

Jiří Anger (Charles University, Prague),

Keep That Image Burning: Digital Kříženecký and the Autonomous Creativity of Archival Footage

Throughout history, artistic experiments with archival footage have often served as an alarm clock for film scholars and archivists, pointing them towards material and technological underpinnings of the figurative images they study (and vice versa). “Found footage” filmmakers such as Bill Morrison, Ken Jacobs, Gustav Deutsch or Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi appropriate early films preserved on decomposing nitrate prints to remind us to what extent the figurative dimension of the image (i.e., the represented figures and objects and their composition) can change face to face with material and technological actors. Nevertheless, championing canonized works and artists can distract us from focusing on the autonomous creativity of the appropriated archival footage itself. Would it be possible to look at the found footage practice from below?

The specific material that provokes this question is the recently digitized body of work of the Czech cinema pioneer Jan Kříženecký. The digitization of all his surviving films (made between 1898 and 1911) gave birth to media artefacts that, in a strangely twisted way, resemble many well-known found footage artworks. While the digitized films benefit from the crystal-clear 4K image quality, their material deformations have not been retouched but made all the more visible (Pommeau and Anger 2019). This problem is only highlighted in some of the most distorted films, in which the intrinsic technological properties of the nitrate prints and negatives and the Cinématographe (all obtained from the Lumière brothers) interfere significantly into the formation of figures and objects in the image, even at the risk of evaporating them entirely. Consequently, one of the key aesthetic factors of found footage – the clash between figuration and materiality – arises accidentally, without external intervention, through the inbred deformative operations of filmic matter.

Three interrelated questions arise: How do extreme archival artefacts such as Kříženecký’s films problematize our notions of found footage and appropriation of archival materials? What do they tell us about the fragile relationship between figuration and materiality in the moving image and its aesthetic potential? Does it matter whether this tension arises by external means (e.g., ageing of the material or artistic intervention) or by means that are intrinsic to the archival material? To answer these questions, contemporary studies of early film technology (e.g., Mannoni 2017, Usai 2019, Turquety 2019) will need to join forces with media-theoretical approaches to experimental found footage practice (e.g., Herzogenrath 2017, Kim 2018, Russell 2018) and the “second life” of archival moving images (e.g., Baron 2014, Groo 2019).

Three short films by Jan Kříženecký – *Grand Consecration of the Emperor Franz I Bridge* (1901, source: nitrate print), *The First Day of the Spring Races of Prague* (1908, source: original negative), and *Opening Ceremony of the Čech Bridge* (1908, source: original negative) – will demonstrate how a specific material-technological quality (colour layer with an unclear origin, static electricity marks, and camera instability) can engage in direct contact with the figures and objects represented in the moving image. Thus, they will allow us to perceive specific experimental film practices as mutually intertwined with the intrinsic predispositions of film technology.

The encounter between the films of Jan Kříženecký and found footage will benefit both sides. On the one hand, it may show that many effects shown in celebrated found footage artworks do not result primarily from artistic appropriation or traces of passing time but from the autonomous, accidental creativity of the appropriated footage itself. On the other, found footage films may offer what Kříženecký's films as of yet lack – the ability to organize the chaotic operations of filmic matter and shape them into consistent forms. Thus, by reading found footage through Kříženecký and Kříženecký through found footage, we can gain a more centrifugal and immanent perspective on what archival footage is and can be.

Selected bibliography:

- Baron, Jaimie: *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Groo, Katherine: *Bad Film Histories: Ethnography and the Early Archive*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019.
- Herzogenrath, Bernd (ed.): *The Films of Bill Morrison: Aesthetics of the Archive*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017.
- Kim, Jihoon: *Between Film, Video, and the Digital: Hybrid Moving Images in the Post-Media Age*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.
- Mannoni, Laurent: "Les Appareils cinématographiques Lumière." *1895*, vol. 82 (2017), pp.52–85.
- Pommeau, Jeanne, and Jiří Anger: "The Digitization of Jan Kříženecký's Films." *Illuminace*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2019), pp. 104–107.
- Russell, Catherine: *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Turquety, Benoît: *Inventing Cinema: Machines, Gestures and Media History*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019.
- Usai, Paolo Cherchi: *Silent Cinema: An Introduction: Revised and Expanded Edition*. London: BFI, 2019.

Patrícia Castello Branco (IFILNOVA, Lisbon)

Experimental film at the borders of the human: *Leviathan's* eco-criticism and a new sensorium (online)

This paper will focus on the relationship between experimental film and eco-criticism. It will try and explore how experimental film can contribute to the on-going contemporary debate on the non-human and non-anthropocentric forms of art, through the analyses of the film *Leviathan* (Castaing-Taylor and Paravel, 2012). My main aim is to entangle the film's experimental aesthetic options with philosophical perspectives on the non-human (Latour) and film's potential to challenging cognition and creating new sensory and new perceptive experiences outside the dominance of the anthropocentric viewpoint. I will try and demonstrate that *Leviathan's* radical experimental procedures (such as the total abandonment of narrative or fictional dimensions, the exclusive use of Go-Pro cameras and its affixation in improbable places offering the most unconventional viewpoints, its image and sound montage, etc.), propose a new way of perceiving and sensing the world. The action of removing the cameras from the standard point of view of the human eye liberated the film from a human perspective and created des-anthropomorphized imagery. In addition, the film's constant dismemberments of images, its successive temporal and spatial collapses, the dizzying visual and sound montage, all contribute to the aim of resisting the anthropocentric viewing. Its main aesthetic achievement is the possibility of offering a non-human perspective. This idea relates to the long tradition of experimental film that conceives of cinema as a non-human perception (for instance in Dziga Vertov or Jean Epstein), or as having the capacity to offer a sensory journey and to help shaping a new sensorium outside the ocularcentric domination of mainstream visual works (such as in the abstract films of Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, Mary Ellen Bute or Jordan Belson's, Stan Brakhage amongst others; or even the idea of film as sensation of the first French avant-garde – Germaine Dulac, Henri Chomette, Jean Tedesco or René Clair). Aligning with this long tradition, *Leviathan* explores how the technological dimension of cinema (its optical and editing devices) can open the doors to non-human eyes and ears. Furthermore, the work's hybrid ontology, situated between experimental and documentary forms, explores the way film has the capacity to create non-human images that can emerge from the encounter between two very precise materialities: the technological devices of image recording and editing, and the bodies and matter they meet in the process.

The analysis of this experimental work, with all the philosophical questions it raises, will help and demonstrate how experimental film continues to entrain a significant development in thinking about the mediation of perception that is currently pivotal to ecological thinking. Offering an aesthetic that highlights the fundamental contribution of experimental films to eco-criticism, *Leviathan* addresses directly, not only to the artistic dimensions of contemporary culture, but also to its political and ecological repercussions.

Dario Cecchi (Sapienza, Rome)

The Transfiguration of Historical Reality: Experimental and Documentary Films as Embodied Meanings

Experimental and documentary films often present a trait that could appear problematic in the perspective of their definition as works of art. I share here the definition of work of art argued by Arthur C. Danto in the latest version of his ontology of art: a work of art is an “embodied meaning”. In other words, a work of art reveals a significance that cannot be isolated from its bodily structure, in a way or another: a traditional mimetic painting is as much an embodied meaning as Andy Warhol’s *Brillo Box*, which is not a mimetic representation of the original box designed by James Harvey in the artist’s intention. Embodied meaning is therefore the most comprehensive definition of work of art that is available to Danto’s ontological perspective. Consequently, this definition should entail not only paintings and sculptures or ready-mades and installations but also objects like movies. The philosophical sources of Danto’s definition of works of art as embodied meanings are two: Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* and Hegel’s *Aesthetics*. As we shall see, this duality is fundamental to understand the collocation of experimental and documentary films within this definition.

Nonetheless, these sorts of films could be problematic with regard to the abovementioned definition. Films could be experimental not for the sake of creating new ways of being an embodied meaning, but for the sake of investigating new uses of the audiovisual device. And documentary films are sometimes considered as bare narratives of mere facts, whose implication in meaning is either small or none. It is true, however, that these two directories often converge: it is the case, among others, for Dziga Vertov’s idea of the cameraman as a “cine-eye” for whom the investigation of reality implies the investigation of the mode of use of a camera, as well as the whole film industry, above all montage. This convergence is highly meaningful to the history and theory of cinema. Hence it does not follow, however, that this meaningfulness corresponds to the idea of embodied meaning.

To clarify the abovementioned issue, it might be helpful to consider Danto’s two references in the formulation of the embodied meaning theory. According to his Hegelian inspiration, a work of art is an embodied meaning insofar it transfigures a certain “objective spirit”, i.e. the system of human relations that configures a historical age, into “absolute spirit”, that is, the intelligible character of this ethical system of relations, its pure mode of manifestation. The absolute spirit of art does not mirror the objective spirit of a certain historical age: otherwise, Danto’s definition would be limited to mimetic art. This absolute spirit rather selects the traits and aspects which make this historical reality meaningful. It is eminently the case for Warhol’s *Brillo Box* with regard to the merchandized Brillo Boxes and the world of consumerism to which they belong.

However, if we consider the Kantian inspiration of the embodied meaning theory, we must also say that, by virtue of this transfiguration, a work of art is an “aesthetic idea”, that is, a “representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible to any determinate thought, i.e., concept, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or make it intelligible” (*CPJ*, § 49). Two elements of Kant’s theory of the imagination must be pointed out, in order to fully understand this statement. Firstly, Kant does not consider imagination as fancy, not even in the aesthetic experience: imagination is the faculty that schematizes experience, in the first as well as in the third Critique. Secondly, in the third Critique, this schematism is the object of a non-intellectual communication, gives birth to a “free play” between the intellectual and imaginative faculty and can only be performed in an intersubjective perspective: in other words, communication does not depend here on grammars. On the occasion of a work of art, its communication encompasses the imagination at work in the artist’s genius and that at work in the spectator’s taste. In that sense, the work of art is also for

Kant an embodied (and shareable) meaning. However, his formulation introduces an element that does not emerge with the same evidence in Hegel's account: the work of art is available to interpretations that, though consistent, are inexhaustible. It is the work of imagination, that is, the faculty of schematizing experience, that makes it possible.

By this way, we can reconsider the status of experimental and documentary films as works of art. Their experimentation in documentation is not concerned solely with the mode of use of a certain technological device: therefore, it does not matter to film theory alone. It is a philosophical issue as far as it deals with the productive imagination devising experience and so being exposed to the approval of other imaginations. We can argue that works of art, because of being embodied meanings, are also *attention devices* that canalize an otherwise floating imagination.

To conclude, I would like to mention Harun Farocki's film *Videograms of a Revolution*, realized with Andrej Ujca. This is a reused footage film made of videos shot by both independent and embedded video-makers during the last hours of Ceasescu's regime in Romania. Farocki aims at representing the fall of the regime, but also showing how such an extraordinary historical event can be witnessed. It is a document for historians, but also for politically engaged spectators. Farocki's aim is to demonstrate that, after the massive introduction of audiovisual machinery in our everyday life, it is impossible to partake in historical events outside their technological transfiguration. Spectators are not only provided with extraordinary documents, but are also learnt that historical events and their technological mediations are inseparable: spectators can only pay serious attention to these events as soon as they assume the perspective of this technological transfiguration. In other words, as an experimental and documentary film, *Videograms of a Revolution* is at the same an embodied meaning and an attention device.

Agostino Cera (Ferrara),
Experimental Film as Film Philosophy: The “Qatsi Case” (online)

My paper aims to investigate Godfrey Reggio’s *Qatsi Trilogy* – especially its first and fundamental part: *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982) – as a particular kind of experimental film (i.e. not a documentary film) or even as potential new film genre: *the film (philosophical) essay*. More precisely, I will consider it as a sub-group of such a genre, that is the *film-aesthetic essay*, different from the *film-theoretical essay*, whose paradigmatic examples are Guy Debord’s experimental films. While film-theoretical essay makes use of images and sounds as supplement or integration of a rational argument (i.e. it appeals to our logic/conscious side), film-aesthetic essay makes use of images and sounds as surrogate or substitute of a rational argument (i.e. it appeals to our emotional/unconscious side).

Reggio’s trilogy is not only a wonderful example about the possibilities of an authentic osmosis between image and music (thanks to the extraordinary work of Ron Fricke and Philip Glass), but it represents the best film treatment of a philosophical *topos* during the 20th century: “technology” and therefore a paradigmatic case of “Filmosophy”. Furthermore it shows how useful can be cinema (even an experimental film) in order to popularize “high culture” issues, by making them concrete.

Given these premises I will interpret *Qatsi Trilogy* as a mirror of some crucial points in the philosophy of technology. In particular, Reggio’s perspective reflects the approach of the so-called “first-generation of (or classical) philosophers of technology” – Martin Heidegger, Jacques Ellul, Hannah Arendt, Hans Jonas, Lewis Mumford, Günther Anders, Arnold Gehlen, Ernst Jünger – which dealt with the historical and transcendental conditions that made modern technology possible. They were able to grasp that technology is neither “applied natural science” nor “instrumentality”, rather “form of life”, or according to a famous Heidegger’s statement that “the essence of technology is by no means anything technological”. Reggio is able to give an aesthetic (i.e. visual, acoustic, emotional) concreteness to highly abstract concepts, such as:

1. the “*disenchantment*” of world (Weber), that is our society as a “*megamachine*” (Mumford);
2. the relation between human being and nature as “*Herausforderung*” (challenge), that is the interpretation of every being/entity as “*Bestand*” (standing-reserve) or raw material (Heidegger);
3. the matter of fact that technology represents the current “subject of history” (Anders), that is our “*destiny*” (Jonas);
4. the “total mobilization” (Jünger) as basic law of the megamachine;
5. the “supraliminal” or “overmanned” (Anders) rhythm of our lives within this epochal framework and the consequent risk that human being as such becomes “obsolescent/outdated” (Anders).

At the same time, Reggio’s work also shows the limits of the first generation philosophers in its approach to the question of technology, that is: essentialism, apriorism, determinism, dystopian attitude. Just from the awareness of these limits at the eighties of the last century (the same years of *Koyaanisqatsi*) moves the so-called *Empirical Turn* in the philosophy of technology, namely a rejection of the classical essentialist approach with its apocalyptic implications, which culminates in the idea of *a natural co-evolution between technology and society*. One of the main outcomes of this turn is that “the centre of gravity for front-rank work in the philosophy of technology shifted from Europe to North America”. This means that just when Reggio popularizes the classical assumptions in the philosophy of technology, the latter considered these assumptions too radical and decided therefore to modify them by assuming a pragmatist, optimistic (or, at least, not apocalyptic) and constructivist approach.

Finally Qatsi Trilogy also embodies a paradigmatic example of the *power of images* (in their combination with sound and music), namely their huge seductive power. Such a power represents at the same time an important resource in order to emphasize a strong theoretical message, but also a potential misleading tool in order to make appear an argument stronger than it is. Such a risk proves how urgent nowadays is the question of an *ecology of images*.

References

- Achterhuis H. (ed.), *American Philosophy of Technology: the Empirical Turn*, Bloomington/Minneapolis: Indiana University Press 2001.
- Dempsey M., "Quatsi Means Life: The Films of Godfrey Reggio," *Film Quarterly* (Spring 1989), 2-11.
- Frampton D., *Filmosophy*, London: Wallflower, 2006.
- Grant B. K., *Film Genre Reader IV*, Austin: University of Texas Press 2012.
- Heidegger, M., "The Question Concerning Technology," In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. W. Lovitt, 3-35. New York & London: Garland 1977.

**Byron Davies (Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana),
“Pictorial Metaphor in Experimental Film”**

In recent years philosophers of film have shown some interest in the applicability to cinema of the theory of painting that Richard Wollheim developed in his 1987 book *Painting as an Art* (Morgan 2016: 236-8, Wilson 2011: 41-2). These accounts have mostly focused on Wollheim’s notion of the “spectator in the picture” (the idea that some paintings have contents “in excess of what they represent,” namely a spectator whose psychological repertoire explains why the painting’s contents are presented as they are; Wollheim 1987: 101) and its applicability to questions of cinematic point of view. And yet that notion was part of a still broader account of pictorial meaning, culminating in Wollheim’s distinctive account of *pictorial metaphor*, according to which a painting might not only contain metaphorical content, but also generate a global response to the picture itself as a metaphor: fundamentally in the history of art, according to Wollheim, a metaphor for the human body (Wollheim 1987: 305-356). Thus—although Wollheim did not put the point quite so explicitly—in his interpretations of certain works by Bellini, Titian, and de Kooning, among other painters, those works are to be understood as (correctly) eliciting a response in which a beholder might declare, pointing to the painting as a whole, “The human body is *that*.”

But the question of whether there is an analogous notion of pictorial metaphor in film would have to be complicated. On one hand, it is not unusual to find figurative statements of the medium’s relation to, it happens, Wollheim’s paradigm of what painting “metaphorizes,” namely the (human) body. “*Il film è carne*” (“Film *is* flesh”), as the Italian experimental filmmaker Paolo Gioli sometimes says at screenings of his work (Gioli 2016). On the other hand, film’s character as a time-based medium would seem to exclude the kind of global response to a work that Wollheim took to be his very topic. That is, if we are interested in how a work itself (as opposed to any of its discrete contents) can constitute a metaphor for the body, then the relevant response cannot be “piecemeal” (Wollheim 1987: 306), and it might even require, as Wollheim suggests at one point, taking in the work “at a glance” (Wollheim 1987: 312). And yet to the extent that films unfold in time it would seem that our responses to them could *only ever* be “piecemeal.”

Nevertheless, in this presentation I will argue that what is distinctive about certain experimental films is their capacity to showcase their own global, “structural” features, exactly in order to allow for global responses analogous to what Wollheim thought was essential for effecting pictorial metaphor. (These include those features of interest to P. Adams Sitney in his seminal account of “structural” film, such as an insistence on “outline” and “monomorphic shape;” Sitney 2002: 184, 348.) In other words, in certain experimental films the vehicle of pictorial metaphor would be just those global structural features, even if their showcasing necessarily takes time.

To make this case, I will offer as examples two films whose global structures, I will argue, constitute metaphors for different (but related) conceptions of the body. (It will be of additional interest that both films share themes having to do with the relations between a child and a parent.) The first, Chantal Akerman’s 1977 *News from Home* (a work widely understood to have been born out of developments in structural film; Marguiles 1996: 43) uses Akerman’s voiceover readings of her mother’s letters from Belgium, read over shots typically perpendicular to buildings, windows, and subway cars in New York City (often with people moving in and out of those “containers”), in order for the film itself, as a result of its global application of this structure, to constitute a metaphor for the body, understood as both a container (cf. Wollheim 1987: 314-5) and as a site for variably intimate and distanced relations with others. The second

and more recent example, *Mano de metate* (or *Grindstone Hand*, 2018), a collaboration between the Oaxaca-based Mexican experimental filmmaker and video artist Bruno Varela and his then-six-year-old daughter Eugenia, would at first seem, in contrast, to be very far from structural cinema, especially since its poetic character would seem to consist exactly in its apparent shapelessness and spontaneity. Nevertheless, I will argue that their film is characterized by the global application of the structure of a digital collection or collage, thus constituting the film itself as a metaphor for the body: again understood as a container, only in this instance principally a container of manipulable sensations, impressions, and sounds (cf. Wollheim 1987: 348-9).

Therefore, these examples will show how attention to global structure, characteristic of experimental cinema, makes possible a wide and productive application of pictorial metaphor, even among pictures that take time to unfold.

References

- Akerman, C. (1977). *News from Home*. Unité 3, I.N.A., and Paradise Films.
- Gioli, P. (2016, April). *When the Eye Quakes: The Cinema of Paolo Gioli*. Presented at the Harvard Film Archive, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Marguiles, I. (1996). *Nothing Happens: Chantal Akerman's Hyperrealist Everyday*, Duke University Press.
- Morgan, D. (2016). Where Are We? Camera Movements and the Problem of Point of View. *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 14, 222-248.
- Sitney, P.A. (2002). *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943-2000*. Oxford University Press.
- Varela, B. and E. Varela. (2018). *Mano de metate*. Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/256326337>
- Wilson, G.M. (2011). *Seeing Fictions in Film: The Epistemology of Movies*, Oxford University Press.
- Wollheim, R. (1987). *Painting as an Art*, Princeton University Press.

**Tomas Koblizek (Czech Academy of Sciences),
Moving on the Spot: Representation of Time in Static Cinema**

This paper draws a comparison between photography and the “cinema of stasis” – an experimental kind of film that presents little to no movement. Such a juxtaposition may shed more light on the *positive* features of this kind of cinema than would be possible through comparison with narrative film, against which it appears as an aberrant negation of action and plot.¹

I have four aims in this paper. First, I demonstrate that the cinema of stasis and photography take recourse to a substantial, shared cache of techniques or technical resources² (especially veridical representation, the stillness of the subject, and the stability of the frame). They nonetheless differ across important domains. In particular, while photography presents a snapshot of a static subject at a particular moment, the cinema of stasis presents this static subject across a time frame (see, for example, Derek Jarman’s *Blue* (1993), a 74-minute recording of a blue surface). I take this to be the fundamental difference between the two kinds of art.

Second, I show that the temporal phases of a static film are often mutually- interchangeable and are, in this sense, equivalent. To this end, take Johnnie Lawson’s *Notions of Silence 3*, a ten-minute recording of an empty space in which one phase of the footage may be replaced by another without significantly altering the film’s artistic integrity.³ By contrast, photography—understood as the art of “the right timing”—does not represent an interchangeable but a *privileged* moment in a temporal sequence (Henri Cartier-Bresson’s,

¹ For an introduction to the history and theory of the cinema of stasis, see J. Remes, *Motion(less) Pictures: The Cinema of Stasis*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. Also see Remes’ article of the same title (2012). Remes in fact coined the term “cinema of stasis”. Static films are also discussed in Paul Schrader’s *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer, Berkeley*: University of California Press, 1972, 166–168. Schrader likewise speaks of the “stasis film”. Moreover, the cinema of stasis is touched upon by Noël Carroll in his text “The Essence of Cinema?”, in *Philosophical Studies* 89 (1998), 323–330.

² I borrow this term from Dominic Lopes, *Beyond Art*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp.138–144. Lopes points out that a technical resource “may be a material stuff, but it may be symbolic (e.g., a language), and events like the sounding of a c-sharp and an actor’s movement are also resources. In addition, resources are inert until we do something with them by using techniques” (138–139).

³ The equivalence of temporal phases in the cinema of stasis is manifested insofar as static films often have no beginning nor end; they simply *start* and *stop*. Owing to this, the final phase of a static film is not a resolution of what we witness in its initial phase: it is rather one temporal phase among others.

Derrière la gare Saint-Lazare may be a good example of this). I will argue that this explains why photography and the cinema of stasis arouse entirely disparate experiences of time.

Third, I show that, while the cinema of stasis and photography *may* have the same epistemic value regarding an object *p* (unlike painting, both are “transparent to the world”), they may differ in *aesthetic* value. For, while a good photograph of *p* may be appreciated as skilfully timed or composed, the static-cinematic representation of *p* may incite a feeling of strangeness, monotony, or boredom. We can explain this difference through a perceptual constraint that the cinema of stasis imposes upon the spectator. Simply put, unlike works of photography, which we can contemplate for as long as we wish, the cinema of stasis has a determinate spectatorial time span, as demarcated by the first and final moments of the film. The feeling of strangeness thereby elicited is owing to the film’s forcing the viewer to regard a simple subject over a protracted time period (two examples of this include Michael Snow’s *Solar Breath* (2002), footage just over an hour long showing a streaming curtain, and James Benning’s *the Ten Skies* (2004), a 97-minute recording of the sky filmed at different times of day).⁴

Finally, I demonstrate that the respectively divergent aesthetic experiences of the cinema of stasis and photography correspond with temporal differences. While we frequently appreciate a photograph either immediately or following a quick glance, in the cinema of stasis, aesthetic appreciation typically takes place as we vacillate between a negatively- and positively- valenced experience (viz. from boredom to appreciation). The move from negative to positive transpires once the spectator no longer perceives the stillness of the film as a *narrative absence*, but instead as an image that *positively presents* a situation into which she may become immersed. The mastery involved in the cinema of stasis can be adduced to a creative capacity for enabling such immersive experiences.⁵

⁴ On the difference between epistemic and aesthetic value in film and photography, see R. Scruton, “Photography and Representation”, in *Critical Inquiry* 3 (1981), 577–603; G. Currie, G., *Arts and Minds*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; and D. Cavedon-Taylor, “Arrangement and Timing: Photography, Causation and Anti- Empiricist Aesthetics”, in *Ergo*, forthcoming. For a discussion of strangeness and displeasure in the aesthetic experience, see J. Dokic, “Aesthetic Experience as a Metacognitive Feeling? A Dual-Aspect View”, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1, 2016, 69–88; and J. Shelley, “The Default Theory of Aesthetic Value”, in *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 1 (2019), 1–12.

⁵ For a detailed discussion of immersion in film, see V. Visch, E. Tan, and D. Molenaar, “The Emotional and Cognitive Effect of Immersion in Film Viewing”, in *Cognition and Emotion* 8 (2010), 1439–1445. Regarding immersion in the cinema of stasis, see J. Remes, *Motion(less) Pictures*, 2015, 51.

**Trevor Ponech (McGill),
Opening the Borders of the Cinematic Display**

It's hard to know what exactly people are talking about when they talk about cinema. This omnibus term evokes an artform and its history; an industry and its history; a vast, changeable system of social practices of production, distribution, and spectatorship; the production techniques, formal elements, and styles of movie imagery associated with the aforementioned artform, industry, or social institution. But there is another apposite if less familiar way of using "cinema." We may use it to designate a particular type of display. My presentation will trace in broad strokes what a cinematic display is and what it has to do with something best understood as a cinematic work. In the course of this discussion, I assess Noël Carroll's nonessentialist claim that moving images necessarily comprise what he calls "detached displays." I advocate an alternative display concept that has nothing to do with detachment and that stakes a robustly realist claim about what it is that makes cinematic displays categorically different from those belonging to paintings, sculptures, live theatrical productions, and other visual works of plastic and performing art. Agents of the avant-garde often grapple creatively with the challenge of delineating, conceptually and spatially, the boundaries of cinematic and other displays.

Hence one of my goals in what follows is to activate the cognitive and philosophical merits of several works of experimental cinema, including Anthony McCall's *Line Describing a Cone*.

**Gracia Ramirez (LCC),
Funding for Experimental Film, Video and Educational Television: An Enquiry into the
Differentiation of Practices in the United States**

This paper examines the historical development of American experimental film and video art in the late 1960s and early 1970s in connection with the history of film institutions and arts funding in the US. In 1968 the American Film Institute started awarding funds to produce experimental and independent films as part of the Independent Filmmaker Program. The AFI had just come into being in 1967 under the umbrella of larger arts and cultural policies advanced by the Kennedy's and Johnson's administrations, receiving one third of its funding from the federal government, one third from the Ford Foundation's philanthropy and another third from the Motion Picture Association of America, Hollywood's trade organisation. The Independent Filmmaker Program focused on arts and media hybridisation, and targeted both established and emerging filmmakers and artists from different disciplines who wanted to work with film. This paper starts from questioning why the U.S. federal government put money into protecting and promoting experimental and independent film practices at this point, which was the heyday of American avant-garde and underground films. It goes on to enquire into the consequences of such form of support for the development of various experimental moving image practices.

Approximately 153 projects, on all sorts of themes, genres and styles, including documentaries and animations, were produced with the help of the Independent Film Program scheme between 1967 and 1977. A significant number of experimental filmmakers such as Paul Sharits, Chick Strand, Will Hindle, Jordan Belson, Paul Sharits, Tony Conrad, Ed Emshwiller, Standish Lawder, Bruce Baillie, Abigail Child, Stan Vanderbeek and James Benning received support for individual film projects. Nevertheless, while supporting production, the American Film Institute did not support distribution, which was fundamental for experimental film practices to continue in a sustainable way. Within the structure of U.S. government funding for the arts, the AFI had exclusive rights to award grants in the area of film and to provide funds for individual filmmakers. Between 1967 and the early 1970s, another federally-funded body, the Public Media Program concentrated on the development of non-commercial television and video under the principles of education and experimentation, which resulted in support for organisations engaging with early experimental television and video art practices. In this context, this paper explains the key role of policies and rationalisation of categories of funding for the evolution of national traditions in experimental moving image practices in America.

References

- American Film Institute, *Independent Filmmaker Program Annual Report, May 1977*. Jan Haag Materials at the Library of The Woman's Collection at Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas.
- Renan, Sheldon. *The Underground Film: An Introduction to its Development in America*. London: Studio Vista, 1968.
- Sitney, P. Adams. *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943-2000*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Straight, Michael. *Twigs for an Eagle's Nest: Government and the Arts, 1965-1978*. New York: Devon Press, 1979.

**Matthew Rowe (The City & Guilds of London Art School),
The Temporal Nature of Moving Images: A Common Thread**

This paper uses a Waltonian (1972) analysis of 'standard', 'variable' and 'contra-standard' properties and indiscernibles-type thought experiment ultimately derived from Danto (1980) in order to draw conclusions about different approaches to defining moving images that might mutually exclusively define Narrative Cinema or Experimental film. It then proposes an alternative account that deals with both as forms of moving image artwork – with each form using moving images in a way that utilizes techniques from narrative art forms such as literature or theatre (narrative cinema) or non-narrative forms such as (arguably) music or visual art (experimental film). It's proposed that in using moving images as a material that each cannot help but produce temporal works – but that within that structure moving images can be used to produce temporal narratives or temporal constructions/abstractions.

The paper makes a case about the nature of moving images, conceptually separate from any particular use those images within an art form: It presents two related thought experiments involving simultaneously experienced perceptually indiscernible image pairs (analogue or digital). The first compares a still image within/from a moving image, and the other a still photographic image. The second a still image of/from a moving picture and a moving picture of an image that remains still.

It's suggested that, for each, the two may not be distinguishable in theory. However, this indiscernibility sustains only so long as the image from the moving image remains still. Moreover, once the indiscernibility of the pair stops the viewer resolves they made a *mistake* about one image – taking a moving image that happened to not move for some period of time as a photographic image that *cannot move* at any time. It's movement from the moving image that reveals the distinction.

The analysis is that the potential for movement is, in Walton's (1972) sense, 'contra-standard' for photographic images, but 'variable' for moving images; that stillness is 'standard' for photographic images but 'variable' for moving images. The potential for moving images to be variable in respect of their movement is what causes the confusion with a still image and also why that confusion becomes resolved as a mistake when the moving image moves (not when the still image doesn't move).

The paper argues that these thought experiments suggests difficulties for arguing that movement is the essence of moving images, since stillness is not 'contra-standard' for them. Instead, it's argued that they suggest that moving images might be essentially temporal, to the extent that the idea of an atemporal moving image is contradictory whereas a non-moving moving image is not.

This sets up the conclusion that all art forms and artworks that use moving images will be temporal in nature, in that they exist and are constructed to be experienced sequentially. As an aside some observations are made about how this analysis lets us view different moving image artworks (such as Warhol's *Empire State Building* or Debord's *Heulementsen Faveur of Sade*) that present long periods of moving images as if still images, as playing with the variable properties of moving image artworks, and gives support to the role of editing as the foundational and specific technique of artworks across all forms that use moving images.

References

Carroll, Noel "The Essence of Cinema" *Phil Studies* v.89 1998 pp323-330

Carroll Noel "Philosophizing through the Moving image – the case of Serene velocity" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* v.64, 2006

Danto, Arthur C *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Cornell, New York, 1980

Deren, Maya "Cinematography, the Creative Use of reality" *Dadalus* 89, 1960 pp.150-167Justin

Remes "Motionless Pictures: The Cinema of Stasis" *British Journal of Aesthetics* July 2012 v52 no 3

Paul Schrader "Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer" Berkeley 1972.

**Paul Taberham (Arts University Bournemouth),
Room for Error: Speculations on Defining Experimental Film**

The proposed paper will explore prior definitions of experimental film, and offer new possible recurrent traits. In addition, the paper will consider how artists and theorists have been reluctant to try and define experimental film, since it is typically defined by a lack of constraining rules. It will be suggested that experimental films can be defined without being prescriptive, by identifying recurring features rather than listing a set of criteria that needs to be met.

Of the few scholars who have offered a list of defining features of experimental film and animation (such as Fred Camper, Paul Wells, Maureen Furniss and myself), I will identify recurrent elements and how they can be split into three key categories: the context of distribution and production (i.e. financed and distributed independently or through an arts council), recurrent aesthetic traits (i.e. suggestive rather than concrete, emphasis on surface details and free exposure of materials, absence of psychologically defined characters), and the role of the artist (use of non-rational intuitions, readily discernible personal style, the act of creation is a process of discovery). These will be examined in more detail.

In addition, I will offer two more recent speculations I have made. The first speculation is that one of the protocols of experimental film is to identify assumptions about filmic experience which are so implicitly embedded, they pass by unnoticed. In turn, the experimental filmmaker seeks to identify and subvert that assumption, while still offering an aesthetic experience.

The second speculation is that there should perhaps be a degree of doubt as to the merits of the film. Where (cosmetic) traits of experimental film can be adopted and subsumed into commercial media such as music videos, movie special effects and title sequences, commercial filmmakers nevertheless still need to do as much as possible to ensure the virtues of their film are readily discernible to its investors and general audiences. In experimental filmmaking, by contrast, there is room for doubt. This second speculation in particular will be presented in the hopes of a productive exchange of ideas during the Q&A.

Bibliography

- Camper, Fred. 'Naming, and Defining, Avant-Garde or Experimental Film', n.d. Retrieved 12 January 2020 from <http://www.fredcamper.com/Film/AvantGardeDefinition.html>. Furniss, Maureen. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics*. New Barnet Herts: John Libbey Cinema and Animation, 2009.
- Hamlyn, N. *Film Art Phenomena*. Basingstoke: BFI Publishing, 2003. Wells, Paul. *Understanding Animation*. London: Routledge, 1998.

**Malcolm Turvey (Tufts),
Cinematic Specificity, Intermediality, and the European Avant-Garde**

Much recent scholarship about film and the European avant-garde before World War II has sought to show that cinema shaped the work of avant-garde artists in other media, and even helped give rise to the avant-garde movements to which they belonged. Call this the intermedial approach. Leading the charge is R. Bruce Elder, who alleges that avant-garde artists of the period commonly viewed film as the "top art" and set about reformulating the media in which they worked to take on "at least some of the attributes that made the cinema the *ottima arte*" (Elder 2013, 3). Meanwhile, in a rich and fascinating account, Pavle Levi has demonstrated that many avant-gardists practiced "cinema by other means" by making "films" using "the tools, the materials, the technology, and the techniques that either modify and alter, or are entirely different from those typically associated with the normative cinematographic apparatus" (Levi 2012, xii- xiii). And in an innovative work of film history, Jennifer Wild has explored how film projection and exhibition, along with "the film industry's expansive, extrafilmic penetration into cultural life by way of stardom, advertising, and distribution . . . played a significant role in the development of modern and avant-garde art" during what she calls "the age of cinema" (1900-1923) (Wild 2016, 2; 1).

Of course, it has long been recognized that film exerted a profound influence on the avant-garde. In her seminal writings for *Artforum* and other publications from the early 1970s onward, Annette Michelson maintained that there is a special sense in which almost all the major authentic movements and styles of this century--Futurism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Constructivism--reacted to the growth of cinema. Each fresh revision of esthetic and social values staked its claim upon film, claiming as well that its aspirations and energies subsumed and articulated a filmic ontology (Michelson 1973, 49-50)

However, the intermedial approach has perhaps been given renewed impetus recently by the widespread embrace of mixed media and even the dissolution of distinct media in the artworld, the media industries, and academia. Influential thinkers such as Friedrich Kittler have proclaimed that "The general digitalization of information and channels erases the difference between individual media [. . . and] the notion of the medium itself" (Kittler 1987, 102), while observers of the media industries, like Henry Jenkins, speak of their increasing "convergence [which] represents . . . a move from medium-specific content toward content that flows across multiple media channels" (Jenkins 2006, 243). Film and art historians have become increasingly skeptical about medium-specific claims and the concept of a distinct medium, with some even declaring that "there are no media" (Horn 2008, 7). Whether one agrees with these arguments or not, they have likely encouraged scholars to examine the ways media are interconnected, interpenetrate, and merge.

In this paper, I point to two potential pitfalls of the intermedial approach. The first has to do with establishing the influence of one medium on another, which is more difficult than is often acknowledged. In the absence of information about artists' intentions and the works they have encountered in other media, intermedial scholars often resort to *analogies* as their only evidence for a connection between media. Philosophers have long debated the correct criteria for evaluating analogical reasoning, but they tend to agree that an analogy is more convincing the more specific similarities it identifies between the objects in question. As David Hume famously put it, "But wherever you depart, in the least, from the similarity of the cases, you diminish proportionably the evidence; and may at last bring it to a very weak analogy, which is confessedly liable to error and uncertainty" (Hume 1990, 54). In establishing the influence of one work or medium on another, an art historical analogy will therefore be more plausible the

more precise and detailed resemblances it pinpoints between them. I will show that the analogies the intermedial approach relies on often mask significant disanalogies that its practitioners don't address, thereby making the evidence for film's impact on the other arts less convincing and certain than they acknowledge.

Another recurring problem with intermedial analogies is that they tend to be general and abstract, appealing to broad features of film that are not specific to it, which brings us to the second potential pitfall of the intermedial approach. If the cinematic properties being compared to avant-garde experimentation in other art forms are not unique to film but are shared with different media, how do we know in the absence of further evidence that it was film, rather than those other arts, that influenced that experimentation? It turns out that, even though it might appear to reflect the contemporary embrace of mixed media and the dissolution of distinct media, the intermedial approach actually requires an account of cinema's medium-specific characteristics otherwise it is left bereft of an explanation of why it was film, as opposed to another medium, that influenced work in other media. Or to put it another way, the intermedial emphasis on artists borrowing from film risks losing sight of the fact that avant-gardists, even though they might have sought to approximate characteristics of moving images in their native media, viewed cinema as a unique medium with medium-specific features, which is why they turned to it in the first place, and I will use Surrealism as my example.

References

- Elder, R. Bruce. 2013. *Dada, Surrealism, and the Cinematic Effect*. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Horn, Eva. 2008. "Editor's Introduction: 'There Are No Media'." *Grey Room* 29: 7-13. Hume, David. 1990. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. London: Penguin.
- Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kittler, Friedrich. 1987. "Gramophone, Film, Typewriter." *October* 41: 101-118. Levi, Pavle. 2012. *Cinema by Other Means*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Michelson, Annette. 1973. "Rose Hobart and Monsieur Phot: Early Films from Utopia Parkway". *Artforum* XI: 45-57.
- Wild, Jennifer. 2015. *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema, 1900-1923*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Panel chaired by Nicky Hamlyn (University for the Creative Arts) with Deniz Jons, Vicky Smith and Andrew Vallance

Screenings as material and discursive processes.

Our panel examines the productive relationship between workshops, screening events and making processes, in which a mix of live and recorded works might be presented, including curator-initiated discussions between artists and audience. Such events take place outside of the normal art gallery or cinema contexts and are a continuation in some respects of the ethos of the London Filmmaker's Co-op's Open Screenings and more latterly events held at No.w.here in London and at Bristol Experimental and Expanded Film (BEEF).

Andrew Vallance discusses a variety of events that were designed specifically to engender discussion and dialogue. *Pairs* (2017) put two filmmakers together to show and discuss each other's work and influences. At *Holding Space*, curated by Vallance and Simon Payne, site-specific video projections, film installations and hybrid forms, including performances involving light, interacted productively in an event designed to bring the audience together to mingle freely among the works.

The film works shown on this occasion carefully refused the sentimentalising and fetish attitude associated with celluloid. The video work also rejected the techno-fetishism often indulged by artists in their use of very high-resolution forms in which sophisticated software heavily determines the making processes. Contrastingly low-tech approaches and questions around the idea of haptic film are presented by Vicky Smith, who frames the issues via a discussion of Annabel Nicolson's seminal performance *Matches* (1975), which was recreated at (BEEF) in 2019. Smith sees a contemporary relevance in *Matches'* figuring of the precarity that afflicts many areas of life and links it to an artistic recourse to 'poor' materials.

When film is separated into its constituent stages, its necessary or sufficient conditions, or when digital video recording devices are disturbed by modification or augmentation, the forms generated stimulate ongoing discursivity which, in the case of these live events, pull making, viewing and thinking into an integrated activity. These events are transformed thereby into laboratories where artists and audience mingle and communicate directly in a manner that's much harder to achieve in the formal and restricted setting of a standard post-screening Q&A. The unpredictable effects issuing from the interactions in this context generate novel aesthetic experiences that extend and fortify forms of critical moving image and our experience of them. A process of socialised re-materialisation stresses the importance of the haptic, discursive and artisanal in an increasingly distanced and de-materialised world.

**Vicky Smith (University for the Creative Arts),
Precarious light, precarious life.**

This paper will discuss the quality of precarious aesthetics that manifest in experimental cinema, whose expanded character is facilitated, not by cinema exhibition, nor by the gallery, but by a third type of space whose existence is itself precarious. Might such precarity actually enhance the provisional quality of such works.

Annabel Nicolson's *Matches* (1975) will be discussed in terms of its aesthetically rich staging of the precarious. *Matches* must be performed in full darkness, broken only by flames from matches that are struck during the piece. Bristol's Brunswick Club, former home to Bristol Experimental & Expanded Film, was able to meet this particular lighting requirement when it hosted *Matches* in March 2019. This was BEEF's final event at the club as the collective were being evicted from the property and had to vacate shortly afterwards: borne out of the reality of precarity, the event was called *Low Light* to capture this experience of insecurity. Precarity is a condition of economic vulnerability that is affecting increasing human numbers; artists and the short lives of artist run film projects and spaces included.

Matches is characterized by both the precarious, and precarity, on three different counts: its deployment of, and reliance upon precarious light; its staging of the very conditions of precarity by placing the event in the hands of two volunteers from the audience who are asked to perform in precarious conditions; its dependency on non-institutional venues, such as The Brunswick Club, whose existence is always under threat.

The quality of the precarious in *Matches* has been attributed to material factors, such as the variable quality of the flame, as opposed to the constancy of electrically powered film projection (Reynolds, 2010: 154); (Sparrow: 2005). These readings place less emphasis on the aspect of precarity that is also present in the work: an aesthetic that gives it such contemporary currency.

The precarious participatory qualities of *Matches* anticipates much contemporary art practice that, responding to mounting socioeconomic disparity, gives form to the precarious in order to address the fragility of life. Yet authorities on the subject of precarity in art (Dezeuze: 2016); (Foster: 2017) do not consider how such early expanded film informs and shapes contemporary practice. Through interviews with performers and participants present in the performance of *Matches* at TBC, this paper will relate the aesthetics of the precarious to the economics of precarity, and will argue that works of experimental expanded cinema anticipate concerns in contemporary art.

References

- Dezeuze, Anna (2016). *Almost Nothing: Observations on Precarious Practices in Contemporary Art*. Manchester University Press.
- Foster, Hal (2017). *Bad New Days: Art Criticism Emergency*. Verso: London NY.
- Reynolds, Lucy (2011). 'Magic Tricks? Shadow Play in British Expanded Cinema', in Ball, S., Curtis, D., Rees, A.L., White, D. (eds) *Expanded Cinema: Art Performance and Film*. London: Tate Publishing, pp. 135-140.
- Sparrow, Felicity. [https://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/annabel_nicolson/essay\(4\).html](https://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/annabel_nicolson/essay(4).html) downloaded 25/06/2020.

Andrew Vallance (Arts University Bournemouth),
Discursive Interaction

This paper will begin to examine a *discursive* model of presenting artists' and experimental film. Through considering three case studies (all of which are *Contact* events - www.contactscreenings.co.uk/ - that I co-curated with Simon Payne) exhibition strategies and reception, site specificity and temporal dynamics, the interplay between work, display and its encounter, outside of the traditional gallery and cinema space, will be explored.

These events are part of a developmental process of 'live research'. They investigated how active spectatorship might be engendered, considered contextual histories, artist interaction and sought to explore how sites of co-presence can be created and participants can be part of a collaborative enterprise: *Pairs: - / -* (The Depot, London, 2017), was a series of four events, each of which featured two artist-filmmakers, who presented work (their own and a work that inspired them) and was accompanied by a printed conversation between the participants; *Holding Space* (Hunts Wharf, London, 2017), a group show, featured a selection of film, video and performative works, which were made and installed in a vacated factory, for one evening only, and investigated a structured durational response to spatial and temporal conditions; *Contact: A Festival* (Apiary Studios, London, 2016), featured more than 70 film artists across three days in its venues' three studios, its curatorial focus combined a multiplicity of forms, which brought together niche and new audiences. These venues were adapted sites and the improvised nature of the respective presentations fostered a more inclusive atmosphere, with artists and audiences sharing the same space, which all added to the discursiveness of the assemblages.

The contributing artists were invited to participate due to their willingness to explore the relationship between process, site and presentation. For instance, *Holding Space*, which was staged in a disused industrial site prior to its redevelopment, featured works that were largely made in situ on the day of the event, which further emphasised their presence and the exhibition's specificity; the sequencing and positioning of work (film and video installations, expanded cinema, film and para-cinematic performances) stimulated medium interrogation and the spectator experience (their orientation and navigation was not pre-designated but the works' programming brought them together at certain pre-ordained times). Also, *Pairs: - / -* created a platform for discourse, which allowed ideas to develop in relation to the shared experience across different forms of communication and participation (including lineages and linkages, peer-to-peer, audience and place). Assessing an event's recognition is never straightforward, but for *Contact: A Festival* we collected responses for the ACE evaluation, which indicated its discursive nature was identified and appreciated.

Through reviewing these specific examples *Discursive Interaction* examines how experimental work and performance can be exhibited, how considerations of context, modes of display, artist and audience engagement all influence its proposition and reception, and whether this particular configuration can make artists and spectators more aware of time (based media) and (its manifestation in) space.

Panel chaired by Lilly Husbands (Middlesex University London) with Amy Dickson, Jennifer Nightingale and Mary Stark

Textile Practice in Experimental and Expanded Cinema

Anchored by their filmmaking practices, Amy Dickson, Jennifer Nightingale and Mary Stark will examine connections between textile practice and experimental filmmaking. Key relationships between the histories of the two fields will be discussed, as well as how new links have been created through their individual practice-based research projects since 2006. Novel overlaps have materialised as single screen films, object-based outcomes, expanded and para-cinematic performances. These works exhibit concerns with filmic specificity and structure, as well as improvisation and the flow of the making process. Their radical approaches to film production highlight subject matter including the representation of women, hidden labour and the body.

Informed by feminist theory and practice across both disciplines, Stark will map a historical narrative of shared materiality, terminology and technology. She will show how since 2012 this has driven her studio-based and expanded cinema performance practice, resulting in the creation of hybrid tools, as well as the performance *Film as Fabric*, which involves the transformation of fabric and stitch patterns into optical sounds and moving images on 16mm film, which is edited into loops using a process informed by dressmaking.

Nightingale will develop these ideas with reference to the *Knitting Pattern Series*, a collection of 16mm animation landscape films that translate Cornish Guernsey and Faroese colour work knitting patterns into film. The focus will be on the analogy between a frame and a stitch, landscape as editing structure, plus the networks of association to the historical and cultural aspects of the knitting patterns.

Expanding upon her para-cinematic performances using thermochromic fabric and light, Dickson will explore how her knowledge and background in textiles influenced her approach to experimental film, video and performance. Drawing on connections in the process-led methods of textile practice and filmmaking, their relationship to the body, ties between new and old technology, and relatable methods by Vicky Smith and Annabel Nicolson. She will discuss how her practice raises the importance of improvisational methods and playful approaches to working live.

Following these individual papers, there will be a discussion chaired by Lilly Husbands, author of *Craft as Critique in Experimental Animation* (Husbands, 2019). The artists will debate the common threads and different approaches in their practice-based research with the aim of staking out an intermedia field of practice between textile practice and experimental filmmaking to support future exchange.

Husbands' critical perspective will underpin a dialog of themes, such as craft; community; technology and the measurement of time. Consideration will be given to how all the artists have built on works by the British artist Annabel Nicolson, most notably her expanded cinema performance *Reel Time* (1973) in which she punctured a huge loop of 16mm film with her unthreaded sewing machine (Sparrow, 2005: online). The central role of the maker and the making process (Smith, 2015) will be highlighted in tandem with the importance of artistic networks and communities (Anastassiou *et al.*, 2016, p. 11).

Mary Stark (Manchester School of Art Research Centre)
Film as Fabric: Textile Practice as Feminist Critique in Experimental Filmmaking

This paper discusses doctorate research that examined relationships between textile practice and experimental filmmaking through expanded cinema performance. Originating from the idea that photochemical film offers a tangible visual equivalent to that of fabric, the research questioned how these two seemingly separate disciplines are deeply conjoined. My position as an experimental filmmaker with a background in embroidery grounded the study, which took as a point of departure Annabel Nicolson's seminal live work *Reel Time* (1973).

The possibility of repressed relationships between the fields was supported by bringing together feminist critique from both disciplines. Feminist scholars have repeatedly problematised contextualisation of experimental filmmaking as narrow and misplaced (Rhodes, 1979; Hatfield, 2006; Blaetz, 2007; Reynolds, 2009, 2012). Until now connections with textile practice in experimental film have been largely overlooked, most likely because domestic crafts have a long association with women's work (Barber, 1994), are central to deep rooted Western stereotypes of femininity and remain denigrated art forms (Parker, 2010).

After investigating the shared materiality, terminology and technology of textile practice and experimental filmmaking, analogue film editing terminology was identified as indicative of the largely unrecognised labour of women in the cutting rooms of early cinema. Up to the late 1920s, editing was carried out by women. At this time, it was seen as similar to sewing and therefore a menial task. Female film editors undergo 'double invisibility' in histories of cinema (Wright, 2009, p. 8). Furthermore, their work in early cinema has been associated with stitch (Murch, 2011) as a way to distance it from male-dominated histories of film editing.

Informed by this analysis, the expanded cinema performance *Film as Fabric* developed through numerous iterations. This led to the creation of hybrid tools as well as optical sounds and moving images made from fabric and stitch patterns, which were measured, cut with dressmaking scissors, stitched, spliced into loops and projected in former cotton mills. My live presence as female artist working with clothing, fabric and stitch as expanded cinema aimed to highlight connections between textile practice and experimental filmmaking and recognise women's work, particularly in the cutting rooms of early cinema.

The methodology of 'crafting' expanded cinema was informed by discussion of editing as a craft of connection (Harbord, 2007), craft as critique in experimental animation (Husbands, 2019, pp. 45–74), intermedia (Walley, 2011, p. 27) and the 'domain shift' as a way to generate new knowledge and reveal hidden meanings (Sennett, 2009, pp. 125–128). The embroidery practice of 'sampling' allowed specific elements of *Reel Time* to be re-examined, as well as analogue film editing practices that originated in early cinema to re-emerge and be celebrated. Research outcomes included a divergent historical narrative and a glossary of shared terms; the live work; plus performance documentation in the form of a vinyl record (Stark, 2018) and a website with videos, photographs, sound recordings, drawings and notes (Stark, 2020: online). Together these elements re-contextualise already existing artworks and support further interdisciplinary dialogue.

Jennifer Nightingale (Royal College of Art and Anglia Ruskin University)
The Knitting Pattern Film Series: a collection of 16mm experimental animation landscape films

This presentation will discuss the *Knitting Pattern Series* (2016-), a collection of 16mm animation landscape films that use a single frame production technique to translate Cornish Guernsey and Faroese colour work knitting patterns into film. The films are a part of practiced-based research in which strategies are used to set up a structural relationship between that of a knitted stitch and a frame of film. In using these approaches the films aim to draw out analogies between both forms of production and reveal networks of association in the films to Landscape, knitting practices and the historical and cultural aspects of the Cornish Guernsey and Faroese knitting patterns.

Alongside the above, the presentation will aim to illuminate readings of the films and threads of association that extend the basis of the film, knitting analogy and create a rationale for the way in which the films re-embed the patterns back into the locations from which they were inspired and are derived. This will include ideas of pattern and representations of Landscape; issues of female creative expression, labour and the nature of the intergenerational knitting communities. The role of camera position will also be addressed. This will focus on how framing has been used to explore multiple, dual positions within the landscape that highlight the geographical architecture (both geological and artificial) plus perspectives and points of view linked to the history of the knitting patterns.

The presentation will consider the methods and processes of the films' production and address the consideration and decisions made by the filmmaker - including the role of film charts. The role of the Bolex camera technology will be highlighted to explore representations of time and site-specific working via single frame animation techniques. The film charts will be explored as examples of an approach to systems-based editing and location-as-editing system with reference to the context of experimental film (e.g. Rose Lowder, Kurt Kren, Dziga Vertov). The charts' instructional nature will also be addressed, as will their role as visualizations of the knitting patterns; pragmatic pre-production material; notation documentation and retrospectively a significant aid to reflection on the work carried out. How these findings relate to key aspects of the film series such as how gesture, landscape and film are 'knitted together' in the film as a material object, will also be highlighted.

Amy Dickson (Royal College of Art)

***Light Traces, Light Time and Light-Time-Strung*: Textile Practice as Para-Cinema Performance**

This presentation will look at how my para-cinema (Walley, 2003) performances involving thermochromic fabric printing and heat inducing light are informed by knowledge and background in textiles. Analysing some key examples of these para-cinematic works; *Light Traces* (2017), *Light Time* (2013) and *Light-Time-Strung* (2019). I will explore why and how my background in textiles impacted on this process, becoming a foothold and lens in which to explore experimental cinematic methods. Textile practice offered a familiar language through which I could translate the terminology of film and video. I identified specific photochemical processes as analogous with the photographic/developing process in printed textiles.

My experimental approach to cinema was further informed and transformed through exposure to the history of avant-garde film and video (Rees, 2011), and specifically the practitioners associated with the London Filmmakers Co-op (LUX, no date: online). Camera-less and photographic processes, such as cyanotypes and photograms, as well as Jennifer Nightingale's pinhole films were also influential. I drew similarities with these and related methods to the textiles print processes that use an open screen or work directly onto fabric; as well as drawing further relationships between creative processes that happen in the textile workshop/studio in relation to live performance. Placing importance on the creative process in the site of its production rather than final results, was combined with staging the creative process as live para-cinematic event.

The choice to employ my background in textiles within the context of experimental film and video can be partly linked to an intimidation and frustration with technology. This issue has been expressed by other practitioners, such as Annabel Nicolson, in her performance *Reel Time*, which originated from a sense of frustration with the technical apparatus associated with cinema and filmmaking (Curtis, 2002). A corresponding relationship between my work in textiles, para-cinema, and video can be understood through their improvisational methods of creation; intuitive, responsive and playful approaches to working live; and the embracing of uncontrollable elements. Exposure to improvised music has further impacted and influenced this trajectory. My use of the body also bears a relationship in the process of production across disciplines, ascribing to Vicky Smith's thoughts on direct-on-film animation (Smith, 2012) and how its performative production brings about unique choreography that directly corresponds to the resulting traces/marks/image (Smith, 2015).

References

- Anastassiou, M. *et al.* (2016) 'collective-Iz in Conversation'. London: Contact: A Festival of New Experimental Film and Video, pp. 10–19.
- Barber, E. W. (1994) *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years*. London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd.
- Blaetz, R. (2007) *Women's experimental cinema: critical frameworks*. London: Duke University Press.
- Curtis, D. (2002) "'Annabel Nicolson talking about Reel Time" transcript'. London: British Artists' Film and Video Study Collection.
- Harbord, J. (2007) *The Evolution of Film: Rethinking Film Studies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hatfield, J. (2006) 'Imagining Future Gardens of History', *Camera Obscura*, 62,(21), pp. 185–191.
- Husbands, L. (2019) 'Craft as Critique in Experimental Animation', in Ruddell, Caroline & Ward, P. (ed.) *The Crafty Animator*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 45–74.
- LUX (no date) *1966 13TH OCTOBER LONDON FILMMAKERS' CO-OPERATIVE IS FORMED*. Available at: http://www.luxonline.org.uk/histories/1960-1969/london_film-makers_cop.html (Accessed: 29 June 2020).
- Murch, W. (2011) *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing*. 5th edn. Los Angeles: Simon James Press.
- Parker, R. (2010) *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Rees, A. L. (2011) *A History of Experimental Film and Video*. London: British Film Institute.
- Reynolds, L. (2009) *British Avant-Garde Women Filmmakers and Expanded Cinema of the 1970s*. University of East London.
- Reynolds, L. (2012) 'Hysteriography', *Sequence: New Artists' Film and Video*, Winter, pp. 52–57.
- Rhodes, L. (1979) 'Whose History?', in *Film as film: formal experiment in film, 1910-1975: (catalogue of an exhibition held at the Hayward Gallery, South Bank, London SE1, 3 May-17 June 1979)*. London: Hayward Gallery.
- Sennett, R. (2009) *The Craftsman*. London: Penguin.
- Smith, V. (2012) 'Full Body Film', *Sequence: New Artists' Film and Video*, Winter, pp. 42–47.
- Smith, V. (2015) 'The Animator's Body in Expanded Cinema', *Animation: an interdisciplinary journal*, pp. 1–16.
- Sparrow, F. (2005) *Annabel Nicolson: The Art of Light and Shadow*. Available at: [http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/annabel_nicolson/essay\(1\).html](http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/annabel_nicolson/essay(1).html) (Accessed: 28 February 2013).
- Stark, M. (2018) 'Industrial Folklore Tapes Vol III: Film as Fabric'. Manchester: Folklore Tapes.
- Stark, M. (2020) *Film as Fabric: connecting textile practice and experimental filmmaking through expanded cinema performance*. Available at: <https://marystark.wixsite.com/filmasfabric/performances> (Accessed: 30 June 2020).
- Walley, J. (2003) 'The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-garde Film', *October*, 103, p. pp.15-30.
- Walley, J. (2011) 'Identity crisis: Experimental film and artistic expansion', *October*, (137), pp. 23–50.
- Wright, J. (2009) 'Making the Cut: Female Editors and Representation in the Film and Media Industry', in. UC Los Angeles: UCLA Center for the Study of Women, pp. 7–12.

Dr. Deniz Johns (Lancaster University)

Now and Here: Experimental filmmaker as programmer

Abstract:

The organisers of this conference raised a several questions with regards to the location of reception: they asked:

- Where should we appreciate experimental films and works of video art? In movie theatres or in art galleries? How does the screening-location bear upon appreciation?

As a practice-based researcher, maker, and a programmer, I spend a lot of time examining the viewing experience, how the viewer is imagined, positioned, manipulated, directed, and arguably constructed via filmic constructions and also by location i.e. the site of reception, and how this physical positioning impacts the viewer as much as the filmic positioning. So, since I am approaching these questions departing from my own practice, I not only want to think about the location but also discuss how the filmmaker as a programmer has a distinct effect on the ways in which the experimental films, videos and expanded cinema pieces are perceived and appreciated. And why in fact this is at least an equally critical question especially in relation to the particular aesthetic experience that they create. It is true that the space determines certain conditions of viewing, but at the hands of the filmmakers I want to look at how those spaces are reconfigured to facilitate a more dialectical and collective viewing experience.

In this presentation I will argue that film screenings and events put together by film/video makers, collectives, or groups such as Bristol Experimental and Expanded Film or a.k.a. BEEF, Analogue Ensemble, Analogue Recurring, Contact, or collective-iz produce such unique events often in unconventional sites that not only transcends the black box vs. white cube paradigm but also challenges the dominant viewing experience in a similar vein to 1970s works from London Filmmakers' Co-op.