefly a few works that have addressed this problem directly since the 1990s: Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and, by the same author, *Framed Time: toward a Postfilmic Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Barbara Le Maître, *Entre film et photographie. Essai sur l'empreinte* (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2004); Laura Mulvey, *Death 24× a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006); David Campany, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008); *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography*, ed. by Karen Beckman and Jean Ma (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Caroline Chik, *L'Image paradoxale. Fixité et mouvement* (Villeneuve d'Asq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2011); *Between Still and Moving Images: Photography and Cinema in the 20th Century*, ed. by Laurent Guido and Olivier Lugon (New Barnet, Herts: John Libbey Publishing, 2012); *Between Stillness and Motion: Film, Photography, Algorithms*, ed. by Eivind Røssaak (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012).

allows the following questions to be raised: where does this leave us in terms of a standpoint on the relationship between various media? How, in particular, should the relationship between photography and cinema be addressed today? And above all, why should we return to a question that has already so consistently, amply and minutely been discussed?

In principle, the pioneering works alluded to above belong to an intellectual moment when the concept of the medium lacked the significance it later adopted, once Rosalind Krauss theorized its singular reinvention through photography.[7] No full discussion of that essay can be attempted within these few introductory lines.[8] We wish only to draw attention here to the very suggestive formulation whereby the theorist, taking James Coleman's work as an example, describes the hybridization of 1) certain parameters of the cinematographic mechanism or other aspects of its language, 2) the gestural repertoire of theatre, and 3) slide photography: the three aspects of hybridization that constitute the work in question (and the reinvention of the medium that it represents). Rosalind Krauss insists on 'the seriousness with which Coleman intends to invest the lowly materials from which he is fashioning his medium'.[9]

Fashioning his medium? In fact this formulation suggests supplementing the notion of medium as totality of means, as an *a priori* condition of a work's expressive content,[10] with a second conception whereby *the medium is also what the work makes of it* and the ways of using one or another medium are necessarily manifold. That is to say, the work is no mere tributary to a medium that fixes or prescribes its formal economy, rather it composes or constructs its relation to 'its' medium, and also to all the media that are materially or ideally implied in its making. Thus, a second perspective — one concerned with understanding exactly how the work engages with (the specificities of) various media — can now enhance the approach to the connections between photography and cinema in terms of the reciprocal influence(s) of one pre-defined medium on another.

To lay out this trajectory of thought — for which the 'post-medium condition' discussed by Rosalind Krauss is unquestionably a crucial source — means to rethink the juncture between a first approach to media relations in terms (or from the perspective) of influence, and another that is more focused on a principle of confluence. These are the ultimate stakes of this volume.

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[7] Rosalind E. Krauss, 'Reinventing the Medium', *Critical Inquiry*, 25.2 (special issue *Angelus Novus: Perspectives on Walter Benjamin*, Winter 1999), 289–305.
[8] It is discussed in greater detail later in the volume (see my contribution about Jeff Wall, below).
[9] Krauss, p. 301.
[10] Of course, this 'totality of means' depends fundamentally on evolving techniques and/or technology, such that every medium appears as a historically unstable reality (if not a category).

Overlapping / Re-staging

By testing the applicability of a postmedial approach to the relationship between cinema and photography, the following essays explore how far the re-configuring of media can be extended from the single work of art to all the visual forms that, over time, have radically situated themselves at the borders between languages. In this context, some contributions here included bring to light crucial stages of a possible archeology of the hybrid form as a way of questioning the prerequisites of the media on which they draw. Chronophotography has evidently represented one of these 'stages', and its rediscovery in contemporary art put in focus its already postmedial dimension,[11] whereas the role played by astrophotography is perhaps less expected**.** While pursuing its own scientific objectives, it too erodes the borders between the two media, producing an experience of space and time that belongs to both of them.[12] The history of scientific images probably offers us the most radical cases of the intersection between cinema and photography,[13] as if the call of postmediality can be felt precociously in the field of the non-artistic, where the need to harness the medium in order to achieve concrete objectives has always produced a strong incentive for overcoming its (presumed) linguistic and cultural specificity.

Is this not perhaps also true in the case of still photography, another vast area of confluence of practices, forms and cine-photographic materials? Still photography owes its borderline identity to its basic commercial purposes, so functional and peripheral that for a long time it remains the only activity on set to receive no credits: this means that throughout the classical era and beyond, the still photographer is not acknowledged as an artist, nor in any way as a contributor to the making of the movie. He is viewed as a technician who acts at the borders of the set, producing materials destined for other media (the press, above all), and the fact that he takes it upon himself to elaborate a code of conversion of the filmic into the photographic seems not to pertain properly to the world of cinema. Perhaps it was precisely that institutional disconnection from cinema which allowed still photography to operate with more freedom in relation to the mediums on which it draws, and to become, in the contemporary era, a sort of matrix of some artistic, postmedial gestures, like that of the American photographer Gregory Crewdson. A brief analysis of still-photography and its 're-activation' in Crewdson's pictures might work as a partial complement of the archeology sketched in the following essays.

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[11] See Francesca Scotto Lavina, 'Still-moving Engrams: The Ecstasy of Bodily Gestures in Chronophotography and its Contemporary Reproductions', below.
[12] See Francesco Giarrusso, 'From Stillness (in)to Motion through Astronomical Images: The Cases of Jules Janssen's Photographic Revolver and Josep Comas i Solà's Spectrographic Cinematography', below.
[13] In addition to physiology and astronomy, diagnostic imaging too has often challenged the seeming exclusivity of the two languages.

First of all some basic clarifications: the still has nothing to do with the photogram, indeed it is not (or hardly ever) the enlargement of a chosen frame taken from a film strip, but a photograph taken on the set, serving a double role of set photography (photos of the cast and crew at work) and still photography (the re-staging of a specific scene in order to promote the film). In time, and in parallel with the rising popularity of photojournalism, the first variation assumed aesthetic value, while the second variation, which continued to be practiced, gained artistic appreciation only later, as a result of attention from artists beginning in the mid-1970s. It is obviously the latter which interests us, because set photography, particularly when commissioned by the agency in place of the production, reactivates the logic of the 'decisive moment', while still photography continued to create a borderline visual experience.

In order to obtain images of a film which are firstly easy to understand and to publicize, and secondly memorable and visually attractive, the so-called 'stillman' works at the crossroads between the two media, by subjecting a cinematic staging (actors, set designs, costumes) to a photographic treatment. In this way he transports the filmic away from its chosen apparatus, offering film the chance to exist 'intermedially' (in the foyer of the theatre, in the specialized press, but also, later, in art galleries).[14] Does this transfer 'betray' the filmic? Not in principle, considering, following Barthes, that the filmic is in some way obstructed by movement, and, on the contrary, is conveyed by the single photogram and its 'obtuse meaning'. How is the photographic, on the other hand, reconfigured in relation to such an artificial staging?

In some way, still photography introduces an idea of the photographic that is close to what is expressed by Krauss since, by focusing on the strategic realization of the greatest possible sharpness, it elaborates a particular way of seeing in depth which constitutes the ideal place for the convergence of different languages (painting, sculpture, theatre and, obviously, cinema).

Such sharpness is guaranteed by three specific techniques — the use of large format plates (usually an 8×10 inch camera), hard lighting and depth of focus — which produce the unique aspect of still photography, extremely clear and hard edges, to the extent that it often reveals more than what was meant to show (the possible irregularity of the staging, the artifice of the gesture, or better, the 'code' of conversion of reality into the imaginary). Indeed, large plates register an impressive quantity of detail regarding the actors and their surroundings, while depth of focus — with which still photography experiments precociously, far earlier than its widespread use in the cinema of the 1940s[15] — produces a

[14] This idea is developed by Le Maître, 'Le Photographe du film, une histoire de décentrement', in *Arts du spectacle, métiers et industries culturelles. Penser la généalogie*, ed. by Laurent Creton, Michael Palmer, Jean-Pierre Sarrazac (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2005), pp. 137–44 (p. 95).
[15] See Steven Jacobs, 'The History and Aesthetics of the Classical Film Still', *History of Photography*, 34.4 (2010), 373–86, and Joel W. Finler, *Hollywood Movie Stills: Art and Technique in the Golden Age of the Studios* (London: Reynolds & Hearn, 2008).

pronounced, three-dimensional effect, highlighting the human figure rising up and out of the image. In front of these images, the spectator's eye activates a form of perception that relates to that of sculpture, and s/he ends up 'visiting' the film from inside, as though circling around the actors.[16] Rather than a conversion from moving to still, iconic matter changes state, leaking fluidity and 'coagulating' on a *tableau* composed of solid figures and objects. Metaphors like 'concentration' and 'distillation' are in fact often used to describe the creative process of the still photographer,[17] which is thus presented as a sort of extraction of essences, implying the evaporation of the liquid via some intervention on the original materials: 'Gestures are altered, body positions are reorganized, and facial expressions are held. The lighting is perfected, wayward hair and clothing are groomed so as not to distract, and the camera focus is pin sharp.'[18]

Another equally strategic factor that contrasts the grainy effect and the loss of focus is the immobilization of actors in front of the lens. With the famous 'once more for the stills' the still photographer of the classical era requires of the stars the protracted assumption of a certain gesture, obliging them to perform as models instead. The actors have to interpret a character while holding a single expression or pose at great length, and this leads us back to the theatrical (and pictorial) logic of the *tableau vivant*. Indeed, immobility of the body is part of the spectacle offered by still photography (the focus of which is *the actor in the act of performing a character*, and not the character in action). Still photography represents, therefore, the first photographic remediation of the *tableau*, a *dispositif* with its own story and a second life in contemporary cinema,[19] but which in reality has already encountered the moving image. Indeed, the practice of the pose is not foreign to silent cinema, which gave overwhelming emphasis to the bodily gestures of the actors, often calling for moments of emphatic stasis, which has recently been attributed to the practice of *statue posing*.[20]

Let us consider for a moment the unique stillness of still photography, which is in fact a double stillness: the actual immobility of the models is combined with the arrest and the absolute suspension of time, determined by the click of the shutter; and vice versa a 'freezing' gaze is directed at a theatre of bodies that are already frozen, at a fragment of an already-immortalized world (the photography of a *tableau vivant*?). Here photography addresses itself, it looks at itself in

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[16] It is not possible here to deal with the problem of the sculptural in still photography, we simply note it in relation to modes of perception. See F. David Martin, 'On Perceiving Paintings and Sculpture', *Leonardo*, 11.4 (1978), 287–92.

[17] We do not consider here the still photos taken to create photonovels, which were extremely popular in the 1950s: their characteristics are not entirely equivalent.

[18] Campany, 'Once More for Stills', in *Paper Dreams: The Lost Art of Hollywood Stills Photography*, ed. by Christoph Schifferli (Paris: Editions 7L, 2006), pp. 7–13 (p. 7).

[19] As argued by Ágnes Pethő, 'The Image, Alone: Photography, Painting and the *Tableau* Aesthetic in Post-Cinema', below.

[20] On the widespread technique of *statue posing* in the training of actors see Carrie J. Preston, *Modernism's Mythic Pose: Gender, Genre, Solo Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

the mirror, so to speak, and in this way it stages itself. It is the experience of a doubled image, of a photograph re-photographed, as portrayed in the film *The Machine that Kills Bad People* (*La macchina ammazzacattivi*, Roberto Rossellini, 1952), where the act of taking a picture of a picture already taken has the effect of transforming the body represented into a statue, wherever it may be. What the still photographer has in front of him is already an image too, a paradoxical photograph without a support. This recalls the short circuit described by Louis Marin writing about Caravaggio's *Testa di Medusa*,[21] a painting characterized by the hallucinatory realism of its details, that are powerful enough to 'destroy painting',[22] but which also goes further in presenting together both the freezing gaze and its effect. According to Louis Marin, when he portrayed himself as Medusa and overlapped the petrifying gaze and the petrified head, Caravaggio interrupted the connection between image and reality and at the same time spectacularized this crucial cut:

> C'est lui [le peintre] qui est sur le bouclier comme cette tête même, regard aveuglant et aveuglé et cri-silencieux. Ainsi le peintre s'inscrit-il dans le tableau sous le double signe du regard pétrifiant-pétrifié et de la césure de ce par quoi il est regard, la tête; mais coupée à sa plu fort puissance, à sa plus extrême violence: présentant la violence même de cette coupure.[23]

Still photography shares this logic of cutting, and expresses an idea of the photographic as the act of detachment of the image from reality. An intrinsic detachment, not only for the fact that the stillman immortalizes something which was constructed for and in front of the lens, but also for the intangibility of the 'fictional reality' he tries to grasp. The still contains cinema, but not the film that it is preparing to become, nor that which it was just before, but rather that which in fact it cannot be. For this reason, the question of whether it refers to a real scene or to one that was cut from the movie, or even to a movie never shot, is not relevant.

Several contemporary artists have grasped this idea fully, and from the mid-1970s have started working, more or less explicitly, on the model of still photography. It is significant that Cindy Sherman's series *Untitled Film Stills* (1978) — in which she staged herself in various female film roles, mimicking the stills of prototypical, unrealized movies — inaugurates what has been called staged photography, or *tableau* photography. Inside this trend, the cinema plays a fundamental role, no longer as a language of movement and montage which can affect the photographic form, but as a machine that transforms reality into the imaginary, and in this way flowing (also) into photography. Perhaps following this reasoning, Jeff Wall goes so far as to say that 'no picture could exist today

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[21] Caravaggio, *Testa di Medusa*, 1596–1598, oil on canvas, 60×55 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
[22] Louis Marin, *Détruire la peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977, repr. 1997).
[23] Ivi, p. 181.

without having a trace of the film still in it, at least no photograph, but that could also be true of drawings and paintings'.[24] While Wall identifies a specific, more sophisticated mixture of cinema and photography,[25] the recognition of still photography as an archeological form of intermedial imagination ought probably to be credited to Gregory Crewdson.

The idea of still photography as a frame of reference in Crewdson's work has been circulating for some time,[26] but what we would like to clarify here, is that Crewdson does not simply imitate its format, as Cindy Sherman did, but he continues its story as an intermedial *dispositif* which makes cinema and photography converge around the question of depth of field.

It is worth examining first the cinematic aspect of Crewdson's photographs: this is the result of a series of formal and narrative factors, which are particularly clear in his two main works. *Twilight* (2002) and *Beneath the Rose*s (2005) are completely immersed in the American imaginary of suburban life; they construct believable characters and real narratives, drawing their strength from cinema, and in particular from the mixing of different genres (science-fiction, thriller, melodrama). The minimalist social types depicted appear at dawn and dusk in suburban streets or in the most intimate rooms of the house (the bathroom, the bedroom), often in very informal dress, if not half-naked. The aging woman, the young mother, the pregnant girl, the young lovers are, however, living an anything but ordinary instant, lit — not only metaphorically — by some invisible and mysterious presence which turns the familiar environment into something sinister. The alienation typical of suburban life becomes the perception of the truly alien, following a formula taken from science-fiction, and in particular from one of its key moments: a character waking in the presence of some strange force, or falling into that evening lethargy which steals self-control and facilitates the invasion of the body-snatchers.

The staging of this fantastical situation, however, follows the principles of another cinematic genre. This is not to say that explicit, figurative sci-fi visual memories are lacking (for instance, in the final photo of *Twilight*, we find a 'Spielbergian' beam of light coming from above and ploughing through the frame); however, the relationship between characters and environments reflects, on the whole, the visual logic of the melodrama, a genre based on the constant consonance between the outside and the inside, the state of the world and the psychic theatre of the characters.

Being essentially psychological-science-fiction dramas, Crewdson's images are

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[24] Quoted by Campany, 'Posing, Acting, Photography', in *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image*, ed. by David Green and Joanna Lowry (Brighton: Photoworks, 2006), pp. 97–112 (p. 97).
[25] See Le Maître, 'Jeff Wall, beyond the Borders of the Medium: Photography, History Painting and the Cinema of the Living-dead', below.
[26] See Campany, *Once more for Stills*, p. 12, but also Jacobs, p. 385 and Green and Lowry, 'Photography, Cinema and Medium As Social Practice', *Visual Studies*, 24.2 (2009), 132–42 (p. 135).

so rich in narratives, and at the same time so enigmatic, that they have stimulated the imagination of novelists: Richard Banks, Ricky Moody and Jonathan Lethem took it upon themselves to re-narrate them in words. Banks recognizes the *motif* of the door hanging open, revealing that 'the characters are ready for a quick getaway, in flight either from a bad marriage or a stick-up' or that 'the driver suddenly remembered the long-forgotten crime, suffered or committed'.[27] Aside from its melodramatic meaning, the *motif* of the door hanging open, recurring nearly everywhere — car doors but also windows, house doors, shower doors, closet doors, a sort of a trade-mark of these two series — creates a figurative bridge among the images. This kind of horizontal connection, however, does not produce a narrative network; on the contrary the narration remains compressed into the single picture, although the characters sometimes repeat from one *tableau* to another, evidently co-existing in the same universe. There is indeed a common world to which they belong, but perhaps not one single movie that contains all their stories, and certainly no logical sequence to be reconstructed. This clarifies, at least in part, the role played by cinema for Crewdson: not a language which changes photography, by introducing time series and dynamism (both dimensions emphatically refused by the photographer), but an archive of images which overlap with reality, covering it with many layers. Perhaps, more precisely, an archive of scenes, which have represented in different registers the transformation of the ordinary into the extraordinary, of the quotidian into the surreal, of the real into the imaginary. Crewdson's creativity is enhanced by the memory of scenes (more than of movies), one of which recurs obsessively: a middle-aged woman placed, surreally naked, outside in the open and under the gaze of a boy. Crewdson stages the naked body of a woman at the caravan door, of a mother standing in the dining room, of a pregnant woman in a corner of the garden: his photographs reproduce endlessly one of the most disturbing scenes of *Blue Velvet* (David Lynch, 1986), in which Isabella Rossellini, having been dumped by the maniac who has kidnapped her son, waits, naked, at the door to her house for the young Jeffrey, and runs through the grass to hole up in his arms. Crewdson re-stages this strange naked body many times inside his pictures, overlapping it with other memories, therefore inserting it into other re-stagings; his *tableau*, in the end, proves to be much more layered than it might at first sight seem.

In this regard, again Lynch is key to a better understanding of Crewdson's work. In the first image of *Blue Velvet*, a line of roses stands out *against* a very white fence; the camera pans down and stops at ground level, so that the roses almost burst out of the image. One of Crewdson's first photos is almost identical, except that the roses are positioned *behind* the fence, therefore drawing our eyes toward the background, in a first level of depth, after which many others follow. In reality, this untitled photograph, like all the other works in the series *Natural Wonder* (1992), is a diorama, a *dispositif* for seeing in depth, through

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[27] Gregory Crewdson, Russell Banks, *Beneath the Roses* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2008), p. 7.

which Crewdson re-stages cinema in order to lead it toward photography. In the diorama, by the way a possible 'ancestor' of still photography, cinema and photography flow together, interrupting their separate, parallel lives.

Two very brief conclusive remarks help put in focus the dynamics of confluence in the work of Crewdson. The first is that in order to take his pictures, Crewdson really does need to trigger the *dispositif* of the cinema, and in particular its entire production machine; photography literally must pass through cinema. Hence the assembly of the cast, including Hollywood stars (among local inhabitants in small-town Massachussets) and the organization of elaborate sets which involve up to one hundred professionals, thus implying the division of creative labour into stages (planning, production and post-production) and a working time of at least four months. His crew moreover includes veteran cinematographer Richard Sands, and as such we face a situation in which a photographer directs a cinematographer in order to take pictures. This is already eloquent enough: in order to establish a new relationship with its own chosen support, the image, under the form of mere staging, passes through another medium, which guarantees, for a few moments, a pure and potentially intermedial existence.

In the moment of shooting — and this is our second remark — Crewdson steps once again into the borderline zone between cinema and photography. On the one hand, he chooses a format which is par excellence photographic — not the 35mm, but the 8×10 inch camera, like the majority of professional still photographers — on the other hand, he shoots every scene many times, taking at least fifty photographs for each *tableau*;[28] this allows a true *building of the image*,[29] which is then achieved through the post-digitization process. During this phase, the clearest parts of the different shots — objects, bodies, set-designed elements and all the other minuscule details — are selected and overlapped on a single *tableau*, which therefore is not the result of a single perception, but of many acts of perception, 'summed' together, that is to say, on the photographic plate. The end result is a hyperbolic depth of field, a picture in which everything is equally, inhumanly sharp. In this *tableau* composed of numerous invisible layers, like the successive 'sheets' of an ancient diorama, cinema and photography are reciprocally reconfigured, by rediscovering a sort of common origin.

Suspended Images

The question of a return to the origin of a specific form of the gaze complements a possible archaeology of the hybrid form. Crewdson too works on this idea in his last work, *Sanctuary* (2009), dedicated to a sacred place for the history

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[28] The process is filmed in the documentary *Gregory Crewdson: Brief Encounters* (Ben Shapiro, 2012).
[29] On the gesture of 'building an image', see the interesting remarks of Pethő, in the essay below.

of cinema: the Cinecittà studios in Rome.[30] Even the title suggests the conception of Cinecittà as a sanctuary, at the same time assigning the included photographs a memorial — if not funerary — value, that aims to recall the beauty of a disappeared world. The forty-one photographs of the series present, indeed, a ruined, grass-covered place, lifeless, without a human presence. Deserted roads, arches, doors and thresholds that open into emptiness depict the mysterious landscape of an abandoned set, inhabited by ghosts that are still, nonetheless, capable of animating the images.[31] These are no longer 'on-set photographs', but 'photos of a set': the legendary one of Cinecittà, the symbol of cinema as a machine that creates illusionary but nonetheless truly realistic worlds, tangibly present in this space in which Medieval houses are placed side by side with the temples of the Roman Empire, in a constant overlap of landscapes and imaginaries. This 'scene of appearance' is made even more evident by the scaffolding that shore up the set decorations and fill the images, giving the impression of a huge construction site still in progress: long pipes emerge from behind the facades or between the shingles of a destroyed roof, iron armours sustain entire buildings or stand out like suspended skeletons. It is a sort of 'behind the scenes' or an off-screen space that enters the frame, the real structure of a fake world, the frame construction of a dream whose remains cumber the landscape. Given the fact that the boundary between construction and disuse is extremely thin, it is precisely the condition of disorder and destruction exhibited in these photographs — suspended between greatness and decay and whose melancholic tone is emphasized by the use of monochrome — that makes it clear that we are looking at abandoned film sets.

Ruins, after all, are the appropriate and recognizable form of 'the ancient times', recreated for *Rome* — the HBO television series[32] — whose abandoned set, with its torn off floor tiles and grass-covered temples and columns, is one of the subjects of Crewdson's photographs. The sense of decay seems to correspond to a shared vision of history, as if the papier-mâché skeletons of the cinematic imaginary overlap with the remains of the Roman Empire — which really exists a few kilometres away from Cinecittà. In the work, Crewdson leaves the United States for the first time, looking instead at a far away world and its history, nonetheless recognizing in it an imaginary that also belongs to him and moreover witnessing its disappearance. Exactly 'what remains', the decomposition of

[30] *Sanctuary* is a series of forty-one black-and-white photographs made between 1 June and 1 July 2009 on the back lot of Cinecittà studios in Rome. First exhibition: Gagosian Gallery, New York 2010. The construction of such a lengthy series is already, in a sense, assigning to photography the role of 'the frame', of the fragment of a virtual cinematic sequence, thus establishing the first, and most obvious, link between the two media.
[31] Several unoccupied sets were present in the Cinecittà studios when Crewdson took his photographs: among them, the nineteenth-century New York set of *Gangs of New York* (Martin Scorsese, 2002) and a Medieval Italian town, from an unidentified movie. More than the others, the remains of the Roman Empire from the HBO series *Rome* fill the images.
[32] Shot between 2005 and 2007 at Cinecittà studios, the television series, created by Bruno Heller, is an HBO, BBC and Rai Fiction co-production.

things under the pressure of time and history, is the object of the fascinated and sorrowful gaze of an American tourist travelling in the Old World: the ruins of the Classical antiquity overlay the remains of the sets as the living testimony of an unburied past; *remains* indeed, and not memories of the glory of the past but figures of an elegy that concerns both that location and cinema itself.

The photographic series opens with the image of an ancient door intersecting a paved street, which runs through the surrounding walls and is closed by a round arch; the last image represents an iron gate that opens onto a path surrounded by wild fields, leading out of the Cinecittà studios. From a movement toward the inside to one toward the outside, from a piece of set design to a real element (the gate is part of the perimeter of the studios), the series represents a boundary crossing. This is confirmed by the recurrence of the visual motif of the threshold, thus reaffirming the metaphor of the gap between times, modes and visions. The second photograph of *Sanctuary*, that stands as an introduction for the whole work, makes this especially clear. The image is an extreme long shot taken from above, which reveals a layered landscape: beyond the scaffolds that hold a facade — whose frame construction occupies the foreground delineating the lower side — there is a small cluster of wooden houses from different ages and different film sets, among which it is possible to identify Classical-Age buildings with overlapping arches. Close to the borders of Cinecittà several modern buildings stand out, while the hills on the horizon delimit the landscape. The artificial splendour of reconstructed Classical antiquity is inserted between modernist, functionalist architectures, trespassing organically between past and present, real and fake, nature and artifice, life and staging. In this impossibility to distinguish between spectacularization and testimony, document and reconstruction — that is already within the things themselves and does not need to be staged — Crewdson seems to restore a productive relationship between reality and the image and to present a mode of viewing that is similar to certain landscape photography 'in a Edward Weston way', not to mention the contemplative sobriety of Atget and his willingness to document what is likely to disappear. It was Anthony Oliver Scott — not by chance a film critic who was in charge of writing the introductive essay for *Sanctuary*'s catalogue — who identified this connection, specifying however that in Crewdon's work the duty of preserving and remembering the past is performed in a fictional world that has all the features of reality, and therefore in a ghostly world that overlaps and affects the real one.[33]

Not only is it possible to acknowledge, in the images of the series, the influence of previous figurative forms — in a layering of models that combines landscape painting, a Romantic sensibility towards the ruins, monumental photography and historical cinema — but in fact reality itself is modelled and defined by

[33] See Anthony Oliver Scott, 'When in Rome: Gregory Crewdson's *Sanctuary*', in *Sanctuary*, catalogue of the eponymous exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery, New York (New York: Abrams, 2010), pp. 8–11.

these memories. Precisely this active relationship between cinema and reality is the main focus of *Sanctuary* and of Crewdson's latest research.

Without entering into specific interpretations of the work, what is particularly relevant here is the double gesture of restoration: not only of the ghosts of an idea of cinema, of a world that now is mainly a memory, but also of *a way of looking* that is overtly testimonial, as it is for photographic memories. Crewdson seems to go back to a somehow elementary form of photography: he abandons artifice and the apparent complexity of his *tableaux vivants* in favour of an unexpected realistic dimension, he chooses black and white in order to establish 'the past' of cinema as well as the origin of his gaze. If cinema and its ghosts are the central meaning of his photography, and, on an even deeper level, of the very *experience of the real* — as it is in many works of contemporary photography — it is nevertheless the duty of photography to consign an experience of time in which preservation and transformation coexist: the sense of something that has passed and of its memory. Therefore *Sanctuary* may be considered above all an example of the primitive and elementary value of the photographic image that is *the relic*: a shrine to the ruins of cinema, a memory of a world that continues to affect our way of seeing, which photography, in a sort of paradoxical and historical inversion, acknowledges as its matrix.

In this gesture of the recovery of forms from the past it is possible to identify a stance that coheres with the contemporary dynamic of the re-writing, confluence and fluctuation between experiences, times and modes of the gaze that belong to different phases in the history of images. Indeed, numerous artistic forms and practices express such an interest in conducting research *about* the past of the contemporary visual culture; it is a sort of 'regard en arrière'[34] that is interested in reconstructing the many forms of the visual experience to find a *new* identity of the image. In particular, the main focus of this research is the irreducible tension between stasis and movement: a sort of primal scene in which we can trace the origin of our gaze and an alternative relationship with images and the experience of time they consign.

Moreover, the return to obsolete forms — including photography and cinema, in their materiality as media — has also produced a more general reconsideration of the two media, that cannot be resolved as a plain opposition. Specifically, contemporary research on the foundational elements of the images has rediscovered the importance of the dialectic between stillness and motion, thus individuating their mutual implications, their inter-mingling, which is always constitutively 'impure':

In the suspended animation created by the intersection of photography and cinema we find a model for simultaneously looking forward and backward at the vicissitudes

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[34] *Arrêt sur image, fragmentation du temps. Aux sources de la culture visuelle moderne/Stop Motion, Fragmentation of Time: Exploring the Roots of Modern Visual Culture,* ed. by François Albera, Marta Braun and André Gaudreault (Lausanne: Editions Payot, 2002), p. 7.

of the media in question, and see that new media do not simply displace what came before, but rather shine a light onto older media, permitting us to see them differently.[35]

The possibility of re-tracing a 'counter-history' of the images — with the aim of developing intermedial nexus, connections more than ruptures, confluences rather than influences — appears to be essential in order to understand the complexity of the contemporary visual experience, as well as a condition of contemporary aesthetics. Studies in media archeology, above all, are currently exploring the phenomena of the resurfacing and confluence of non-synchronous forms, retracing the connections between the past and the present of the images and of the viewing experiences.[36]

We could mention, by way of example, the 'new aesthetics of attractions'. This is not intended as a repetition of early cinema's attraction mechanisms in the new forms of digital special effects,[37] but rather as a *shift* from the early astonishment caused by the movement — the 'astonishing moment of movement', described by Tom Gunning,[38] that constitutes a foundational moment for the cinematic experience — to a new fascination for the suspension of movement. It is the 'reverse transition to immobility' that Vivian Sobchack identified ten years ago as the pursuit of a new 'experience of revelation'[39] of time. The 'appeal of "slow motion"'[40] is based on exactly the same process of movement visibility that ruled the attractions of the early cinema, despite this reversal of direction:

> [...] what 'attracts' is not simply 'still to moving' or 'moving to still' but, rather, the *movement from* one terminus to the other — indeed, the movement of movement itself, which, made visible in slow motion, occupies the uncanny space 'between' these end points, and reveals them both to be merely different 'dimensions of the same process'.[41]

Thus the issue at stake is not the intrusion of a temporal fracture, the interruption of movement, the clash between different experiences of time — as in a

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[35] Beckman and Ma, 'Introduction', in *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography*, pp. 1–19 (p. 10).

[36] See, among others: *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications and Implications*, ed. by Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2011); *Between Still and Moving Images: Photography and Cinema in the 20th Century*.

[37] See *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. by Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

[38] Tom Gunning, 'Re-Newing Old Technologies: Astonishment, Second Nature, and the Uncanny in Technology from the Previous Turn-of-the-Century', in *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition*, ed. by David Thornburn and Henry Jenkins (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003, pp. 39–59).

[39] Vivian Sobchack, '"Cutting the Quick": Techne, Physis, and Poiesis and the Attractions of Slow Motion', in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, pp. 337–51.

[40] Ivi, p. 337.

[41] Ivi, pp. 340–41 [emphasis in the original].

freeze frame — but the modification of a natural perceptive process that makes visible '"the essential" movement of movement itself'.[42] A *revelation* that corresponds, according to Sobchack, to an 'extended sense of time'[43] that for the most part has been lost in contemporary society.

The necessity to relocate lost ways of viewing informs the need for research about the past for many contemporary filmmakers and visual artists. We may also call it 'an aesthetic of anachronism', motivated less by the longing for a vanished age of cinema, than by the aim to *recreate* the tensions that have been always present in the history of images. This capacity to reinvent is expressed, by way of an example, through explicit forms of stylistic mimicry (a case in point is Miguel Gomes's cinema, which restages silent cinema), and moreover through the *return* to a 'basic' condition of the gaze that adopts extreme measures of the objectivity of time and space. The latter is exemplified by Contemplative Cinema: a real experience of collapse of movement into fixity.[44]

Even the digital, in its incessant experimentation with the visual arts, recovers the 'old' ambition of electronic images and video to assimilate forms, images and techniques. The erosion of the boundaries between old and new forms of images, which the digital enables, cancels the opposition between moving and fixed. Nevertheless, this dichotomy resurfaces with unprecedented features in the work of some visual artists.[45] The memory of magical forms of animation, typical of pre-cinema, is reflected in the 'fascination for slowing down the images, for the decomposition of the dynamics, for the freezing of movement, almost wanting to recreate a sort of post-precinema with present-day digital techniques'.[46]

Perhaps the most evident example of something that transcends the boundaries between different types and times of images, and of the coexistence and interconnection among 'non-synchronous' elements, is the GIF.[47] A sort of 'animated photograph', or a photographic vision of cinema, in which fixity and movement are simultaneously present, GIF images seem to propose once again the primitive experience of the 'magical' animation of the inanimate. In this

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[42] Ivi, p. 342.
[43] Ibidem.
[44] Ágnes Pethő's essay, mentioned above, is focused specifically on contemporary forms of slow cinema, in which suspended time pushes the cinematic image toward the limits of the *tableau*.
[45] As Elena Marcheschi argues in her essay 'Deterritorialized Images: Future Visions, Past Memories', below.
[46] Ivi, p. 80.
[47] In the last few years, commentaries on Graphic Format Interchange images are constantly increasing in number. Among the many contributions on this topic, we should mention at least Jane Hu, 'GIF Typologies and the Heritage of the Moving Image', *Hyperallergic*, 28 (2012) <http://hyperallergic.com/57585/gif-typologies-and-the-heritage-of-the-moving-image/> [accessed 17 March 2016]; Lorenzo Marmo, 'Looping, Laughing and Longing: The Animated GIF in the Contemporary Online Environment', *Comunicazioni Sociali*, 1 (special issue *Snapshot Culture: The Photographic Experience in the Post-Medium Age*, ed. by Adriano D'Aloia and Francesco Parisi, 2016), 78–86.

sense — through the constant repetition of the same gesture — it is not unlike the circular movements of the optical toys of pre-cinema: a sort of phenakistoscope or zoetrope with automatic motion, subjected to loops and repeated twitches. The GIF's mechanics of sequence are interrupted the second before the movement may generate a change; in which every initiated gesture folds into itself, is relaunched, starts again in an incessant and identical loop suitable for a child's cognitive schema. Indeed, in this very obsessive repetition we can identify a suspended experience of time, stretched between the infinite impulse for a new beginning and a movement that is nonetheless incapable of generating a change. With its movement, that continuously collapses only to start again, the GIF — even while constituting the reproduction of an archaic visual experience — embodies a paradoxical sense of time in which the new has all the features of the already seen. Sustained by a fetishistic mechanism of regressive fixation on the always identical, the GIF in fact embodies the fragmented nature of the fetish, which further connects it to the photograph: the real starting point, and also point of inquiry, for many contemporary visual practices.

'It's necessary to start again from photography',[48] writes Bellour, in an essay that investigates the connections between different images in contemporary audiovisual production. A return to photography as an enigmatic, absolutely non-evident experience substantiates visual culture widely, as is argued by Michel Frizot, to whom Bellour dedicates the essay. Specifically, the (re)construction of a photographic archive will help us understand this additional 'scene of the return', and thus conclude our brief analytical overview.

Among the artistic practices that take interest in the past, works that rewrite archival materials have played a pivotal role. The reinterpretation and reconfiguration of existing archival material is strictly related to the Foucauldian idea of an 'archaeology of the present', intended more as a promise rather than a restitution, more as a legacy to revitalize, rather than to recompose philologically. The work of Linda Fregni Nagler, a conceptual artist who studies, reconstructs and reconfigures the iconographic conventions of vernacular photography between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, is set within this theoretical framework. One of her latest works, *Pour commander à l'air*,[49] presents a series of images connected through a figurative motif: all the photographs show a subject balanced precariously, or 'suspended': on the verge of jumping — or jumping into the void. These are indeed 'precarious' images, in which an act or the outcome of the act represented is indefinable, hence throw-

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[48] Bellour, 'Concerning "The Photographic"', in *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography*, pp. 253–76 (p. 269).
[49] Exhibited for the first time in 2014 at the MAXXI, in Rome, and now partly acquired by the ACACIA Collection of the Museo del Novecento in Milan, the series *Pour commander à l'air* consists of fifteen photographs taken from the archives of twentieth-century American newspapers.

ing the notion of the 'decisive moment' into crisis, though it is nonetheless represented. All of the images come from different archives of American newspapers from the last century that the artist has collected, photographed and enlarged in the darkroom. This process reveals the presence of layered retouching and corrections that redefine the photographic trace. As Fregni Nagler herself states, 'retouching is a way to underline the meaning, it helps to make visible what, in photography, is out of focus or even absent. However, it is also a means of obscuring, concealing, masking, and furthermore is a form of metamorphosis and transformation.'[50] Therefore, there are many different gestures of image rewriting in the work, starting from the artist's choice to compose the series of photographs through subtle, mutual references between them, but also as a hint to a pre-existing work, Sarah Charlesworth's *Stills* (1980), that shows photographs of people falling from buildings. This work similarly presents enlargements of pictures taken from newspapers, and depicts people falling: we do not know if they are jumping into the void to save themselves from a fire or, conversely, to take their own lives.

In the series *Pour commander à l'air*, however, Fregni Nagler introduces a more complex idea of balance and suspension than in Charlesworth's work, which is focused on showing a vertiginous act of falling. Conversely, the work of Fregni Nagler shows men on the edge of a roof, or hanging from a window, looking down; subjects performing balancing acts that defy gravity in an impossible attempt to freeze the movement; children 'flying' in vertiginous and dangerous jumps: all of the people compose a set of interrupted acts, in which the evident interruption of time highlights the exact act of movement that the snapshot freezes. The dynamic quality of the gestures represented allows the viewer to perceive a 'tension toward the movement': an instability that concerns not only the subject of the image but its very condition, inasmuch as the image looks toward the off-frame space where the unreachable/unseen ending of the actions should be.

As Mary Ann Doane underlines, 'the snapshot takes movement as its referent but betrays it through its petrification':[51] only instant photography — as the violent rupture of the flow of time — makes *visible* the bodies suspended in a jump or in a flight, arresting them as if they will never touch the ground. This is 'the power of the machine' (or medium 'specificity'): that is, the ability to interrupt the vertigo of falling, and a speed that is imperceptible to our eyes. However, 'the shock of the instant lies in its implausibility':[52] the breaking of continuity appears as unnatural as it is revealing: what we see is the fragment of a movement, a moment *in between* stillness and motion that absorbs them both in a mutual, unbreakable connection.

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[50] 'Intervista con Linda Fregni Nagler/*Pour commander à l'air*', ed. by Elena Bordignon, *ATP Diary*, 22 April 2015 <http://atpdiary.com/linda-fregni-nagler-decardenas/> [accessed 17 March 2016].
[51] Mary Ann Doane, 'Real Time: Instantaneity and the Photographic Imaginary', in *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image*, pp. 23–38 (p. 28).
[52] Ibidem.

Even the photographs that do not show a 'flying' body but rather a subject waiting, about to jump, maintain this tension and hint at 'what happens next', therefore referring to the off-frame. It is precisely this moment, before anything happens, that interests Fregni Nagler. She imagines the photographers who pursue such snapshot and the 'decisive moment' as being forced to wait for a long time, subjugated by the dramatic time taken for a decision that can take many hours. 'I wanted to represent the impotence of waiting',[53] 'a time that is psychological and also symbolic', that lasts even longer due to the limits of the captured moment, to the inability to convey the completeness of the event.

This incompleteness specifically, as a constitutive limit of all images, not only of photographs, is therefore the foundation for a new 'aesthetics of indecision or of suspension', where what the image cannot show is definitive, what is *in* the image pushes *beyond* the mere data. The absent, incomplete, defective, inconclusive image, which is aware of the difficulty of resolving the complexity of the real, is key to a new way of questioning our gaze, interested in recovering those 'grey areas' of the visible that the digital image tends to erase.

The figure of the 'off-frame/off-screen space', which gives way to one of the major oppositions between cinema and photography — the conclusive, 'blind' off-frame of photography versus the varying space of cinema, with the permeable borders of its frame — becomes the central figure of a composition that calls upon the viewer to 'look differently', builds a cognitive experience of crisis and doubt and promotes an attitude of openness and suspension toward the images.

The persistent recourse to off-screen space made in several contemporary films is a form of resistance to the supposedly comprehensive 'evidence of the world' and of its images. Instead these are counterposed to a symbolic interactivity that is typical of cinema, and partially lost with the advent of digital technologies. In films like *Play* (Ruben Östlund, 2011), *A Separation* (*Jodaeiye Nader az Simin*, Asghar Farhadi, 2011), or *Stranger by the Lake* (*L'Inconnu du lac*, Alain Guiraudie, 2013) — to name only a few — the shot is never self-sufficient and the act of disclosing always exceeds the image, in an epistemological tension regarding the off-screen space. Essentially, the issue at stake no longer consists of measuring the limits of the image, but rather of assigning the image to its limits and of turning them into the setting of a new discovery that involves both photography and cinema.

This introduction can only touch upon a issue that would require a more in-depth analysis; however, here — at the boundaries of the frame and of this overview — we identify in the well-established figure of *a limit* the key for new research, where once again photography provides a model for experience: 'The photographic exists somewhere in-between; it is a state of "in-betweenness": in movement, it is that which interrupts, that paralyzes; in immobility, it perhaps bespeaks its relative impossibility.'[54]

[53] 'Intervista con Linda Fregni Nagler/*Pour commander à l'air*, ed. by Elena Bordignon.
[54] Bellour, 'Concerning "The Photographic"', p. 13.

Linda Fregni Nagler, *Pour commander à l'air*, 2014 – *Daredevil*
Gelatin silver print on Matt Baryt Paper, Selenium Toner, 114.5×165.4 cm

From Stillness (in)to Motion through Astronomical Images: The Cases of Jules Janssen's Photographic Revolver and Josep Comas i Solà's Spectrographic Cinematography

Francesco Giarrusso, Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa

Abstract

Through the analysis of two case studies — namely, images of Venus' transit across the Sun, captured in 1874 by Pierre J.C. Janssen's photographic revolver, and the advent of spectro-cinematography performed for the first time by Josep Comas i Solà during the solar eclipse of 1912 — the present article seeks to claim and substantiate the strict correlation between photography and cinematic device, recalling what Jean Epstein has defined as 'the lens philosophy'. In fact, both the photographic and cinematic apparatuses, along with the microscope and the telescope, not only surpass the physiological flaws of the human eye, allowing us to see the un-observable, but moreover contribute to the elaboration and development of new philosophical-scientific systems about the Universe, via their images of celestial bodies. I demonstrate therefore how both of the cases under analysis delimit a specific phase of the history of astronomical images. Changes in the latter relate to the production technique and its underlying representation models, thus corroborating the role played by the astronomical image in the permanent dissolution, attenuation, and redefinition of the frontier between photography and film, instantaneity and duration, and the discrete and the continuous.

From its origins, photography has found in astronomy a privileged field of application,[1] especially in regards to astronomical observation and calculation. As early as 1849, Hervé Auguste Étienne Albans Faye — Dominique François Jean Arago's disciple and astronomer in the Paris Observatory — stated 'l'usage le plus important […] de la photographie, dans les observatoires, est de résoudre un singulier problème […] la détermination du temps absolu',[2] reiterating what

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[1] The attention paid by François Arago, French astronomer and politician, to the daguerreotype and its relation with astronomy, since its invention, is emblematic. In this regard, see Arago, 'Fixation des images qui se forment au foyer d'une chambre obscure, séance du lundi 7 janvier 1839', *Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des sciences*, 8 (1839), 4–7; and Arago, 'Le daguerréotype, séance du lundi 19 août 1839', *Comptes rendus*, 9 (1839), 250–67.

[2] Hervé Faye, 'Sur les observations du Soleil, séance du lundi 19 février 1849', *Comptes rendus*, 18

will be the prerogative of the French astronomical school. In those years, the scientists in the Paris Observatory were especially dedicated to the meridian observations, that is, to the assertion of the

> instant précis du passage des astres au méridien, derrière les fils du micromètre de la lunette fixée invariablement dans le plan méridien, et de mesurer leur distance aux pôles. On obtient ainsi les deux coordonnées établissant les positions exactes des astres sur la voûte céleste et c'est là la base fondamentale de l'astronomie mathématique.[3]

This strongly complex and delicate operation was what Faye decided to entrust to photography, dismissing the observer in order to elude the fallibility of our own senses. Furthermore, according to Faye, the photographic device would, with great skill and precision, substitute human observation, suppressing any type of personal error; because, as Faye will continue to confidently sustain throughout the years, in this way we would eliminate 'l'anxiété, la fatigue, l'éblouissement, la précipitation, les erreurs de nos sens, en un mot l'intervention toujours suspectes de notre système nerveux'.[4]

Indeed it will be with Pierre Jules César Janssen's photographic revolver that photography will become 'la véritable rétine du savant',[5] as it will allow to capture Venus' passage across the Sun in 1874. This had already been envisaged and foreboded by Faye, his direct predecessor, when he stated on 28 May 1869 in 'Sur l'état de la photographie astronomique en France' that the photographic plate would have come to substitute the human retina.[6]

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It was an exceptional event, both by the rareness of the phenomenon[7] and by the scientific intention underlying its observation. As such, it needed the support of a device of a really high precision. Part of the scientific world, among all and particularly Janssen,[8] recognized this quality in the photomechanical register,

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(1849), 241–44 (p. 243).

[3] Faye in Quentin Bajac, '1840–1875: les faux départs de la photographie astronomique', in *Dans le champ des étoiles. Les photographes et le ciel 1850–2000*, ed. by Quentin Bajac and Agnés de Gouvion Saint-Cyr (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2000), pp. 11–21 (p. 16).

[4] Faye, 'Sur l'observation photographique des passages de Vénus et sur un appareil de M. Laussedat, séance du lundi 14 mars 1870', *Comptes rendus*, 70 (1870), 541–48 (p. 543).

[5] Pierre Janssen, 'La Photographie céleste', in *Œuvres scientifiques*, ed. by Henri Dehérain, 2 vols (Paris: Société d'éditions géographiques, maritimes et coloniales, 1929–1930), ii, 27–50 (p. 50).

[6] Faye, 'Sur l'état de la photographie astronomique en France, séance du lundi 28 mai 1860', *Comptes rendus*, 50 (1860), 965–67.

[7] Venus passes across the Sun twice each 113 years, with an interval of eight years between them.

[8] As declared by Janssen himself: 'Pour moi c'est l'observation du passage de Vénus qui a attiré plus spécialment mon attention sur cette branche [la photographie] si féconde et si délaissée chez nous.' See Janssen, 'Presentation de quelques spécimen de photographies solaires obtenues avec un appareil construit pour la mission du Japon, séance du lundi 22 juin 1874', *Comptes rendus*, 78

the only that guaranteed that result, according to the astronomer Nicolas Camille Flammarion.[9] In other words, this event was the first astronomical occurrence that, in its promulgators' intentions,[10] should have confirmed photography as the main observation and measurement device, because of its ability to overcome the physiologic limitations of human sight.

On 8 December 1874, the aim of the countless expeditions around the world was the optical determination of the exact instant of the entry and exit of Venus' dark disc in that of the Sun. The confirmation of these contacts, observed by two distant observers, along with the data on their position in space, was combined with the comparison of the schedule of those contacts. This would allow obtaining the value of the distance between the Earth and the Sun — i.e. 'la base de toutes les mesures astronomiques. […] le mètre du système du monde et de toutes les évaluations des distances célestes'. Furthermore, Janssen's gesture of pointing the photographic revolver to the sky to describe the movement of the heavenly bodies corroborates the affiliation of his proto-cinematic device with Galileo's telescope, and with all other optical instruments.[11] It made possible to overcome the physiological shortcomings of the human eye in the perception and capture of the infinitely large and the infinitely small. If the telescope and the microscope explore the dimensions of space, the photographic revolver and the daguerreotype plate, with the several printed phases of Venus' passage across the Sun, allow for a more precise measurement of the distance between the Earth and the Sun. The photographic revolver and the daguerreotype plate also widened the spectrum of analysis of the so-called 'philosophies de la lunette et de la loupe',[12] initiating the studies on movement and its variation in time, and premiered an instrument capable of recording the phenomena in order to perpetuate them in time for continued analysis and future sharing of observations.

Although the photographic revolver was not able to reproduce movement in its dynamism, Janssen's device was strongly connected to its observation and analysis, through a series of photographic images whose function was to decompose in several phases and at regular intervals the passage of a heavenly body across another one. It was an anticipation of the so-called time-lapse cinematography with which real-time condensation is performed, thus allowing for the

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(1874), 1730–31 (p. 1731).

[9] Camille Flammarion in Monique Sicard, 'Passage de Vénus. Le Revolver photographique de Jules Janssen', *Études photographiques*, 4 (1998) <http://etudesphotographiques.revues.org/157> [accessed 18 September 2015] (para. 11 of 24).

[10] Despite the forces and means deployed, the photographs taken were actually not able to determine with absolute precision the moment of contact. The results were scarce. For instance, in 1882, by the time of the second passage of Venus across the Sun, the scientific journalist Wilfrid de Fonvielle denounced the failure of the photographic record and how it would further induce the astronomers to abandon the photographic support in favour of the data provided by the old kind of observations. Bajac and de Gouvion Saint-Cyr, p. 19.

[11] Flammarion in Sicard, 'Passage de Vénus' (para. 11 of 24).

[12] Jean Epstein, 'Le Cinéma du diable', in *Écrits sur le cinéma*, ed. by Pierre Lherminier and Marie Epstein, 2 vols (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1974–1975), i, 335–410 (p. 339).

examination of movements too slow to be observed by the naked eye. Janssen was thereby able to study and follow the phenomenon, in order to analyse their constituent parts and highlight the contacts between the discs of Venus and the Sun. As Janssen wrote,

> le revolver résout le problème inverse du phénakistiscope. Le phénakistiscope de M. Plateau est destiné à produire l'illusion d'un mouvement ou d'une action au moyen de la série des aspects dont ce mouvement ou cette action se compose. Le revolver photographique donne au contraire l'analyse d'un phénomène en reproduisant la série de ses aspects élémentaires.[13]

For these reasons, Janssen considered photography as a precious instrument for scientific research, both by its ability to faithfully fix and reproduce *a posteriori* the observed phenomenon and by its aptitude to overcome the intrinsic limits of human nature. In this regard, Janssen's own words are iconic, when he stated that photography is 'l'œil universel',[14] and added: 'bien supérieure à l'œil humain; car, d'une part, elle garde la trace du phénomène qu'elle a perçu et, de l'autre, dans certains cas, elle voit plus que celui-ci',[15] and also that: 'en raison de cette admirable propriété de nous donner la fixation des images, de les former avec un ensembles de rayons beaucoup plus étendu que ceux qui affectent notre rétine, et enfin de permettre l'accumulation des actions radiantes pendant un temps, pour ainsi dire, illimité'.[16]

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The rapid decline of the daguerreotype, substituted by the wet-plate collodion technique (1851), and later by silver bromide dry plates (1871–1879), has favoured not only the birth of astronomical photography, whose images, until about 1880, fixated the observations made by the human eye, but also propelled the photographic method beyond the possibilities of visual observation. Visual observation will be substituted by the arrival of spectroscopy and photometry, whose images provide information inaccessible to the human eye, like temperature, density and chemical composition, or the measurement of the power and energy that sustain the light sources, giving life to modern astrophysics. Hence, Janssen's quote mentioned above refers inevitably to the ability of the photosensitive medium to capture every electromagnetic radiations, from the infrared

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[13] Janssen, 'Présentation du revolver photographique et d'épreuves obtenues avec cet instrument', *Bulletin de la Société Française de Photographie*, 22 (1876), 100–08 (pp. 105–06).
[14] Janssen, 'Discours prononcé à la fête du cinquantenaire de la divulgation de la photographie, le 19 août 1889', in *Œuvres scientifiques*, ii, 166–170 (p. 169).
[15] Janssen in Albert Londe, *La Photographie dans les arts, les sciences et l'industrie* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1888), p. 8.
[16] Janssen in François Launay, 'Jules Janssen et la photographie', in Bajac and de Gouvion Saint-Cyr, p. 26.

to the gamma rays. This ability renders possible not only the measurement of distances between the celestial bodies and the galaxies, but also the time analysis of light, whose remote origin will allow us to see the past of the Universe, its primordial images.

By then Janssen was referring to the study of the nebulae, the eclipses, the comets, and the effect of the photographic irradiation regarding the photosphere, despite the fact that his device was starting to weaken the Newtonian building of absolute time and space — already giving us a glimpse of the possibilities of visual representation of a trans-Cartesian universe: an asymmetric and heterogeneous space-time.

> C'est bien ce que nous montre l'expérience cinématographique, qui n'est point si isolée d'observations jugées plus scientifiques qu'elle ne puisse être confirmée par ces dernières. Par exemple, telle nébuleuse, nous la voyons aujourd'hui dans son état d'il y a exactement un siècle. L'expansion de l'univers peut faire que cette galaxie et notre globe s'éloignent, l'une de l'autre, tous deux animés d'une vitesse égale aux trois quarts de celle de la lumière. Au bout d'un an, nous pourrons voir la nébuleuse dans un état antérieur, datant de cent ans et six mois d'après notre chronologie. Donc, au cours du laps de temps, pendant lequel, nous, nous aurons vieilli en vivant une année dirigée du passé vers l'avenir, la nébuleuse, elle, aura rajeuni sous notre regard, dévécu six mois dirigés de l'avenir vers le passé.[17]

Returning to the object of this analysis, i.e. the astronomical images produced by Janssen's photographic revolver, two things are evident. On the one hand, the photographic record has confirmed once again the indexical value, the presumed objectivity of the space-time fragment taken from the observed reality. On the other hand, it contributed to set the basis for a new visual practice, able to describe 'un univers mouvant, découpé en tranches de 72 secondes, celle qui, décomposant les phénomènes, ne les percevrait que par intermittence'.[18] Janssen's device, in which the continuous and the discontinuous overlap, and the analytical photography of movements anticipates the motion and prefigures the synthesis of movement itself, redefining the status of the photomechanical image. Janssen forecasts the advent of the kinetic, of the movement understood as a flux composed by discrete units, through which time is conceived in its atomistic nature, in that each element is marked by a clock's mechanical system. Moreover, the clock itself provided, by means of the hands movements, the parcelled model of time, whose passage was seen as the sum of moments quantitatively identifiable. Clocks and metronomes were used even in scientific laboratories as essential instruments to study and measure the flow of life, its constituent temporal units.[19] The science of the second half of the nineteenth

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[17] Epstein, 'Le Cinéma du diable', pp. 377–78.
[18] Sicard, *La Fabrique du regard* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 1998), pp. 164–65.
[19] Despite the great relevance of Muybridge and Marey's studies, I will not delve in the exam of the technical devices and the countless experiences of Muybridge's serial photography and Marey's

century was committed to the attempt of finding devices that could photograph time, rendering it visible, ductile, measurable, and representable through the mathematization of movement into qualitative and quantitative data that could be scientifically verified.[20]

In this regard, Janssen was the first, just as Marey declared,[21] to transform photography into a kind of recording clock capable of simultaneously perform the indexation of sight and the measurement of time, mechanically combining the view of the observed phenomenon with the detection of its fundamental time units, by means of immobilizing and decomposing the movement and its duration.

Therefore, the photographic revolver's double-faced nature was configured in the observer's experiential horizon. The 'pregnant instant'[22] coexists with the impression of the duration in which the kinetic of the photographic image is given by the circularity and repetition of the frames, ideally infinite, while the photographic nature of the revolver's images succession is given by the discontinuous pose, by the immobility of each photograph. To the fixity of the frame is added the transition of a long exposure, thus combining the pose with the view and the immobility with the return to movement. What's more, the device conceived by Janssen possesses and displays a dual overlapping, both technical and epistemological. Although Janssen, during the Congress of the Union Nationale des Sociétés Photographiques de France which took place in Lyon in July 1895, had stressed the distinction between the 'analytical photography of movements' of Marey's chronophotography — a scientific procedure perfected and derived from the photographic revolver — and the 'animated photography' from the Lumière Brothers' projections — the naturalistic reproduction of pictures in motion —, both devices presented the Maltese cross gear, responsible for the intermittent progression of the photosensitive surface,[23] and the shutter, whose

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chronophotography, in what concerns the study of the relationship of the space-time coordinates with the physiological movements whose dynamic and mechanism they intended to analyse.

[20] In those years, Marey's research on the study of movement have contributed to the process of mathematization of physiology, raising a considerable interest in the scientific (Hermann von Helmholtz and Charles Fremont) and industrial (Frederick W. Taylor and Frank B. Gilbreth) fields. This interest focused in the measurement of the preservation/energetic expenditure of the labour force and their harmonisation with the movements of the industrial machines. See Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

[21] 'C'est M. Janssen qui le premier, dans un but scientifique, imagina de prendre automatiquement une série d'images photographiques pour représenter les phases successives d'une phénomène. C'est donc à lui que revient l'honneur d'avoir inauguré ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui la *Chronophotographie sur plaque mobile.*' Étienne-Jules Marey, 'Chronophotographie sur plaque mobile', in *Le Mouvement* (Paris: G. Masson Éditeur, 1894), pp. 102–23 (p. 102).

[22] Here I refer to Lessing's notion, postulated in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 'Laoköon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie' (Berlin: Christian Friedrich Voss, 1766) and resumed by Jacques Aumont, *L'Œil interminable: cinéma et peinture* (Paris: Librairie Séguier, 1989) and Roland Barthes, *L'Obvie et l'obtus* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982), among others.

[23] While the photographic revolver had a sensitive, circular plate, Lumière's cinematograph used perforated film.

function is to prevent the passage of the light during the advancement of the support. As mentioned above, the proximity is not limited to what concerns the components and the operation of the devices in question. It also encompasses two distinct paradigms related to the techniques and the visual practices implied.

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Indeed, Janssen's astronomical photography redefined the image status not only in respect of the production technique, due to the unprecedented conjunction of heliostat, telescope and daguerreotype, but also in the profound change related to the scopic regime — that is, the new dialectic relationship between the geometric optics of the camera obscura and the onset of the physiological optics of the consecutive image.[24] As far as the first visual model is concerned, Janssen's device shares with the camera obscura one of its main functions: the indirect observation of the Sun. Just as Johannes Kepler and Sir Isaac Newton used the camera obscura to avoid the direct observation of the Sun during its analysis, Janssen's device was also designed to capture the inscrutable, the unobservable. In both cases, the aim was to capture and concentrate sunlight almost as if they were mirrors capable of returning with absolute clarity, according to the mechanisms of propagation of the light beam and the laws of optical transmission, 'the light of reason, not the potentially dangerous dazzlement of the senses by the light of the sun'.[25]

The camera obscura model performed a separation between the act of sight and the observer's body, excluding the deceiving senses of the capture of the phenomenon, so that the subject could go from organizer to witness in the process of the objective and mechanical register of the observed reality. The observer's body did not intervene, his physical position before the observed phenomenon was irrelevant, since the trust was placed solely in 'a disembodied cyclopean eye, detached from the observer',[26] able to establish a rational space, a transcendental representation of the world, away from the corruption of the senses and the uncertainty and confusion of the human eye. As aforementioned, the photomechanical image in the astronomical field was also always conceived within a device that, since Faye and his project to bind photography and electromagnetism,[27] intended to do without the intervention of the observer's senses, since 'la fatigue oculaire, le travail analytique de l'esprit ou des maladresses de la main'[28] could harm the work of the scientist.

Faye's project and Janssen's device to substitute the human retina by the pho-

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[24] For a more complete presentation of the concepts related to the optical regime of the camera obscura and to the physiological optics of consecutive images, I refer to Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).
[25] Ivi, p. 44.
[26] Ivi, p. 47.
[27] Faye in Bajac and de Gouvion Saint-Cyr, p. 17.
[28] Bajac, ibidem.

tographic plate referred inevitably to the objective and immaterial eye of the camera obscura. Furthermore, the photographic revolver and the attempt to decompose the movement, slowing it down and condensing it, somehow attested the assertion of the observer's physical subjectivity as the active place where, and through which, the visual representations take shape. As the words of Jonathan Crary corroborate, from the beginning of the nineteenth century 'the visible escapes from the timeless order of the camera obscura and becomes lodged in another apparatus, within the unstable physiology and temporality of the human body'.[29] Actually, the photographic revolver was not only an autonomous optical device, a neutral apparatus of instantaneous transmission of data proceeding exclusively from the observation of an object. On the contrary, the observer's presence became mandatory to the interpretation of the observed phenomenon, constituting the basis of the visual experience, the individual who produces the movement and the passage of time, in synergy with the machine of which he became an integral part.

If, during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the human being made optical instruments that reproduced the principle of the camera obscura — such as the microscope and the telescope for example —, proposing its monocular, motionless and immaterial vision, then from the advent of the photographic revolver it was no longer just the human being using a device made by himself, but the observer's own body using and interacting with the machine, guaranteeing the succession of images and his experience of time.

In fairness, it will be the cinematograph, this automaton of sight whose mechanism ensures for the first time in history the photographic inscription of time and the simultaneous recording of space that will go beyond this apparent overlapping, displaying a new image of the universe, the inconsistency of the dichotomies instantaneous/duration, discrete/continuous. The cinematograph: this sort of brain-machine able to reveal in the continuity of the projection a subjective transfiguration of a more true discontinuity and, at the same time, in discontinuity an arbitrary and mechanical interpretation of a fundamental continuity. Paraphrasing Jean Epstein, it is then discovered that the cinematic continuous and discontinuous are inexistent, since

> [l]e cinématographe nous indique que le continu et le discontinu, le repos et le mouvement, loin d'être deux modes de réalité incompatibles, sont deux modes d'irréalité facilement interchangeables [...]. Il n'y a pas plus d'exclusive entre eux, qu'il n'y en a entre les couleurs d'un disque à l'arrêt et le blanc du même disque en rotation. Continu et discontinu, repos et mouvement, couleur et blanc jouent alternativement le rôle de réalité, laquelle n'est, ici comme ailleurs, jamais, nulle part, autre chose qu'une fonction [...].[30]

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[29] Crary, p. 70.
[30] Epstein, 'L'Intelligence d'une machine', in *Écrits sur le cinéma*, i, 255–334 (p. 281).

It was no longer a matter of understanding the superficial continuity of mundane phenomena, or of probing the molecular and subatomic discontinuity, because the Universe is not made of matter but of energy, as stated by Epstein.[31] The cinematic device, in accordance with the scientific materialism of the second half of the nineteenth century of which it derives, enables the visualization of new shapes and new relations that break with the homogenous, non deformable and isotropic continuous of the Newtonian conception of the Universe. In other words, it is as if the advent of the cinematograph had revealed the inconsistency of the classical conception of space and time, seen as distinct and unchanging domains in which movement is measured in regard to a fixed and absolute reference system. The inconstant mobility of the forms that run on the cinematographic screen and the dilation and/or reduction of the extension and succession of recorded phenomena reveal the most intimate nature of matter, whose consistence is no other than energy, located within a certain, limited space-time section, perceptible and understood by our senses.

> Le cinématographe nous montre que la forme n'est que l'état précaire d'une mobilité fondamentale, et que, le mouvement étant universel et variablement variable, toute forme est inconstante, inconsistante, fluide. Le solide se trouve tout à coup menacé dans sa suprématie ; il ne représente plus qu'un genre particulier d'apparences propres aux systèmes d'ordinaire expérience et d'échelle humaine, qui sont à mouvement constant ou faiblement et uniformément varié.[32]

<p align="center">*</p>

By then the third phase of space observation was taking shape: after drawing and photography,[33] the third great advance in astronomy was in cine-photographing the spectra of the stars. During the first years, however, the use of cinematic devices in the astronomical field did not achieve great results immediately.

I mainly point out the observations made by Josep Comas i Solà, director of Fabra Observatory in Barcelona, who during the solar eclipse of 1900 in Elche, performed a series of photographs of the corona and of the spectrum of the chromosphere with a prismatic camera[34] — a conventional photographic camera with a prism attached to the lens. Furthermore, during the solar eclipse of 30

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[31] Epstein, 'Le Cinéma du diable', ivi, pp. 335–410.

[32] Ivi, pp. 403–04.

[33] This was a preponderant phase of the scientific representations in the astronomical field. It encompasses the drawings of the lunar phases observed by Galilei through a telescope and published in Galileo Galilei, *Sidereus Nuncius* (Venice: Tommaso Baglioni, 1610), and the work of Nasmyth and Carpenter, published in James Nasmyth and James Carpenter, *The Moon Considered as a World, a Planet and a Satellite* (London: John Murray, 1874). In the later case, the Moon images were accomplished by photographing it from different perspectives and building plaster scale models of the satellite from drawings drawn by Nasmyth himself.

[34] M. Encarnació Soler i Alomà, 'Va filmar Chomón I'Eclipsi?', *Cinema Rescat*, 15 (2004), 11–16 (p. 12).

August 1905, Comas i Solà went even further and, besides the photographs of several chromospheric spectra, made some images with 'un cinématographe de M. Gaumont, dans lequel [il avait] placé devant son objectif de Goerz un prisme de M. Mailhat', adding '[o]n doit conseiller ce procédé spectro-cinématographique comme un puissant auxiliaire des autres observations spectroscopique.'[35] Yet, Comas i Solà's big astronomical success was achieved later with the eclipse of 1912, when he adapted two equilateral prisms to the lens of a normal, commercial camera 'in order to record with a convenient temporal resolution the occurrence and evolution of the flash spectrum of the solar chromosphere'.[36] For the first time, the cinematographic image was used not only to document eclipses, comets' movements, sunspots and every dynamic phenomena concerning positional astronomy, but also to identify the different energies of the electromagnetic spectrum. This assisted in the transition 'to the new astrophysical studies, process in which the eclipses of the beginning of the century (1900, 1905 e 1912) were a relevant driving factor (Ruiz, 2009)'.[37]

Comas i Solà's cinematic prismatic camera and his footage of the flash spectrum, performed with a pace of five photograms per second for a total of about one hundred images,[38] confirmed the access to a new universe that questioned Kantian categories of space and time. Now the cinematograph had the power to challenge the space-time relationships conceived for centuries as fixed and absolute entities. It was therefore enough to modify the time of cinematic representation to destroy the usual experience of things. Or, making mine Epstein's words, changing the time of recording and projection sufficed to reveal a '[m]onde profondément fluide, d'où la permanence des formes a disparu dans un espace qui ne connaît plus de symétrie et dans un temps qui a cessé d'être uniforme'.[39] This is the reason why nothing is motionless in the universe, everything changes, and everything is transformed.

Just as previously with the photographic revolver, the astronomical image came to redefine once more the already subtle frontier between photographic and cinematic, whose statuses were even questioned by the spectrographic cinematography. These new astronomical shootings showed features of the observed phenomena that the human body could not and cannot experience, not only because they insinuate themselves in the folds of time, inconspicuous to the physiology of our eyes, but because they give us back arbitrarily encoded images from outer space.[40]

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[35] Josep Comas i Solà, 'Observations sur l'éclipse totale du Soleil du 30 août 1905, séance du lundi 16 octobre 1905', *Comptes rendus*, 141 (1905), 616–17 (p. 617).
[36] Salvador X. Bará Viñas, 'Innovación tecnolóxica e astronomía social na eclipse de sol do 17 de abril de 1912 no Barco de Valdeorras', *Revista Real Academia Galega de Ciencias*, 31 (2012), 55–68 (p. 56, my translation).
[37] Ivi, pp. 59–60 (my translation).
[38] Ivi, p. 58.
[39] Epstein, 'Esprit de cinéma 1946–1949', in *Écrits sur le cinéma*, ii, 11–128 (p. 107).
[40] As de Gouvion Saint-Cyr reminds us: 'Le pied sur la lune, la tête dans les étoiles...', in Bajac and de

It would be possible to assert that with the spectrographic cinematography nothing of what we see will ever be within our sight's reach, both by the huge distance between us and the observed celestial object, and by the progressive separation between the body and the organ of sight, be it human or artificial. In the measurements of the electromagnetic spectrum, within balloons in the 1930s and within artificial satellites from the 1950s onwards, we have seen observation devices being placed beyond the atmosphere to also capture the radiation that does not reach the terrestrial observatories. Thus, a vision without sight is outlined, in an automatism of perception that ousts the body from its role of fundamental referent of the human action as centre of observation and measurement of space. Furthermore, the transcription of invisible radiations through a code and a chromatic scale, intentionally developed to render intelligible the data from spectral range explorations, constituted the first step towards the total computerisation of image production and reception. This is why the simulation mechanism that brought the eye closer to the photomechanical representation will leave its position to a substitution process, by which the machine will produce images by itself, with no physical mediation whatsoever of a human being.

In this sense, the technical progress of the astronomical image will put forth the implementation of a new vision, of a new image — the electro-numerical — whose elaboration and transmission will envelop the Earth in an infographic net in which space and time will implode in the ubiquity and concomitance of the teletopological phenomenon,[41] in the synthesis between the photographic and the cinematic,[42] in which the instantaneousness of the event and the duration of the transmission overlap. Otherwise, how do we define the images of 18 March 1965 of humanity's first EVA[43] performed by the cosmonaut Alexey Arkhipovich Leonov, whose production, transmission and reception involved, respectively, photomechanical, radio-electronic and broadcasting processes? And above all, what is the place of the earthly observer who admires the Globe spinning behind the cosmonaut?

Gouvion Saint-Cyr, p. 41: 'Telle onde lumineuse n'ayant pas de nom — donc pas de représentation — dans notre langage visuel, il convient de lui attribuer un code qui, par rapport à d'autres sources de rayonnement, permette de situer l'astre dans l'Univers. On comprend alors pourquoi il devient désormais illusoire de dresser des cartes du ciel sans les accompagner de légendes précises.'

[41] Paul Virilio, *La Machine de vision* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1988).

[42] As Mitchell writes: 'The first cameras in space used photographic film, which was automatically developed and scanned for transmission to Earth.' See Donald P. Mitchell, 'Soviet Space Cameras', <http://mentallandscape.com/V_Cameras.htm> [accessed 15 July 2015]. For a deeper understanding of the history of the soviet missions and for technical information about the space photographs and shootings, visit the websites <https://donpmitchell.wordpress.com/> and <http://mentallandscape.com/> [accessed 30 September 2015].

[43] EVA stands for Extra Vehicular Activity.

Les Formes cinématographiques du discours photographique.
Le cas de *Men at Work*, de Lewis Hine

Marc-Emmanuel Mélon, Université de Liège

Abstract

Lewis W. Hine's series on the construction of the Empire State Building, published in 1932 in *Men at Work*, the photographer's only book, offers a pioneering form of photographic enunciation within the history of the medium that is inspired by the cinematographic language. Compared with the evolution of photographic illustrated magazines during the 1920s, and the use of montage by the designer Stefan Lorant, Hine's series appears to be the first to have employed cinematographic continuity to express an allegorical idea: the links between the pictures are like the links between the men at work. A brief detour via Ėjzenštejn theory of montage helps understand that just as each picture is a part of the whole series, each of the men is a part of the working class who built the highest skyscraper in the world.

Il fut un temps, pas si lointain, où les historiens de la photographie considéraient qu'avec l'apparition du cinéma en 1895, comme le disait Beaumont Newhall, « une autre histoire commence »[1]. Au même moment, les historiens du cinéma ne se souciaient de la photographie qu'en tant qu'elle se trouve à l'origine dite « pré-historique » de l'image animée. Cette exclusion mutuelle, fruit de la spécialisation des historiens, a eu pour effet d'ignorer que le cinéma et la photographie, comme tant d'autres moyens d'expression, sont soumis à des fluctuations sociales, économiques, culturelles et esthétiques globales qui ont déterminé leur évolution commune. En dépit de faits marquants comme, par exemple, l'adoption par les deux industries du support celluloïd 35 mm ou encore le vaste mouvement artistique qui aboutit à la fameuse exposition *Film und Foto* à Stuttgart en 1929, en dépit des œuvres et des réflexions théoriques des nombreux artistes qui pratiquaient aussi bien la photographie que le cinéma (de Moholy-Nagy à Paul Strand, de Chris Marker à Robert Frank), une question assez simple, élémentaire même, a rarement été examinée en ces termes : l'invention des frères Lumière en 1895 a-t-elle modifié en profondeur le cours

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[1] Beaumont Newhall, *L'histoire de la photographie depuis 1839 et jusqu'à nos jours*, trad. André Jammes, New York, Museum of Modern Art, et Paris, Bélier-Prisma, 1967, p. 91.

de l'histoire de la photographie ? En retour, les renouvellements esthétiques de la photographie ont-ils bouleversé d'une manière ou d'une autre l'histoire du cinéma ? Telles sont les questions qui se posent d'entrée de jeu, auxquelles diverses réponses ont déjà été apportées par des chercheurs qui étaient moins des historiens que des théoriciens de l'image. Je ne retiens ici que la première, celle qui interroge l'impact du cinéma sur l'histoire de la photographie, à laquelle un élément de réponse, rarement envisagé jusqu'à présent, peut être apporté : entre autres échanges entre les deux médias, le cinéma a fourni à la photographie un ensemble de moyens formels qui lui ont permis d'élaborer un nouveau mode de discours.

Il s'agit donc ici, non pas de savoir si la photographie pourrait énoncer un discours (débat ontologique un peu vain puisque l'histoire de la photographie démontre à suffisance que, depuis ses origines, elle n'a cessé d'être utilisée à cette fin), mais de se demander plutôt comment elle l'a fait au cours de son histoire, et avec quels moyens. On postule donc que la photographie a élaboré au cours de son histoire plusieurs modes d'énonciation du discours (postulat impossible à démontrer ici puisqu'il nécessiterait de revisiter l'ensemble de l'histoire de la photographie au cours de laquelle furent mis au point différents modèles discursifs) et que le cinéma a contribué à la mise au point d'un nouveau modèle, adapté à de nouvelles conditions d'énonciation.

Cette hypothèse inscrit clairement la question du discours au cœur du débat entre le fixe et l'animé. Elle suppose que, entre la photographie comme image fixe et le cinéma comme image en mouvement, il existerait un stade intermédiaire qui ne serait ni mécanique (animation d'images fixes par un projecteur ou tout autre appareil) ni physiologique (effet de la persistance rétinienne) mais strictement intellectuel. Sans être animée mécaniquement (sinon, elle devient du cinéma), la photographie aurait élaboré au contact du cinéma le moyen d'énoncer une pensée complexe et de la faire partager par le spectateur. Puisque la pensée, par principe, n'est pas fixe, la photographie aurait trouvé le moyen d'animer l'esprit du spectateur lui-même en exploitant les possibilités du montage des images. Or, animer l'esprit du spectateur est, dans les années vingt, la grande préoccupation des cinéastes soviétiques qui trouvent dans le montage « le moyen fondamental — et d'ailleurs unique — par lequel le cinéma a été capable d'atteindre un aussi haut degré d'efficacité » pour produire sur le spectateur « une impression puissante »[2].

Le montage des images serait donc le moyen par lequel la photographie, au contact du cinéma, aurait développé un nouveau mode discursif. Par « montage », il ne suffit pas d'entendre une simple continuité d'images fixes mais bien leur articulation dans un ordre déterminé, productif de sens. Il faut rappeler en effet que, bien avant de devenir instantanée, la photographie a été tentée

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[2] Sergueï M. Eisenstein, Vsevolod Poudovkine et Gregory Alexandroff, « Manifeste. Contrepoint orchestral. L'avenir du film sonore » (octobre 1928), repris dans Eisenstein, *Le Film: sa forme, son sens*, tr. Armand Panigel, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1976, p. 19.

par la série, la séquence et l'illusion de la continuité. Très vite, elle a voulu sortir des limites étroites de l'image unique pour mieux rendre compte des différentes phases d'une action, des étapes d'un déplacement et même, bien avant la chronophotographie, des phases d'un mouvement. Les cas ne manquent pas qui prouvent que la photographie n'a pas attendu le cinéma pour produire, avec des moyens certes limités, des effets de continuité étendus dans le temps (citons par exemple la fameuse interview de Chevreul par Nadar, photographiée par son fils Paul et publiée en 1886 par le *Journal illustré*). Ces effets seront particulièrement recherchés par la presse illustrée dès le début du XXᵉ siècle[3]. Malgré leur qualité graphique, ces premiers magazines n'exploitent pas les possibilités du montage dans le but de produire du sens mais juxtaposent simplement les images pour créer des effets de continuité temporelle. Or, les premiers théoriciens du montage ont constaté qu'une simple association d'images ne suffisait pas pour produire un sens déterminé dans l'esprit du spectateur, comme le remarque Béla Balász : « Le montage de cinéma, s'il était souverain, l'était en somme par force : même dans deux images juxtaposées strictement au hasard, le spectateur découvrirait une 'suite' »[4]. Ce que Balász désigne ainsi, c'est le bien connu effet Koulechov obtenu grâce au principe d'inférence, un courant d'induction qui conduit tout spectateur à chercher une continuité entre deux images, quelles qu'elles soient, et à leur attribuer un sens. Une simple juxtaposition d'images ne suffit donc pas à déterminer précisément l'idée que l'on veut faire naître dans l'esprit du spectateur. Il faudra, comme on va le voir, dépasser la simple continuité au profit d'une articulation minutieuse des éléments visuels.

Dans l'histoire de la photographie, les possibilités discursives du montage (au sens cinématographique du terme) sont rarement exploitées avant la fin des années vingt. On peut se demander pourquoi cette application se produit aussi tardivement, alors que dès la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale, les dadaïstes Georg Grosz et John Heartfield, Hannah Höch et Raoul Hausmann avaient découvert les immenses possibilités discursives du photomontage et que les artistes constructivistes (Rodtchenko, Lissitzky ou Moholy-Nagy, dont le livre *Peinture, photographie, film* paraît en 1924), jettent les bases d'une conception intégrée de l'art et des médias et surtout de l'art au regard de l'engagement politique. Moholy-Nagy, un des premiers à envisager globalement la communication dans l'art et l'art dans la communication à des fins politiques, fut aussi l'un des maîtres d'œuvre de la célèbre exposition *Film und Foto* montée par Gustav Stotz qui consacre la rencontre entre le cinéma et la photographie comme formes artistiques complémentaires, mais surtout inscrit précisément la notion de montage au centre de cette rencontre.

Le montage d'images photographiques n'est pas une invention des photographes mais des graphistes chargés de la mise en page des magazines et livres

[3] Voir à ce sujet Thierry Gervais (avec la collaboration de Gaëlle Morel), *La Fabrique de l'information visuelle. Photographies et magazines d'actualité*, Paris, Textuel, 2015.
[4] Béla Balász, *Der Geist der Film,* 1930, passage repris dans l'anthologie de Pierre Lherminier, *L'art du cinéma*, Paris, Seghers, 1960, p. 208.

illustrés. En 1931, lorsqu'il travaillait pour la *Münchner Illustrierte Presse*, Stefan Lorant (qui, rappelons-le, fut cinéaste à la Decla au début de la décennie) a mis en page le fameux reportage de Felix Man consacré à Mussolini en jouant sur les formats, les répétitions, les séries narratives et toute une panoplie de raccords entre les images comme jamais la presse illustrée ne l'avait fait jusqu'alors. Néanmoins, cette application du langage cinématographique au graphisme de la presse magazine reste rare et circonscrite aux magazines les plus novateurs comme *Vu* en France ou *Picture Post*, fondé en 1938 par Lorant en exil à Londres.

Dans ce processus historique aujourd'hui bien connu, un photographe fait exception. En 1932, Lewis W. Hine publie son unique livre personnel intitulé *Men at Work. Photographic Studies of Modern Men and Machines*[5]. L'ouvrage, que son auteur destine aux enfants et dont il réalise lui-même la mise en page, se présente en deux parties distinctes. La première, consacrée à la construction de l'Empire State Building, adopte clairement des principes de montage inspirés par le langage cinématographique. La seconde, consacrée plus spécifiquement aux rapports entre l'homme et la machine, crée des analogies formelles entre des images élaborées sur des modèles allégoriques.

Si l'œuvre de Hine fait l'objet, aujourd'hui encore, de nombreuses études et publications, il faut remarquer que c'est essentiellement son travail à Ellis Island d'abord puis pour le compte du National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) qui retient surtout l'attention des historiens et des critiques. L'œuvre de Hine plaît quand elle dénonce des situations sociales injustes et qu'elle réclame des réformes. Par contre, le travail largement allégorique qu'il entreprend à partir de 1920 et qui culmine avec la publication de *Men at Work* reste aujourd'hui encore nettement sous-évalué. Il est surprenant que la mise en page novatrice de la série consacrée à la construction de l'Empire State Building n'ait jamais été analysée et encore moins replacée dans une histoire des discours photographiques. Dans l'essai qui clôture la monographie publiée par Aperture sous le titre *America and Lewis Hine*, Alan Trachtenberg se contente d'écrire :

> Conformément à son idée fonctionnaliste de l'éducation, Hine nous montre le building comme il apparaît : étape par étape : rien de mystérieux, rien d'inquiétant (comme dans les études de gratte-ciel de Stieglitz à la même période) — juste quelque chose de fabriqué, avec talent, audace et courage[6].

Kate Sampsell-Willmann, dans une étude plus récente[7], consacre un chapitre

[5] Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work: Photographic Studies of Modern Men and Machines,* New York, Macmillan, 1932. Réédition en fac-similé, New York, Dover, Rochester, George Eastman House, 1977 (non paginé).
[6] Alan Trachtenberg, « Ever – The Human Document », dans *America and Lewis Hine: Photographs 1904–1940*, New York, The Brooklyn Museum and Aperture, 1977, p. 136.
[7] Kate Sampsell-Willmann, *Lewis Hine as Social Critic*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2009, pp. 175–208.

(sur six) au travail entrepris par Hine entre 1920 et 1931. Mais fondant son étude sur les nombreuses sources écrites, entre autres l'importante correspondance de Hine à son ami Paul Kellogg, elle dresse un portrait très précis de l'homme sans jamais analyser ni les images ni le livre, comme si Lewis Hine pouvait être « critique social » sans être photographe. Seule Alison Nordström évoque rapidement les premières images de *Men at Work* dans le catalogue que la George Eastman House publie à l'occasion d'une grande exposition rétrospective de l'œuvre de Hine et dans lequel figure un fac-simile de l'édition originale[8].

C'est peu dire que toute l'œuvre de Hine se justifie d'une obsession constante d'énoncer un discours au moyen de la photographie. Son engagement social est un combat permanent tout au long de sa carrière. Hine est convaincu que la photographie peut changer le monde, qu'elle peut dénoncer les injustices sociales, susciter une réaction de la part du public et favoriser des mesures politiques adéquates. Actif durant la Progressive Era, il est proche des réformistes qui réclament une plus grande intervention de l'État dans les problèmes économiques et sociaux dont souffre la population, en particulier les nouveaux immigrés. Son travail durant une douzaine d'années, entre 1906 et 1918, pour le compte du NCLC, est exemplaire à cet égard. « Where lies the power in a picture ? » demande-t-il en 1909, au cours de la National Conference of Charities and Correction réunie autour du thème « Press and Publicity ». Sa communication intitulée « Social Photography : How the Camera May Help in the Social Uplift »[9], peut être lue comme un « manifeste personnel », écrit Alan Trachtenberg[10]. Hine y affirme sa foi dans la capacité de la photographie à toucher l'opinion publique et dans l'universalité de son langage, grâce auquel elle raconte

> […] une histoire emballée dans la forme vitale la plus condensée. En fait, elle est souvent plus efficace que la réalité pourrait l'être puisque, dans une image, les intérêts conflictuels et non essentiels ont été éliminés. L'image est le langage de toutes les nationalités et de tous les âges. L'augmentation, ces dernières années, du nombre d'illustrations dans les journaux, les livres, les expositions et autres moyens de ce genre le démontre amplement[11].

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[8] *Lewis Hine: From the collections of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film*, Paris, Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson ; Madrid, Fundación MAPFRE ; Rotterdam, Nederlands Fotomuseum ; New York City, International Center of Photography ; Rochester, GEH, 2011, p. 31.
[9] Hine, « Social Photography: How the Camera May Help in the Social Uplift », *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction at the Thirty-sixth Annual Session held in the City of Buffalo, New York, June 9–16, 1909*, Fort Wayne, IN, Alexander Johnson ed., Press of Fort Wayne, 1909, pp. 355–359. Texte disponible en ligne sur le site de l'University of Illinois at Chicago <www.uic.edu/depts/hist/hull-maxwell/maxwell/chapters/russheb/section7/documents/HINE-Social-Photography.pdf> [consulté le 1er février 2016].
[10] Trachtenberg, « Ever – The Human Document », op. cit., p. 132.
[11] Hine, « Social Photography: How the Camera May Help in the Social Uplift », op. cit., pp. 50–54. Extraits cités par Trachtenberg, « Ever – The Human Document », op. cit., pp. 132–133.

Ce pouvoir de l'image dont Hine a acquis une conscience aiguë ne peut s'exercer qu'à la condition que les photographies soient accompagnées d'un texte qui explicite leur message et qu'elles soient largement diffusées. Très tôt, Hine se soucie de publier ses photos dans des magazines (*The Survey* en priorité) sous la forme de reportages autonomes qu'il nommera plus tard « *photo-story* ». Il les fait imprimer sur des dépliants (*Night Scenes in the City of Brotherly Love*, 1907) ou les tire en diapositives pour illustrer des conférences. Devenu exhibition designer pour le NCLC, il réalise des panneaux d'expositions pour lesquels il emploie plusieurs procédés récurrents : prédominance du message textuel sur les images ; textes courts (mots isolés, fragments de phrases, questions et interpellations du public) qui orientent la lecture du panneau et explicitent les images, chacune conservant son autonomie propre ; message parfaitement lisible, même sans les images qui l'illustrent ; structures oppositionnelles symétriques (« old methods, new methods »), graphismes (flèches, camemberts), multiplication des photographies constituant autant de preuves de l'exploitation des enfants (fig. 1). L'ensemble de ces procédés fait apparaître, en creux, qu'il en est un autre que Lewis Hine n'exploite pas : le montage des images articulées entre elles au moyen de raccords visuels.

À partir de 1920, Hine change radicalement l'orientation de son travail. Tout en exécutant des commandes pour diverses entreprises, il conçoit un projet photographique personnel : réaliser ce qu'il appelle des « work portraits ». Il ne s'agit plus de dénoncer des situations d'injustice sociale mais de donner de l'ouvrier l'image d'un héros des temps modernes. « Je pensais — écrit-il en 1938 — avoir fait ma part de documentation négative. Je voulais faire quelque chose de positif. Alors je me suis dit 'Pourquoi ne pas faire le travailleur au travail ? L'homme à son poste. En ce temps-là, il était aussi défavorisé que le gosse à l'usine.' »[12]

Ce travail poursuivi durant une dizaine d'années, auquel vient s'ajouter la commande qu'il reçoit en 1930 de photographier la construction de l'Empire State Building, trouve son accomplissement dans le livre d'une cinquantaine de pages qu'il publie en 1932 et qui témoigne de façon exemplaire que, pour énoncer ce discours radicalement neuf, Lewis Hine a dû mettre au point de nouveaux modes discursifs adaptés aux idées qu'il entendait soutenir. Le texte introductif intitulé « L'esprit de l'industrie » explicite, dit-il, son nouveau credo :

Les villes ne se construisent pas d'elles-mêmes, les machines ne fabriquent pas des machines s'il n'y a pas derrière elles des cerveaux et le travail des hommes. Nous appelons cela l'Âge de la Machine. Mais plus nous utilisons de machines, plus nous avons besoin d'hommes réels pour les fabriquer et les conduire[13].

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[12] Cité par Elisabeth McCausland, « Portrait of a Photographer », *Survey Graphic*, oct. 1938, repris dans Alan Trachtenberg, « Ever – The Human Document », op. cit., p. 134.
[13] Hine, « The Spirit of Industry », dans *Men at Work*, op. cit. (non paginé).

Fig. 1: Lewis W. Hine, Panneaux d'exposition pour le National Child Labor Committee. Ca 1913-14. Washington, Library of Congress, NCLC Collection.

L'humain est au cœur du projet de Hine, comme il est au cœur de la machine. Hine donne à cette idée une forme visuelle inédite, à la fois simple et récurrente : c'est le cercle, dont l'homme est le centre ou dont le corps accompagne la courbe de la machine (figs 2–4).

Ces « work portraits » ont clairement une vocation allégorique. La forme circulaire exprime une idée universelle. En extrayant chaque cas de son contexte, en supprimant de l'image tout ce qui pourrait appeler un hors-champ, en mettant en scène chaque situation de manière théâtrale et parfois spectaculaire, le photographe inscrit l'homme au cœur de la machine qui l'enveloppe dans son cocon de métal. Comme dans les anciennes figures allégoriques dotées d'emblèmes et d'attributs, la machine allégorise la figure de l'ouvrier qui perd sa singularité historique pour devenir un héros des temps modernes. L'allégorie devient le nouveau moyen discursif que Hine découvre pour transformer en idée l'image d'un fait et passer ainsi du particulier au général.

Dans la première partie du livre consacrée à la construction de l'Empire State Building, Hine découvre un nouveau mode d'énonciation de son discours, sans abandonner son projet allégorique mais en l'adaptant aux dimensions exceptionnelles de son objet et aux conditions extrêmement difficiles dans lesquelles

MEN AT WORK

Fig. 3: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).
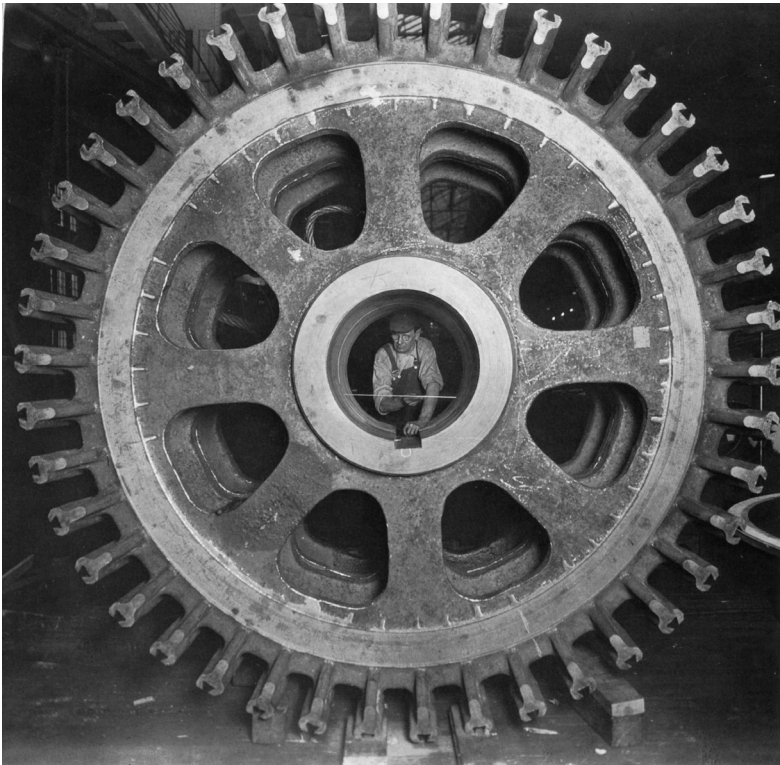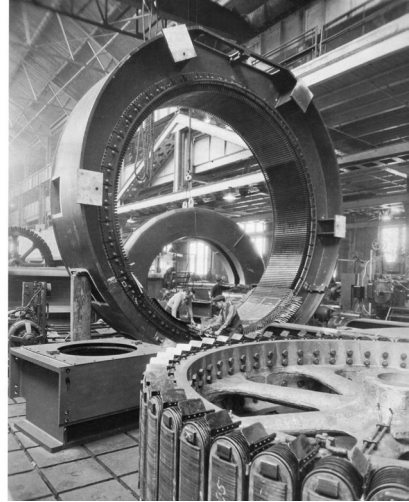
Fig. 4: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).

Fig. 5: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).

il a dû travailler. La page-titre du livre témoigne bien de cette différence (fig. 5). Elle montre un homme debout au bord du vide, communiquant par gestes avec un autre situé en contrebas mais qu'on ne voit pas. Le regard de l'homme et la position de ses mains font exister un ailleurs au-delà du cadre, un hors-champ qui alimente librement l'imaginaire du spectateur. Autant les « work portraits » pris en usine inscrivent l'ouvrier dans un cercle fermé, autant les photographies de l'Empire State Building le situent dans un espace largement ouvert. Le hors-champ de l'image et les indicateurs qui, dans l'image, signifient sa présence deviennent des instruments discursifs tout à fait neufs.

À gauche de la page-titre, une photo sous-titrée *The Sky Boy* montre un homme suspendu à un câble en plein ciel au-dessus de New York. On ne voit pas à quoi est attaché le câble qui traverse obliquement toute l'image et fait exister un puissant hors-champ tout autour de l'homme suspendu dans le vide, ce qui accroît la puissance littéralement vertigineuse de l'image. Or, une autre photo de la même scène, prise d'un point de vue plus élevé, montre que cet ouvrier se trouve en réalité au-dessus d'un plancher situé à peine deux mètres sous lui (fig. 6). Cette seconde image, dont le hors-champ est faible, ne figure pas dans *Men at Work*. On comprend qu'en choisissant la première, Hine cherchait une image allégorique qui conserverait sa puissance mythique : cet homme qui vole au-dessus de New York, Hine le surnomme Icare.

Du millier de photographies qu'il a prises durant la construction de l'édifice, Hine n'en conserve que vingt-huit dans *Men at Work*. Quoique la série commence au début du chantier (*Fondation Men*) et s'achève à la fin (*Finishing Up the Job*), elle ne se structure pas comme un récit. Les images sont assemblées par catégories de travail : les terrassiers, les grutiers, les riveteurs, les soudeurs, les contrôleurs. L'analyse de la mise en page des images fait apparaître que les photos ont été choisies sur la base de critères mûrement réfléchis, en fonction des possibilités de montage qu'elles offrent. À raison d'une photo par page (parfois deux, jamais plus), les images sont disposées sur chaque double page de manière à créer entre elles différents raccords au sens cinématographique du terme : raccords de regard ou raccords dans l'axe. Sur la double page intitulée *Derrick Men*, Hine place à gauche la photo d'un ouvrier tenant un câble et regardant vers le haut. En prolongeant son regard jusqu'à la photographie de droite, on constate qu'il rencontre celui d'un autre ouvrier, torse nu, debout sur une poutrelle et regardant vers le bas (fig. 7) ; sur la page suivante, l'homme suspendu au crochet volumineux d'une grue est le même qui, à l'arrière-plan de la photo de droite, attache un lot de poutrelles à ce même crochet (fig. 8) ; sur la double page intitulée *Riveting Gang*, la photo de gauche montre un groupe de riveteurs en plan large et, à droite, un seul riveteur en plan rapproché (fig. 9) ; sur la double page intitulée *Checking Up*, on voit à gauche un ingénieur regardant dans le viseur de son théodolite et faisant un signe de la main vers le haut. Sur la photo de droite, un ouvrier qui travaille au sommet d'une poutrelle verticale semble répondre à son injonction (fig. 10). Le court texte accompagnant les deux images confirme ce rapport : les ingénieurs vérifient constamment la verticalité des éléments as-

THE SKY BOY

One of the first men to swing out a quarter of a mile above
New York City, helping to build a skyscraper.

Fig. 6: Lewis W. Hine, *The Sky Boy*. A gauche, épreuve publiée dans *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé); à droite, autre cliché de la série (non publié).

DERRICK MEN

The man below is turning and directing
a great derrick; the connecters opposite
are receiving a beam to lay it in place.

Fig. 7: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).

This derrick gang is moving a heavy load of planks while men in the foreground extend the bull-stick of the derrick for greater leverage. Opposite, another connecter goes aloft.

Fig. 8: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).
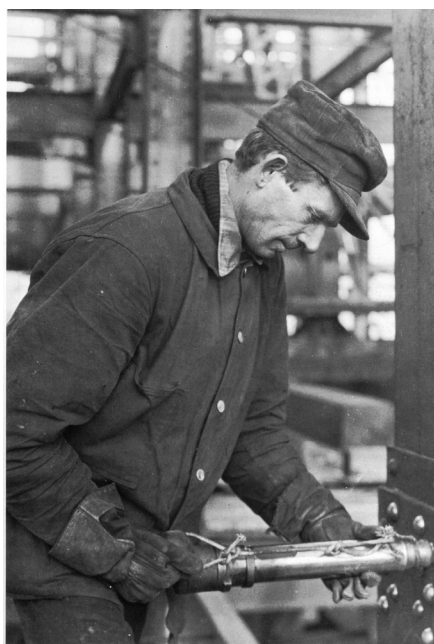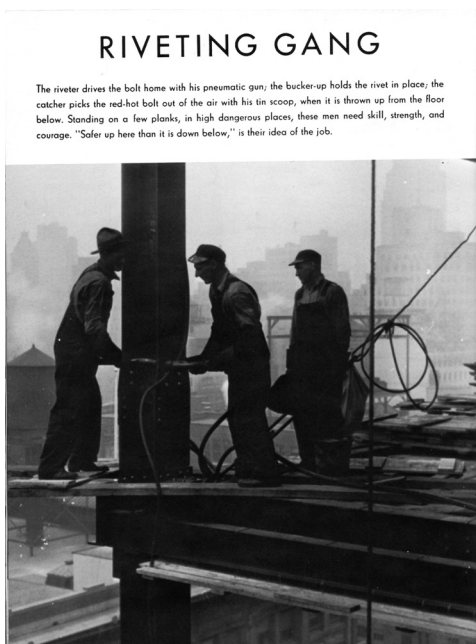
RIVETING GANG

The riveter drives the bolt home with his pneumatic gun; the bucker-up holds the rivet in place; the catcher picks the red-hot bolt out of the air with his tin scoop, when it is thrown up from the floor below. Standing on a few planks, in high dangerous places, these men need skill, strength, and courage. "Safer up here than it is down below," is their idea of the job.

Fig. 9: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).

Fig. 10: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).

semblés, qui sont aussitôt rectifiés si nécessaire. À y regarder de plus près, il est évident que ces raccords visuels sont faux, ou du moins qu'ils ne respectent pas une stricte continuité de contexte. On ne peut donc parler de raccord au sens strict du terme. Néanmoins, il y a incontestablement des rapports visuels qui ont été faits entre les images en vue de les relier tout en laissant percevoir le décalage qui subsiste entre elles et que viennent colmater les légendes.

Men at Work exploite d'autres formes de montage qui ne sont pas du même ordre mais jouent sur des relations plastiques entre les images, par répétition des mêmes structures formelles : les jets d'étincelles des soudeurs, que Hine qualifie de feux d'artifices industriels (fig. 11) ou le motif triangulaire que forment les câbles qui se détachent sur le fond blanc du ciel (fig. 12). Hine exploite aussi intelligemment le réseau de lignes dessinées par les câbles et qui permet de réunir visuellement plusieurs images. Dans la séquence consacrée aux *Derrick Men*, les câbles et les regards hors-champ créent une forme triangulaire qui se superpose aux trois images ainsi reliées (fig. 13).

La séquence consacrée à la construction de l'Empire State Building obéit à des principes de montage à peu près inexistants dans la pratique courante de la mise en page des magazines et des livres illustrés par la photographie[14]. Différente des

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[14] On peut s'en rendre compte aisément en parcourant le livre très utile de Robert Lebecq et Bodo

The burner, above, is cutting the beam with his acetylene torch. The heater, right, gets the bolts red hot and tosses them to the riveters. The welder, opposite, is working on a great steel pipe in its shaft. Industrial fireworks!

Fig. 11: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).

As the building pushes skyward the connecters stay aloft and bolt the beams after they have swung into place. Two of them (opposite) are going up to the next height, like spiders spinning a fabric of steel against the sky.

Fig. 12: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).

The hoist engineer controls the cable that lifts the load. He takes his signal on the gong from the bellman (right) located near the derrick, who decides when it must start and stop, and rings the gong for the engineer below.

The hoisting gang attach the great cables to the beams, steer and shift them into place, and wave their signals to the bellman. Careful teamwork is necessary; every man is alert at every minute to do his part.

Fig. 13: Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work*, 1932 (non paginé).

« *work portraits* » de la seconde partie du livre, cette mise en page ne s'adapte pas seulement aux conditions de la prise de vue sur un chantier qu'il était impossible de saisir globalement. Elle constitue surtout pour Lewis Hine un mode énonciatif tout à fait adapté au discours qu'il entend énoncer. Il ne cesse de répéter, dans le livre comme dans ses entretiens, que l'Empire State Building, « le plus haut point jamais atteint par une structure faite par l'homme »[15], a des fondations humaines. La séquence photographique, qui place l'homme au centre de chaque image (sans jamais indiquer son nom), rappelle que le symbole de la puissance industrielle et du capitalisme américains n'a pas été construit par un homme seul, mais par une collectivité d'ouvriers reliés entre eux par des grues et des câbles, mais aussi par des regards, des responsabilités partagées, une forte collaboration entre chacun et une grande solidarité, enfin par le sentiment de dépasser leur condition sociale en construisant le plus haut gratte-ciel du monde. Le montage s'avère être la forme requise pour énoncer un tel discours. Les raccords entre les images attestent que l'Empire State Building est l'œuvre d'hommes reliés par toutes sortes de fils, au propre (les câbles qui structurent nombre d'images) comme au figuré (la collecti-

Von Dewitz, *Kiosk. Eine Geschichte Der Fotoreportage. A History of Photojournalism. 1839–1973*, Göttingen, Steidl Verlag, 2001. Ce catalogue publié pour une exposition du Museum Ludwig de Cologne présente plus de 600 mises en page de magazines illustrés par la photographie.
[15] Hine, *Men at Work*, op. cit., chap. « Finishing the Job ».

vité). Le montage est la forme visuelle de l'unité symbolique de cette collectivité et des liens profonds qui la constituent en tant que classe.

Aucun projecteur ne viendra jamais animer (au sens strictement mécanique du terme) les images fixes de Lewis W. Hine. Celui-ci ne s'intéressait pas au mouvement des images, mais cherchait à mobiliser les gens. Son travail sur les enfants avait une forte charge émotionnelle : il fallait avant tout émouvoir l'opinion publique pour que les choses bougent. Il utilisait pour cela des moyens photographiques, graphiques et textuels. Dans *Men at Work*, il ne s'agit plus de sensibiliser l'opinion, mais de faire l'apologie des hommes qui sont les supports de toute la société, de montrer qu'ils sont les vrais héros des temps modernes, bien supérieurs aux machines qu'ils fabriquent. Il s'agit surtout de faire adhérer le spectateur à cette vision différente du monde. Le mouvement que l'œuvre de Hine produit est un mouvement mental, suggéré par le montage. Faire voir le monde autrement, pour qu'il soit pensé autrement, et que de nouvelles valeurs s'imposent qui replacent l'homme au cœur du processus, tel est le discours que véhicule *Men at Work*.

De l'image fixe au mouvement de la pensée, le chemin passe par la perception et le montage. Le cinéma, parce qu'il est une image-mouvement, a le pouvoir d'agir sur la conscience et de faire naître chez le spectateur ce que Deleuze, citant Eisenstein, appelle un « automate spirituel ». La photographie, image fixe, ne bénéficie pas de cet avantage ni de cette puissance des images en mouvement. Le montage a néanmoins le pouvoir de susciter des idées et de mobiliser l'esprit du spectateur, à la condition d'être autre chose qu'une simple suite d'images. Eisenstein rappelle, dans ce texte essentiel qu'est « Montage 1938 », cette propriété qu'avait découverte « l'aile gauche » des partisans du montage :

> [...] à savoir que deux morceaux de pellicule, n'importe lesquels, mis bout à bout se combinent inévitablement; et que de leur juxtaposition naît une qualité nouvelle. Ceci n'est nullement une particularité du cinéma; c'est un phénomène que l'on remarque invariablement chaque fois que l'on juxtapose deux faits, deux phénomènes ou deux objets. [...]. Il n'y a donc rien de surprenant dans le fait que les spectateurs d'un film tirent des déductions bien définies de la juxtaposition de deux morceaux de pellicule mis bout à bout[16].

Pour le théoricien du « montage intellectuel », une simple continuité entre deux images ne suffit pas à dynamiser dialectiquement la pensée pour lui faire atteindre un niveau supérieur. Les éléments associés doivent avoir été finement sélectionnés :

> La représentation A et la représentation B doivent être choisies (parmi tous les éléments possibles du thème que l'on traite) et recherchées de telle sorte que leur

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[16] Eisenstein, « Montage 1938 », repris dans Eisenstein, *Le Film: sa forme, son sens,* op. cit., pp. 214–215.

juxtaposition — la leur et non celle d'autres éléments — éveille dans l'esprit et dans la sensibilité du spectateur une image exhaustive du thème traité[17].

Il précise sa formule avec un exemple très simple : une montre se compose d'un disque blanc numéroté, de deux tiges de métal mobiles fixées au centre, l'une plus grande que l'autre, et dessinant entre elles une série de figures géométriques. Ce ne sont pourtant pas des figures géométriques que notre esprit perçoit, mais l'image du temps. Le disque, les chiffres, les aiguilles sont les parties de la montre, ce sont des figures qui ne s'additionnent pas, mais dont le produit crée dans l'esprit ce qu'Eisenstein appelle une image. Pour lui, l'image, c'est le Tout :

> Chacun des éléments du montage n'est plus indépendant mais devient une des représentations particulières du thème général également présent dans tous les 'plans'. La juxtaposition de tous ces éléments en un montage donné fait naître et apparaître au grand jour ce caractère général qui a engendré chacun de ces éléments et qui les unit en un tout, singulièrement en cette image d'ensemble à travers laquelle le créateur, suivi du spectateur, ressent le thème du film[18].

Il ajoute, un peu plus loin : « Le montage prend tout son sens réaliste quand les différents morceaux produisent, une fois réunis, le Tout, la Synthèse d'un thème donné. C'est bien là l'image, où le thème s'incarne. »[19].

Ainsi procède Lewis Hine dans le montage de la séquence consacrée à l'Empire State Building. Chacune des images retenues contient des éléments visuels indicateurs d'un puissant hors-champ : regards, câbles, gestes, poutrelles, grues, à chaque fois quelque chose déborde des limites du cadre, suggère l'immensité du vide au-dessus duquel les ouvriers travaillent, appelle l'autre qui ne se voit pas mais sans qui le travail ne peut se faire. En suturant l'intervalle qui sépare chaque image, le montage construit non pas un gratte-ciel mais des rapports entre les hommes et les machines et, par-dessus tout, des relations humaines. Le Tout dont parle Eisenstein n'est pas l'Empire State Building dont, de façon très significative, Hine ne montre pas l'achèvement alors qu'il a photographié, depuis la rue, l'immense édifice terminé. Le Tout, c'est l'idée allégorique que le plus haut gratte-ciel du monde est à l'image de toute la société : il a été construit par la classe ouvrière, par « nos soldats, nos soutiens, les vrais parents de notre vie », selon les mots de William James cités en exergue.

Le lecteur attentif de *Men at Work* perçoit les procédés de montage employés, les raccords de regards ou les relations plastiques qui font naître en lui l'idée synthétique que le livre tout entier exprime. Il voit combien chacune des parties de l'ouvrage obéit aux mêmes principes de construction que l'ensemble. Il comprend que le montage d'images fixes est capable de mettre la pensée elle-même

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[17] Eisenstein, *Le Film : sa forme, son sens*, op. cit., p. 217.
[18] Ibidem.
[19] Ivi, p. 226. Il n'est pas surprenant de savoir que la série d'images photographiques consacrée à la construction de l'Empire State Building figurait dans la collection personnelle d'Eisenstein.

en mouvement pour qu'elle atteigne un stade supérieur, une idée globale qui ne se réduit pas à la somme des parties. La dernière image du livre est un portrait d'ouvrier non identifié, un visage en gros plan que souligne un large sourire. Non pas un homme singulier mais la personnification allégorique de son statut social, de sa classe. Cet homme anonyme incarne l'idée véhiculée par l'ensemble du livre. Dans *Men at Work*, la photographie, cette image fixe, est devenue dynamique.

Il est intéressant de constater qu'après la publication de *Men at Work*, Lewis Hine n'aura plus recours à ce type de montage pour les quelques *photo-stories* qu'il publiera encore durant les années trente[20]. Alors que ce type de montage se généralise, il va même contester son emploi récurrent dans les photo-essais du magazine *Life*, estimant que relier les images par un « fil unitaire » est devenu un « fétiche »[21]. Il a raison. Les techniques de montage exploitées par *Life* ont pour objectif de construire un récit qui, recouvrant le discours, le rend à la fois plus efficace et plus pernicieux. Au contraire, dans la séquence relative à l'Empire State Building, les fils sont multiples, visibles et explicites. Hine ne triche pas.

[20] Comme, par exemple, « A Railroad Fireman » publié par le magazine *Fortune* en juin 1939.
[21] Voir à ce sujet Daile Kaplan, « 'The Fetisch of Having a Unified Thread': Lewis W. Hine's Reaction to the Use of the Photo Story in *Life* Magazine », *Exposure*, vol. 27, n° 2, 1989, pp. 9–20.

Still-moving Engrams: The Ecstasy of Bodily Gestures in Chronophotography and its Contemporary Reproductions

Francesca Scotto Lavina, "La Sapienza", Università di Roma

Abstract

In the 1880s chronophotograpic still images dissected the otherwise indistingui-shable stages of bodily movement, revealing both the discontinuities between still images that are hidden in cinematic images, and the details of gestures that are imperceptible to the human eye.

According to recent film theory, chronophotography reveals that aesthetic frui-tion is not based on continuity alone, but also on instantaneity, discontinuities of movement and the dichotomy of immobility and motion.

The essay argues that chronophotography can express the *dynamis* of Warburg's engrams and Ėjzenštejn's expressive movement, as well as its organic nature and the qualitative changes it enacts on the body. In Ėjzenštejn's opinion, the changes that occur in the work of art trigger the spectator's imitative process, which in turn is responsible for ecstatic flow.

The article considers *Choros* (Langan and Maher, 2011) and the media art project *White Horse Hills* (Wood, 2002), both of which render chronophotographic, engram-like images of movement through digital techniques. In their analysis, I claim not only that they both emphasize their chronophotographic effect, but moreover that they strengthen the *dynamis* of gesture, thus demonstrating its importance in aesthetic fruition when it is in line with the laws of nature.

Prelude: the Aesthetic Dissection of Gestures in the Chronophotographic Images of Movement

Movement has been thoroughly discussed in cinema theory: the focus has been on the ontology of movement in relation to cinematic image rather than on the material nature of movement itself in relation to its inner component, gesture.

Gesture was first brought to our attention in the 1880s with the advent of chronophotography, a technique developed by the physiologist Étienne-Jules Marey and the photographer Eadweard Muybridge to create a succession of snapshots of movement taken at equidistant intervals of time.

Marey and Muybridge, like other chronophotographers and scientists of the same period, developed different methods of dissecting the otherwise imperceptible stages of movement. Marey's first experiments were represented by graphs whose lines reproduced people's movements[1] or sculptures, reflecting his intention of showing only the phases of movement.

Marey believed these graphs gave a false impression of continuity, so he developed a photographic gun to record twelve snapshots per second from the same angle. Muybridge, on the other hand, used a battery of cameras to record the subject's movement from different angles.

As a consequence, Marey's analytical reproduction of movement addresses the qualitative changes of the body. Marey's snapshots render the trajectory of movement and its sense of duration; see *Man Walking* (Marey, 1882),[2] where a black suit hides the body's features to bring out the stages of movement in one interval of time.

Muybridge's sequences describe qualitative changes of the body in relation to different positions in space,[3] such as in *Woman Walking Downstairs* (Muybridge, 1887),[4] which clearly shows the bodily features.

Chronophotographers animated the sequences of their snapshots by using a Zoopraxiscope creating the illusion of movement to entertain larger audiences.

Despite their different techniques[5] both Marey and Muybridge's single snapshot freezes a set of gestures in an eternal any-instant-whatever, by realizing their *mise en pose,* which reduces a movement to zero by suspending each single gesture in its execution phase and allows the spectator to focus on its unperceived details.

The sequences of snapshots crystallize the whole movement in an eternal present progressive and realize a *mise en geste* of the image by extracting the gestural features of a movement; e.g. a dance, gallop or walk; however the montage of a chronophotographic sequence reveals the discontinuities between the still ima-

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[1] This technique did not show any characteristic of the observed object and made the use of captions necessary in order to explain the object's relation with its movement. Marey's graphs are available at <http://cnum.cnam.fr> [accessed 30 September 2015]. Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, trans. by Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2007 [2004]), pp. 87–90. Étienne-Jules Marey, *La Méthode Graphique dans les Sciences Expérimentales et Principalement en Physiologie et en Médecine* (Paris: G. Masson, 1878), p. 108. Marta Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830–1904)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 8–41.

[2] Marey, *Le Mouvement* (Paris: G. Masson, 1894), quoted in Michaud, p. 89, fig. 26.

[3] Tom Gunning, 'Never Seen this Picture Before; Muybridge in Multiplicity', in *Time Stands Still: Muybridge and the Instantaneous Photography Movement*, ed. by Phillip Prodger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 222–72 (pp. 224-25).

[4] Eadweard Muybridge*, The Human and Animal Locomotion Photographs*, ed. by Hans-Christian Adam (Köln: Taschen, 2010).

[5] Braun. A comparison between *Man Walking* and *Woman Walking Downstairs* and its animated Gif simulating the effect of the Zoopraxiscope (available at <http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Nude_Descending_a_Staircase,_No._2> [accessed 20 December 2015]) shows the differences between Marey's analytical purposes and Muybridge's creative and artistic intents.

ges of movement, which, by contrast, cinema makes inaccessible to conscious human perception by its apparatus.

Chronophotographic sequences show analytical images of movement, or rather, images of the gestures, which make up movement, and not 'movement-images' that are peculiar to cinema according to Deleuze. By questioning Bergson's thesis on movement Deleuze argued that continuity of movement is inherent to cinematic image, which he contrasted with stillness of photographic poses, which doesn't belong to cinema.[6]

By contrast, not only did still images appear in chronophotography and then in the projections of early cinema in the 1900s in order to arouse spectators' astonished reactions,[7] but they were also reintroduced by avant-garde movements, such as Structural Film. Directors, like Hollis Frampton,[8] drawing their inspiration from chronophotography, used the tension between stillness and motion to investigate the laws of perception and the 'unconscious optic'.[9]

Thanks to a renewed interest in chronophotography, in Early Cinema and in avant-garde movements, since the 1980s film scholars have developed a new film history and theories,[10] which consider still images, such as the 'Still-Moving Field',[11] and argue that aesthetic fruition is not based only on continuity, but also on instantaneity and discontinuities of movement.[12]

Chronophotography, among all the pre-cinematic forms, appears to be the most meaningful expression of the dichotomy between immobility and motion, and moreover its montage demonstrates tangibly that movement can be created using a series of still images.

The chronophotographic montage of movement actually reminds us of Bergson's thesis that movement consists of qualitative changes of matter (a tran-

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[6] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image,* trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997 [1986]), pp. 23–28. See Raymond Bellour, 'The Film Stilled', *Camera Obscura*, 24 (1990), 99–123 (pp. 99–100) (first publ. as 'L'Interruption, l'instant', *La Recherche photographique*, 3 (December 1987), 51–63).

[7] Gunning, 'An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator', in *Film Theory and Criticism*: *Introductory Readings*, ed. by Leo Braudy, Marshall Cohen (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 736–751 (pp. 740–41).

[8] Mark Hansen, 'Digital Technics Beyond the "Last Machine": Thinking Digital Media with Hollis Frampton', in *Between Stillness and Motion: Film, Photography, Algorithms*, ed. by Eivind Røssaak (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), pp. 45–72.

[9] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969). Rosalind Krauss suggests that Benjamin came up with the idea of the optical unconscious thanks to Marey and Muybridge's chronophotographic sequences. Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).

[10] *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded,* ed. by Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

[11] Røssaak, 'The Still Moving Field: An Introduction', in *Between Stillness and Motion,* pp. 11–26.

[12] Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen*: *Modernism's Photo Synthesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 27–73.

sition of forms) in relation to its duration. These changes are perceived as a succession of immobile sections, that is, snapshots of reality, that are cut by the brain, in much the same way as in cinematic montage, to create an illusion of perceptual continuity.[13] In turn, Bergson himself was influenced by chronophotographic experiments dealing with animal locomotion,[14] which fragmented movement into any-instant-whatever by imitating the (cinematographic) mechanism of perception and revealing its discontinuity.

Chronophotography calls into question the importance of still images sequences dealing with the oxymoron of static movement in the aesthetic fruition. By an aesthetic of dissection such images reveal details of movement that, despite being unperceived by human consciousness, are crucial to capturing the qualitative changes that are immanent to movement.

The Ecstasy of Expressive Gestures: The Chronophotographic Engrams-like Images Sequences

The gestural details revealed by chronophotography disclose the organic characteristics of movement, its physicality, the irreversibility of its duration and its dynamic and emotional potential, which history of art scholars have debated in depth in relation to painting and sculpture.

Both the *mise en pose* and *mise en geste* of Marey and Muybridge's chronophotographic sequences are reminiscent of the sense of motion rendered by Renaissance paintings and sculptures, analyzed by art historian Aby Warburg (1866–1929), who claimed that such still images triggered emotional responses.

Warburg, and before him, his art historian professor, August Schmarsow, were deeply influenced by Robert Vischer's thinking in the 1870s. The philosopher argued that works of art representing particular forms based on conformity to the design and function of body parts (eyes, muscles, limbs, posture as a whole) aroused particular responsive feelings.[15] Schmarsow emphasized the role of gestures in the appreciation of visual arts, and Warburg, following his teaching, during his studies of Renaissance paintings, claimed that some gestures and bodily postures, which he distinguished as *pathosformeln* (forms of pathos), are constantly reproduced in the history of art. He suggested that such gestures and

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[13] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution,* trans. by Arthur Mitchell (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1998), pp. 302–04. Different branches of sciences, such as psychology, physiology and neuroscience, have been addressing the complex phenomenon of the human perception of motion. 'Neurophysiological and imaging experiments support […] biological movements might be recognized by analysing sequences of body shapes that correspond to "snapshots" from movies of complex movements', which supports Bergson's thesis. See Martin A. Giese and Tomaso Poggio, 'Neural Mechanisms for the Recognition of Biological Movements', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 4 (March 2003), 179–92 (p. 180).
[14] Braun, pp. 280–81.
[15] Robert Vischer, *Über das Optische Formgefühl: Ein Beitrag zur Ästhetik* (Leipzig: Credner, 1873).

postures rendering the sense of motion are imprinted in our memory because of their emotional power. He used the term 'engrams', a term he borrowed from evolutionary biologist Richard Semon (1859–1918), to describe these images in terms of their energy. Since 1927, Warburg had been collecting various examples of *pathosformeln* in his *Mnemosyne,*[16] whose panels join sets of still images (engrams), which make sense in relation to each other. Not only does each panel represent a general theme, but it also portrays energy in motion (*dynamis*), flowing among the engrams in a way that is quite similar to juxtaposed chronophotographic images.[17]

Moreover chronophotography 'reproduces movement as a function of any-instant-whatever',[18] that is, one 'instant, which is equidistant from another'.[19] Chronophotographic instants are privileged, because they are 'remarkable or singular points, which belong to movement […], but simply not ordinary, not regular […], an organised set of any-instant-whatevers through which the cuts have to pass'.[20] These characteristics give them their organic nature that does not belong to (unnatural) 'poses'.[21] According to Ėjzenštejn, organic means being natural and in harmony with the laws of nature[22] and it is the basis of pathos.

Chronophotographic still images are actual images of natural gestures, whose expressivity turns such images into forms of pathos.[23] Ėjzenštejn claimed that expressivity is peculiar to such organic gestures blending the instinctive and the conscious or goal-oriented features of movement.[24] Such gestures are deeply imprinted in the human memory because of their emotional meaning as a result of natural evolution.[25]

In *Woman Dancing* (Muybridge, 1887),[26] the dancer emphasizes the expres-

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[16] Aby Warburg, *Mnemosyne. L'Atlante delle Immagini*, ed. by Martin Warnke and Claudia Brin (Turin: Aragno, 2002).

[17] Michaud, p. 86.

[18] Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 5. Deleuze used 'privileged instants' in Ėjzenštejn's meaning, that is, 'pathetic', 'moments of crisis'. Ibid.

[19] Ivi, p. 6

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ivi, p. 5.

[22] For 'organic', 'pathos' and 'ecstasy' see, Sergej M. Ėjzenštejn, *Non-indifferent Nature: Film and the Structure of the Things*, ed. by Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 [1964]).

[23] It is worth noting Warburg's forms of pathos are related to bodily expressions and gestures, while Ėjzenštejn's deals with the pathetization of not necessarily pathetic raw material through the use of montage. See Sylvia Sasse, 'Pathos und Antipathos. Pathosformeln bei Sergej Ėjzenštejn und Aby Waburg', in *Pathos: zur Geschichte Einer Problematischen Kategorie*, ed. by Cornelia Zumbusch (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010), pp. 171–90.

[24] Ėjzenštejn, Sergei Tretyakov, 'Expressive Movement', trans. by Alma Law, *Millennium Film Journal*, 3 (Winter-Spring 1979), 30–38.

[25] Both Ėjzenštejn and Warburg were deeply influenced by *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* published in 1872 by the evolutionary biologist Charles Darwin, who argued that emotions are expressed by facial expressions and bodily movements.

[26] The image is available at MoMa website: <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/44243?locale=en> [accessed 20 December 2015].

sivity of her solo ballet by sensually moving the draperies of her transparent dress; her gestures bring to mind the study of the nymph in motion in panel 39 of Warburg's *Mnemosyne.* Moreover we manage to perceive expressivity in the stylized silhouette's oriented walk represented in *Man Walking* reminding us of the 'zig zag'[27] and the snake (*dynamis* par excellence according to both Warburg and Ėjzenštejn)[28] in the *Laocoön* sculptural group (*Mnemosyne,* panel 6).

Whenever an artist manages to capture the expressive gestures, as in aforementioned examples, he stimulates the spectators into recalling forms of pathos and allows expressive gestural language to prevail according to natural laws.

Ėjzenštejn argued that such a language and the sense of touch triggered by the sight of the gesture are the inner components of emotional response; he also claimed that such a response is primitive and prelogical and it causes a sort of regression to an earlier form of thinking, where the distinction between motion and emotion is less clear and, as a consequence, it allows to represent ideas in a very tangible way.[29] Moreover, Ėjzenštejn's concept of the audio-visual images (he used the Russian word *obraznost*) describes the connection between visual motifs and general ideas or topics in art, in short: empirically invisible abstractions.

The expressive gestures of the chronophotographic engrams-like images are visual motifs that crystallize into stable forms leading to a plastic composition of the shot in pathetic terms.[30]

Such stable forms are montaged, as in Warburg's panels, in an organized set of images of organic gestures.

Whenever montage, in Ėjzenštejn's opinion, manages to arrange a set of images according to a pathetic composition of all its elements, it means producing a rhythm[31] and showing qualitative changes, which occur in the image and contemporaneously in the bodies of the spectators because of an emotionally induced imitative process. This produces the spectator's transition from one physical state to another, that is, a 'going out of himself',[32] responsible for generating an 'ecstatic flow', which deeply affects the spectator's body at an unconscious level before he becomes aware of it.

Chronophotographic montaged sets of still images show the transition from

[27] Michaud, p. 286.

[28] Ivi, p. 285–87.

[29] Ėjzenštejn was deeply influenced by the research of two psychologists, Vygotsky and Lauria, arguing that the origins of language lie in gesture itself. This assumption might be confirmed by recent neuroscientific trials demonstrating that language, as well as cognition, might have evolved through gestures and body language because of the closeness of the mirror neurons and the Broca area, the part of the brain which produces language. Luciano Fadiga, Laila Craighero, Alessandro D'Ausilio, 'Broca's Area in Language, Action, and Music', *The Neurosciences and Music III, Disorders and Plasticity*: Ann. NY Acad. Sci., 1169 (2009), 448–58.

[30] Ėjzenštejn, *Nonindifferent Nature*. Ėjzenštejn, *Towards a Theory of Montage*: *Selected Works II*, trans. by Michael Glenny, ed. by Glenny and Richard Taylor (London: BFI Publishing, 1991).

[31] Ėjzenštejn, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory,* ed. and trans. by Jay Leyda (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1949), pp. 72–82.

[32] Ivi, p. 166.

one gesture into another, which is directly related to the flow of privileged any-instants-whatever extracted by movement. The composition of the whole movement creates a rhythm and produces the qualitative changes (claimed by Bergson as well) mirrored into spectator's body. This draws him into motion through a (mental) imitation of the expressive gestures of the image.

With montage the degree of muscle contractions, the various limbs positions and the changes of direction in the movement manage to express Warburgian *dynamis,* which affects the senses at various levels and intensities.

In fact, chronophotographic sequences 'move-with the feeling of the movement taking form' and therefore spectators 'feel-with […] the intensive passage from the virtual to actualization […], what is amodally felt [...] at the threshold of sight'.[33]

The Dynamic Echoes of Gestures in the Digital Chronophotographic Reproduction

Digitization has given further impulse to new film theory and the Still-Moving Field and has paved the way to a deeper dialogue between cinema, chronophotography, photography in general, and other arts, such as painting and sculpture.[34] Digital effects manage to 'animate and complexify the apparently frozen or fixed time-frames'[35] of chronophotography and therefore they enhance its potential to emphasize the details of gestures and movement.

Nowadays chronophotography inspires the spectacular effects of mainstream cinema, the most famous of which is the 'bullet-time effect' of *Matrix* (Lana and Andy Wachowski, 1999),[36] as well as experimental films and art projects, in which immobility (still images of movement) and movement(-image) can flow into each other or even coexist in the same frame, as in *Choros*, an experimental film by Michael Langan and Terah Maher (2011).[37]

We can already see this in an analogical predecessor of *Choros*, *Duo* (*Pas de Deux,* Norman McLaren, 1968), from which Langan and Maher drew their inspiration. In *Duo*, the dancer's still figures are duplicated to create two figures moving about the stage contemporaneously. The moving images of the figures remind us of the process of 'going outside oneself' and seem to physically represent the concept of Ėjzenštejn's ecstasy.

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[33] Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA, London: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 94–95. Manning's considerations refer to Marey's work.

[34] These arts have been deeply influenced by chronophotography since the 1920s. See Marcel Duchamp and Giacomo Balla's paintings, avant-garde movements of Kinetic art and Futurism and, in the 1970s, Francis Bacon's paintings.

[35] Hansen, p. 57.

[36] Røssaak, 'Figures of Sensation: Between Still and Moving Images', in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, p. 321.

[37] *Choros*, online video is available at <http://langanfilms.com/choros.html> [accessed 20 December 2015].

In *Choros*, the digital technique, besides reproducing this effect, adds the chronophotographic effect vividly producing a chorus of gestures (fig 1).

Choros is a significant example of the charm of gestures made apparent through digital manipulation and allows us to explore the tension between stillness and motion and the dissection of the chronophotographic effect by 'fine-grained temporal intervals'.[38]

The *mise-en-scene* of the solo ballet of Maher, who is one of the directors as well as the dancer on stage, is in line with Muybridge's effort of reproducing the fascination of dancers' gestures,[39] as privileged any-instants-whatever.

After dissecting the movements of Maher's figure into thirty-two engrams-like image (juxtaposing the body's gestures side by side) digital compositing sets them in motion in the continuous flow of a movement-image. The result is a continuous overlapping of figures hauntingly echoing every graceful and deliberate gesture of the dancer (fig. 2) reminding us of *Woman Dancing* animated by a Zoopraxiscope.

Every chronophotographic sequence of Maher's gestures starts from a still image of a single figure and merges into another still image recomposing thirty-two Maher's bodily images in a unique figure. As the stillness is perceived, Maher's body sets in motion another movement that gives rise to the same process once again.

In some of the frames, still images of Maher's figure coexist with chronophotographic sequences of her movement (fig. 2), which strengthens the composition of the image in pathetic terms by contrasting stillness with motion. Even though this clearly reveals the paradox of immobility immanent to the moving image, both still images and chronophotographic sequences render the sense of movement, as in the images of Warburg's *Mnemosyne* or in the kinetic artists' paintings, such as *Nude Descending a Staircase* (Marcel Duchamp, 1912, oil on canvas, 147×89.2 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia).[40]

However, in spite of the astonishment of audiences of Early Cinema at the transitions from moving to still image and vice-versa, and besides the disclosure of the optical unconscious that Structural Film directors aimed at, the emotional appeal of experimental cinematographic forms like *Choros* seems to be the result of the ecstatic flow triggered by the qualitative changes occurring in the image of the dancer's body.

Flowing in sequence, Maher's expressive gestures generate a continuous flow of privileged any-instants-whatever extracted by movement rendering a sense of

[38] Hansen, p. 57.
[39] Laurent Guido, 'Rhythmic Bodies/Movies: Dance as Attraction in Early Film Culture', in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, pp. 139–56.
[40] Image available at <http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Nude_Descending_a_Staircase,_No._2> [accessed 20 December 2015].

duration expanding into space. The gestures seem to create a rhythm, crucial to pathos and to spectators' (mental) imitative process of Maher's movements.

The rhythm is enhanced thanks to the close match of the tempo of the soundtrack, *Music for Eighteen Musicians* (Steve Reich, 1976) with the number of gestures created by using the chronophotographic digital effect, thus showing that 'the attitude of the body is like a time-image […]; the gesture is already a different time-image, the order or organization of time'.[41]

The pathetic composition of *Choros* images (fig. 2) often realizes figures of montage that Ėjzenštejn had previously analyzed in still images, such as Balla's paintings[42] or the aforementioned *Laocoön* sculptural group,[43] which he defined the totem of movement, as did Warburg.

As in *Laocoön*, the montage is based on the collision of elements (colours, forms) that are re-composed after being decomposed to give each of them a pathetic role.[44] Montage 'brings a succession to simultaneity […], [and] propagates a dynamic impetus'.[45] Maher's pale limbs are highlighted against a dark background and are further accentuated by the appearance of small flames and fireballs illuminating the movements. Their red wake simultaneously collides with the darkness of the stage, which in turn, collides with the brightness of a green field in the last sequence (conflict of colour and form). Nevertheless Maher's still figures often appear larger than the moving figures in the background (conflict of volumes and planes).

As in Warburg's *Mnemosyne* panels, the images render the force of movement acting on Maher's body, its *dynamis*, its '*vis elastica*' […], [its] affective athleticism',[46] which brings the digital composition of the image closer to Francis Bacon's paintings. This means making 'the interior forces that climb through the flesh […] [and] the spasm visible'.[47] These forces reorganize the body in the most natural (organic) postures according to the body's inner attitude: turning around, standing still, falling asleep or getting up.

The visual rendering of the digital chronophotographic effect makes some of Maher's bodily traits, such as her face, indistinguishable, as in Marey's works, except for the last frame. At the same time the image vividly presents the details of her vibrating gestures, as in Muybridge's chronosequences. This further collision of elements draws our attention to Maher's contracted muscles and pathetic postures. The white dress, which gently contours her dancing body, reminds us

[41] Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image,* trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997 [1989]), p. 195.
[42] *The Film Form*, p. 50.
[43] Ėjzenštejn. 'Laocoön', in *Towards a Theory of Montage*: *Selected Works II*, pp. 109-202.
[44] *The Film Form*, pp. 31–63.
[45] Michaud, p. 286.
[46] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith (London, New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 41.
[47] Ivi, p. XI.

of the flowing draperies of the aforementioned *Woman Dancing* and of the nymphs-like images of Botticelli and Ghirlandaio's paintings analysed by Warburg in panel 39 of *Mnemosyne*.

In some of the shots, the chronophotographic effect deforms the Maher's face and body, an effect we see in *Two Figures* (Francis Bacon, 1961, oil and sand on canvas, 198×142 cm),[48] thus rousing the spectators to create 'original relations which are substitutes for the form'.[49] This is what Bacon does according to Deleuze, who claimed that these relations erase the figurative data and create levels of sensation through 'a non figurative resemblance for the same form'.[50] This process stimulates creativity as the brain attempts to interpret the figures and to find the correlations it needs to arrive at a unitary perception of the elements.[51]

In fact, Ėjzenštejn believed that the audience's emotions are heightened when a film presents incomplete fragments that spectators are required to assemble themselves,[52] actively and emotionally.

The juxtaposition of Maher's gestures generates images (*obraznost*), whose visual motifs bring to mind the mythological Icarus spreading his wings (fig. 3) or the nymphs in motion (figs 1, 2), both represented in panel 39 of *Mnemosyne*, or one of the *Niobides* sitting on the floor on her bent knees in panel 5 (fig. 4). These visual motifs also generate empirically invisible abstractions, because they recall ancestral images that are deeply imprinted in our brains because of their (unconscious) association with sexuality and fertility,[53] such as the peacocks spreading their tails during courtship rituals (fig. 3) or flying birds (fig. 5) reminding us of Marey's chronophotographic studies of birds' flight.[54]

Unlike *Choros*, Jeremy Wood's locative media art project, *White Horse Hill* (2002), explores the representation of bodies in motion by reducing them to black dots, so focusing solely on movement in the same way as Marey when he erased the body's features.

The participants in this locative media art project are given a GPS mobile

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[48] Available at <https://artimage.org.uk/4602/francis-bacon/two-figures--1961> [accessed 20 December 2015].
[49] Ivi, p. 158.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Thanks to the activation of the limbic system, a complex set of structures primarily responsible for our emotions, the process evokes an agreeable sensation. See Vilayanur S. Ramachandran, William Hirstein, 'The Science of Art. A Neurological Theory of Aesthetic Experience', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6 (1999), 15–51, <http://www.imprint.co.uk/rama/art.pdf> [accessed 20 December 2015].
[52] *Towards a Theory of Montage*.
[53] The exaggeration of such bodily traits by the artist overstimulates specific areas in the brain responsible for the 'peak shift' effect; i.e. the perception of essential elements (colours, forms and movements) that allow spectators to give the figures emotional significance. This process is heightened by the limbic system, which joins these elements in a unitary perception in order to achieve an aesthetically pleasing experience. See Ramachandran.
[54] Braun.

Fig. 1: *Choros* (Michael Langan and Terah Maher, 2011). The simultaneousness of the moving image of thirty-two Maher's figures and of the chronophotographic sequence.

Fig. 2: *Choros*. On the right the chronophotographic dissection of bodily gestures, on the left the still images of Maher's figures.

Fig. 3: *Choros*. Chronophotographic sequence reminding us of both Icarus (see *Mnemosyne,* panel 39, figure 1) and a peacock opening its tail.

Fig. 4: *Choros*. Chronophotographic sequence reminding us of Niobides's posture (see *Mnemosyne*, panel 5, figure 6).

Fig. 5: *Choros*. Chronophotographic sequence deforming Maher's traits reminding us the figure of a flying bird.

device and are asked to stroll through White Horse Hill, in Uffington. As soon as each participant steps forward, a dot, which represents the GPS coordinates, appears on a display which draws animated GPS tracks of the trajectory.

The aim of this work is to trace a human presence within a delineated public space and to use the data collected from the sensors to visualize both individual and collective movements via a representational system.

Wood's project allows the participants to map their course in physical space and to share their maps by means of GPS mobile devices: they can reformulate their physical space actively by using strolling movements, which reminds us of Benjamin's idea of *flânerie*.[55]

At the end of the walk, the succession of dots forms an undulating line merging into the still image of a continuous line graph, creating a false impression of continuous movement.

Wood's graphs are similar to Marey's first experiments, which produced only a *mise en ligne* of movements.

The locative projection is created by the expressive gestures of both the artist and the participants, which trigger the spectator's abstract representation of the participants' movements in a process of imitation.

The juxtaposition of dots side by side in Wood's undulated line going in different directions does, in fact, evoke the idea of human movements. The swedish psychologist Gunnar Johansson demonstrated that spectators shown only ten

[55] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 442.

light dots moving against a dark background on a videotape were immediately able to identify the movement of the dots as those of a human being.[56] In Wood's progressively composed animated lines we can (mentally) visualize the strolling motion of a person, and we can associate human steps with flight in his sculptures. The overlapping lines in Wood's images are indirect evidence of the tracks of human body in movement, and are, therefore, time-images, which establish a direct relation to any-instants-whatever.

The animated lines depicted in Wood's graphs also represent visual motifs, as 'zig zag' or the silhouette of a snake, like the one in the above-mentioned *Laocoön* group, considered by Warburg to be a pure manifestation of energy. In fact, Warburg claimed that the most representative and universal form of movement is the serpentine form. Nevertheless, the aesthetic value of lines was recognized by artists such as Paolo Uccello during the Renaissance, and later emphasized by Cezanne, cubists and abstract painters, like Mondrian or Malevich, and kinetic artists, such as Calder.[57]

Wood also created GPS sculptures, representing the participants' bodily movements,[58] which give rise to an ancestral image resembling Marey's chronophotographic sequences and sculptures, such as the *Flight of seagulls* (Marey, 1886)[59] and reminding us of Calder's kinetic sculptures, e.g. *Mobiles*, which have the appearance of dots blown in different directions by the wind.[60]

As in *Choros*, the process of forming a unitary perception triggers an agreeable emotional state in the spectator. The process involves consciousness and cognition and further enhances the aesthetic experience.[61]

Warburg and other contemporary art historians, such as David Freedberg, and neuroscientists like Zeki, argued that the sense of movement is crucial to the spectator's emotional response.

In the 1880s, chronophotography was introduced as an experimental technique and produced engrams-like images representing the *dynamis* of movement in still image sequences consistent with Ėjzenštejn's idea of the organic and of pathos. Pathos lies in an appreciation of the details of expressive gesture, revealed by both the paradox of the immobility of the still images of movement and by the chronophotographic aesthetics of dissection. *Choros*'s visual echo ex-

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[56] Gunnar Johansson, 'Visual Perception of Biological Motion and a Model for its Analysis', *Perception & Psychophysics*, 14.2, (1973), 201–11, quoted in Giese and Poggio.

[57] Neuroscience has confirmed that the line is essential to the brain's perception of movement, because its view overstimulates the area of the brain that responds to fast movements. Semir Zeki, *Inner Vision: an Exploration of Art and the Brain* (London, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[58] Animated graphs and images of *White Horse Hill* project are available at: <http://www.gpsdrawing.com/gallery/maps/whh-model.htm> [accessed 20 December 2015].

[59] Marey's motion studies and images of seagulls' flight are available at <http://yin.arts.uci.edu/~studio/resources/175/marey.html> [accessed 20 December 2015].

[60] Images of Calder are available at <http://www.calder.org/work/by-category/household-object> [accessed 20 December 2015].

[61] Neuroaesthetic trials support this assumption. See Zeki and Ramachandran.

periment improves the visual potential of chronophotography: the overlapping gestures reveal that the *obraznost* effected by natural movement is etched and deeply imprinted in the brain, thus creating high (e)motional potential. Wood's *mise en ligne* of gestures leads us to awareness that we, as humans, can experience motion through an imitative process, which, as Ėjzenštejn claimed, lies at the basis of the ecstatic flow.

Finally, not only do the aforementioned artistic forms extend the limits of human perception, as in Structural Film, and allow gestural language to prevail, but the digital effects also strengthen the *dynamis* of the engram-like images in a more organic way when they are set in motion by giving a false impression of continuity. Cinema works in this way, as does the brain, when it forms a unitary perception of the image of movement. The analysis of the use of digital effects in these forms offers a deeper insight into how the 'movement-image' can represent gesture to improve its dynamic characteristics and emotional power.

Deterritorialized Images: Future Visions, Past Memories

Elena Marcheschi, Università di Pisa

Abstract

From the very start, electronic language and video technologies have provided a free territory for expanding and reformulating multiple artistic itineraries, as well as a point of confluence for the most creative dialogue between different media. Raymond Bellour's work has been significant in defining the role that video has played in the media context, describing it as a *passeur* between systems of old and new images, between the mobile and the immobile. Following the digital turn, it seems that the most obvious legacy of video in today's digital system lies in the transfer, within the logic of computers, of that vocation for integration and intermediation which has always been acknowledged as its genetic characteristic. The computer becomes itself a *passeur* between the history of photography, the cinema and the experimental electronic world, increasing the possibility of interweaving influences, both practical and conceptual. The essay describes the work of some contemporary artists (Mittelstäd, Vogel, Klasmer), where the choice of a notably inter-media representation condenses the spirit of the history of photography and moving images, in a parabola that originates in pre-cinema to reach electronic experimentation and go towards the all-comprehensive logic of the metamedium-*passeur*.

From the very start, electronic language and video technologies have provided a free territory for expanding and reformulating multiple artistic itineraries, as well as a point of confluence for the most innovative and non-standard lines of research developed in cinema and television. Since the 1960s, media scholars and art historians have therefore observed the birth and evolution of a visual production which was often greatly diverse and disconnected, characterized by an incoherence of identities which opened up potential and horizons.[1] By now this

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[1] Amongst the many studies of international historical recognition, see: *Metamorfosi della visione. Saggi di pensiero elettronico*, ed. by Rosanna Albertini and Sandra Lischi 2nd edn (Pisa: ETS, 2000); *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, ed. by Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture/BAVC, 1990); Silvia Bordini, *Videoarte & arte, tracce per una storia* (Rome: Lithos, 1995); *La Vidéo entre art et communication*, ed. by Nathalie Magnant (Paris: École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1997); Lischi, *Visioni elettroniche. L'oltre del cinema e l'arte del*

history is a familiar story of artistic and media contexts converging in electronic technologies, and of their shared trajectories and exchanges. The interpretation of video by Raymond Bellour has been significant, though often considered ambiguous and elusive by critics, and it clearly defines the role that electronic images have played in the media context: '[...] la grande force de la vidéo a été, est, sera, d'avoir opéré des *passages*. La vidéo est avant tout une passeuse. Passages [...] au deux grands niveau d'expérience que j'ai évoqués : entre mobile et immobile, entre l'analogie photographique et ce qui la transforme.'[2] In his essay Bellour emphasizes the potential of translation that is intrinsic to video: on the one hand capable of incorporating and transforming painting, photography and cinema; on the other hand ready for a production of its own images and therefore inclined, by its very nature, to creating a new and unforeseeable circularity between systems of old and new images.[3]

The intense relationship that over the years has developed between cinema, photography and video has been articulated from many points of view. There are countless authors on the international scene who have drawn inspiration from the cinema, recovering it, quoting it, turning narrative structures upside-down, opposing new ways of telling a story, both in a single-channel work and in forms of installation, up to the many current practices of what is known as exposed cinema. Old and new names come to the surface, from Woody Vasulka to Candice Breitz, from Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi to Douglas Gordon, from Gianni Toti to Oliver Pietsch, from Harun Farocki to Christian Marclay, from Thierry Kuntzel to Antoni Muntadas, and so on. Alongside these names there are filmmakers whose work is open to the electronic experience such as Jean-Luc Godard, Agnès Varda, Chantal Akerman and Jonas Mekas, to mention only a few. Scholarly research has been equally intense, having revealed for example the resurfacing of the theories of the avant-gardes in video-practices, the visionary inspiration of surrealist cinema, New American Cinema practices, as well as the return to vision aesthetics that evoke the experiments of pre-cinema and the cinema of the origins.[4]

video (Rome: Scuola Nazionale di Cinema, 2001); Françoise Parfait, *Vidéo: un art contemporain* (Paris: Regard, 2001); *Le storie del video*, ed. by Valentina Valentini (Rome: Bulzoni, 2003); Florence De Méredieu, *Arts et nouvelles technologies* (Paris: Larousse, 2003); Michael Rush, *Video Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007); Alessandro Amaducci, *Videoarte. Storia, autori, linguaggi* (Turin: Kaplan, 2014).

[2] Raymond Bellour, *L'Entre-Images, Photo, Cinéma, Vidéo* (Paris: La Différence, 2002), p. 14 [emphasis in the original].

[3] The interpretation by Philippe Dubois also echoes that of Bellour. In a similar way, Dubois interpreted video as an intermediary more than a medium, a state of the image more than an object, a way of thinking in images and making images. See Dubois, 'La Question vidéo face au cinéma: déplacements esthetiques', in *Cinéma et dernières technologies*, ed. by Frank Beau, Dubois, Gérard Blanc (Paris, Bruxelles: INA, De Boeck & Larcier, 1998), pp. 189–92; Dubois, *La Question vidéo entre cinéma et art contemporain* (Crisnée: Yellow Now, 2011).

[4] In Italian studies alone, I refer to *Cine ma video*, ed. by Lischi (Pisa: ETS, 1996); Amaducci, *Segnali video. I nuovi immaginari della videoarte* (Santhià: GS, 2000); Bruno Di Marino, *Interferenze dello sguardo. La sperimentazione audiovisiva tra analogico e digitale* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2002); Marco Maria Gazzano, *Kinema. Il cinema sulle tracce del cinema: dal film alle arti elettroniche, andata e*

The more subtle and problematic relationship alluded to by Bellour is that which goes beyond salvaging archive images from photographs and films as a place of testimony, or as a fragment of the past on which to weave reflections. Rather it is the dialogue that electronics have enabled between (photographic) fixity and (cinematographic) movement. This direction of research is also the basis of the artistic production of Bill Viola and Robert Cahen, in a different way. They have extensively used the figures of slow motion, still image, stasis-movement passages as figures of style, poetic interpretations and ways of perceptive interrogation.

Very recent international research in film studies has enabled reflection on these topics, specifically on how the digital turning-point has influenced the ontological redefinition of cinema and photography with regard to questions which, in the era of film, had been fundamental: the relationships with time and with movement.[5]

It is looking in this direction that it seems legitimate to ask a question: since, as Philippe Dubois writes, 'Aujourd'hui, le discours ontologique dans les arts visuels (photographie, cinéma, vidéo) n'est plus guère de mise parce qu'il n'y a plus d'image "pure" qui puisse tenir. Le temps n'est plus à la recherche des "spécificités" et des démarcations catégoriques',[6] then in light of the turn to the digital, what has happened to that dialogic tendency of video, widely observed by scholars, and in particular its ability to connect fixity and movement? Observing the current media landscape, and the confluence of languages that the digital has enabled, is it still possible and appropriate to speak of video?[7] If so, in what terms? What remains on the current media scene of Bellour's interpretation?

Following work in the standardization of the media proposed by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin in their *Remediation*, but also the view of Lev Manovich,[8] a staunch defender of the need to put the new and old media on a line of continuity, what in my opinion remains the most obvious legacy of video in today's digital environment is the transfer, within the logics of the comput-

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ritorno (Rome: Exorma, 2012).

[5] Focusing in particular on the texts that are most closely related to the topic in question, I refer to: Barbara Le Maître, *Entre film et photographie. Essai sur l'empreinte* (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2004); *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image*, ed. by David Green and Joanna Lowry (Brighton: Photoworks 2006); Laura Mulvey, *Death 24× a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006); *The Cinematic*, ed. by David Campany (Cambridge, MA, London: MIT Press, 2007); Di Marino, *Pose in movimento. Fotografia e cinema* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2009); *Between Stillness and Motion: Film, Photography, Algorithms*, ed. by Eivind Røssaak (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011).

[6] Dubois, *La Question vidéo*, p. 138.

[7] The recent book *Medium senza medium. Amnesia e cannibalizzazione: il video dopo gli anni Novanta*, ed. by Valentini and Cosetta G. Saba (Rome: Bulzoni, 2015) questions the development and fate of video and video art from the 1990s to the present day.

[8] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

er, of that vocation for integration and intermediation which has always been considered its genetic characteristic. Where new technologies and new artistic strategies trouble the domination of images in movement, it seems to me that in the face of the radical change undergone by the arts of film — which have inevitably evolved into algorithmic codes that are infinitely modifiable — video has guaranteed a resistance that, as well as being naturally electronic, is also conceptual, preserving and disseminating its inter-media essence. With this in mind, in fact the computer — a meta-medium which seems to assimilate the aesthetic strategies of the avant-garde in its controls and in the metaphors of software interface, as Manovich writes [9] — moreover picks up the conceptual legacy of video, becoming itself a *passeur* between the history of photography, the cinema and experimental electronic image, assuring a renewed increase in the possibility of interweaving, exchanges and confluences, both practical and conceptual. Therefore, we can no longer refer today to the electronic fluidity of video as something that is capable of receiving the other arts, since it is the very essence of video, not only in its inter-personal inclination, but also in its openness to re-creating images through special effects, which has been diluted into other languages through the digital.[10]

Returning to the central context of this article — the relationship between fixity and movement, particularly in the field of non-fiction digital production since 2000 — one notes the presence of works where the photographic, cinematographic and electronic matrices intersect through the use of images which appear to have dislocated themselves from their original territories. This is a consequence of their 'deterritorialization' in the digital space, to use a Deleuzian concept of memory. This idea of deterritorialization, which has migrated between different disciplines over the years,[11] today seems to be the most appropriate to describe the transversal integrations between media languages which, in the digital field, seem to lose their original purity while nevertheless preserving a trace or a memory of it.[12] In this sense, to speak of the relationship between fixity and movement in a digital field

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[9] Manovich, pp. 258–59.

[10] On this shift of the role of video, see also Georges Heck, 'La Vidéo entre medium et art. De la formation d'un genre à son éclatement', in *Vidéo topiques. Tours et retours de l'art vidéo*, ed. by Fabrice Hergott and others (Strasbourg: Musée de Strasbourg, 2002), pp. 18–23.

[11] For example in the fields of anthropology and sociology, I refer to Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). Elsewhere, I have discussed the various meanings of deterritorialization, from a mix of languages to the multiplicity of viewing channels; see Elena Marcheschi, *Videoestetiche dell'emergenza. L'immagine della crisi nella sperimentazione audiovisiva* (Turin: Kaplan, 2015). The same concept is used to interpret the language of video by Saba, 'Per un supplemento d'indagine: la forza deterritorializzante del video' in *Medium senza medium*, pp. 78–127. Although he does not use the concept of deterritorialization, Luciano De Giusti also discusses osmosis and intermedia fluidity when defining new paradigms of the audiovisual experience; *Immagini migranti. Forme intermediali del cinema nell'era digitale*, ed. by Luciano De Giusti (Venice: Marsilio, 2008), pp. 9–17.

[12] To mention just one example, a broad affection for the grainy image and the warmth of film stock, which is often recreated in digital images.

that dilutes photography with cinema and video, today it seems only partially effective to employ the references and theories of the past, which were linked primarily to the analysis of the physical nature of the supports referring to the essence of the frame, or to theories of the electronic image. This is because, as Røssaak maintains, the images are no longer facts, but algorithmic codes which, having lost the nostalgia for authenticity and indexicality, can be processed in infinite ways.[13]

Therefore, if the digital demarcates the new space for the passages between media, and if the notion of video, in addition to what has been observed above, remains categorized by the short format and experimentations in non-fiction, how then can we redefine the relationship between fixity and movement in current digital audiovisual production?

Among the various international artists who have addressed these subjects in recent years, I would like to mention in particular the crucial work *entre-images* by Egbert Mittelstädt, François Vogel and Shira Klasmer.[14] In different ways, as we will see, these authors examine the world and its dynamism from a digital-technological perspective that is reminiscent of earlier, varied experimentations in the passage from the photographic image to the cinematographic one.

To begin, let us consider the question of the relationship between fixity and movement through the analysis of all the single-channel works and installations by the German artist Egbert Mittelstädt.[15] The recurrent theme in his works is the observation of urban space, often saturated with humanity, traffic, physicality, through a representation which sets itself at a distance from the poetic enquiries in the style of metropolitan symphonies.[16] This takes place through a physical and temporal deconstruction of the environments: in a video such as *Genkai* (2011) (fig. 1), to take only one example into consideration, the natural movement of spaces is decomposed and divided into both photographic and dynamic portions that are then superimposed or scrolled past, one on top of the other, therefore fraying and contorting the architectonic structures and shapes thanks to the use of the slit-scan. In the same way, in the passage of states between fixity and movement, human bodies also change consistency, they become fluid, thin but also frozen in photographic snapshots. On the one hand, the artist's research recovers the experimental itinerary of the pioneers of video-art, with special reference to the concept of the mechanical eye elaborated by the Vasulkas; on the other, it is connected with age-old ex-

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[13] Røssaak, 'The Still/Moving Field: An Introduction', in *Between Stillness and Motion*, pp. 11–24 (pp. 16–20).
[14] With respect to my focus here, on the relationship between fixity and movement in images, I have decided to omit the analysis of sound design, which nonetheless would deserve a separate, specific discussion insofar as it is an element that affects the perception of movement and rhythm.
[15] The reader is referred to the Vimeo channel <https://vimeo.com/egbertmittelstaedt> [accessed 10 February 2016], in particular to the works *La Rue Coupée* (2005), *Altostratus* (2006), *Elsewhere 2* (2007), *Genkai* (2011).
[16] Here I refer to both cinematographic and video traditions, obviously accounting for their respective differences, ranging from films such as those by Vertov and Ruttmann to the video works by Cohen, Toti or Cahen.
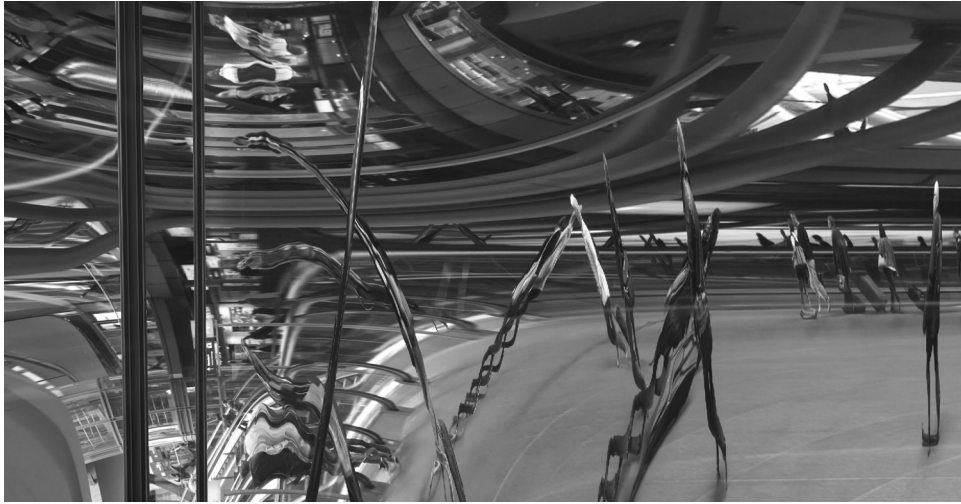
Fig. 1: *Genkai* (Egbert Mittelstädt, 2011)

perimentations which refer back to the romantic visions of the nineteenth-century *vedute* and the chronophotographic research by Muybridge. For Mittelstädt, the reflection on the relationship between static and dynamic image becomes above all a way of investigating relations between the past, present and future of a given urban and anthropic context. In this sense, while situating himself within a profoundly digital perspective, his research is closely related to the history of the technological reproduction of the image, both photographic and cinematographic. The worlds that Mittelstädt constructs are actually the result of using advanced technologies that have their roots in the mechanics (or dreamt-of mechanics) of the past: the roundshot that allows circular vision thanks to the use of a mobile film camera connected to the computer, or the use of the slit-scan which allows fragmentation and the effects of dragged images. In his installations or performances, the use of slide projectors, translucent screens or rotating projectors does not appear to be anything other than the technologies desired by the theoretician-filmmakers of the early twentieth century: here I refer to the pre-visions of Vertov, Ėjzenštejn, Gance, Moholy-Nagy and many others. Though at the end of the nineteenth century the reproduction of movement appeared to be the inevitable future of photographic experimentation, with a reverse perspective we can see a kind of hesitation in the works of Mittelstädt, a fascination for slowing down the images, the decomposition of their dynamism, the freezing of movement, as though the artist wants to recreate a sort of post-pre-cinema with present-day digital techniques.

   Let us now consider the work of the French artist François Vogel, defined in the magazine *Bref* as the 'baroque magician of video'.[17] In his single-channel works, in

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[17] James Donald, 'François Vogel, magicien baroque', *Bref*, 95 (2010), 20–21. To view his works, see the site <http://francoisvogel.com/fr> [accessed 13 February 2016], with particular attention

Fig. 2: *Terrains glissants* (François Vogel, 2010)

his installations but also in the photographs he produced, Vogel observes with equal attention both the world closest to him, the domestic one, but also the urban or natural environments in which he moves, often framing himself within the various contexts. With an engineering-like inclination towards the fabrication of images, the artist offers a dilated representation of reality, between optical straining and stretching, offering a baroque, wide-angle and anamorphic vision of the world (fig. 2) that leads back to the memory of optical boxes and the catoptrical magic of the pre-cinema. This complex way of looking inevitably involves and also determines the temporal trend, in images where the use of photographic fixity goes beyond stop-motion, in favour of the hyper-kinesis of city life and spaces, and where baroque views imply a kaleidoscopic and improbable regeneration of urban dynamism. The work in digital and the use of 3D in Vogel is combined with age-old practices, for example in the use of stenopeic machines that he constructed himself;[18] his artisanal work with reflecting spheres, with which he creates shots; the use of cameras; recourse to stop-motion and the organization of spaces according to stereographic visions. Questioning the classic perspective frees a vision of the world which is at one and the same time playful and enigmatic, and which pays tribute to the graphic art of Escher, the cinema of McLaren and the (im)possible visions of cinematographic and electronic research of Rybczynski. Temporality thus appears altered between acceleration and deceleration, between moments of only apparent stasis and the continuous, dynamic transformations of space. The treatment of the human bodies is also involved in this reformulation through optical deformations, inverted images and back-to-front repetitions of gestures which seem to abandon human natural-

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to *Cuisine* (2007), *Stretching* (2009), *Terrains glissants* (2010).
[18] The artist is also the author of the book *Nouveau traité du sténopé* (Paris: Éditions Éoliennes, 2011).

ness in order to adopt a mechanical nature. The 'vertigo of the perspective'[19] of Vogel's works, the resulting dialogue between the analogue matrix and the digital context, thus also becomes a vertigo of time, by means of the phenomenic representation which simultaneously synthesizes photographic fixity and kinetic frenzy.

In the production of the two artists quoted here, on the one hand the choice of a profound inter-media representation condenses the spirit of the history of moving images and of photography, in a parabola that originates in the pre-cinema, extends to electronic experimentation and culminates in the all-comprehensive logic of the metamedium-*passeur.* On the other hand, this operative method also aims to be representative of the chaotic nature of the contemporary world, with its hyper-built-up environments, overpopulation, frenzy and existential decentralization and, through the alteration of spatial-temporal categories, to translate the disorienting perception that man has of reality.

As a last case study, I would like to present the work of Shira Klasmer,[20] a London-based Israeli photographer, who defines herself a movement artist. Her aesthetic research is based on a special technique she developed herself: that of dragging the film inside the camera in order to create panoramic images which return a narration of movement like a continuous trace. From her works, let us take the example of *Successions* (2009) (fig. 3): once developed, the roll of film was digitized and the static panoramic images were subsequently rendered dynamic using video editing software. In this way, time is stretched in a linear way and yet contained within one frame. In this work, as in all of her research, the temporal transitions, the relationship that the movement has with space and time, and the human capacity to perceive these connections are the main objects of investigation in her works, where the photographic technique developed is also at the basis of her audiovisual production. In Klasmer's gaze we find again a taste for the scientific observation that has its most direct ancestor in Marey and in his plates, the studies on movement by the Futurists and by Marcel Duchamp, but also a meticulousness in her management of the relationship between the gaze and the phenomenic world, that attains results with a pictorial and sculptural flavour, as though the movement were impacting the images in a continuous flow.

To conclude, the case studies that I have mentioned are only a small selection from a much wider panorama of authors who work in digital experimentation, using images that appear to us as stratified, hybrid objects '[…] of *casting* and *calculation*, of *ancient* and *modern*, of *past* and *future*'.[21] The relationship between

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[19] I quote the title of the article by Giulia Simi, 'Vertigini prospettiche. Le immagini di François Vogel', *Digimag*, 71 (2012) <http://www.digicult.it/it/digimag/issue-071/italiano-vertigine-prospettiche-le-immagini-di-francois-vogel/> [accessed 13 January 2016].

[20] See the page <https://vimeo.com/shiraklasmer> and the site <http://www.shiraklasmerphotography.com/> [accessed 13 February 2016].

[21] Christian Uva describes the digital image this way in *Impronte digitali. Il cinema e le sue immagini tra regime fotografico e tecnologia numerica* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2009), p. 163 [emphasis in the original]. In the context of film studies, those who support the idea of a new flourishing of cinema

Fig. 3: *Successions* (Shira Klasmer, 2009)

new and old technologies today appears completely reinforced in digital environments and the analysis of the renewed relationship between fixity and movement is only confirmation of this. Is the cinema gaining ground?[22] It certainly is not losing any and, together with pre-cinema and photography, has been revitalized in new dimensions where to question the relationship between fixity and movement means to reflect on a dialogue between media which today appear increasingly without specificities. As Laura Mulvey has written, 'Passing time, in and of itself, shifts perception of relations and aesthetic patterns and these shifts are, in turn, accentuated by the new horizons formed by new technologies. As a result, a new kind of ontology may emerge, in which ambivalence, impurity and uncertainty displace the traditional oppositions.'[23]

While we try to define this new ontology — at least as far as the most experimental audiovisual production is concerned, where inter-media exchanges appear fertile — all that remains is for us to accept the vertigo of images which, by preserving the memory of film, reach us, transported by an electronic flow which is renewed with algorithmic vitality, pulsating and flowing instant by instant.

in the era of convergence include Francesco Casetti, *The Lumière Galaxy: Seven Key Words for the Cinema to Come* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
[22] The question takes inspiration from the title *Extended Cinema. Le cinéma gagne du terrain*, ed. by Dubois, Frédéric Monvoisin, Elena Biserna (Udine: Campanotto, 2010).
[23] Mulvey, p. 14.

Jeff Wall, beyond the Borders of the Medium: Photography, History Painting and the Cinema of the Living-dead

Barbara Le Maître, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre

Abstract

How can a work of art reach beyond the borders of the medium to which it would logically seem to belong? Following a brief reflection upon an important essay by Rosalind Krauss, 'Reinventing the Medium', this contribution focuses specifically on one of Jeff Wall's works, allowing the author to deal more directly with the issue of the dialogue between different mediums. Through the analysis of *Dead Troops Talk*, the aim of the article is to demonstrate: first, how the so-called photograph does not exploit the potential of its own medium, but instead applies a compositional strategy borrowed from the pictorial medium; and second, how the same photograph undermines the genre of historical painting (to which it is linked via its compositional strategy) by putting the fictitious — and cinematographic — figure of the zombie at the center of the representation.

A. P.: Representation of the human body, depending on the construction of micro-gestures, is kind of programmatic in your work. Recently, some unrealistic, improbable bodies have appeared such as […] the zombies in *Dead Troops Talk*. What are these bodies?
J. W.: I have always thought of my 'realistic' work as populated with spectral characters whose state of being was not that fixed. That, too, is an inherent aspect, or effect, of what I call 'cinematography': things don't have to really exist, or to have existed, to appear in the picture […]. 'What are these bodies?' — that question requires an interpretation of the picture in which they appear, and I'm not the best person to do that.
(Arielle Pelenc in correspondence with Jeff Wall)

How can a work of art reach beyond the borders of the medium to which it would logically seem to belong? It should be noted at the outset that for quite some time the boundaries between the mediums[1] of photography, painting and

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[1] The coinage *mediums* is used here to distinguish the plural of 'medium' — in ordinary usage, 'media' — from the 'media' as widely used in the singular with reference to printed, audiovisual and digital channels of public communication of the kind addressed in the work of Jeff Wall (many thanks to Matthew Hyland for the discussion about 'media versus mediums').

cinema have been dissipating and their autonomy questioned. This, as we know, is suggested by the expression 'post medium era' or 'post medium condition', which was coined in order to define a more or less contemporary state of artistic practices. Before focusing on one of Jeff Wall's works which will allow me to deal more concretely with those questions of open borders and dialogue between different mediums, I will first look back upon 'Reinventing the Medium', an article published by Rosalind Krauss a little more than a decade ago.[2] Indeed, it is the reading of that article which triggered the reasoning developed in the following pages, and, without entering into the finer details of the author's argument, it seems necessary to draw attention to certain aspects of her thinking.

Rosalind Krauss deals with the concept of medium both historically and theoretically. On the one hand, she considers the specific medium of photography in an attempt to recapture its historical development. She traces its first uses and its evolution until the time when it became a rite of passage or indispensable utility for all artists who saw photography as a means of disrupting or undermining the traditional values of art. Among such artists Krauss mentions Dan Graham, Robert Smithson, Victor Burgin, Jeff Wall and James Coleman. On the other hand, Krauss goes beyond the specific instance of the photographic to discuss the concept of medium itself. Essentially, the argument which she develops throughout her article runs as follows: during the 1960s, photography became the primary instrument in a criticism of the supposed specificity and independence of the mediums, as well as (and, thus, consequently) the means of a reinvention of the very concept of medium. Let's add here that:

> […] the reinvention in question does not imply the restoration of any of those earlier forms of support that the 'age of mechanical reproduction' had rendered thoroughly dysfunctional through their own assimilation to the commodity form. Rather, it concerns the idea of a medium as such, a medium as a set of conventions derived from (but not identical with) the material conditions of a given technical support, conventions out of which to develop a form of expressiveness that can be both projective and mnemonic.[3]

By relying on the example of James Coleman turning a museum space into a dark room and projecting a montage of slides featuring comedians in theatrical poses, Krauss shows how a given work can become the place of a confrontation between the *dispositif* of cinema (the projection of lights in a dark room, the principle of temporal succession of projected images), the gestural codes of theatre and the image-object of photography (the slide).[4] Such confrontation results in the invention of an as-yet-unknown medium which simultaneously enacts the specificities of several established mediums without, strictly speaking, belonging

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to any one of them[5] — unless one places the definition of the medium solely on the material support of the image. The author finally suggests that at that point, the principle of clearly distinguishable mediums has given way to what I would call a 'perpetual interaction between mediums' (although Krauss only goes as far as using the expression of 'post medium').

Whilst rapidly surveying the main aspects of a much more complex analysis, I have bypassed many facets of the art historian's text, for instance the general obsolescence of all mediums which constitutes an essential stage in her reasoning. But beyond Krauss' essay, what interests me in particular and what I would like to develop *via* the analysis of one of Jeff Wall's works is the idea of a decompartmentalization and a recasting of mediums. That is to say, to somewhat pre-empt the rest of my analysis, the idea that the medium of photography can be used to compose a history painting, or the idea that one can use an apparently cinematic motif — which is also in that specific instance, a seed of fiction — outside of cinema. There is more: although the reinvention of the medium postulated by Krauss takes place within the historically determined context of artistic practices in the 1960s and 1970s and although by her reasoning this reinvention implies the specific medium of photography, I believe it is possible to extend her proposal and to define the dialogue between different mediums as part of the general economy of forms, all images included.[6]

As shown by the many ways in which it was dealt with — liberal arts v. mechanical arts, *ut pictura poesis,* etc. —, the problem of the distinction and comparison between the arts has been and still is a cornerstone of the aesthetic debate. It is likely that the dialogue between the mediums which we are considering here — that is to say, the exchanges between the material supports, the *dispositifs* as well as the forms and the modes of composition which they respectively imply

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[5] 'But Coleman cannot be said to be returning to a given medium, although the fact that the luminous projections occur in darkened rooms sets up a certain relation to cinema, and the fact that in them actors are portrayed in highly staged situations evokes a connection to theater. Rather, the medium Coleman seems to be elaborating is just this paradoxical collision between stillness and movement that the static slide provokes right at the interstice of its changes, which, since Coleman insists that the projection equipment be placed in the same space as the viewer of his work, is underscored by the click of the carousel's rotation [...]'. See Krauss, p. 297. I would add that the author invites us to think of the 'paradoxical collision between stillness and movement' which Coleman creates as inverting the effects of that other collision between stillness and movement on which cinema relies (or at least has long relied). In Coleman's case, the collision is created *via* the discontinuous succession of slides adjusted in the carousel. In cinema, it relies on the equally discontinuous succession of photograms in the projector. Hence the following hypothesis: the aesthetic and technical parameters which define specific mediums should not be seen as characteristics which exclusively and eternally belong to them but rather as elements likely to participate in the elaboration of various *dispositifs* and forms.

[6] In lieu of supporting this statement with a series of examples from Jeff Wall's works, I refer the reader to my book *Entre film et photographie. Essai sur l'empreinte* (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2004), which contains a few reflections on the dialogue between cinema — *Les Photos d'Alix* (Jean Eustache, 1980) — and stereoscopic photography, as well as between cinema — *Calendar* (Atom Egoyan, 1993) — and the mechanism of the *camera obscura*.

— will amount to a rephrasing of that same problem along the lines of a non-exclusive principle which would substitute the concept of medium for that of art. This leads us to an important question concerning the interaction between the concept of art and that of medium, a question which I will, however, only raise: what evolutionary role can such a re-problematization play in relation to those arts which were once compared and judged according to their supposedly specific qualities? But, let us put an end to this digression or, rather, let us maintain the question as background reference for our analysis in order to take up this problem more concretely.

Dead Troops Talk *(1): the History Painting, the 'Pregnant Moment'*

Let us consider *Dead Troops Talk (a vision after an ambush of a Red Army patrol, near Moqor, Afghanistan, winter 1986)*, a photograph by Jeff Wall completed in 1992 (fig. 1). This image of a war scene represented in the aftermath of the fight features thirteen corpses of soldiers[7] lying on a slope of stones and gravel, an ensemble of nearly-lifeless ragged and mutilated bodies whose posture and faces perform the entire expressive spectrum of the passions of the soul, from melancholy and pain to fury. The work has been commented upon at length and has triggered statements such as the following: 'The structure and the theme of *Dead Troops Talk* relate to the French nineteenth-century Salon Machine paintings such as Antoine-Jean Gros's *Napoleon on the Battlefield at Eylau, February 9, 1807*, 1808.[8] In the text referred to at the beginning of this paper, Rosalind Krauss briefly considers Wall's photographs and cites two other nineteenth-century paintings featuring the characteristic piling up of agonizing or dead bodies which Wall's photographs and the Salon machine paintings have in common: *The Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault (1819), and *The Barricade rue de la Mortellerie 1848* (1849) by Ernest Meissonier. Those references constitute a web or network which fleshes out, disturbs, that is to say complexifies the *istoria* of the photograph. *Self-Portrait at the Age of Twenty* — also known as *Self-portrait with a Bandage* — could also be introduced as further reference '(fig. 2)'. Indeed, this drawing by Dürer dated around 1491–92 is strangely echoed in the melancholy motif of the meditative man holding his wounded head on the left-hand side of Wall's photograph.[9] But my aim here is not to examine in detail

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[7] The image contains as well two or three other characters of lesser relevance to my analysis.
[8] See Craig Burnett, *Jeff Wall* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), p. 58. Slightly further down (p. 59), Jeff Wall himself adds that: '[…] it could have a relationship to the Salon machine paintings of the nineteenth century — but without Napoleon, without the hero'.
[9] Other references have been mentioned, which underlie the photograph either globally or locally — motif by motif, that is to say: the engraving *Melencholia* by Albrecht Dürer (1514), the painting *The Calling of Saint Matthew* by Caravaggio (1599–1600), the etching 'The Revenge of the Peasants' from *The Miseries and Misfortunes of War* (1633) by Jacques Callot, the series of etchings *The Disasters of War* (1810–20) by Francisco Goya y Lucientes. See Paola Checcoli, 'Sur l'efficacité

Fig. 1: Jeff Wall, *Dead Troops Talk (a vision after an ambush of a Red Army patrol, near Moqor, Afghanistan, winter 1986)*, 1992.

Fig. 2: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait at the Age of Twenty* (or *Self-portrait with a Bandage*), 1491-92

the system of references which operate within the work. I intend rather to demonstrate that the concerted representation of a more or less historical event links up *Dead Troops Walk* with a certain pictorial tradition and in particular with the compositional mode specifically attached to it.

From a technical point of view, *Dead Troops Talk* was produced through the means of digital photography, a time-consuming not to say complex pro-

symbolique de la citation. Le cas de deux photographies de guerre', in *Citer l'autre*, ed. by Marie-Dominique Popelard and Anthony Wall (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2005), pp. 149–58.

cess which from the outset goes beyond the realms of the initial photographic medium. Jeff Wall began by recreating a mountainous relief intended to evoke (and even stand for) Afghanistan. In this studio setting,[10] he then arranged actors made-up as corpses of soldiers from 'the Red Army'[11] in order to enact the dead troops from the title. To start with, the artist had carefully drawn the corpses of the soldiers, designing all at one time their poses, gestures, expressions and wounds in fine detail. The actors modelled themselves on the sketches (fig. 3), were photographed one by one and finally their individual images were assembled into a seamless image, the separation between the distinct photographs having been erased thanks to digital technology.[12] Géricault himself had begun by having a small-scale raft built inside his studio and he had drafted around twenty preparatory sketches prior to the composition of his painting. By doing so, he hoped to make his depiction of the agonizing faces and wounded bodies as acute as possible.[13]

Dead Troops Talk constitutes a contemporary version of the history painting[14] not only through the theme it represents (a war scene in the immediate aftermath of the fight), but also and essentially because Jeff Wall delocalizes and by doing

[10] According to Thierry de Duve, 'Wall did not go "*sur le motif*", he imagined the set, conceived it and constructed it freely, with no constraint other than having to think, simultaneously, like a stage director arranging his actors in a real depth of space; like a painter composing a space from a plane; and like a photographer (or a filmmaker of the 'still image') lighting the scene and knowing where to place his camera.' See de Duve, 'The Mainstream and the Crooked Path', in *Jeff Wall*, ed. by Thierry de Duve and others (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), pp. 24–53 (p. 37).
[11] If I'm not mistaken, the Soviet Army, in 1986. Most likely, the term 'Red Army' is being used as an ironical term or to invoke the Soviet Army's Past (many thanks to Diana Wade for this suggestion).
[12] These operations are recounted by Jeff Wall in an instalment of the series *Contacts* devoted to him (directed by J.-P Krief). See *Contacts. Volume 2. Le renouveau de la photographie contemporaine* (Arte/La sept vidéo, 2000).
[13] It is worth adding a few more details which give further insight not only into the painter's work but also into Jeff Wall's own artistic choice: 'Le charpentier de la *Méduse* fit pour Géricault un petit modèle du radeau qui reproduisait, avec la plus scrupuleuse exactitude, tous les détails de la construction; le peintre y disposa des maquettes de terre. Il avait loué un grand atelier en haut du Faubourg Saint Honoré, près de l'hôpital Beaujon. Il allait souvent dans les salles des malades pour suivre sur le visage des agonisants toutes les phases de la souffrance, pour étudier toutes les expressions de la douleur et des suprêmes angoisses. Son atelier devint la succursale de la Morgue. Il s'était entendu avec les internes et les infirmiers qui lui apportaient pour ses études des membres coupés et des cadavres […].' In Henry Houssaye, 'Un maître de l'école française - Théodore Géricault', *Revue des deux mondes*, 36.3 (1879), 374–91 (p. 385).
[14] The relation of photography to the *tableau* has been widely discussed by Jean-François Chevrier, see Jean-François Chevrier, 'Les aventures de la forme tableau dans l'histoire de la photographie', in *Photo Kunst, Arbeiten aus 150 Jahren – du XXᵉ au XIXᵉ, Aller et retour*, exhibition catalogue ed. by Chevrier (Stuttgart: Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, 1990), pp. 9–81. For a further comment on the modes of presence of the *tableau* (in general, not limited to history painting) in Jeff Wall's photographs, as well as on the stakes of their relation to pictorial tradition, and amongst many other references, I may refer the reader to Chevrier, 'The Spectres of the Everyday', in *Jeff Wall*, pp. 162–91. In this same book (pp. 23–53), one may also consult De Duve's essay dealing, in particular, with the relation between painting and photography suggested by Wall's work and focusing, on the one hand, on the issue of modernity and, on the other hand, on the issue of transparency (as '*the* convention common to Renaissance (painting) and photography').

Fig. 3: Preparatory drawing for *Dead Troops Talk (a vision after an ambush of a Red Army patrol, near Moqor, Afghanistan, winter 1986).*

so renews a logic attached to such a type of representation, namely the logic of the 'pregnant moment'. I emphasize the fact that, although the artist had made several preparatory drafts, this renewal took place outside of the pictorial medium for which this particular logic had originally been invented.

The principle of the 'pregnant moment' was proposed in 1766 by Gotthold Ephraïm Lessing in the general context of a comparison between painting and poetry (the *ut pictura poesis* previously mentioned), and it aimed to solve the problem of the representation of a historical event. How could one represent the complete unfolding of a historical event in a single painting? How could one capture its full complexity and duration without turning the picture into an unidentifiable accumulation of bodies and postures? The 'pregnant moment' meant that the representation had to focus on one particular stage of the event, not just any random moment but, rather, the moment which would allow the painter to best convey the global significance of the event: the so-called 'pregnant moment' is not just any meaningless moment; it is a symbolic and eloquent moment. Importantly, it never existed as such in reality. Indeed, although the painter relies on a precise point in time which is deemed emblematic of the event as a whole, he nevertheless proceeds to slightly alter the as-yet-unwritten facts of history and will for instance — among other such modifications — cut out less important characters and add elements from before or after the chosen moment in order to make the historical implications of the event more explicit. To quote Lessing:

> [In the support of this view] I will not cite the fact, that in great historical pictures, the single moment is almost always extended; and that perhaps there is scarcely any piece, very rich in figures, in which every one of them is in the same motion and attitude, in which he would have been at the moment of the main action, some being represented in the posture of a little earlier, others in that of a little later period.[15]

[15] Gotthold Ephraïm Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766), trans. by E. C. Beasley (1853) (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans; Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons; Oxford: F. Mac Pherson; Rugby: Crossley and Billington), p. 121.

As I have said, Jeff Wall's photograph was constructed piece by piece, motif by motif, and thus reenacts the principle of a carefully constructed and composed moment as opposed to the instantly recorded moment created by the photographic medium and theorized later on by Henri-Cartier Bresson as the decisive moment. Considering the subject of Jeff Wall's image — the contemporary Afghanistan war — the spectator could have the right to expect a documentary photograph determined by the logic of the decisive moment, rather than a painting reconstituting the war in a studio and substituting the real event (or the real referent) and its possible *reproduction* with such a grotesque *imitation*. We clearly see here to what extent Jeff Wall recasts different mediums by applying a compositional strategy more or less borrowed from the pictorial medium to a photograph which is, as it were, separated from the potential of its own medium, especially with regard to the temporal logic of the snapshot and the relation between the photographic image and its referent. In the end, Jeff Wall creates a separation between the photographic image and the photographic medium, thus establishing that no medium can entirely prescribe or control the aesthetic logic of its images. The artist is not reinventing painting by using the technical means of photography — and further Jeff Wall does not paint, he composes a *tableau* — what he is doing rather is freeing the construction of the image from the conventions of its medium.

Dead Troops Talk *(2): the Motif of the Zombie, the Utopian Scene*

The play on mediums does not end there. Indeed, as soon as we set them against their pictorial homonyms, such as the corpses of the nineteenth-century French paintings previously mentioned (those by Meissonier, Géricault, as well as Gros), the specificity of Jeff Wall's motifs becomes particularly striking. These bluish and blood-dripping cadavers are 'coming back to life'. Their gnawed limbs, their gaping wounds revealing the inside of an abdomen or skull and their somewhat carnal tendencies[16] indicate that these are not just straight-up cadavers but zombies. In other words, creatures which have been exemplarily featured through the means of cinema, especially in the movies of George A. Romero (fig. 4), the filmmaker who most notably contributed to the elaboration of the motif, at least in its cannibalistic version.[17] The figure of the zombie first appeared in the cinema

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[16] One of the cadavers at the centre of the image offers an open-mouthed companion a morsel of what resembles blood-soaked entrails.

[17] Indeed, the cinematic zombie was originally represented according to the Voodoo tradition as a soulless slave quite distinct from Romero's mordant creatures — as an example, it is only necessary to mention *White Zombie* (Victor Halperin, 1932). The anthropologist Alfred Métraux has insisted on the slave status of the zombie in Haitian Voodoo: 'Le *zombi* est une bête de somme que son maître exploite sans merci, le forçant à travailler dans les champs, l'accablant de besogne, ne lui ménageant pas les coups de fouet et ne le nourrissant que d'aliments insipides.' Alfred Métraux, *Le Vaudou Haïtien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p. 250.

Fig. 4: *Day of the Dead* (George A. Romero, 1985).

of the 1930s and was then still part of the Voodoo tradition, which it has since emancipated itself from. In the last ten years, it has regained an unprecedented popularity and it now frequents horror movies, comedies and video games. We should however point out that when Jeff Wall embarked on his work, this motif was a long way from holding the centre of the cinematic stage.

Before continuing any further with the motif of the zombie, let us briefly revisit the sketches which Géricault had drafted in preparation of *The Raft of the Medusa.* Indeed, these included *Cannibalism on the Raft of the Medusa*, a drawing[18] which he eventually chose to exclude from the setting up of his pregnant moment (fig. 5). The complexity of this scene was part of the drama which the painting reiterated. Cannibalism had also been featured in prior representations and texts:

> […] One critic in *Le Courrier Royal* noted the group's resemblance to Joshua Reynolds' painting of Ugolino and his sons, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773 […]. Ugolino is cruel and, in the context of the *Medusa* shipwreck, resonant episode from Dante's *Inferno*, involving incarceration, prolonged suffering, despair, cannibalism and death. It was thus a signifier of a number of nightmarish events, including cannibalism, which occurred on the raft.[19]

[18] See Théodore Géricault, *Cannibalism on the Raft of the Medusa (Scène de Cannibalisme, le Radeau de la Méduse)*, 1818–19, crayon, ink wash and gouache on paper, Musée du Louvre, Paris.
[19] See Christine Riding, 'Staging *The Raft of the Medusa*', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5.2 (2004), 1–26 (p. 11).
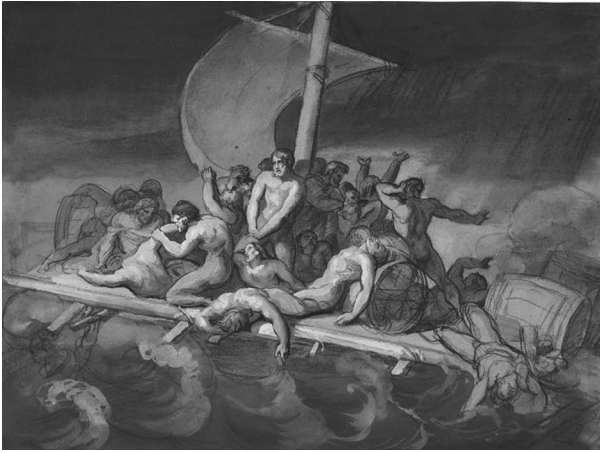
Fig. 5: Théodore Géricault, *Cannibalism on the Raft of the Medusa* (*Scène de Cannibalisme, le Radeau de la Méduse*), 1818–19.

I will speculate further into the specific role of the zombie motif in the 'photographic painting', but we can already say that the choice of this motif unearths the cannibalism which Géricault had excluded from his own composition. In brief, there is neither raft nor shipwreck in Jeff Wall's picture, but his zombies, it might be suggested, are the ghosts or spirits of the cannibals of *The Medusa*: Wall skilfully acknowledges the reality banned from the nineteenth-century painting. Indeed, as we shall soon demonstrate, it is through the motif of the zombie, a motif hardly compatible with the logic of historical discourse, that the historical fact — the shipwrecked cannibals of *The Medusa* — is reintegrated within the 'photographic painting'. But what exact role does the zombie play in this war scene, beyond that of a mere corpse?

Let us state it bluntly: in this particular case, the zombie is the instrument that undermines the genre of history painting. Indeed, this essentially fictitious figure introduces its ontological contradiction within the war painting, a subversive interaction between the living and the dead, which initially contradicts the principle of the representation of a historical event. In other words, the zombie figure is that impossibility which transforms the supposedly real historical scene into a utopian scene. Jeff Wall recurrently uses the terms 'hallucination' or 'fantastic vision' in order to describe the status of the depicted scene,[20] something which further demonstrates the discrepancy between history and its representation. Similarly, he insists that his reconstruction does not rely on any particular stage of the war evoked in his photograph: the ambush mentioned in the work's title could very well have taken place, but as it happens it was entirely imagined by the artist. In the end, the photograph retains only one motif from the absent or eclipsed

[20] Jeff Wall explains: 'It always seemed to me that the work was going to have a relationship to war photography. I was going to advance a claim to authenticity that couldn't be satisfied and, in the suspension of that area — the fantasy — the hallucination could occur.' See Burnett, p. 59.

cinematographic medium, a mere fragment of the cinematic imaginary. Albeit displaced from its medium, this motif still retains all the power of cinema, that is, its fiction effect. Through those aimless zombies who have lost their ability to bite and groan and are equally deprived of the narrative economy of cinema,[21] *fiction descends and enters the supposedly historical scene.* Now such an operation undoubtedly constitutes the game or the pretence of a utopian discourse. Louis Marin has used Thomas More's seminal work as his starting point to discuss the paradoxical nature of the Utopia as a literary genre. He summarizes the problem in the following manner: 'Comment peut-il mettre en scène une contradiction historique en la dissimulant ou plus précisément en la jouant dans une fiction?'[22] Thomas More's *Utopia* mainly revolves around such an exchange between fiction and history and this relation is cunningly managed by its author. In other words, the utopian discourse implies the projection of the historical present within a fiction that reconsiders it, and inversely, the projection of fiction within the preexisting context of history. The implications of Thomas More's work can obviously not be reduced to those of Jeff Wall's piece, since the photograph is concerned with the representation of history rather than with a political model. I believe nevertheless that both works essentially revolve around an interaction between fiction and history and a conversion of the historical scene into a utopian scene.

To summarize, we are confronted with a photograph whose mode of composition is borrowed from the history painting and its main motif from the horror movie. This ultimately produces what I have referred to as a conversion of the historical scene into a utopian scene. In such a context, one might wonder what becomes of the photographic medium. In opposition to the law (and the transparency) of the imprint, Wall's piece valorizes the conception of the photographic image as *istoria*[23] so that, along with the history painting, it is the traditionally established relation between the photograph and its referent which is subverted.

Looking Back upon the Question of the Medium

I will now conclude on two points and come back to the question of the medium in order to open up the scope of my analysis. Firstly, the phenomenon which Rosalind Krauss theorized in the late 1990s seems to have emancipated itself from its well-circumscribed historical and aesthetic context and to have spread so widely as to become more generally relevant. Indeed the repeated use of the filmic medium in contemporary art (by Tacita Dean or Mark Lewis, for instance)

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[21] Let me add that although the zombie is deprived of the ordinary economy of the cinematic narrative, it is not irrevocably excluded from the narrative register, since in this particular case it enters the *istoria* of the photography.
[22] Louis Marin, *Utopiques: jeux d'espace* (Paris: Minuit, 1973), p. 87.
[23] For a discussion about this concept, see Anthony Grafton, 'Historia and Istoria: Alberti's Terminology in Context', *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance*, 8 (1999), 37–68.

sufficiently proves that the re-elaboration discussed throughout this paper does not only apply to photography — this could be stated even if the filmic medium did not systematically imply all the critical aspects which Krauss attributes to its photographic homologue.

Secondly, as a result of this general recasting of all mediums, it is necessary to reexamine the concept of medium itself. Post-medium era or not, I do not think that the discussion of the image can dispense with the theoretical tool of the medium (and it has to be noted that within 'post-medium' we *still* have the word medium). However, the assemblage lying at the core of the concept of medium — that is the correlation between the material support of a work and its aesthetic reason, or its expressive reason to take up Krauss's words — has to be re-considered as soon as this correlation ceases to be systematic. The question which I will eventually raise is the following: to what extent was the correlation between material support and aesthetic reason ever in effect?

The Image, Alone: Photography, Painting and the *Tableau* Aesthetic in Post-Cinema

Ágnes Pethő, Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca (Romania)

Abstract

Recent art cinema has produced several experiments in the *tableau* that conceive entire movies based on its aesthetic. Such films blur the boundaries between cinema and installation art, and consist of a loosely connected string of *tableaux* which gain a degree of autonomy and therefore cannot be interpreted in the contexts of cinematic narration and dramaturgy. These films are usually categorized as slow movies, and indeed their duration has inspired the majority of their analysis in film theory. Nevertheless, I suggest that we should focus on the similarities between the *tableau* sequences of slow movies and the installations of moving image *tableaux* in order to highlight the ways they revitalise the traditional, intermedial figure of the *tableau vivant* in art, and foreground the single, photographic frame within moving images. Referring to recent reinterpretations of the notion of the transmedial *dispositif* and to the revisions of the *tableau* mode in art (and the ideas of Jean-François Chevrier) I propose to contest Raymond Bellour's idea of the 'battle of the dispositifs' and concentrate on aspects of the complex convergences between the traditional visual arts and the new media of moving images that underlies the *tableau* aesthetic in post-cinema. Taking into account the implosion of the *tableau vivant* into a more generic *tableau* style, I examine a set of gestures and actions of folding together photography, painting and cinema that may define the post-cinematic '*mise en tableau*' (via examples from the films of James Benning, Lav Diaz, Gustav Deutsch, Raúl Perrone, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Tsai Ming-liang).

> The effect of picture on picture as a factor in style is much more important than what comes directly from the imitation of nature.
> (Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*)

The 'Aesthetic of Confusion' or the 'New Adventure of the Picture Form?'

From the fashionable *cinemagraphs* breathing life into photographs on our

portable screens to the monumental photo-filmic installations exhibited in art galleries, the fascination with moving images posing as pictures (photographs or paintings) and vice versa, is not only ubiquitous in our digital age, but perceptible in all layers of contemporary visual culture. The *tableau* form combining stillness with motion has emerged as an extremely versatile and widely used template of digital imagery, connecting the new media of moving images with traditional arts, everyday consumer practices with highbrow aestheticism. In recent art cinema we often see entire movies based on the aesthetic of the *tableau* which blur the boundaries between cinema and installation art. In such films sequences conceived as individual pictures are no longer aesthetic ornaments, or privileged moments interpreted in the context of a cinematic narration and dramaturgy, but gain a degree of autonomy. And while such films are usually included in the general canon of slow cinema on account of their 'intensified sense of temporality',[1] we may not only view them as durational movies, but as films which are concerned with different ways of foregrounding the single, photographic frame in cinema in an unprecedented way, revitalising in the process the traditional intermedial figure of the *tableau vivant*. Accordingly, instead of considering their aesthetic from the perspective of temporality (or, as usually analysed, from the perspective of the cinematic long take), I suggest that we focus on the similarities between the *tableau* sequences of slow movies and the installations of moving image *tableaux* in order to highlight the way in which they effectively re-negotiate the long-established relations between photography, painting and the moving image.

In this respect, I have found that the recent reinterpretations of the notion of the *dispositif*[2] in film theory as well as in the theory of art may prove productive in determining key features of what we may regard as the post-cinematic *tableau*. In his seminal essays[3] Jean-Louis Baudry described 'the cinema effect' not as something resulting from the discursive specificities of the film as language

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[1] Jonathan Romney, 'In Search of Lost Time', *Sight and Sound*, 20.2 (February 2010), 43–44 (p. 43).

[2] Examples for the reinterpretation of the dispositifs of moving images in the last decades include, among others: Raymond Bellour, 'La Querelle des dispositifs / Battle of the Images', in *Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary After Film*, ed. by Jeffrey Shaw, Peter Weibel (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), pp. 56–59 (first publ. in *Art Press*, 262 (November 2000), 48–52); Frank Kessler, 'The Cinema of Attractions as Dispositif', in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. by Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), pp. 57–71; André Parente and Victa de Carvalho, 'Cinema as *dispositif*: Between Cinema and Contemporary Art', *Cinémas: revue d'études cinématographiques/Cinémas: Journal of Film Studies*, 19.1 (2008), 37–55; Pavle Levi, *Cinema by Other Means* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Adrian Martin, *Mise en Scène and Film Style: From Classical Hollywood to New Media Art* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), in particular the chapter 'The Rise of the *Dispositif*', pp. 178–205.

[3] Jean-Louis Baudry, 'Ideological effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus' in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader*, ed. by Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 286–98 (first publ. as 'Effets idéologiques de l'appareil cinématographique de base', *Cinéthique*, 7–8 (1970), 1–8); Baudry, 'The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema', in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, pp. 299–318 (first publ. as 'Le Dispositif: approaches métapsychologiques de l'impression de realité', *Communications*, 23 (1975), 56–72).

or text, but as a product of its basic technological machinery (*l'appareil*) and a particular 'set up', a 'disposition' (*dispositif*), of the conditions of image projection or spectatorship, of material as well as psychological, social and ideological components. Digital images produced and displayed with new devices and in different conditions of reception bring about a multiplication of the *dispositifs* of moving images, alongside the traditional institutional *dispositif* of cinema (i.e. movies experienced in the cinema theatre).[4] Raymond Bellour has written extensively about the relationship of film, video, photography at the dawn of the digital age, coining the term '*l'entre images*' ('images in between') to capture the 'collusion'[5] and collision of these media and their consequences in film. In several of his latest writings and public lectures, however, he has adopted a much more radical stance by declaring that today we see an 'aesthetic of confusion' and a 'battle of the dispositifs' ('*la querelle des dispositifs*'), in which, instead of a fertile in-betweenness, of cross-pollinations among the arts, 'all we have is incertitudes — slip-sliding, straddling, flickering, hybridization, metamorphosing, transition and passages between what is still called cinema and the thousand and one ways to show moving images in the vague and misnomered domain known as Art.'[6] As a consequence, quite surprisingly, Bellour reasserts the uniqueness of cinema and demands that we delimit it from all other arts using motion pictures.[7]

The *tableau* sequences in recent cinema, in which slow movies, experimental films and installation pieces converge, introduce us to the heart of this ongoing debate on the relation between the new cinematic *dispositifs* and, as Bellour affectionately phrases, citing Serge Daney, 'the cinema, alone.'[8] But instead of supporting the idea of the clash of the *dispositifs*, purported by Bellour, they lead us to a unique connection between cinema and the *tableau*, or 'the picture form' in painting and photography. According to Jean-François Chevrier[9] and the discussions in contemporary art theory following his thoughts on the 'adventure of the picture form',[10] the *tableau* can be defined as a particular *dispositif* with a history

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[4] From this point of view there has not been a 'relocation' of cinema in the post-media age, only a multiplication of cinematic *dispositifs*, even though, as Francesco Casetti's latest book argues, 'relocation' has emerged as one of the key words defining the major processes taking place in today's cinema. See: Francesco Casetti, *The Lumière Galaxy. Seven Key Words for the Cinema to Come* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 17–43.

[5] Bellour uses this verbal metaphor in his *Between-the-Images* (Zürich, Dijon: JRP Rinigier & Les Presses du Réel, 2012), p. 16.

[6] Bellour, 'Battle of the Images', p. 58.

[7] A similar conclusion is reached by John Belton in his article, 'If Film is Dead, What is Cinema?', *Screen*, 55.4 (Winter 2014), 460–71.

[8] Bellour, 'The Cinema Alone/Multiple Cinemas', *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*, 5 (Summer 2013), <http://www.alphavillejournal.com/Issue5/PDFs/ArticleBellour.pdf> [accessed 27 August 2015].

[9] Jean-François Chevrier, 'The Adventures of the Picture Form in the History of Photography', in *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography 1960–1982*, ed. by Douglas Fogle (Minneapolis: Walker Art Centre, 2003 [1989]), pp. 113–28.

[10] The most comprehensive discussions of these ideas were published following the conference

and a trans-mediality of its own. It appears in the history of painting at the time when the image becomes disentangled from its support in architecture or the book and is framed as a picture hanging on the wall, becoming an autonomous art object.[11] Beginning from the late 1970s and 1980s the dominance of large scale photographs in art galleries hails in a new era in which photography appropriates this *tableau* form from painting, and becomes disentangled from its own previous connections with print culture. As Chevrier writes: 'images are not mere prints — mobile, manipulable sheets that are framed and mounted on a wall for the duration of an exhibition and go back into their boxes afterward. They are designed and produced for the wall, summoning a confrontational experience on the part of the spectator'.[12] Thus photography also becomes inextricably intertwined with image-installations, and connected to a parallel evolution of video art, which renounces its intricate contraptions and machineries of display towards the end of the 1980s and adopts the *dispositif* of cinematic projections upon a single or multiple screens on the walls of the art gallery. Leaving aside all commercial uses which are more like the so called 'furniture films' that Justin Remes has described: being 'meant to be looked at but not seen',[13] the post-cinematic *tableau* (the single-take image, with its commanding presence, viewed in an immobile frame for a considerable length of time) can be regarded as a 'new adventure' of the same, transmutable picture form, of the *tableau* as a *dispositif* handed down to us from painting through photography.

The *tableau vivant* in film has always forced the spectator into a direct confrontation with the image introducing a pause within the flow of the narrative. In certain cases, however, when the distinction between the *tableau vivant* proper (the imitation of a painting) and the *tableau shot* (a static sequence shot that looks like a picture or a scene on a stage) is blurred, the *tableau* form ceases to be an incidental rhetorical device, and appears instead as a more or less rigorously applied constraint, a general mode of pictorial organization, imposing the contemplative *disposition* of the *tableau* form over the string of sequences that make up the entire length of the film (thus facilitating its presentation as an installation or its disassembly into a gallery exhibit). Films based on the aesthetic of the *tab-*

'Tableau: Painting, Photo, Object' organized at the Tate Modern in London, 28–29 October 2011.
[11] As Chevrier has pointed out: '[w]hen it assumes the form of the tableau, the pictorial work affirms its status as an autonomous image, endowed with its own support: the tableau is movable, it is not fixed to one single place, it does not depend upon architecture (in contrast to the fresco); it does not share its support with text (in contrast to the image of an illustration)'. Chevrier, 'The Tableau and the Document of Experience', in *Click Double Click: The Documentary Factor*, ed. by Thomas Weski (Köln: Walther König, 2006), pp. 51–61 (p. 51).
[12] Chevrier, 'The Adventures of the Picture Form', p. 116.
[13] Justin Remes, *Motion(less) Pictures: The Cinema of Stasis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 39. Such films, he claims, invite a 'series of distracted glances rather than a focused and comprehensive gaze' (p. 34). We can see this, for example, in the countless ambient videos uploaded on YouTube showing exotic beaches, waterfalls or forest landscapes running for hours as moving photographs.

leau can in fact be included in the category that Adrian Martin describes as 'the dispositif film', a film conceived as 'a game with rules.'[14]

The Photo-Pictorial Gestures of the Mise en Tableau

Based on Foucault's ideas, Giorgio Agamben describes the *dispositif* as a 'play of power', something that realizes 'a pure activity of governance'[15] in the process through which apparatuses produce their subject, something that can be connected to the military definition of the word *apparatus* in French, as 'the set of means arranged in conformity with a plan.'[16] Thinking in terms of poetics, and leaving aside more general, ideological or social implications, this could be translated as a set of gestures that realize this 'governance' of formlessness into the *tableau* form.

Although Raymond Bellour's ideas on the 'clash of dispositifs' seem untenable, I have found elsewhere in his theoretical writings a set of notions that might be used, paradoxically, to argue for the interconnectedness of the arts realized through the dispositif of the *tableau*. In an intriguing essay presenting the importance of certain 'figures' in cinema,[17] Bellour points out that in film analysis too much emphasis has been laid on types of shots and the idea of staging suggested by the second part of the term *mise en scène*. He proposes that we should concentrate instead on the first words of the phrase ('*mise en*'), on the gesture of 'placing' something into a certain form or figure, implying that this form may also come from photography, language, painting, and so on. Thus, he introduces a series of new concepts like *mise en page*, *mise en plan*, *mise en place*, *mise en phrase*, *mise en image*, and even, *mise en pli.*[18] Following this logic of certain figurations taking shape within film, we can also speak of the process of *tableauisation* of a moving image in terms of the gesture of the cinematic *mise en tableau*. Using Bellour's terminology as stepping stones, in what follows, I will attempt to argue, through a few paradigmatic examples, that presenting a moving image in the form of the *tableau* implies not only one, but a series of gestures or actions. Far from being exhaustive, the examples offered below are meant to tentatively map some of those areas where the gestures of folding together photography, painting and cinema may occur.[19]

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[14] Martin, *Mise en Scène and Film Style*, pp. 187–88.
[15] Giorgio Agamben, *What is an Apparatus and Other Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 6 and p. 11.
[16] Ivi, p. 7.
[17] Bellour, 'Figures aux allures de plans', in *La Mise en scène*, ed. by Jacques Aumont (Bruxelles: De Boeck, 2000), pp. 109–26.
[18] With these concepts he successfully contests the traditional thinking that contrasts the 'cinema of the *mise en scène*' with the 'cinema of the image', a way of thinking that is maintained, for example, in Aumont, *Le Cinéma et la Mise en Scène* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010).
[19] These complex gestures of *mise en tableau* may also be perceived as the ones that distinguish 'slow cinema' (which operates to a large extent on the aesthetic of the *tableau*) from so called 'slow TV', in which instead of the contemplation of 'the image', there is a fluid perception of 'the world'

Gestures of Containment: Mise en Cadre, Mise en Pose, Mise en Place, and Mise en Image

From the point of view of Agamben's perspective on the *dispositif*, perhaps the most important gestures in the production of a *tableau* are those that result in the containment of free flowing forms and movements, of the evanescent moments captured by the camera in a fixed structure, and which manage to connect 'the liquid intelligence of nature' inherent in the art of photography, as Jeff Wall has so poetically described,[20] with the stability of the pictorial organization. The role of placement within a narrative (of the *mise en histoire*) prevalent in fiction films is replaced by the gesture of anchoring 'the natural form, with its unpredictable contours',[21] all the unfolding movements in time and the changes of light and colour to something that remains fixed within the rigorous composition as a picture. Most of the time this means a placing within a frame (*mise en cadre*), but it can also be a retained pose (*mise en pose*), an abstract geometrical or compositional element, patches of colour that remain unchanged within the ensemble. The *tableau* in its minimalist form conveys therefore an elemental play upon stillness versus mobility, in which mobility is always framed (and contained) by stillness or fixity.

The whitewash on grey concrete, the massive dark walls, the bright zigzag line of the neon light on the ceiling of an underground tunnel in Duisburg in the opening sequence of James Benning's essay film, a crossover between a documentary and an installation piece, entitled *Ruhr* (2009), composed of a series of digital long takes, frame the movement of the cars or cyclists passing by, of the withered leaves crawling along the eerie, deserted tunnel in the draught (fig. 1). The dynamics of the *tableau* recalls the famous photograph of Cartier Bresson (*Hyères, France*, 1932) which captures the moment a bicycle swooshes by in the street against the angular lines of descending stairs and the heavy walls. A similar structure of lines appears in the picturesque static takes of Benning's 2011 film, *Small Roads*: this time a yellow paint on the road, the angles of the improvised barbed wire fence, echoed in colour and form in the road sign stand firmly against the 'liquid' elements of the landscape, the stalks of grain waving in the wind, the clouds floating above in the sky (fig. 2). The carefully chosen position of the camera and the frame emphasizing the structuring elements in the landscape, enclosing the pulse of life, exemplifies more than anything Chevrier's claim that a *tableau* implies not simply a way of seeing but a way of being in the world, the '*tableau* always presents more than it represents.'[22] The prolonged attention

through the hyperbolic application of the digital long take (or sometimes the playful flaunting of digital wizardry, as we see in projects like *Tokyo Reverse*, made in 2014 by Simon Bouisson and Ludovic Zuili).

[20] Jeff Wall, 'Photography and Liquid Intelligence', in *Selected Essays and Interviews* (New York: MOMA, 2007 [1989]), pp.109–10.

[21] Ivi, p. 109.

[22] Chevrier, 'The Tableau and the Document of Experience', p. 51.

Figs 1-2: Stills from James Benning photo-filmic essays, *Ruhr* (2009) and *Small Roads* (2011).

given to the frame does not only ensure the general mode of contemplation that defines the *tableau* mode, and suggest an implicit reflection upon its own con-structedness, it also foregrounds cinema as moving photography acting as 'the

pencil of nature',[23] allowing the photographic inscription of the world onto the screen, with an affluence of perceptual details.

What is more, such images always fix the frame upon a particular place: both of Benning's films quoted here are journeys into specific geographical regions, enabling an extraordinary attention to the sense of place. Thus, another important gesture is performed: a '*mise en place*' ensures that the aestheticism of the images, 'the sensory riches extracted from life'[24] are 'returned' to the world. These are the words of Jacques Rancière, who identifies this, for example, as the most relevant gesture in the cinema of Pedro Costa, whose films (also screened as installations) set in the derelict Fontainhas district of Lisbon, consist of a series of fixed frame photo-filmic *tableaux* reminiscent of the masters of the Dutch Golden Age.[25] They show us how the gesture of '*mise en image*' in the creation of the photo-filmic *tableau* may imply, in the words of Chevrier, 'a return to classical compositional forms, along with borrowings from the history of modern and pre-modern painting',[26] even if this means only a few basic elements or principles of pictorial organization. In this sense, Benning's installation, *Tulare Road* (2010), may present a pure form of this feature of the photo-filmic *tableau*. Working like an impressionist painter, he places side by side three takes of the same stretch of highway shot under different weather conditions: in fog, with an overcast sky and basking in light, arranging them in a triptych (fig. 3). These sensuous impressions linger over the abstraction of the landscape, constructed of lines converging at the horizon, where cars vanish into pixel sized dots or emerge and materialize as real objects.[27]

I will conclude the overview of this set of gestures with a scene from a film made in 2014, *From What is Before* (*Mula sa Kung Ano ang Noon*). The five and a half hour long film was written, directed, filmed and edited by Lav Diaz. It chronicles in stark black-and-white images the life of a small rural community in the Philippines just before President Ferdinand Marcos imposed martial law in 1972. Each loosely connected scene is like a photograph in motion, framed with the same aesthetic care (suggestive of both the emotional attachment and the reflexive distance of the act of remembrance), slowly introducing us to a land and its people, to a world that is about to disappear. In a hauntingly beautiful scene we see a woman with a baby in her arms covered in a blanket, sitting in a boat (fig. 4). She

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[23] The metaphor originates from Henry Fox Talbot, a pioneer of photography who published a series of books with photo illustrations with the title *The Pencil of Nature* (1844–46).

[24] Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London, New York: Verso, 2009), p. 81.

[25] See more about Costa's cinematic poetics balancing between photography and painting in: Ágnes Pethő, 'Figurations of the Photofilmic: Stillness versus Motion – Stillness in Motion', in *The Photofilmic: Entangled Images in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture*, ed. by Brianne Cohen, Alexander Streitberger (Leuven University Press: Lieven Gevaert Series, forthcoming).

[26] Chevrier, 'The Adventures of the Picture Form', p. 116.

[27] See an insightful analysis of Benning's work in Silke Panse, 'The Work of the Documentary Protagonist: The Material Labour of Aesthetics', in *A Companion to Contemporary Documentary Film*, ed. by Alexandra Juhasz and Alisa Lebow (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), pp. 155–76.

Fig. 3: James Benning's installation *Tulare Road* (2010), an impressionistic, photographic triptych (frame grab from the video available on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/121401079> [accessed 20 October 2015]).

Fig. 4: *From What is Before* (*Mula sa Kung Ano ang Noon*, 2014): the gesture of *mise en pose* and *mise en image* that invokes the figure of graceful Renaissance Madonnas.

sits motionless as the rain pours down on her and the boat advances, with the lush, damp foliage swaying on each side, releasing clouds of vapour around her, and we hear the rain pounding against the surface of the water. This time it is not only the contrast between the liquidity of nature surrounding the static figure or the lines of the boat making the linear perspective palpable in the image that mould the image into a *tableau* form. There is also an astonishing gesture of *mise en pose* and *mise en image* that invokes the figure of graceful renaissance Madonnas in painting, framed by nature, arranged in pyramidal compositions emphasizing depth of field. In the film the image is symptomatic of the coexistence of Christianity with local culture, and appears detached from the immediate context of events, as a possible vision in a dream, an apparition of a living picture.

The Act of Building an Image: the Photo-Filmic Diorama

In many of the contemporary *tableau*-films images appear to be built as *a photo-filmic diorama*. Often conceived as actual *tableaux vivants*, such images strike us not only with their constructedness, but also with a unique sense of spatiality, as images are not only contained within a given compositional frame, but they are built like a glass case display. Gustave Deutsch's film *Shirley: Visions of Reality* (2013), according to the author, is a meditation on the 'staging of reality'.[28] Each scene unfolds the reconstruction of one of Edward Hopper's canvases. The image is built in the form of an installation assembled as a theatrical set, combined with painted backgrounds and photographed as a cinematic *tableau vivant*[29] (fig. 5). The methodology is similar to the way Jeff Wall devises his light boxes, and almost identical to the procedure used by Gregory Crewdson in photography. Crewdson shoots his uncanny, hyperrealist cinematic photographs (also influenced by Hopper) on elaborate film sets constructed for the sake of a single image, sometimes using well-known film actors as models, and assembles the final image as a composite of several takes. The result is a photo-filmic diorama encapsulating a particular historical segment of reality (the tumultuous times of the 1950s and 1960s in Deutsch's film, the contemporary American suburbs in Crewdson's photos), with specimens of human beings placed in the image as puppets.

The Argentinean experimental filmmaker Raúl Perrone inflects this structure in the direction that emphasizes even more the photographic quality of the assemblage. Each take in his film entitled *Favula* (2013) is a composite black-and-white picture of moving images of still faces appearing to be floating in space like daguerreotype portraits. Placed behind another transparent moving image they give the impression of being in the process of exposure, over-exposure,

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[28] See the synopsis on the author's website: <http://www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com/index.html> [accessed 27 August 2015].
[29] Deutsch presented scenes from the film along with its sets and props also in the form of an art installation assembled in collaboration with art director Hanna Schimek.

Fig. 5: Building an image like a photo-filmic diorama: *Shirley: Visions of Reality* (Gustav Deutsch, 2013).

affected by the sudden intrusions of light (fig. 6). In *Hierba* (2015) the cinematic *tableau vivant* reproduction of Éduard Manet's famous painting, *The Luncheon on the Grass* (*Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1865–66, oil on canvas 248×217 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris) with its visible double layers of moving image and painted background recalls not only the colorized frames of early cinema and the photographic format of the daguerreotype, but also Louis Daguerre's *diorama theatre*, which exhibited superimposed paintings on both sides of a translucent canvas lit from different directions, producing stunning effects of *trompe l'oeil* (fig. 7).

Folding the Image and an Architecture of Photographic Spaces

As these previous examples have shown, building an image as a container often implies the overlapping of different layers of images, of different media folded onto each other, in other words, to appropriate with a more concrete meaning Bellour's phrase, an act of '*mise en pli*.' Bellour introduces the term derived from Deleuze's concept of the baroque fold,[30] to top all the other acts of 'placing' discernible in the moving image, indicating the introduction of multiple levels of sensations and abstractions folded onto each other within the same scene, an action of disfiguration of the concrete elements of the *mise en scène*, and an act of figuration on another level.[31] In many cases of the contemporary *tableaux* films

[30] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993).
[31] Bellour, 'Figures aux allures de plans', and 'Le dépli des émotions', *Trafic*, 43 (September 2002), 93–128.

Figs 6-7: Raúl Perrone's *Favula* (2013): faces floating in space like daguerreotype portraits, and *Hierba* (2015): the reproduction of Manet's painting in a double layered picture.

(installations, feature films or experimental works), we may discern a similar process of actively folding the image 'from within' a single shot, resulting in 'folds' that reflect on complex relationships in cinema between photography, painting, architecture and installation art. Such folds may also stage a kind of intermedial 'metabolism' of post-cinema in which cinema internalizes and figurates the *dispositif* of the *tableau* within the image itself. This seems to be the case in which another moving image emerges within an inner frame, as a picture on the wall, a *tableau* in motion, juxtaposing and inverting flatness and space, movement and immobility, the 'cinematic' and the 'photographic' within the same shot. James Benning's short film, *Two Cabins* (2011), also exhibited as a two channel installation,[32] presents this structure in its purest form by presenting the cabin

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[32] The film (available on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Na7jNa4uj4> [accessed 20 October 2015]) is part of a larger, more complex project, conceived by Benning in which he

Figs 8-9: Apichatpong Weerasethakul: *Mekong Hotel* (2012) and *Syndromes and a Century* (*Sang sattawat*, 2006): moving photographs placed in the *découpage* of windows on the wall

window as a picture of trees, as a moving still life placed on the wall. Similarly, Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Mekong Hotel* (2012) contrasts the abstract lines and forms of the static hotel room, which appears as a kind of installation space, with the fluidity of the movement in the 'picture' revealed in the *découpage* of the window (fig. 8). The opening sequence of Weerasethakul's *Syndromes and a Century* (*Sang sattawat*, 2006) offers a more unconventional variation on this with its continuous tracking shot starting from a similarly abstract space towards a window that unfolds a photograph-like image (fig. 9).

The astonishing finale of Tsai Ming-liang's *Stray Dogs* (*Jiao you,* 2013) provides an emblematic, slow sequence for folding movement into stillness and combining different types and textures of images. The scene stages a cluster of image planes around the human figure, in and outside the ruinous architectural space and internalizes a *tableau*. We watch for over five minutes the dark silhouette of the protagonist standing motionless in front of a mural, in fact a charcoal painting based on a photograph, enclosed by picturesque walls, while the whole

actually reconstructed the philosopher Henry David Thoreau's and the anarchist, 'Unabomber', Ted Kaczynski's cabins to reflect on two versions of social isolation.

Figs 10-11: Folds between architecture and photography in Tsai Ming-liang's
Stray Dogs (*Jiao you,* 2013).

scene is lit as an elaborate installation for us to contemplate (fig. 10). The image is symptomatic in fact of another possible '*mise en pli*', in which the *tableau* is entirely built on the folds between architecture and photography. There are several scenes like this in Tsai Ming-liang's films, which sometimes include a protagonist who contemplates a view from within a space emerging like a sophisticated image installation (see a frame from *Visage*, 2009, fig. 12). In such cases spaces are made abstract by their dense overlay with photographic reflections, the multiplication of inner frames, often with strange loops, or inversions (see fig. 11, or the upside down reflection in Tsai's *Journey to the West/Xi you*, 2014, fig. 13), challenging the traditional frontality of the *tableau*, and resulting in a unique cinematic architecture of photographic spaces. Chevrier emphasized how the *ta-*

Fig. 12: Tsai Ming-liang's *Visage* (2009).

Fig. 13: The entanglement of moving photographs into the fabric of our lives: Tsai Ming-liang's
Journey to the West (*Xi you*, 2014).

bleau is primarily an autonomous 'way of being in the world',[33] images like these record a re-entanglement of moving photographs into the fabric of our lives and suggest the contemplation of a world that folds around us in infinite variations of inter-media *tableaux*.

[33] Chevrier's presentation video recorded at the symposium organized at the Tate Modern in London, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99gOPABmVUM> [accessed 20 October 2015].

Conclusion: the Photographic Experience of the Moving Tableau

The *tableau* as a *dispositif* always implies a viewer standing in front of it, attempting to comprehend the picture as a whole, which is traditionally a single picture, displayed in a manner that visibly separates it from the surrounding space. In classical and modernist cinema, the *tableau* imposes a halt (a break in the narrative, a moment of self-reflexivity or pure visual attraction) by isolating the single take within a series. Post-cinematic *tableau*-films, on the other hand, not only constitute a separate paradigm standing apart from mainstream trends in cinema, but also isolate their viewers. With the exception of film festivals, which only a few people can attend, these films are usually watched in conditions that favour a more intimate reception, like the occasional screenings in film clubs, film schools, art museums, or they are viewed at home, in front of a computer.[34] Furthermore, through the repeated gestures of *tableauisation* named above, emphasised in the long, fixed frame sequences, the moving image experience morphs into a photographic one, extending the gesture contained in Talbot's metaphor of 'the pencil of nature': slowly engraving individual pictures into our memory. In either case, this cannot be viewed in terms of what we traditionally regard as *cinephilia* any more. This is not the pleasure of going to the movies and experiencing a ghost-like illusion in the dark space of the cinema theatre, which Bellour defends so passionately as 'the cinema, alone' against all the other forms of moving pictures. It is the sheer pleasure of being in the presence of images, of beholding a single shot as a *tableau*, of facing the image, alone.

Acknowledgement

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[34] The difference between such films viewed in the traditional environment of the cinema theatre, on the computer or in the art gallery will naturally affect the intensity of the contemplative 'disposition' (and as such should constitute an important field in the study of post-cinema), nevertheless, as I have argued, we should also consider the convergence imposed by the trans-medial *dispositif* of the *tableau* itself.

New Studies

The Vision of the End: Anders on the TV Series *Holocaust*

Micaela Latini, Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale

Abstract

The article deals with philosopher Günther Stern Anders's response to the airing of the NBC miniseries *Holocaust* in Austria and in Western Germany in 1979. While much has been written about the TV miniseries, the reaction of Anders (1902–1992) has not been the object of discussion. The present article first examines the debate on the witnessing, visualization and representation of the Shoah (Adorno, Agamben, Didi-Huberman, Lanzmann and Levi), focusing in particular on the American TV miniseries *Holocaust*, and then investigates Günther Anders's reaction to this controversial fiction in the essay 'Nach "Holocaust"' (1979). Anders's remarks about the miniseries are important in connection with his cultural-philosophical studies on Auschwitz and Hiroshima-Nagasaki as major turning points, as well as his theory of media. It is remarkable that Anders was one of the first intellectuals to develop an interest in television as a new medium.

Visualizing the Holocaust

Critics have often talked of Auschwitz as something that cannot be truly represented without risking reducing its unique horror to a tragic normality. Others have insisted on the importance of bearing witness to the Shoah.[1] The aesthetical and ethical problem raised by the representation of Auschwitz and the Holocaust is described by Theodor W. Adorno in a well-known passage of *Cultural Criticism and Society* (1949): 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric, and that corrodes also the knowledge which expresses why it has become impossible to write poetry today'.[2] The arts cannot represent the Shoah, according to Adorno,

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[1] Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2002).
[2] Theodor W. Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in *Prisms*, trans. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen and Samuel Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), pp. 17–34 (p. 34).

because the Shoah has demonstrated the impossibility of an 'artistic serenity'. Auschwitz marks, for Adorno, the caesura or irredeemable break in the history of civilization, the failure of Western humanism, insofar as its horror makes the person helpless and dooms any attempt at explanation. On the other hand, renouncing the possibility of bearing witness to the barbarity through arts would be giving in to the barbarity itself. It is no coincidence if Adorno later resumed and corrected his verdict in *Negative Dialectics* (1966), writing that the impossibility of representing Auschwitz does not cancel the duty of representing that impossibility.

While the debate on the representation of the Shoah developed in the 1960s among intellectuals (especially within the Jewish community), it took twenty years to extend it to the larger community, where there was a strong resistance towards dealing with the Holocaust. An important role in overcoming this resistance and bringing the Holocaust into the collective imagination was played by the more popular media, such as television and the cinema.[3] Among the many television and cinema productions on the Shoah, one of the most famous is the 1978 American TV miniseries *Holocaust*, directed by Marvin Chomsky. The miniseries, which featured talented actors like James Woods and Meryl Streep, was broadcasted in West Germany in 1979 — a year earlier, in September 1978, it aired in England — and seen by millions of persons.[4] The miniseries *Holocaust* described, in a typical Hollywood style, the genesis of the extermination of the Jews in the ill-fated decade 1935–1945 through the story of two German families, one Jewish, the Weiss family, and the other Aryan, the Dorf, in which the

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[3] See, for instance: Raul Calzoni, 'Witnessing and Visualizing Trauma. Peter Weiss, Alexander Kluge and Claude Lanzmann Representing the Shoah'*, Eupsycho*, 3.1 (2015), 4–12; *Holocaust and the Moving Image: Representations in Film and Television Since 1933*, ed. by Toby Haggit and Joanna Newman (London: Wallflower, 2005); Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Andrea Minuz, *La Shoah e la cultura visuale. Cinema, memoria, spazio pubblico* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2010); Claudio Gaetani, *Il cinema e la Shoah* (Genoa: Le Mani, 2006).

[4] It is important to underscore that the miniseries did not air in East Germany. See, for instance: Mark A. Wolfgram, 'The Holocaust through the Prism of East German Television: Collective Memory and Audience Perceptions', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 20 (2006), 57–79; Friedrich Knilli and Siegfried Zielinski, *Holocaust zur Unterhaltung. Anatomie eines internationalen Bestsellers* (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1982); *Betrifft: Holocaust. Zuschauer schreiben an den WDR: ein Projektbericht*, ed. by Erwin Gundelsheimer and others (Berlin: Volker Spiess Verlag, 1983); Siegfried Zielinski, 'History as Entertainment and Provocation: The TV Series "Holocaust" in West Germany', *New German Critique*, 19 (winter 1980), 81–96 (repr. in *Germans and Jews since the Holocaust: The Changing Situation in West Germany*, ed. by Anson Rabinbach and Jack Zipes (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), pp. 258–86); *Im Kreuzfeuer: Der Fernsehfilm Holocaust. Eine Nation ist betroffen*, ed. by Peter Märthesheimer and Ivo Frenzel (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1979); Andréa Lauterwein, *Essai sur la mémoire de la Shoah en Allemagne fédérale (1945–1990)* (Paris: Kimé, 2005); Susanne Brandt, 'Wenig Anschauung? Die Ausstrahlung des Film "Holocaust" im westdeutschen Fernsehen (1978/79)', in *Erinnerungskulturen. Deutschland, Italien und Japan seit 1945*, ed. by Christoph Cornelißen, Lutz Klinkhammer and Wolfgang Schwentker (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2003). See also: *Germans and Jews*, the special issue of *New German Critique*, 19 (Winter 1980), dedicated to the response to *Holocaust* in West Germany.

father, a lawyer out of a job, decides to enlist in the SS and eventually becomes a war criminal.

The impact of the series in Europe was enormous, and sparked a debate on the question of representing the Holocaust, giving rise to two contrasting positions: the first rejected the representation of the Holocaust in images, while the second argued that only images could evoke an horror which otherwise could not be represented.[5] In regards to the reception of the *Holocaust* TV series in the US[6] the Bulgarian-American writer Elie Wiesel wrote in 1978: 'Auschwitz cannot be explained nor can it be visualized […]. The Holocaust transcends history', because it is 'the ultimate event, the ultimate mystery, never to be transmitted'.[7] Similarly, in 1979, the French director Claude Lanzmann (who at that time was filming his documentary film *Shoah,* 1985) criticized the series arguing that truly understanding the Holocaust is impossible and the *Holocaust* series could only be a fictive product of Hollywood's cultural industry but not a representation of the historical event. What, among other things, did not convince Lanzmann was the choice of representing mass murder through the life of a family, who experiences the various stages of persecution. There is a high risk that this format will serve to move the audience (and then to remove the memory), rather than helping understand what actually happened.[8] Another question is the extent to which the images should reflect the horror of the Shoah or, rather, seek not to excessively shock the audience. Stephen Spielberg faced a similar issue when he made *Schindler's List* (1993), an iconic film of the Holocaust, basing it on the testimonies of survivors instead of using the approach of Claude Lanzmann. The latter responded with a negative analysis of *Schindler's List*, describing it as a performance.[9] The German director Edgar

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[5] See: Annette Insdorf, *L'Holocauste à l'écran*, special issue *CinémAction*, 32 (1985), 5–185 (pp.18–21).

[6] For discussions concerning the reception of *Holocaust* in the United States, see: Jeffrey Schandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) — which shows that the Holocaust was a recurring feature in many popular TV programmes — and Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

[7] Elie Wiesel, 'Trivializing the Holocaust: Semi-Fact and Semi-Fiction', *New York Times*, 16 April 1978, section 1, p. 2.

[8] See: Claude Lanzmann, 'De l'Holocauste à Holocauste ou comment s'en débarrasser', *Les Temps Modernes*, 395 (1979), 1897–1909. See also: Claude Lanzmann, 'Seminar with Claude Lanzmann 11 April 1990', *Yale French Studies: Literature and the Ethical Questions*, 79 (1991), 82–99.

[9] See: Mathias Weiß, 'Sinnliche Erinnerung. Die Filme "Holocaust" und "Schindler's List" in der bundesrepublikanischen Vergegenwärtigung der NS-Zeit', in *Beschweigen und Bekennen. Die deutsche Nachkriegsgesellschaft und der Holocaust*, ed. by Norbert Frei and Sybille Steinbacher (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001), pp. 71–102. It is perhaps worth noting that the German writer Winfried Georg (Max) Sebald in a passage, which also emphasizes the capability of the impact produced by fiction film compared to the historical monograph, provides an adverse opinion of *Schindler's List* as a false form of fiction: 'The question remains the same: can one go to market using the misfortunes of others? Fiction is also a form of popularization — with the advantage that the topics are conveyed to a much wider reading group than the one possible for a historical monograph [...]. This is intentional, because I fear falling into the melodramatic, even when the melodrama is based on historical events. When this happens the aesthetic authenticity gets lost,

Reitz — who has linked his name to the film *Heimat* — recognized in *Holocaust* a negative model, lacking any aesthetic and/or experiential authenticity. In the light of the international success of this serial product, Reitz argues that Germans must take again possession of their history, which Americans have expropriated.[10]

Regarding the notion of unrepresentability, a completely different position was taken by Christian Zimmer, who defined *Holocaust* a weak fiction, but recognized its importance in the debate on Nazism.[11]

Not so distant from Zimmer's position was the one taken by the Italian novelist and survivor of Auschwitz, Primo Levi.[12] While criticizing the commercial aspect of the series, its inaccuracies, its naiveté, its failure to properly outline the historical characteristics of Nazism, Levi stressed that the series provided a sense of the Holocaust to people who had no other means to grasp it in concrete terms. For many Germans, the television miniseries had the extraordinary effect of brusquely awakening them from the oblivious sleep they had indulged in for thirty years. In a 1979 interview in the programme *Dalla realtà alla TV*, Levi explained his thesis as follows:

> The fierceness and the disproportioned nature of the Holocaust carried out by the Nazis, which the fiction shows with shocking realism, harboured in itself a riddle that no historian has yet solved, and this explains the several phone calls that bombarded the networks of the countries where the movie has so far been broadcast. They were, for the most part, viewers asking 'why?', and this is a gigantic why, and as old as the human race. It is the query about the evil of the world, the question that Job addressed to God in vain, and to which people can respond with many partial answers.[13]

which is connected in subtle, intimate ways with the ethical one. It is paradoxical that the documents cannot become literature in their undisguised form. Of course there are also false forms of fictionalization: an example for me is the movie *Schindler's List*. I have always tried to present this topic as already mediated: the readers are repeatedly reminded that the story has been told by someone and that it has gone through the filter of the narrator'. Martin Von Doerry and Volker Hage, 'Ich fürchte das melodramatische', *Der Spiegel*, 11 (2001), <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-18700596.html> (my translation) [accessed 20 January 2015].

[10] See, for instance: Matteo Galli, *Edgar Reitz* (Milan: il Castoro, 2006), pp. 117–119.

[11] Christian Zimmer, 'Le vrai choc d'"Holocauste"', *Les Temps Modernes*, 393 (1979), 1697–1704. The study of Ivelise Perniola focuses on the dispute between Zimmer and Lanzmann with regard to *Holocaust*. See: Ivelise Perniola, *L'immagine spezzata. Il cinema di Claude Lanzmann* (Turin: Kaplan, 2007), pp. 27–31.

[12] *Holocaust* was broadcast in Italy in episodes airing from May to June 1979. See, for instance: Emiliano Perra, 'Politica, memoria, identità. La ricezione italiana di *Holocaust* e di *Schindler's List*', *Cinema e storia*, 2 (special issue on *La Shoah nel cinema italiano*, ed. by Andrea Minuz and Guido Vitiello, 2013), 49–67; Emiliano Perra, *Conflicts of Memory: The Reception of Holocaust Films and TV Programmes in Italy: 1945 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), particularly pp. 132–138.

[13] Primo Levi, 'Images from Holocaust', in *The Complete Works of Primo Levi*, ed. by Ann Goldstein, 3 vols (New York–London: Liveright, 2015), ii, 1308–16 (p. 1311). Even more favorable was the judgment of the Italian intellectual Luigi Pintor, who, while noting the pro-US rhetoric that characterizes the series, credits *Holocaust* for having awakened a 'sleeping left-wing'. Luigi Pintor, 'Olocausto, nostra storia', *Il manifesto*, 1 June 1979, pp. 1–2 (my translation).

Anders and the Miniseries Holocaust

Among the many spectators (more than twenty million Germans) who, on 22 January 1979, began watching the series, was the German Jewish philosopher Günther Stern Anders (1902–1992). From the comfort of his drawing room in Vienna — where he had settled in 1950, after his return from his exile in the United States, to follow his wife, the Austrian writer Elisabeth Freundlich — Anders carefully studied the TV series *Holocaust*.

At the time, Anders was one of the few philosophers who wrote about television, and was particularly aware of its potential. Especially in *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*, 1956 [*The Outdatedness of Human Beings*], in the chapter entitled 'Die Welt als Phantom und Matrize. Philosophische Betrachtungen über Rundfunk und Fernsehen' [The World as Phantom and as Matrix: philosophical considerations on radio and television],[14] Anders remarks that television and radio provide us with world-wide home: families transform themselves into an audience of 'mass hermits'. This experience depletes the sphere of feelings, and the sad conclusion is that we become 'consumers of the world'.[15] Anders' preoccupation with the new medium is important in connection with cultural-historical studies as well as with the history of his own work.

After watching the miniseries, Anders decided to write about it, joining the debate on the relation between movies and the Holocaust. The notes he took from 4 March to 20 April 1979 were published by Anders in the work *Besuch im Hades. Auschwitz und Breslau 1966. Nach "Holocaust" 1979* [Visit to Hades. Auschwitz and Breslau, 1966. After "Holocaust", 1979],[16] and are not only interesting for the original discussion on the television series, but also for Anders' reflection on Jewishness and on the role of images and films.[17] It is remarkable that Anders was one of the first to critically examine the Austrian victim myth.

Anders starts by asking the following question: why did the thrill of horror and shame produced by the American TV-miniseries *Holocaust* not occur in 1945, when people saw the documentaries and photographs testifying to the gruesome reality of the Shoah? The answer is rooted in Anders's philosophical anthropology. This lack of response, Anders says, is not a German shortcoming, a sign of

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[14] Günther Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen. Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution* [*The Outdatedness of Human Beings 1. On the Soul in the Era of the Second Industrial Revolution*] (Munich: Beck, 1956), pp. 97–110.

[15] See also: Stefano Velotti, 'L'antropologia di Günther Anders e l'ambivalenza delle immagini', *Discipline filosofiche*, 2 (2008), 99–114. For this important dimension of Anders's philosophy, see: Werner Fuld, 'Zwischen Film und Bombe. Die Kontinuität des Andersschen Denkens', in *Günther Anders kontrovers,* ed. by Konrad Paul Liessmann (Munich: Beck, 1992), pp. 114–23; and Klaus Albrecht Schröder, 'Die Genese von Günther Anders' Medienkritik', ivi, pp. 124–34.

[16] Günther Anders, *Besuch im Hades. Auschwitz und Breslau 1966. Nach 'Holocaust' 1979* (Munich: Beck, 1996).

[17] See also Anders's reflections on these topics in his works: *Mein Judentum* [*My Jewishness*], ed. by Hans Jürgen Schultz (Zürich-Düsseldorf: Benzinger, 1999 [1979]), pp. 69–87; and *Kafka. Pro und contra. Die Prozess-Unterlagen* [*Kafka, pro and contra. The Trial Records*] (Munich: Beck, 1952).

the inhumanity of the German people, but rather the hallmark of humanity *tout court* at the time of the 'outdatedness of human beings'.

> The surprising thing is that *this fiction gives us the facts*, and that only through this fiction we learn what happened a long time ago. And that's not all. The fiction is essential not only because the truth that we need to know is no longer perceptible, but mainly because the monstrosity [*Ungeheuerlichkeit*] and the enormity [*Enormität*] of what happens today […] are no longer perceptible and knowable.[18]

We are not able, Anders explains, to mourn for millions of people killed, we are unable to bear such a disproportionate pain. There is a discrepancy between what humans can produce (the bureaucratic extermination of an immense mass of Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals...) and what humans can see, feel, truly grasp. The 'emotional illiteracy', i.e. the inability to feel pain or remorse described by Anders in the first volume of his monumental *The Outdatedness of Human Beings*,[19] applies also to the Holocaust and makes it unreadable. In his main philosophical work Anders advanced a 'philosophy of discrepance', an analysis of the gap between what we are able to produce (*herstellen*) and what we are able to imagine (*vorstellen*).[20] Faced with a new surplus of images, with their suffocating and blinding sensationalism, the imagination stalls, collapses, in a kind of domino effect, a defensive anaesthetizing reaction, leading to the inability to feel and therefore to take responsibility in regard to the world, to act as subjects.

Unlike many intellectuals, Anders' book *After 'Holocaust'* offered a positive assessment of the miniseries, not so much in terms of its aesthetic qualities, as for its power to awaken the conscience of West German and Austrian people.[21]

In light of the inevitable human tendency to avoid thinking of the horror that had happened, says Anders, the *Holocaust* series has a positive role: it brings the experience of Auschwitz into the homes of those who did not know what had happened in the concentration camps, close to where they lived, or of those who had been told but were unable to imagine it. The cinematic images rip the veil of oblivion, break the taboo of the Holocaust, and induce a painful awareness of the event: in this sense a conventional Hollywood series is able to achieve what had not been achieved in 1945.

The success of the television series was not a consequence of its historical accuracy or its reliance on real witnesses, but of the force of fiction, of its focus on the individuals rather than the mass, on the micro-history of a family. Throu-

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[18] Anders, *Besuch im Hades*, pp. 202–03 (my translation).
[19] See: Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*, pp. 260–70.
[20] See: *The Life and Work of Günther Anders: Émigré, Iconoclast, Philosopher, Man of Letters*, ed. by Günther Bishof, Jason Dawsey and Bernhard Fetz (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2014).
[21] See: David Bidussa, 'Prefazione. *Holocaust* e il discorso pubblico sulla Shoah', in Günther Anders, *Dopo* Holocaust*, 1979*, ed. by David Bidussa and Sergio Fabian, trans. by Sergio Fabian (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2014), pp. 9–21 and Sergio Fabian, 'Postfazione. Storie minuscole per turbare una coscienza opaca', in *Dopo* Holocaust*, 1979*, pp. 85–97.

gh a fiction, a pretense, perhaps even a trivialization of the events, people were able to finally begin grasping and remembering the unconceivable horror of the Holocaust.

In describing the effects of the Holocaust, Anders adopts and corrects the well-known Paul Klee painting of *Angelus Novus,* as it was used by his cousin, Walter Benjamin, in *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (*Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, 1940).[22] In Germany after Auschwitz, no angel of history is silhouetted against the sky, or, at the most, it is a broken, impotent angel: an angel of oblivion.[23] Post-war Germany, after its total defeat, had to renounce any prospect of a millennial past or future, and all that is left is a passion for the present, personified by consumers with no sense of past or future.

Like Adorno, Anders also denounces the denial of the past that dominates the collective consciousness, preventing a healthy elaboration of the tragedy of the Holocaust. In this context, the series *Holocaust* adopts an innovative strategy: to reach out to the consciousness of millions of Germans, the director Marvin Chomsky based his work on the individual portraits of people involved. According to Anders, the miniseries successfully shows, as it reels backwards through a series of historical events, how what was treated as an insignificant lump of flesh was once a person, and how, behind the abstract numbers (six million), the abstract mass of victims, are real individuals who once loved, hoped, dreamed. Captivated by the fast-paced events and dramatic, and sometimes sentimental, moments, the viewer of *Holocaust* becomes involved in the story of the two families and shares their tragic destiny:

> The imaginary character of a single tortured person of whom we know the fictitious life and whom we have learned to love, reveals about the millions of dead far more than could have been revealed, even about a single individual, by sum of the millions.[24]

As for the habitual criticism leveled against the film, i.e. that it emphasizes personal events and disregards the historical dimension of the Holocaust, Anders's position is clear: the need to personalize the history is a result of the previous depersonalization that the people of the Holocaust have undergone. Auschwitz, as Primo Levi said, involved the 'destruction of man', a destruction in which not only individual lives are destroyed but also the very idea of the humanity of the victims and it is this humanity that must be restored. Shoah victims were treated literally as animals who were processed and transformed into things — shoes, spectacle frames, broken dentures, baggage without owners — or quasi-things, the waste arising from the chimneys of the furnaces where the bodies were burnt.

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[22] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. by Hannah Arendt and trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007 [1968]), pp. 253–63.

[23] I refer to the title of a novel by the Austrian writer Maja Haderlap.

[24] Anders, *Besuch im Hades*, p. 187 (my translation).

According to Anders, it is necessary to react against the perception of the victims as an anonymous mass and the murderers as mere cogs in a machine. The status of persons must be restored back to both victims and to their executioners, people like Erik Dorf (actor Tom Bell) in *Holocaust*, the murderous bureaucrat, whose fictitious character recalls that of Adolf Eichmann.[25]

Anders's notes emphasize the importance of narrowing the focus of our gaze, of bringing the most horrible crime in history within the visual and conceptual grasp of humankind: 'photographs [which] showed too many corpses and the horror for death, even when faced with the crime, decrease as the number of dead bodies shown increases'.[26] Hence the need follows to renegotiate what Adorno called the 'aesthetic distance'.

Narrowing the Focus

This narrowing of the focus is a necessary step to coming to terms with the Holocaust. The circulation of the miniseries *Holocaust* is therefore a crucial bridge that allows people to span the gap of thirty-five years of silence and oblivion. But what does this reflection on the past entail? And why was it not possible for Germans to engage in it sooner? The answer lies partly in the uniqueness and exceptionality of the event called Auschwitz, which constitutes an historical watershed.[27] The crimes occurred under the command of a higher authority, and that made them impersonal, wrapping them in anonymity without responsibility, in the automatic character of the routine, in the 'banality of evil' (using the well-known wording by Hannah Arendt).[28] Secondly, the colossal dimensions of the crime made it very difficult to remember and reflect on it. Faced with such an enormous deed, the mechanism of remorse becomes clogged and denial takes its place. The greater the evil, says Anders, the less can consciousness grasp, feel remorse, and eventually produce a new sense of moral integrity. The eyes of humans become saturated, unable to absorb crimes whose boundaries extend

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[25] It is worth remembering that Anders submitted the trial of Adolf Eichmann to careful scrutiny in his work *Wir Eichmannsöhne: Offener Brief an Klaus Eichmann* [*We Sons of Eichmann: Open Letter to Klaus Eichmann*] (Munich: Beck, 1964). The trial before the Jerusalem District Court began on 11 April 1961 and ended on 15 December 1961, when Eichmann was sentenced to death. The book includes Anders's correspondence with Klaus Eichmann, the son of the notorious Nazi bureaucrat and genocidaire. Anders's remarks recall the thesis of his ex-wife, the political philosopher Hannah Arendt, in her study *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking, 1963).

[26] Anders, *Besuch im Hades*, p. 187 (my translation).

[27] See: Steven T. Katz, 'The Uniqueness of the Holocaust: the Historical Dimension'*,* in *Is the Holocaust Unique?: Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, ed. by Alan S. Rosenbaum, 2nd edn (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000), pp. 49–68.

[28] Yet, the last twenty years of research have demonstrated that a large number of the victims of the Holocaust were killed in more traditional face-to-face killing operations. See, for instance: Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

towards the infernal. Finally, says Anders, humans can remember or imagine, or adequately perceive only what they are able to control linguistically. This last aspect, copies and amplifies Adorno's well-known position, according to which it is impossible to write poetry after Auschwitz: you cannot because 'the words are lacking' to express Auschwitz. Yet 'to be speechless' means renouncing the possibility of preserving the memory of the Holocaust, abdicating to the horror and wrapping Auschwitz in a mist of denial. Instead it is necessary to maintain one's bearings, to avoid being overcome by the dimensions of the events: to achieve this, the gaps in the collective memory must be interrogated, snatching from oblivion all that recalls the finiteness of the human being. As Theodor W. Adorno noted in his *Negative Dialectics* (*Negative Dialektik,* 1966): 'Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems'.[29]

According to Georges Didi-Huberman, even for Anders, grasping Auschwitz required resorting to the power of images, while remaining aware of the limited vision they provided: in order to know you should exert the imagination.[30] For this reason, it is useful to film what was invisible, to imagine Auschwitz notwithstanding the impossibility of representing it in its entirety. While reproducing in full the reality of the Holocaust is impossible, says Anders, we must be able to give a sense of what it was and to induce remorse for it. Thanks to the filter of fiction, the series *Holocaust* can scale down the dimensions of the horror to a graspable size and testify to a horror that would otherwise remain forgotten.

Anders's reflections in *After* Holocaust can be considered as an extraordinary compendium of 'negative aesthetics'. According to him, what the images in the miniseries *Holocaust* transmit

> is the *horrible appearance* [*grauenhafte Schein*], or rather the semblance of horror [*der Schein des Grauenhaften*], which the reality we perceive cannot transmit like the artistic medium manages to do. And what we perceive is not the 'appearance', but the reality of that time, which, in order to be perceived had to be first turned into fiction.[31]

Anders here seems to have embraced the lesson of Friedrich Schiller in his letters *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, 1795 [*On the Aesthetic Edu-*

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[29] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1973), p. 362.
[30] See: Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, trans. by Shane B. Lillis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 38–39; see also: Anders, *Besuch im Hades*, pp. 202–03. For a discussion on this topic, see: Natascia Mattucci, 'Shoah tra riproducibilità e immaginazione', in *Pop Shoah? Immaginari del genocidio ebraico*, ed. by Francesca R. Recchia Luciani and Claudio Vercelli (Genoa: Il melangolo, 2016), pp. 113–27, particularly pp. 125–27.
[31] Anders, *Besuch im Hades,* p. 200 (my translation).

cation of Man], for whom aesthetics (whether it be theatre or cinema) should be the instrument of morality.

If the reality of the horror of our condition cannot be directly perceived, our imagination must serve as a kind of telescope's lens:

> Our simple perception [*nackte Wahrnehmung*] is not enough to understand the present-day world, and it is too short-sighted for the enormous, or better, monstrous dimensions [*monströse Ausmaße*] of what we ourselves are capable of producing […]. We must rather use fantasy as a corrective, because the truth of our monstrous conditions can in no way be perceived, at least by the naked eye […]. At the very least we should be able to imagine the immensity that we ourselves are able to produce and provoke.[32]

The (apparent) deformation, the exaggeration that fancy and force of imagination perform must not be understood as a falsification of the truth. It is rather an alternative method of observing, of allowing people to grasp the truth-content behind the lie, to communicate it and expand our ability to feel. The ability to teach how to despair: 'And thank God, now they despair, finally they despair'.[33] This, for Anders, is the role of culture after Auschwitz: that of expanding our capacity to feel, to see, to break the invisible barrier that surrounds the events of the past. This goal is paramount and anything that allows us to achieve this goal is therefore laudable, whether it is the arguments of philosophy, the words of literature, or the images of a Hollywood TV-miniseries.

[32] Ivi, p. 39 (my translation).
[33] Ivi, p. 202 (my translation).

Projects & Abstracts

Problems in Fiction Film Analysis: Development and Testing of an Analytical and Interpretive Model with Digital Tools

Livia Giunti / Ph.D. Thesis Abstract[1]
Università di Pisa

At the centre of fiction film analysis one encounters multiple complexities, which stem from the nature of the audio-visual language and from its specific faculty to combine multiple elements. This 'pluricodicity' has no equivalent in other representative arts and narratives, which also renders film narration itself particularly ambiguous and problematic. Mainly, the study of the configuration of time — which is inextricably linked to the study of the filmic enunciation instances — constitutes in my judgement one of the principle ways of understanding film text.

Once the centrality of the temporal issue is declared, it is necessary to determine several configurations of time in relation to the activity of the enunciation instance. These explicit elements, or indicative traces, are caught up in the temporal organisation of events, in the deixis, in the use of tenses by narrators and narrative voices, in the choice and the articulation of shooting and editing techniques and, finally, in the management/combination of the various matters of expression. My research focused on two films which are exemplary from this point of view: *Toto the Hero* (*Toto le héros*, Jaco van Dormael, 1991) and *Il caso Mattei* (Francesco Rosi, 1972) examples of metatexts, which integrate the process of storytelling (the first) and filmmaking (the second) within them, developing a particular reflection on narration through a complex manipulation of their temporal structure.

Thus, to study the configuration of time inevitably means stopping time. The researcher is responsible for untangling the interplay of the different time streams and for bringing to a head the many marks of the enunciation scattered throughout the text, in order to identify the mode or modes of production of meaning in the film. This demands the use of theoretical models suitable for the description of how the film narrative works and the use of practical tools which allow the researcher 'to act' on the work, to exercise her own gaze. In the attempt to find a concrete confirmation of the questions raised, one possibility is to use a digital tool capable of helping the researcher in the determination and manage-

ment of the several codes and sub-codes at work in the film, assisting her in the practice and verification of a rigorous and articulate method.

Together with the study of the configuration of time it is necessary to develop a reflection on the tools and techniques used for film analysis, in order to understand what fiction film analysis has been and is today, and to explore what methods, languages and tools have crossed the discipline. In examining the new digital media outline — an outline where new tools, new approaches and different modes of production, storing and reception of audiovisual contents have developed — I focused in particular on some annotation and analysis software which enable to connect historical and theoretical discourses with practice.

The project was initially conceived for a pre-existing tool, the *DCP* (Digital Cinema Project) developed by the University of Pisa,[2] a software which enables the user to analyse a film through a grid of predefined parameters. Thereafter we tested other softwares developed in the last decade, to verify: 1) the speed and precision of certain practices, such as automatic and manual unit segmentation (*shot detection*); 2) their capability and usefulness in managing and intersecting the numerous data that emerge from the different planes of observation, at the level of unit segmentation and at the level of stratification, together with the survey of the occurrences and isotopies, with particular attention to the configuration of time (*usability* and *data mining*); and finally 3) the possibility of making the analysis verifiable 'in the field' and repeatable through data access for future analysis.[3]

During the description of this practice I aimed to offer a constant comparison between manual analysis and computer-assisted analysis, testing the theoretical categories related to segmentation and configuration of time, which the software has helped to define. Last but not least, my colleagues involved in the project and I followed the hypothesis that the software may help not only to promote new practices, but also to implement new methods, not solely statistical, which is normally the main application of these kind of tools. This cross-sectional study of software has resulted in a collaboration with the LIRIS laboratory of computer engineering at the University Claude Bernard Lyon 1, which has developed, according to my tests and research, the best tool for this type of analysis: a software called *Advene*. On the basis of the reflections developed during the research, this

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[2] *DCP* is a software developed by Leonardo Grilli based on a project by Lorenzo Garzella (coordinator) with the supervision of Professor Lorenzo Cuccu. The project was financed by Cofin 2002 (National coordinator Professor Francesco Casetti, Local supervisor Professor Cuccu) and was presented at the Udine Film Forum in 2004.
[3] The research avails itself of the comparison among four softwares of which we described and analysed the concept, the main functions, the possible applications and the strengths and weaknesses relating to the theoretical and practical issues that emerged along the way. Aside from *DCP*, the other three softwares taken into consideration are: *Cinemetrics*, a web-application created in 2005 by Yuri Tsivian and Gunars Civjan; *Lignes de temps* developed by IRI (Centre Pompidou) in 2007 and *Advene* developed by the LIRIS laboratory of the University Claude Bernard Lyon 1 in 2002, created by Olivier Aubert, Pierre-Antoine Champin and Yannick Prié.

collaboration has led to the implementation of certain functions and the integration of new ones in order to make the tool more suitable for cinema studies. It has thus improved the study of such complex themes as the configuration of time.[4]

The use of an integrated tool such as *Advene* has immensely enriched the historical, theoretical and methodological reflection, as well as the concrete practice of film analysis. In fact, by using *Advene* it is possible to experiment with a true 'grasp on the film' both through the determination and management of the different analytical categories and through specific memory tools that show the methodological paths, enabling the user to reflect on its own method and workflow. Moreover, the instant recall of plans or sequences together with the annotation and analysis data, the possibility of browsing the film through key-words and filters, and the choice of different ways of data and query results visualisation, foster the practice of analysis. So the digital tool becomes more than a mere statistical or *mise en forme* tool: it is a real assisting instrument for the practice of analysis.

In conclusion, the dynamic computer screen — a virtual page which displays all the categories and their intersections — together with a specific tool such as *Advene*, are able to give life to that 'constellation of elements' that Ėjzenštejn, Vertov and Barthes tried to achieve on paper. That constellation, together with *Advene*'s specific functionality of creating *hypervideos*, can help the researcher to constitute that *artefact intermédiaire* that analysts and film critics always wanted to attain (just think of Bellour, Aumont and Godard, for instance). An *hypervideo*, or *augmented video*, is in fact an interactive audiovisual model where film and analysis coexist in the same space and time, so that the stream and the split instants, the whole and its parts, the sequential film text and its database of codes and sub-codes stay in mutual relation, exceeding the limits of media such as sequential video and paper. The *Advene* project finally paves the way to an entirely computer-led critical investigation and the computer, usually considered by humanists as a mere data processor and presentation tool, is able to renew research and teaching, encouraging new approaches and new interpretations.

[4] In fact *Advene* had been used mainly for the annotation and analysis of audiovisual streams in social, anthropological, psychological and the performative arts fields.

Strong Uncut Version: VIPCO and the Marketing and Distribution of the 'Video Nasties'

Mark McKenna / Ph.D Thesis Project[1]
University of Sunderland

The history of 'video nasties' has been recounted many times in the 30 years since 1984 and the introduction of the Video Recordings Act. However, in this time little attention has been paid to the distributors outside of their role as dealers, facilitating the perceived 'rape of our children's minds'[2] with graphic scenes of sex and violence. Arguments have favoured issues of censorship and the events that lead to the introduction of the Video Recordings Act, prioritising moral panics more generally and the ubiquitous media effects debates that often accompany the introduction of any new technology. These debates while important, have side-lined the actual effects of retrospectively criminalising a product and the ramifications upon wholesalers, distributors, dealers and consumers in prosecutions that continued well into the 1990s.[3]

For the Video Instant Picture Company (VIPCO), the distributor most closely associated with the 'video nasties' moral panic, the new legislation governing home video would prove to be defining. Targeted by the tabloid press,[4] they quickly garnered a reputation as the leading purveyor of 'sadist videos', and following prosecutions under the Obscene Publications Act (1959) the company disappeared by early 1984.

Re-emerging in the early 1990s VIPCO reissued previously banned films, repackaged and rebranded for a new generation of horror fans. VIPCO's recognition of the value in the 'Video Nasty' defined the company's subsequent renaissance, relicensing titles from their own back catalogue and introducing notorious titles previously distributed from other labels, creating a brand awareness almost as significant as that of British production houses like Hammer or Amicus.

VIPCO operated at the forefront of British horror distribution for almost th-

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[2] 'Rape of our children's minds', *Daily Mail*, 30 June 1983, p. 6.
[3] BBFC records held for *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (Lucio Fulci, 1980), British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) [accessed 13 September 2013].
[4] 'How high street horror is invading the home', *The Sunday Times*, 23 May 1982, p. 7.

ree decades, pioneering the 'banned brand' and establishing a clear market for the re-release of previously contentious material. In post 1984 Britain the stringent regulations of the BBFC would prove damaging to VIPCO's reputation as a distributor trading in the illicit, constrained by the censor into offering films in an expurgated form. VIPCO's product increasingly fell from favour as fans criticised the perceived lack of quality in their videos and DVDs.

Through consideration of historic and subsequent re-releases of these titles, marketing across two distinct periods will be examined — pre–1984 and, following the VRA, the era of certification and compliance to the BBFC's guidelines for 'suitable home viewing.' I will explore the deployment of 'moral panic' as a marketing tool and, through a comparative analysis of pro- and anti-horror texts examining how both seek to construct their object as 'terrifying'. This will lead to an analysis of audience responses to these releases, examining constructions of authenticity within genre film communities and the deployment of sub-cultural capital in the reception to the product.

There is a large body of research on the 'Video Nasties' and censorship, most notably the work of Martin Barker[5] and Julian Petley,[6] however the focus is very much on the political motivations of central figures in the campaign and the issue of censorship itself. A number of scholars have examined the textual formations of the video nasties (Egan;[7] Mee;[8] Mendik[9]). Where my research differs is in its emphasis on the marketing and distribution of the films and how both the voices raised against them, and those producing, distributing and consuming the films characterised the 'video nasties' as illicit. In so doing, I hope to explore the circulation of discourses, often strategically deployed, to understand how, why, and under what conditions, certain kinds of film are greeted by outrage.

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[5] Martin Barker, *The Video Nasties. Freedom and Censorship in the Media* (London: Pluto Press, 1984).

[6] Julian Petley, *Film and Video Censorship in Modern Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

[7] Kate Egan, *Trash or Treasure: Censorship and the Changing Meanings of the Video Nasties* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

[8] Laura Mee, 'The re-rape and revenge of Jennifer Hills: Gender and genre in *I Spit On Your Grave* (2010)', *Horror Studies*, 4.1 (1 April 2013), pp. 75–89.

[9] Xavier Mendik, 'The long road back from hell: Reclaiming *Cannibal Holocaust*', *Cannibal Holocaust* DVD, Shameless Screen Entertainment, UK (2012).

Investigating the Intertwined Aesthetics, Ethics and Politics of Queer Feminist Desires in Pornographic Media

Alessandra Mondin / Ph.D. Thesis Project[1]
University of Sunderland

In the early 1980s feminist porn emerged with the intention of differentiating itself from mainstream pornography and its representations of gender and sexuality. A key feature of such differentiation has been the focus on representing female pleasure and through the definition of women's sexuality from a woman's point of view. Especially from the early 2000s the productions of feminist porn have been more and more diverse, shaping the field through the challenge of 'dominant representations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, body type, and other identity markers.'[2] The varied output of the recent years have provided with an array of material that could be labelled 'queer feminist porn'.

My project focuses specifically on this porn niche since its aims are to trouble, question, and complicate the hegemonic (hetero- and homo-) normative representations of identities, pleasures and desires present in society and mainstream pornography. The project explores how these texts go beyond the female/woman production-point of view-desire-viewership narratives found in some earlier examples of feminist porn. In addition, the research attempts to gauge how this audiovisual material might also queer the production, distribution, and reception of porn and assess how new forms of pornographies aspire to transform this cultural practice.

The research uses mixed-methods and an interdisciplinary approach in order to give a more exhaustive account of queer feminist pornographies, their production and consumption. In the first instance, the research proceeds with textual and media analyses of various pornographic audiovisual texts produced by feminists or with feminist intent, assessing them in terms of content and representation, media coverage, critique, production, distribution, funding and reception. These texts seem to trouble the boundaries between identity categories; art, erotica and porn; amateur, pro-am and professional realms; indie/alt and main-

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[1] Ph.D. dissertation supervised by Professor Clarissa Smith. For information: alessandra.mondin@research.sunderland.ac.uk and www.feministdesires.com.
[2] *The Feminist Porn Book. The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, ed. by Tristan Taormino and others (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013), p. 9.

stream; the public and the private realms of new pornographic homemade digital productions and the aesthetic boundaries of art house productions; art and activism; and the borders of the national and the transnational. In addition, keeping in mind the recent developments of queer methodologies,[3] the texts open for analysis could also be some that have not been created with a feminist or a queer framework in mind, but that have been 'queered' by the audience's readings.[4] Some of the texts analysed have also circulated, gained attention through and been acknowledged by feminist porn events, like the Canadian *Good For Her Feminist Porn Awards* (2006–present) and the Berliner *PorYes* (2009–present), whose manifestos and awards reshape discourses on pornography and set the criteria for feminist porn. Moreover, since feminist porn makers wish to intervene in the field of porn and the representation of women and queer sexualities, the project seeks to investigate if and how this type of pornographic material helps to give more visibility to what it means to be queer, and provide a sense of community and identity. Some of my example texts were state funded, whereas others have partnership deals with mainstream porn companies and others are funded independently. Thus, another aspect of the research is to appraise what role funding plays in the production of feminist pornography and what outcomes might it have in terms of representation and reception. Since its birth feminist porn could be seen as a reaction to the mainstream, it would be useful to consider where individual productions are now positioned in relation to mainstream pornography and in relation to feminist pornography. Furthermore, the different aesthetics of queer feminist pornographies and their visual genealogies and repertoires are examined to see how representations of women and queer's sexualities are shaped in the texts.

At the heart of the investigation also stands what 'ethical', 'feminist' or 'queer' porn mean for those who produce under those labels and for those who choose to consume, and how queer feminist pornography stands in terms of ethics, aesthetic and politics. To address these questions, semi-structured interviews will be held with producers, directors, performers, and other key players. Moreover, a web-based questionnaire (www.feministdesires.com) intends to assess the experience of viewers of queer feminist pornographies. The responses will be examined to trace patterns and understandings of the politics, ethics and importance of pornography produced with an explicitly feminist politics. In addition, the participants of the questionnaire are invited to engage in follow-up semi-structured interviews. This exploration aims to explore discourses and practices around feminist desires.

My research applies phenomenology to the area of porn studies through the analyses of the lived experiences of their viewers with their interpretation and

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[3] *Queer Methods and Methodologies. Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research*, ed. by Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash (Ashgate: Farnham and Burlington, 2010).
[4] Janet Ward, 'Queer Feminist Pigs: A Spectator's Manifesta', in *The Feminist Porn Book. The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, ed. by Taormino and others, pp. 130–39.

use of the texts. The importance of having an aesthetic that is connected with embodiment is crucial to convey the political and ethical aims of this feminist enterprise, because, as Sobchack argues, a sense of embodiment is fundamental in order to invoke a sense of ethics.[5] The research investigates how queer feminist pornographic audiovisuals are able to engage with different lived experiences and embodiments through their aesthetics, but also how they create a feminist ethics regarding porn and representation, which appeals to authenticity and inclusivity while, at the same time, expanding the boundaries of representations of lived experience. Sobchack argues that spectatorship works by rebounding off the sensual experience represented on screen and returning to the spectator's own body.[6] Hence, it is also the aesthetic itself that helps to convey the political aims of avowedly feminist pornography. From this perspective, it becomes crucial to analyse audiences' experiences of queer feminist porn. In doing so, Ahmed's queer phenomenology is pivotal particularly because it engages with the matter of sexual orientation through the question: 'What difference does it make "what" or "who" we are orientated toward in the very direction of our desire?'[7] Following Ahmed, the focus is on how the body is orientated in space and time, how bodies are shaped through what and how they desire, how queer feminist porn and its politics, ethics and aesthetics dislocate and relocate lived experiences, and how politics of disorientation can put pleasure and desire within reach.

Ultimately, the research's main goal is to put in conversation these methods to assess what is queer feminist porn, what kind of relationship this audiovisual material has with feminist desires, how it interprets and constructs those desires, and how the aesthetics, ethics and politics of feminist desires are performed and are interconnected.

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[5] Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
[6] Ibidem.
[7] Sarah Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 1.

Reviews / Comptes-rendus

Grégoire Chamayou
Théorie du drone
La fabrique, Paris 2013, pp. 368[1]

Chamayou's text represents a rare philosophical study that engages with the transformation of contemporary war by means of a device — the drone — which is radically changing our relationship with combat. The extent of this transformation can be seen from two informative statistics: the number of armed drones in the United States increased 1200% between 2005 and 2011; and, though the budget for US defense actually decreased in 2013, the resources set aside for UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) rose by 30%.

Chamayou's essay constitutes both a philosophical reflection on war and an important treatise on visual culture, insofar as the war 'fought' with drones corresponds to a different perspective the offensive soldier has of his enemy, whom has become merely a target to destroy from a distance. Chamayou's goal is summed up as follows:

> More than ever, philosophy is a battlefield. It is time to enter the fray. What I have to say is openly polemical, for, over and above the possible analytical contributions this book may make, its objective is to provide discursive weapons for the use of those men and women who wish to oppose the policy served by drones (p. 16).

In a very clear way, Chamayou states that philosophy must be rooted in the present and relate critically to it, by means of a genealogy of devices through which power is exerted.

Contemporary common sense tends to acknowledge drones as the 'most ethical weapons' men and women have ever built. Drones, therefore, are humane weapons *par excellence*: the enemy is targeted without error, and 'our' soldiers are spared needless sacrifice on the battlefield. Through this propagandistic representation, spread by governments and the arms industry, drones are publicly legitimized. However, Chamayou rightly observes that this pacifying and acritical notion conceals a series of crucial problems: 1) the number of errors in hitting operational targets is incredibly high, as Chamayou's book shows through a

wealth of documentation, making it difficult to believe that UAVs are infallible. 2) According to the classic rhetoric of war drones would be the weapons of cowards, that is, the weapon of a person who strikes from a distance without being seen. Warfare thus becomes execution — or is it assassination? — at distance. Drone warfare is no longer a balanced battle between the forces of two rivals, but rather consists in one person safely seated in front of a computer screen, hunting down prey that tries in vain to escape. 3) The diffusion of devices that are perceived as neutral or innocuous — under the guise of anti-terror instruments — furthers the possible creation of a 'synoptic iconography', along with certain Internet sites, cell phones and tracked credit card usage, whereby increasing portions of our lives can be monitored 24/7. Chamayou informs us, shockingly, that in 2009 alone US drones recorded the equivalent of 24 years of video footage. For the author, then, UAVs are less effective preventative weapons against terrorism than an experimental, intrusive tool for the surveillance of everyday life, which therefore troubles the founding principles of any democracy. In short, today we already inhabit a 'wide area persistent surveillance' made by widespread 'unblinking eyes' (an expression used by the Sierra Nevada Corporation at a NATO symposium), that are active day and night, 365 days a year.

When were drones first made? Chamayou identifies a study by the engineer John W. Clark, published in *New Scientist*, significantly entitled 'Remote control in hostile environments' (1964). This was the first theoretical text dedicated to designing 'telechiric systems' that is, machines that could operate at a distance in hostile environments 'by a cable or by a radio-link', thus keeping the operator safe, comfortably seated at his workstation in front of a screen. The setting for the 'telechiric systems' is identical to the UAVs: on the one hand is the 'danger zone', where the machine works as it hunts down the enemy; on the other is the 'safe zone', where the person monitoring the target can work in all safety. These are two totally different spaces that reflect two equally different existential conditions. Chamayou traces to Clark's study the emergence of a new perspective and the radicalization of asymmetric warfare. The author writes that Harun Farocki had fully grasped the relevance of this perspective (there are numerous references to his works in the publication) when he observes that 'technology of military vision produces not so much representations as "operative images", images that do not represent an object, but instead are part of an operation' (p. 114). And Chamayou writes: 'You can click the apparatus, and when you click, you kill. Here, though, the act of killing is in effect reduced to positioning the pointer or arrow on little "actionable images", tiny figures that have taken the place of the old flesh-and-blood body of the enemy' (p. 114). As the psychologist Stanley Milgram contended, this kind of device provokes 'a break in the "phenomenological unity" of the act' (p. 118).

Among the many aspects of great interest in Chamayou's book, there is certainly a careful philosophical reflection on how our relationship with war has been numbed even though combat grows more and more present in our lives. In fact, UAVs have revealed an inner contradiction of the State with regards to war.

It is not so much the humanization of war and our aversion to the victims that has produced drones in conflicts as it is the suppression of the dialectic contradiction between war and sacrifice:

> One can thus grasp what is politically at stake here: reconciling the neoliberal restriction of the aims of state power to security matters with the maintenance of its prerogative to wage war. Waging war, but without sacrifices. Freely exercising war-waging sovereignty, but within the internal political conditions of sovereign security and protection. Abolishing the contradiction. Wiping off the map the second schema, which is so problematic and in which official political relations were turned inside out and became unilateral in too flagrant a manner. Exercising power, at an internal level, in war as in peace (p. 181).

[Maurizio Guerri, Insmli-Milano – Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera]

Philippe Ragel,

Le Film en suspens. La cinéstase, un essai de définition

Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015, pp. 220

Qu'est-ce donc que la cinéstase ? À travers ce néologisme, Philippe Ragel nous invite à réfléchir sur l'une des caractéristiques du medium cinématographique depuis ses origines : la dialectique entre le mouvement (*kine*) et la stase (*stasis*). Le concept de cinéstase s'est imposé à l'attention du chercheur il y a quelques années, à l'occasion de la rédaction d'un article consacré à *Et la vie continue…* d'Abbas Kiarostami (*Zendegi va digar hich*, 1992), un réalisateur dont Philippe Ragel est spécialiste reconnu[1]. Dans ce film, il est question selon lui de souligner la tension entre le régime représentatif du mouvement et celui de la stase, soit : « L'avancement à marche forcée des personnages d'un côté et les grands moments de détente narrative de l'autre » (p. 27). Ainsi lorsque les deux protagonistes d'*Et la vie continue…* (un cinéaste, alter ego du réalisateur même, et son fils) qui, contraints d'abandonner l'itinéraire initialement prévu pour se rendre à Koker (le village de *Où est la maison de mon ami ?*, *Khane-ye doust kodjast ?,* 1987) à cause du séisme qui vient de ravager la région, sont obligés d'emprunter un autre itinéraire et s'arrêtent dans un village : tout à coup, la tension précédente inscrite dans le voyage en voiture se relâche, en ouvrant une longue séquence de pause et de détente narrative. Ce changement de régime narratif en impose un autre sur le plan plastique et figuratif, qui trouve son acmé dans le plan où un zoom opère une sorte de conversion perceptive. Au cours de ce travelling optique qui traverse une porte éventrée et débouche sur un pré verdoyant planté d'oliviers, nous passons, selon l'auteur, d'un régime de vision en perspective à un régime alternatif qu'il qualifie — sur la base d'un article d'Alain Bergala[2] — de « tabulaire ». Ce qui semblait être un temps mort devient ainsi un temps fort, en éclairant le film d'un éclat lyrique et contemplatif.

Après cette intuition initiale de la cinéstase comme figure opérant dans le film de Kiarostami, cet ouvrage aspire à tracer de façon systématique les frontières esthétiques et narratologiques du concept. *Le Film en suspens* propose donc au

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[1] Philippe Ragel, « L'Émotion continue », *Cinergon*, vol. 8, n° 13–14, Luc-sur-Orbieu, 2002, pp. 94–111 et Philippe Ragel (dir.), *Abbas Kiarostami : le cinéma à l'épreuve du réel*, Crisnée, Yellow Now, 2008.
[2] Alain Bergala, « Du paysage comme inquiétude », Ivi, pp. 103–24.

lecteur une vérification exploratoire de la cinéstase, à travers un parcours en trois étapes.

Le premier chapitre (*La Cinéstase, naissance d'un concept*) est dédié au cinéma de Kiarostami, à travers une série de lectures où les éléments de l'analyse filmique sont considérablement enrichis par une connaissance rigoureuse de la culture poétique et visuelle persane. Les racines culturelles archaïques qui caractérisent les choix formels et iconographiques des films examinés sont ici étudiées de façon très détaillée. On pense par exemple au symbolisme zoroastrien de la couleur et à celui mazdéen du jardin-paradis, ou encore à la tradition iconographique de la miniature persane et à la présence de figures immémoriales telles que celles de l'olivier, de la source ou du chemin. Philippe Ragel consacre des pages très denses à chacun de ces aspects. Des pages assez suggestives sont aussi dédiées à la façon de cadrer les chemins, que le cinéaste utiliserait pour inscrire de véritables messages calligraphiques dans la matière des films, comme la « kaf » (« K ») de Kiarostami dans le chemin qui traverse la colline de Koker (que le réalisateur fit construire expressément pour *Où est la maison de mon ami ?*), ou encore le « Kodjaï » (« Où-es-tu? ») du premier plan de *Le Vent nous emportera* (*Bad ma ra khahad bord*, 1999).

Après la lecture de la première partie, une question sous-jacente s'impose : qu'en est-il de la cinéstase hors du cinéma de Kiarostami ? Afin de répondre à cette question, la deuxième partie (*Rossellini ou le cheminement cinéstasique*) est consacrée au « Rossellini de la période Bergman », c'est-à-dire celui plus résolument « moderne », selon une tradition critique typiquement française, inaugurée par Bazin et Rivette et reprise ensuite par Deleuze. À ce point du discours, le risque, dont l'auteur est conscient, est celui de faire de la cinéstase une figure ancillaire du cinéma moderne, partant de l'image-temps deleuzienne. Si au premier risque répond surtout la troisième partie de l'ouvrage, Philippe Ragel se défend du second en proposant une lecture alternative de *Europe 51* (*Europa 51*, 1951), le film sur lequel s'ouvre le deuxième tome de Deleuze. Pour lui, la séquence clé du film n'est pas — comme chez Deleuze — celle de l'arrivée d'Irène à l'usine, mais celle apparemment assez moins connotée de la découverte d'un noyé sur les rives du Tibre. C'est ici que la tension dramaturgique se relâche et que le film fait entrer le spectateur dans un régime narratif et stylistique complètement différent de celui des séquences initiales, caractérisé par une mise en scène à l'imitation du cinéma hitchcockien.

Après Rossellini, on passe à la troisième partie. Comme je l'ai déjà suggéré, celle-ci semble vouloir répondre à une question déjà en germe dans les parties précédentes : qu'en est-il donc de la cinéstase hors du cinéma moderne et de l'image-temps ? À ce point de l'ouvrage, le lecteur entre dans les stases narratives et plastiques du cinéma muet (*Cinéstases muettes*), lesquelles sont recherchées — et c'est un mérite de l'auteur — non pas là où on s'attendrait à les trouver (par exemple, le cinéma français ou scandinave des années vingt), mais là où on les suppose moins volontiers, c'est-à-dire chez Griffith, Eisenstein et (moins étonnamment) Murnau. En effet, l'objectif déclaré depuis les premières pages

du volume est de vérifier la dimension transhistorique du concept de cinéstase, et donc sa pleine opérativité aussi hors des catégories esthétiques et historiographiques avec lesquelles on risquerait autrement de le confondre et de le banaliser (comme le concept d'image-temps). Philippe Ragel tient en fait à souligner que la tension dialectique entre le mouvement et la stase est, selon lui, consubstantielle aux origines mêmes du medium cinématographique. Des formes primitives de cinéstase sont repérées déjà dans certaines Vues des frères Lumière, comme par exemple dans la *Barque sortant du port* (1895), où le mouvement curviligne de l'embarcation semble s'opposer, à partir d'un certain moment, à la construction en perspective de la vue, en donnant l'impression au spectateur d'un arrêt soudain du mouvement (la barque bouge mais elle semble ne plus avancer).

À travers les différentes périodes de l'histoire du cinéma, la cinéstase semble ainsi se produire sous des formes multiples, souvent attachée à un mouvement curviligne, des sinueux chemins calligraphiques de Kiarostami jusqu'aux énigmatiques dérives du voilier de *Nosferatu, une symphonie de l'horreur* (*Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens*, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, 1922). Comme le cours des fleuves, dont le mouvement serpentin suit la morphologie de la nature qui l'entoure, la cinéstase révèle en fait une proximité avec la ligne de l'arabesque. C'est ici que la cinéstase semble trouver son chemin esthétique privilégié, car — comme nous le rappelle Philippe Ragel en citant William Hogart — « La ligne ondoyante contribue plus à la beauté qu'aucune des autres lignes, comme dans les fleurs et autres formes ornementales » (p. 66).

[Federico Pierotti, Università degli Studi di Firenze]

Contributors / Collaborateurs

Luisella Farinotti is Associate Professor in Film Studies at IULM University of Milan, where she teaches *Film Theory* and *Aesthetics of Cinema*. Her current research study is on theory and history of the image and memory studies, with particular regard to home movies, found-footage films and self-portrayal practices. She is a member of the scientific committee of the series *Cinergie* (Mimesis) and of the editorial board of reviews: *Cinéma & Cie. International Film Studies Journal* and *Cinergie. Il cinema e le altre arti*. She published many essays in journals and miscellaneous books. She supervised and coordinated the research project published in *Atlante del cinema italiano. Corpi, paesaggi e figure del contemporaneo* (2011, with G. Canova). She has published: *Il futuro dietro le spalle. Tempo e storia nel cinema di Edgar Reitz* (2005), *Il metodo e la passione. Cinema amatoriale e film di famiglia in Italia* (2006, with E. Mosconi).

Francesco Giarrusso has a Degree in DAMS (Cinema), Discipline delle Arti, della Musica e dello Spettacolo, from the University of Bologna (2005). In 2013, he was awarded a PhD in Communication Sciences by the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Since 2013, he is an integrated member of the CFCUL (Center of Philosophy of Science of the University of Lisbon), member of the research group Ciência e Arte (Science and Art), and of SAP – Science-Art-Philosophy Lab with a research project entitled 'World images: from the cartographic representation of Earth to the electro-numerical image of the Globe'.

Barbara Grespi is Associate Professor in Cinema Studies at the University of Bergamo, where she coordinates the Research Group on cinema "Balthazar" and is on the scientific board of 'Punctum', an international project devoted to the study of visual culture. She has written particularly on gesture in the cinema and on cinema and photography, and her recent publications include *Memoria e Immagini* (Mondadori, 2009), *Cinema e montaggio* (Carocci, 2010), *Gus Van Sant* (Marsilio, 2011), *Fuori quadro* (co.eds. with Elio Grazioli and Sara Damiani; Aracne, 2013), *Bodies of Stone. Suspended Animations in the Media, Visual Culture and the Arts* (co.eds. with Alessandra Violi, Andrea Pinotti and Pietro Conte; Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming).

Micaela Latini is Assistant Professor of German Literature at Cassino University, Italy. She has written a monograph on Ernst Bloch (*Il Possibile e il marginale*, 2005) and, more recently, two books on Thomas Bernhard (*La pagina bianca*, 2010 and *Il museo degli errori*, 2011), to be published in German (K&N). She is also co-editor of *Dieci anni di estetica tedesca. Una bibliografia ragionata* (with A. Campo), of a book on Günther Anders *L'uomo e la (sua) fine* (with A. Meccariello, 2014) and of *Gli intellettuali e la Guerra. Un abbecedario* (with G. Guerra, 2016). She has also edited a new edition of *The Man without Qualities* by Robert Musil (trans. I. Castiglia, 2014), an anthology of E. Bloch's essays (*Ornamenti*, 2012) and a new edition of *Burning Conscience* by Günther Anders (*L'ultima vittima di Hiroshima,* 2016).

Barbara Le Maître is Professor in Film Studies at Paris Ouest Nanterre University. She has published *Entre film et photographie. Essai sur l'empreinte* (PUV, 2004), *Zombie, une fable anthropologique* (PUPO, 2015) and co-edited *Preserving and Exhibiting Media Art: Challenges and Perspectives* (with Julia Noordegraaf, Cosetta Saba and Vinzenz Hediger, AUP, 2013), *Cinéma muséum. Le musée d'après le cinéma* (with Jennifer Verraes, PUV, 2013) and *Tout ce que le ciel permet en cinéma, photographie, peinture et vidéo* (with Bruno Nassim Aboudrar, PSN, 2015). Her current research deals with: cinema and museology; the figure of the living dead; the relations between films and fossils.

Elena Marcheschi, PhD in Visual and Performing Arts, is Adjunct Professor in Art and Multimedia at the University of Pisa. She's the author of *Videoestetiche dell'emergenza. L'immagine della crisi nella sperimentazione audiovisiva* (2015), *Sguardi eccentrici. Il fantastico nelle arti elettroniche* (2012) and co-editor of *I film in tasca. Videofonino, cinema e televisione* (2009, with M. Ambrosini and G. Maina). She has published articles and essays about new media, video art and experimental cinema. Her research also pays particular attention to women's production and self-media. Curator of videoinstallations exhibitions, she's also in the staff of INVIDEO – International Exhibition of Video and Cinema Beyond (Milan, Italy).

Marc-Emmanuel Mélon is Professor at the University of Liège, where he teaches history and aesthetics of photography, cinema, video and visual arts in an overall perspective of cultural history of the production of meaning. His current research deals with early photography (in particular its non-artistic uses), the photographic discourse, the aesthetics of deep focus (from trompe l'oeil to 3D), visual allegory, and non-fiction film in Belgium.

Ágnes Pethő is Professor at the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) where she is currently head of the Department of Film, Photography, and Media as well as the executive editor of the journal *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Film and Media Studies*. She is the author of *Cinema and*

Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between (2011), the editor of the volumes: *Film in the Post-Media Age* (2012), *The Cinema of Sensations* (2015). She has also published several essays about the relationship of painting, photography and film and the aesthetic of the *tableau vivant* in cinema (e.g. in the 2014 Winter issue of *Screen*, in the volume on *Photofilmic Images in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture* edited by Alexander Streitberger, Brianne Caitlin Cohen, Leuven University Press, 2015).

Francesca Scotto Lavina is a PhD candidate in Film and New Media Studies at La Sapienza, University of Rome. Her research addresses spectators' emotion in film experience through an interdisciplinary approach, because of her background in Biosciences and Media Studies with a focus on cinema. She has published cinema essays in academic journals (*Fata Morgana*, *Bianco e Nero*), films and books reviews. She took part in International congresses and workshops, such as 9th NECS congress; she also organized 12th NECS graduate workshop.