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## **Editorial. In and Out of the Museum: New Destinations of the Moving Image**

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## Editorial. In and Out of the Museum: New Destinations of the Moving Image

Luísa Santos and Eugénie Zvonkine

The fourth issue of *The Garage Journal* aims to publish innovative scholarship on the relationship between the moving image and the museum. It seeks to analyze ways in which cinema, video art, and curatorial practices inform and influence each other. Analyzing this intricate relationship, the issue challenges traditional assumptions and opens up a discourse where affinities and oppositions coexist.

While the interlinks and inter-influences between cinema and curatorial practices have been tackled since the invention of cinema in the end of the nineteenth century, then of video in the 1970s, the ways and speed in which they have been (re)thought and (re)contextualised in the recent decades has highlighted, on the one hand, their socially transformative potential and, on the other hand, how immensely the concept of the museum has changed. Much as the field of architecture transformed over the course of the twentieth century, moving from the end of monuments heralded by Lewis Mumford (1938) to a more collective and flexible concept of what architecture and interior design should be, so too have conceptions of the moving image, the museum, and their interlinks evolved. They now appear to work in symbiosis, borrowing each other's technical tools and practices and enriching theories and history of perception and moving images through their *dispositifs*. By asserting the multiplicity of individual and subjective gazes, contemporary moving images in and out of the museum work as counter-hegemonic initiatives, giving voice to narratives previously silenced and visibility to unseen parts of society and artistic expression.

The definitions of museum, exhibition, and moving image change and are constantly renegotiated. Their distinctions are very much inscribed in sociocultural contexts and history. Yet the possibilities of expression they offer and the ways in which these different spaces, the 'black box' of the cinema theatre and the 'white cube' (Balsom 2013) of the museum, determine interactions between art, artist, and audience have inspired many artists to experiment with both. For instance, some famous film directors have invented two versions of their projects, one for a traditional screen and one for the museum space, like Chantal Akerman with her *From the other side* (2002) and *From the other side*, displayed at Documenta (Kassel, 2002).

The mutual fascination between cinema and contemporary visual arts at formal, conceptual, and methodological levels has resulted in numerous contemporary artists being inspired by cinema and using extensively the possibilities offered by video technologies to draw on and manipulate cinematic

image and narrative. In these explorations, artists study the power of cinema as an art of spectacle and perception. For instance, Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) extended the 109 minutes of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) into 24 hours, alienating the viewers' common understandings of the moving image, while Dóra Maurer activated her 16mm black-and-white silent film *Timing* (1973–80) in an expanded cinema performance via a simple experiment with the structural features of the medium (canvas and screen) to challenge what the viewers think they know of the image (Maurer 2011: 46).

While artists are fascinated by cinema, the opposite is also true: more and more cinematographers who still make and distribute their films in the traditional socioeconomic structure of film production and distribution declare that they are inspired by video artists. Moreover, theoreticians frequently employ concepts originating in analyses of traditionally distributed cinema and apply them to the context of contemporary artistic practices (for instance, Mulvey 1989: 127–136), or the other way around (see Verraes and Le Maître 2013; Denson and Leyda 2016).

*Technê* is an essential aspect of this relationship and the constantly renegotiated definitions of what museum art and cinema are or could be, as publications on post-cinema have shown these last years (Denson and Leyda 2016; Chateau and Moure 2020). Thus, the recent project at the intersection of traditional cinema and art installation *DAU* by Ilya Khrzhanovsky (2019) has been largely discussed for its use of 35mm film and the ways in which it puts the audience—through the means of an installation—in a situation that brings it back to an equivalent of a traditional cinema theatre (Zaezjev 2020; Zvonkine 2020).

Many of the texts in this issue discuss how specific technical *dispositifs* work as a link between the diverse formats of the oeuvre: the circularity or laterality of the camera movements (Sara Castelo Branco), the dolly and the rear projection (Blümlinger), the specific visual illusions created by installations (Biscainho, Kozicharow). These texts investigate these technical *dispositifs* as doorways to an interdisciplinary understanding of the artworks and to the emergence of new tools for understanding other artforms. Thus, the video *Baptizo* by Levi Glass (2019) makes us rethink early cinema and the history of panorama, just as the videos by contemporary video artist Mark Lewis make us reassess cinematic traditional technique and perception without nostalgia.

Research on cinematographic exhibitions has always paid attention to films, but to date, conceptualizations of the topic have been extremely rare (Mandelli 2019). This issue explores the relationship between the variety of narratives created by the moving image and the curatorial practices that make the moving image visible. Contributors uncover a new vision of the relationship between moving image curatorship and preservation and archiving as they study how not only the museum can be used to display and decompose cinema to create a new understanding of its specificities and history, but also how traditionally distributed cinema can act as a means of preserving and understanding the museum. Through creating new (both physical and

virtual) spaces for the audience to experience, cinema and exhibitions work in a symbiosis.

The birth of video art opened both artistic and curatorial universes to further experimentation: images could now be appropriated, manipulated, created, and erased, while the space of the gallery could house installations comparing museum narrative to film narrative. In fact, both film and exhibitions unfold following a pre-determined script, and both use elements such as lighting, framing, composition, selection, focus, as well as a complex articulation of the characters (the works) and their stories. These multifaceted interactions between cinema and contemporary art are made visible in exhibitions curated by filmmakers, such as *L'île et elle* (Fondation Cartier, Paris, 2006), by Agnès Varda. These intersections are analyzed in the third and final part of the issue, which tracks the ways in which audiences are immersed in new relationships (see Bourriaud 1998/2002; Bishop 2012) and (particip)a(c)tions upon entering the exhibition space(s) or outside of it. Audiences' active or passive role, the place given to them in the moving image and in the exhibition space, the processes of identification and distancing, the generation of estrangement, and the mechanisms of emotion and empathy are all components of both cinematographic and curatorial creation.

The diversity of places given to audiences in contemporary films and exhibitions reminds us that, ultimately, as framing/selective devices, both the video camera and the exhibition have the potential to act as a privileged medium of visibility and, as such, they move beyond their aesthetic features to the domains of society and politics (Rancière 2004, 2005: 13–36, 2011; Mouffe 2013). *Casus Belli* (2010) by Yorgos Zois portrays Athens to extrapolate to the domino effect of the global financial crisis in 2008: one after the other, people queuing in shops, art galleries, malls, and supermarkets, fall as a metaphor for the collapse of social systems globally. The installation *La Roquette, Prisons de Femmes* (1974) by Nil Yalter, Judy Blum, and Nicole Croiset criticizes prison conditions. These are just a few examples. It is not only artists who critically analyze society, many times adopting an activist/artist role: Maura Reilly has coined the term 'curatorial activists' to denote those individuals who—just like artists/artivists—choose their practice as a tool for counter-hegemonic initiatives, giving voice to the many micro-narratives that have been systemically silenced from the grand-narratives (Reilly 2018: 14).

In 1974, Kenneth Hudson showed the importance of individual gazes and perceptions inside the museum (Hudson 1974). The study of the diversity of gazes generated or authorized by artworks is nowadays central to reflections on the status of the museum. Several texts of the issue tackle this hypothesis (Vagnsdatter Andersen, Zvonkine, Santos, Radaelli). Some of them show, quite surprisingly, that the relationship between audience and art is sometimes closer and fuller when the audience is *not* in the museum but in a different context of perception—as in the case of net.art or a documentary or fiction film that permits an active use of artefacts otherwise inaccessible in the museum. They also show, in tune with contemporary research in the cinema studies field, how much this relationship is mediated by hapticity



Photomontages by Eugénie Zvonkine, 2021.

(Marks 2000) even when the art piece is audiovisual. The hand touching the book with precaution and tenderness in *Film Book Film* by Tatiana Macedo is just one example of the reintroduction and insistence on this haptic and sensorial approach in contemporary discourse.

### **A diversified and ludic methodology**

We found the invitation to be guest editors of this special issue captivating from a methodological point of view. Luísa Santos is a researcher and art curator; Eugénie Zvonkine is a cinema scholar, film programmer, and film director. The topic of our issue and our backgrounds drove us to mix the approaches in the papers and contributions selected for the journal and to bring researchers from diverse backgrounds into dialogue, either directly (as they do in the podcast) or in readers' minds as you read through the issue.

These diverse disciplinary origins and the format of the journal allowed us to take a diversified approach to the contents of the issue, one rare for research journals. Just as Vlad Strukov argues for the museum as a 'research hub' in the previous issue of the journal (Strukov 2021), we have tried out a variety of forms of research, using the journal itself as a research hub or a platform for multiple approaches to research. The issue presents traditional academic research, but also art-based research (as defined by Shaun McNiff 1998), as well as visual essays and even a podcast.

This diversity echoes the conceptual complexities and intricacies of the interlinks between cinema, art, and museum. Moreover, it involves an element of the ludic, which has been one of the most exciting aspects of the work for us. We use here 'ludic' in the sense in which it was defined by Huizinga (1938) and reinterpreted by Roger Caillois, who argued that the essence of play is in the permanently renegotiated limit between the rule and the liberty of invention (Caillois 1958). Caillois also argued that risk is intrinsic to 'ludic culture.' There is a risk involved in the idea of diversifying methodological approaches through research-based art and other forms of exploring theoretical questions. Risk is an essential aspect of art, since, as the artist Grégory Chatonsky has expressed it, 'each artist produces their own method in regards to their art. Sometimes it is even each art piece that generates its own methodology. This is why the artist has to always learn everything anew and can never fully rely on a previously acquired knowledge' (Chatonsky 2016).

Thus, the participants we solicited and/or selected among the responses to our call for papers are not only truly international, but also representative of the breadth of our scope: our authors are art scholars and cinema scholars, but also artists and researchers with curatorial experience.

We have also ensured that the papers and art pieces reunited in this issue came from seasoned as well as young researchers and artists. Both of us editors have always defended the importance of artists' words and thoughts on their art. We have thus included a text by the artist João

Bescainho on his art piece *Uncanny River* in our JG Media section on the website but have also presented an artist's statement by Tatiana Macedo on her project *Film Book Film* in the issue. An artist also speaks in Eugénie Zvonkine's video project, *Narrate an exhibition as a film*.

The first group of texts reflect on the mutual theoretical influence between video art and cinema. Christa Blümlinger, a cinema professor in France, takes as an object of analysis the complex and prolific artist Mark Lewis. The fascination his art has for cinema scholars (see Verraes and Le Maître, 2013) has brought scholars to analyze his art pieces with great attention. Blümlinger shows that the 'paradoxical allusions that Lewis's work makes toward the "classical" *dispositif* of cinematic projection' shine a light on and at the same time challenge cinematic theories and theories of perception. The visual essay by Eugénie Zvonkine, a French scholar and co-editor of the current issue, explores the complex relationship between cinema and museum by asking several participants 'to narrate an exhibition as a film,' thus testing what imaginary structures people use to spontaneously describe the unique spaces/textures/narrative devices of the cinema and museum. Margherita Foresti, a PhD candidate in Contemporary Art History at the University of Münster, uses her paper to interrogate the interdependency of exhibition space and moving image in defining both terms anew. As she puts it, the 'nature and outcome of the relationship between museum and moving image' depends on our capacity to see both the medium itself and the space anew. Finally, she analyses 'the power inherent in the museum and the way curatorship does or does not empower its spectators.'

A second group of works explores the ways in which museums can curate cinema and cinema can curate artworks. Zvonkine's essay shows how two films, a feature and a documentary film, even though produced in completely different sociopolitical and economic contexts, perform for the spectator a 'transportable museum' that not only preserves, displays, and makes accessible fleeting forms of art exhibition, but also acts as a platform for an interactive relationship to art objects. The podcast created for this part of the issue brings together three art scholars around the same specific question: how can the museum display cinema? The discussion between Paul Sztulman (art historian, Ecole des Arts Décoratifs, co-curator of the exhibition *Practices of distraction* at the HEAD, Geneva, 2019), Antonio Somaini (professor, University of Paris 3, curator of *Time Machine: Cinematic Temporalities* in Parma, 2020) and Ada Akerman (CNRS, curator of *Serguei Eisenstein: the Ecstatic Eye* at the Centre Pompidou-Metz) shows the complexities and specific challenges of this endeavor and how art and cinema scholars construct specific museum-based narrations of cinematic oeuvres through the 'white cube' of the museum space.

Still in the second part, the Garage Archive analyzes the documentary as both object (media) and subject (concept). Irina Gakhova puts together a series of TikTok videos focusing on the video archive of Sergei Borisov, a photographer and documentary filmmaker of *perestroika* and Russian unofficial artistic culture to highlight the close ties between the

musical underground and fine artists in Russia during this complex period. This last piece also makes a connection with Zvonkine's paper, analyzing *Assa* (1987) by Sergey Solovyov.

Tatiana Macedo, a Portuguese filmmaker and visual artist, in turn, delves into the links between literature and film in her video essay *Book Film Book*. Macedo takes a second-hand book from 1976 that is a book-format translation, in Norwegian, of the Canadian short film by George Pastic *The Violin* (1974), turning it into a small film again. Asking whether the narrative was lost in the multiple translation processes (of the language but also the medium), Macedo invites us to critically reflect upon the power structures that lie within translation of different mediums such as the moving image, the printed page, the computer screen, the analogue film, sound, and the image.

Natasha Nedelkova, a PhD student at the French University of Paris 8, reviews a recent publication, *The Moving Image as Public Art: Sidewalk Spectators and Modes of Enchantment* by Annie dell'Aria (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), which reflects upon the presence of moving images within the field of public art through encounters with passersby.

In the third group of texts, Sara Castelo Branco, PhD student in Arts and Sciences of Art and Communication Sciences at the Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne (Paris) and the Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Lisbon), reflects on 'the multiplicity of contemporary screens and their influence on today's modes of vision.' Questioning the relational ontologies between screen, moving images, and body-technology, she suggests three notions to analyze new experiences of vision: depth, laterality and circularity. Nicola Kozicharow, a specialist in Russian and European art and visual culture from the nineteenth century to the present and an assistant professor in the School of History at HSE University, Moscow, investigates the relationship between audiences and the moving image in cinematic and virtual space(s) outside of the museum through Canadian artist Levi Glass's intermedial project *Cineorama*. Rooted in the historical traditions of the panorama, philosophical toy, and early cinema, Glass's physical and virtual versions of *Cineorama/Baptizo* provide a useful case study in reconciling our diverse viewing practices today in light of the plethora of visual media that appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In turn, Maria Redaelli, a Ph.D. fellow in History of Arts at Ca'Foscari University of Venice, discusses how our digital viewing practices differ depending on the context. In her essay, Redaelli describes how net.art turns into a 'testimony' when transposed to the physical space of a museum or a gallery, changing drastically the experience of encountering this type of art. Svala Vagnsdatter Andersen, a researcher focusing primarily on sex, gender, and the body in visual culture, also discusses different ways of experiencing the moving image, claiming that there has been a turn in the art of spectating through the analysis of a series of Jesper Just's film exhibitions.

Portuguese artist and curator João Biscainho's proposal can be read as a visual translation of such a turn. In his visual essay titled *Uncanny River*, an imaginary watercourse runs through the so-called Uncanny Valley

as if the valley really existed in terrestrial physical geography. The symmetrical duplication of the crossing forces us to simultaneously cross and return to the same bank from which we departed without actually noticing where we set off or where we are headed, an impossible movement in the physical world. In front of the installation, we are coaxed into a mode of perceptual suspension as we perpetually attempt to recognize forms and patterns that are continually dissolving and being replaced with an endless succession of new compositions over the thirty minutes of video, projected in an endless loop.

Papers in this part show how moving images, just as art in general, '[may] generate an imaginary space in which the most diverse wishes and desires can be projected' (Gielen 2018: 133). To conclude this segment, Ekaterina Odé, a French PhD holder and independent researcher in film studies reviews the collective volume coedited by Paul Sztulman and Dork Zabunyan, *Politiques de la distraction* (Presses du réel, 2021). The volume investigates the notion of distraction through diverse methodologies and disciplines.

Finally, Luísa Santos, a Portuguese scholar, independent curator, and coeditor of the current issue, closes the three parts with *Moving Image and the Museum: Speculative Spaces in 3 Acts*, an essay to be read as an epilogue to the various narratives presented throughout the current issue. Unfolding in a series of three short stories, each embodied by a main character (an artwork), the essay adopts storytelling as a methodology to present diverse ways of looking at the manifold relationships between the moving image and the museum. What the essays in the current issue, with its many micro-narratives, show is that these relationships have a tremendous potential that goes far beyond the space of the screen(s) and the museum.

Although the three parts of the issue apply different research methodologies to the investigation and analysis of contemporary moving image in and out of the museum, they are in no way disconnected. The aim is not to provide a linear and exhaustive historical reconstruction on the multifold relationship between the moving image and the museum. Rather, concentrating on a variety of cases and methodologies allows an in-depth discussion of the needs to which the moving images exposed in museums respond, the problems they raise, as well as the way in which they lead to a rethinking of film and the very idea of curatorial practices.

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Eugénie Zvonkine (PhD and Accreditation to supervise doctoral research) is an associate professor in the film studies department at the University of Paris 8. She writes on history and aesthetics in Soviet and post-Soviet cinema from the 1960s to the present day. She has published three monographs on Soviet and post-Soviet cinema, including *Kira Mouratova: un cinéma de la dissonance* (2012), and (co-)edited the collective volumes *Cinéma russe, (r)évolutions* (2018) and *Ruptures and Continuities in Soviet/Russian Cinema: Styles, Characters and Genres Before and after the Collapse of the USSR* (2019). She was also a regular contributor to *Cahiers du cinéma* from 2010 until 2020. In October 2021, she was named a Junior member of the French University Institute (IUF).

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