



## ***Film Book Film (2021)***

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*Film Book Film* is a transmedial artwork that starts with a children's book adaptation of a film, picking up the discarded book and translating it back to a film again. Accompanied by an original sound composition that reinterprets the original film score in conjunction with the grainy images in the book, the piece comes full circle. *Film Book Film* is part of the experimental cinema tradition of dematerializing the image—here

intricately done via sound—at the same time as it lifts the book up to get us closer to the images, proving their physicality but pushing them away, all along the lines and using the tricks of narrative cinema. A new experience evolves as the film alternates between objective and subjective shots where we are both readers and spectators, punctuated by humor.

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One of the first challenges imposed by this idea was the copyright. Books, films, and music have strong legal copyright protection that I needed to address. I realized along the way that the problem with images has to do with their physicality: If I scanned the book, those printed pictures would regress to an immaterial form. This immateriality makes them regress to a 'pre-authorship' stage which then puts me in breach of copyright, meaning I cannot manipulate them as if they were my own. The only way to get around this was to work with the book as an object. The solution was to film the book and the pictures inside the book in order to make the video a matter of 'witnessing' an existing object. In the end, it is the music (the decomposition of sound) that performs most of the deconstruction and dematerialization of the image, together with the added layers of subjectivity imbued by the filming and editing.

One of the first things I knew was that I wanted to parody the genre of films and videos with or about books while at the same time letting go of the object and distancing myself from it in order to get closer to the image, the narrative, and the character's subjectivity. But I also knew that the more we get closer to an image, the more it recedes. So, I set out to make

a film from a book without it simply being a book film. It is indeed a 'Film Book Film' in the sense that it started with a film that generated a book that I then transform into a film again, retaining its narrative qualities. We are all aware of the language and techniques of narrative cinema such as plot, pacing, suspense, subjective shots, the counter shot or reverse shot, the Kuleshov effect, montage as 'conflict' according to Eisenstein, and the role of sound and soundtracks as emotional triggers, so I consciously and deliberately made use of them. I challenged myself to tell the same story and follow the linearity and sequencing of the book. But unlike in filmmaking, there are times when I return to a previous page (as we often do when reading a book). It was also very clear to me that the spectator would have to switch from viewing a film to 'reading' the book by reading the images, since I deliberately ignored the text .

Editing is of course a way of writing. It is always a meticulously long process for me, frame by frame. It's amazing how one millisecond can affect the perception of a cut (much like choosing words and punctuation in a text). But when it comes to moving images (and sound), viewers don't realize how precise the cut can be, since our brains get tricked easily through the senses.

Before I started filming, I approached the composer Hugo Vasco Reis with my idea of translating the book back to a film again and challenged him to freely interpret the film score *Reminiscence* by Maurice Solway, which appears on the last page of the book. I should mention that Maurice Solway himself plays the role of the old man who plays the violin in the film. Hugo then carefully deconstructed the score, listened to the original recordings and understood its harmonic field: the key was B flat major, the tempo was 'andante con amore,' and the duration was approximately two minutes. He then developed major and minor harmonies played simultaneously and oscillating microtonal frequencies (which I refer to as 'crackling particles') created digitally through granular synthesis and noise. These particles were an echo of the image grain from the analog photographs in the book. Towards the end the sound grain becomes denser and larger, achieving a climax that later dissipates and returns to the beginning in a nostalgic loop of memory and 'reminiscence.' You would never recognize the final sound mapping as the original score, but according to him, it works as a quote from the original. I then filmed and edited with his composition in mind. The crackling noise can be hard on the ears if you wear earbuds (which was not intentional), so I strongly discourage that—please do not wear earbuds or headphones while experiencing this piece.

There are several moments of 'play' in this piece, like the gestures of those hands that appear and disappear, which are both my own hands and my assistant's hands. I often use a subtle yet incisive humor in my work, and I need these moments of release from the tension created by the haptic observation and micro-actions that I often explore.

### Artist's bio

Tatiana Macedo's work develops transdisciplinarily between installation, photography, essay-film, expanded cinema, and sound. In 2020 Macedo was the subject of a retrospective, *Focus*, at Intersección Contemporary Audiovisual Art Festival in Coruna, Spain. In 2015 she won the 1st Sonae Media Art Award with the expanded video installation *1989*. Her debut film, *Seems So Long Ago, Nancy* (2012), shot at the Tate Britain and Tate Modern, was screened in international film festivals and art galleries. The film won the first SAW Film Prize from the American Anthropological Association (Washington, D.C., 2014). Her work has been exhibited at Jeju Biennial (South Korea), Culturgest (Oporto, Portugal), the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (Lisbon, Portugal), the National Museum of Contemporary Art (Lisbon), Rohkunstbau XXIII (Spreewald, Germany), Iwalewahaus (Bayreuth, Germany), Tegenboschvanvreden Gallery (Amsterdam), Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon), and Künstlerhaus Bethanien (Berlin) among other institutions, galleries, art fairs, and film festivals.