

ART AND THE MOVING IMAGE
A CRITICAL READER



EDITED BY TANYA LEIGHTON

The mutual fascination between art and cinema has had a great influence on contemporary culture. For the past fifty years, the love/hate affair between the two has triggered vital aesthetic, social and political responses that constantly renew the way we understand our age. This book traces the story from early spatial experiments with film and video technologies to the current widespread use of projected images in museums and galleries. Why has there been a turn to the cinematic in contemporary art? What happens to the moving image when it shifts from the black box to the white cube, when cinema is exhibited? How does this challenge the traditional mediums of film, painting and sculpture? *Art and the Moving Image* gathers together key texts including new, translated and previously unavailable essays by eminent writers and theorists including Giorgio Agamben, Beatriz Colomina, Serge Daney, Rosalind Krauss, Maurizio Lazzarato and Peter Wollen. It offers an essential introduction to the complex field of art and the projected image for both students and general readers.

An indispensable guide to the pivotal role of the moving image within contemporary art.

— Laura Mulvey

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hypnotising reality camouflage', she draws attention to the conditions of form and seeks to expose cinema and culture as constructed spectacles. Arguing that destabilises the viewer through new conditions of visual awareness, Fronne (in his fundamental dismantling of the medium and the destabilisation and mobilisation of the spectator as central characteristics of image installations; she writes that 'the illusion begins with the participation of the spectator').

Now, at this moment of technological transition, can we attempt to theorise the form of video, Liz Kotz asks in 'Video: The Space Between Screens'. Drawing on how video has become dislodged from its technological support and historical context, and how it has moved from the television monitor, and how it has been replaced by electronically-produced moving images now loosely referred to as 'video', Kotz offers a critical assessment of video projection. In this essay, she focuses on Stan Douglas's *Horsana Theater's Late and Soon*, *Occident* and Douglas Gordon's *24-Hour Psycho*, both produced between 1992 and 1993, when video had moved into the gallery-museum context, and the pervasive critical discourse that tends to treat such works as these in relation to the technological, interactive and process-based nature of early video, Kotz argues that these works challenge traditional and narrative concerns and challenge the singularly monumentalised installation and the desire to align video more closely with the traditional, spectacularised photographic working practices. In response to such

Kotz outlines a provisional theorisation of the phenomenon of 'projection', situating it in relation to the availability of new consumer technologies. With the current predominance of digital viewing formats, Kotz argues, video is being assimilated back into older filmic practices. Drawing on texts by David James, Douglas and Gene Youngblood, she makes the case that the recent move towards immersive participatory environments represents an evolution of an earlier project of 'expanded cinema' with its utopian desire to depart from the constraints of the filmic apparatus. Kotz points to the work of Lutz Bachor, Steve McQueen and Gillian Triggs as counter examples of more difficult and

productive engagements with the durational and process-based structures of earlier video.

Concerned with the 'widespread rhetoric of anti-illusionism in the conceptualisation of artist's film and video since the 1990s (that) has caused critics to champion the rigorously self-reflexive practices of "Structural-Materialism" as an antidote to the regressive optics of industrial narrative cinema', Andrew V. Uroskie notes, however, that 'a neglected alternative tradition has concerned itself with precisely those qualities of affective engagement and phantasmatic identification these critics have sought to dismiss'.² Far from demanding the defeat of illusionism, Uroskie's essay 'Sitting Cinema' examines the work of artists who have 'employed film as a modality of transport away from the confines of a local material environment, even as they maintain a critical interest with the sedimented cultural and institutional histories of their chosen theatrical site. As in psychoanalytic philosophy, these works imply that a naive aversion to "illusionism" fails to advance either a sophisticated understanding of spectatorship or a pragmatic basis for political intervention'.³ Through an analysis of *The Paradise Institute* (2001) by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller and *The Third Memory* (1999) by Pierre Huyghe, Uroskie's essay argues for the aesthetic and conceptual vitality of those contemporary art practices occurring within the hybrid institutional space between the white cube of the art gallery and the black box of the cinematic theatre. It concludes that a similarly hybrid approach bridging the disciplinary rhetorics of art history and film studies is now needed to address the sophistication of these works.

Acknowledging the prominent role of fractured and disjointed cinemas in contemporary art, and extending their dysfunctional, anti-illusory qualities, John Kelsey – one of three members of the artists' group Bernadette Corporation – proposes a cinematic aesthetics that broaches and complicates the multiple conditions, limits and possibilities of cinema: 'Cinema as a means without end.' In 'Moving Images Moving Images' (a new commission for this volume) Kelsey explores Bernadette Corporation's recent film and video work – *Get Rid of Yourself* (2001–03) and *Pedestrian Cinema* (2006–07) – within a broader discussion of the history of 'dismantled and vandalised cinemas'.

As Raymond Bellour, part of the press on visual art and cinema, notes, the interconnection between the displaced capacity of the 'battle' transformed, reinstated, he seeks to understand the 'aesthetics of confusion' in his essay 'Of An Other Cinema'. Discussing the 'duelling that occurs in the orders of images, strict prerequisite for providing imagination, as well as the politics of the image. In the interplay of the cinematic contemporary art practice, differences and similarities, Bellour provides an insight into installations for this new form, for example, the gap between the photographic panorama from the subtle displacement of formats in Eija-Liisa Ahtas to the successive screens of mutated projections of Douglas Stan Douglas. Citing the projected art installations, their traditionally unassimilated in the field of visual art, and the experiences of the spectator.

The imprecise zone between artists across disciplines is explored in Alexander Alberro's essay 'Film and Installation Art'. In his emergence of the new type of exhibition – whose mode of exhibition moves from single-channel to multi-screen, large screen to television monitor, video to digital production – the development of interdisciplinary programmes in the academy expresses concern for how to address this 'media crossing', the limitations of particular moments in their history, is claims: 'Indeed, audio-visual is rigorously attentive to the in and histories of the medium is becoming a rarity.' The production and the metamorphosis of various versions for different are some of the reasons Alberro of awareness. In his case stud

correspondence with
(July 2012)

3. *Ibid.*

SITING CINEMA

Andrew V. Uroskie

Getting Framed

Everything that's of any importance takes place outside the room.
But the room reminds us of the limitations of our condition.¹
Robert Smithson

Upon approaching *The Paradise Institute*, a work first exhibited at the 2001 Venice Biennale by the Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and Georges Bures Miller, we find ourselves in a doubly framed space. Already within the white cube of the gallery, we encounter a large, two-level plywood box, complete with stairs and doorways leading in and out. Looking inside from a distance, we might be able to just make out the kind of stadium seating more commonly associated with the local multiplex. There is nothing slick or manufactured about the large, plywood construction — on the contrary, it seems to have been quickly thrown together. Yet the seating inside, with its plush red covering and — as we will soon discover — adjustable backs, is obviously not the most economical option. Both this box and its interior seem out of place in a gallery setting, albeit for different reasons. While the box is not without a certain Minimalist aesthetic, it fails to hold our attention as a form. Circumnavigation does not lead to a reflection on the structure *per se*, so much as heighten our anticipation of discovering what lies within. The kind of theatricality invoked is not in the phenomenological sense that Michael Fried famously designated as the pull of Minimalist sculpture; rather, it is in the more prosaic sense of suspense that we might experience in advance of seeing a fairground attraction or a theatre spectacle. As with such attractions, one may not simply enter, but must first obtain a ticket and wait for the performance to commence.

Climbing the steps, we find headphones on the seats awaiting us. Placing them over our ears, the exterior sounds of the gallery are quickly muffled, and our immediate aural environment is swallowed up in the projected static of white noise. The doors to the outside close, and darkness follows. Simultaneously relaxed by the seating and made anxious by the claustrophobic enclosure (how can we leave if we need to get out?), we wait for something to begin. But just as the noise of our fellow audience members falls away, sounds and conversation begin anew. Over to the left and just behind us on the right, people are talking again. Cardiff and Miller recorded the audio component of the piece using binaural technology, which gives

¹ Liza Bear and Willoughby Sharp, 'Discussions with Michael Heizer, Dennis Oppenheim and Robert Smithson' (held December 1968–January 1969).

Avalanche, 1, Fall 1970; reprinted in Jack Flam (ed.), *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, p.250.



a powerful illusion of spatial presence to the sound we hear. Thus, while aurally isolated from the real people around us, we continue to overhear the conversations of people who seem to surround us. There is a sense of uncanny doubling as real and recorded sounds overlap and coalesce. We hear people rustling in their seats, taking off items of clothing and whispering to one another — all preparing for the main attraction. A mobile phone goes off and a woman quickly tells her caller that she has to go — ‘she’s in a movie’. Occurring in eerily precise stereo-sound and seemingly at discrete spatial locations, this all seems quite realistic. Yet this is not to say that it is taken for reality. Even the binaural recordings cannot perfectly evoke the manifold sensory experience of a real phenomenal environment, and spectators quickly recognise that they are listening to an illusion. Yet far from ruining the work, the spectator’s double-consciousness — his or her simultaneous experience of real and recorded sounds and

continued ability to distinguish between them — will prove fundamental to the experience the work seeks to generate. Within the *Paradise Institute*, reality will not be banished so much as redoubled, creating a spectatorial environment that is distinct yet coexistent with the physical space of the theatre.

As the screen lights up in front of us, its glow illuminates a miniature diorama of seats, a proscenium and a balcony, at the far edge of which we might understand ourselves to be seated. Cardiff and Miller have here constructed an alternative universe, a heterotopia in miniature. Gazing upon the tiny diorama, seated on our full-sized chairs, we can comfortably give ourselves over to the spectacle, secure in the knowledge that it is merely spectacle, and that we remain outside of it looking in. The headphones we are given to wear — like the diorama before us and the makeshift theatre in which we sit — specifically draw attention to the staged character of the illusion. Yet this acknowledgement should not be understood as a way of simply ‘foregrounding the apparatus’. This notion, originally stemming from Russian Formalist literary criticism and the dramatic theories of Bertolt Brecht, has operated from within a rhetorical economy invested in sharply distinguishing reality from illusion. *The Paradise Institute* does not allow such secure boundaries to be maintained. While the apparatus is explicitly foregrounded, this is not done simply to dismiss illusion in the name of a contravening reality, but rather to throw the certainty of this very demarcation into doubt.

Janet Cardiff and
George Burts Miller,
The Paradise Institute,
2017. Dealer photo
© 2018 Madsen Project
Warren, photo © 2018
New York. Courtesy
the artists and Libby
Rappaport, New York.

Suddenly we are addressed by a woman's voice just to our left: 'Here's your drink ... have some of my popcorn.' Eating noisily, she tells us that she has heard of this film, that it was based on a real story, that the experiments carried out in it were made by North Americans in World War II. But she may be mistaken — that may be another movie. On the screen, the film begins. But with this voice beside us, it is as if we have already been placed in the centre of the fiction, rather than simply before it. Dramatic elements are now erupting all around us, even though it is not clear they all belong to the same drama. On-screen a nurse approaches a bare-chested man strapped to a bed. While he begs her not to, she slowly bends down and presses her lips to his chest, kissing and then lightly biting his chest. The scene is emotionally charged, even arousing — but, like the voices, it merely solicits our attention without grounding it in a coherent, linear narrative.

A voice from the audience behind us crudely interjects: 'Now that's nursing!' Our attention is grabbed away from the characters on-screen, towards those 'seated' in the audience. The female voice beside us wonders aloud at several points whether you or she might have accidentally left the stove on at home; as she does so, we pull out from the disjointed, *noir* narrative to witness shots of a burning house — a scene which somehow feels completely extra-diegetic, even though the original diegesis is never fully established. The burning house comes to emerge as our own, even as we consciously disown it. It is, as Freud once described the subject of the unconscious, a house of which we are an uncertain or absent master. Likewise, when we are repeatedly asked 'do you want some more popcorn?', it begins to feel as if we are *choosing* to answer with our silence. Repetition performatively works to assign ownership and responsibility, and we find that we cannot help but be involved in this strange form of 'communication'. As the elements of the narrative become introjected one by one, we leave behind the safety and comfort of a distanced spectatorship and begin to occupy an awkward space inside the fiction.

As the film narrative evolves, the distinction between what is occurring on- and off-screen begins to break down completely. A diabolical man evoked in the story starts to become detached from it and crosses over into the audience. The patient in the film does not leave his bed — just as we, the spectators, do not leave our seats. A sense of vertigo overtakes us as we are constantly thrust into new and different locations. As the suspenseful music builds and the screen goes blank, we seem to have lost all ability to discern where this fiction starts and stops. The diabolical man, now beside us in the audience, laughingly describes our predicament: 'You thought you were pretty smart — playing both sides. How long did you think it could last?' We hear a crowd of people pounding on the plywood theatre within which we are seated, demanding that we get out. As the crowd begins shouting a countdown, a burning house appears on-screen and the film abruptly ends. The doors to the outside open up, and we file out of the black box into the freshly comforting white cube of the gallery.

Within *The Paradise Institute*, we struggle not to separate fact from fiction so much as to establish a firm locus for that fiction to *take place*. We never confuse fact and fiction, because we always understand that we are being presented with a fiction. But it is not a consistent fiction. It is fractured, multiple, existing in too many places at once. As we lose track of the boundary or frame where the diegetic world starts and stops, our phenomenological sense of wholeness and interiority gives way to a kind of paranoia. It seems no accident that the work begins with the admonition that spectators will not be able to leave the theatre once the performance has begun. Unlike traditional theatres, *The Paradise Institute* contains no brightly glowing exit sign reassuring us that (in a physical or psychological emergency) the space of the fiction can be quickly and definitively left behind. The word 'paradise' stems from the Ancient Persian for 'walled-off space', and *The Paradise Institute* stages what is ultimately a crisis of boundaries for its spectator. We are allowed to exist neither inside nor outside of the spectacle. This liminal staging of subjectivity is one that is familiar in psychoanalytic theory, wherein the inner space of the psyche and the outer space of the world can no longer be definitively separated as in classical philosophy, but come to form an overlapping or chiasmatic structure. *The Paradise Institute* — which in its very name conflates fantasy with containment, ancient myth with modern medicalisation — confronts the cultural locus of the spectacular with a markedly different economy of spectatorship. Haunted by levels of fiction without a clearly marked escape, the work presents this experience as ambivalently pleasurable and nightmarish at one and the same time.

Trapped within the Fiction

On a hot day in August 1972, 'Little John' Wojtowicz found out that his boyfriend, Aron, lacking the funds for a desperately wanted sex-change operation, had become suicidal and was interned at a mental hospital against his will. Believing that nothing but the operation could ultimately keep Aron alive, Wojtowicz and two friends staged a robbery at a Chase Manhattan Bank in Brooklyn. As a robbery, it was a spectacular failure. But, as a spectacle, it was a fantastic success. Trapped in a stand-off with the police after his escape was prevented, Wojtowicz became a cult hero amongst the crowds that gathered to watch. Newspaper and television reporters quickly arrived on the scene, and, as a result of its extended duration, the robbery became the first to be broadcast over network television as it occurred in real time. Following the ordeal, newspapers, magazines and a talk show told and retold this basic story in different ways; a screenplay was written and rewritten; and within a few short years, Warner Brothers brought the story to the big screen in Sidney Lumet's *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975). Winning both popular and critical acclaim, that film immortalised Al Pacino as John Wojtowicz, even as the real Wojtowicz languished unknown in jail.

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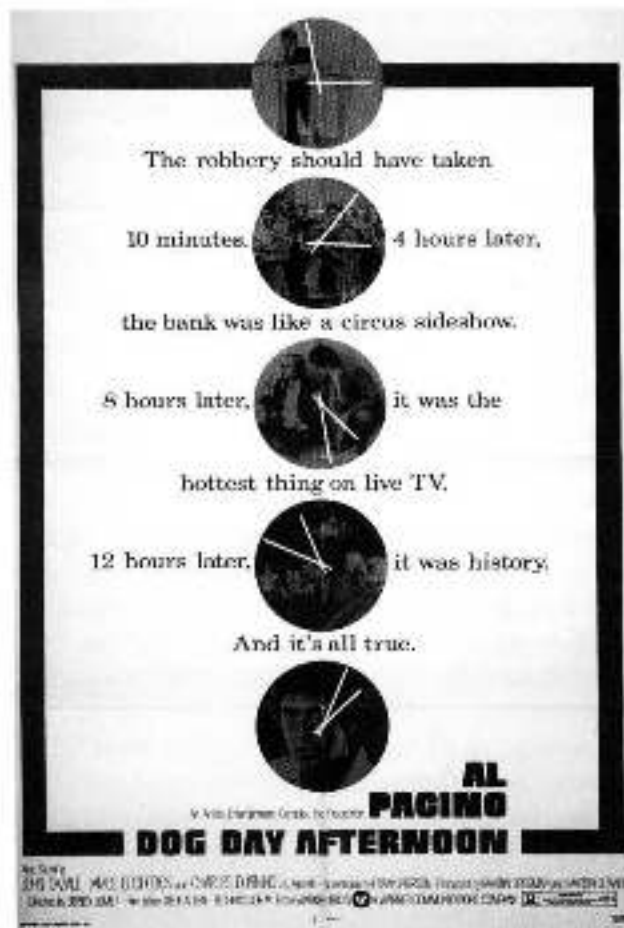
In his video *The Third Memory* (1999), Pierre Huyghe seeks to trace the mediation of this event within both Wojtowicz's individual memory and the collective memory of history. In a split-screen film approximately 10-minutes long, Wojtowicz—having served a twenty-year jail sentence—is asked to re-enact the robbery on a stripped-down studio set. The set recreates the space of a bank, but, because of its minimal decoration, it is not clear whether it is meant to recreate the bank set of *Dog Day Afternoon* or the original Chase Manhattan Bank in Brooklyn where the robbery took place, or both. Within the installation, strategic juxtapositions draw attention to the ways in which subsequent news and Hollywood coverage have reshaped even the original participants' recollections of actual events. As Wojtowicz recounts a story that is no longer his alone, fiction and reality, the imagined and the documented, become inextricably intertwined.

From a first memory of the original crime to a second memory achieved through the media's interpretation of that crime through television, print and cinema, Huyghe presents Wojtowicz's recreation of the original event as a third memory—one in which the multiple layers of mediation emerge for both the actor and spectator. *The Third Memory* presents the past as a continuously

shifting field within the present, an ongoing struggle to mine and decipher meaning from an increasingly opaque sedimentation of characters and actions. As we discover within Wojtowicz's narrative for *The Third Memory*, the foiled bank robbery was itself inspired by Martin Scorsese's *The Godfather* (1972); and, ironically, Wojtowicz's acting-out under the adrenaline surge provided by Marlon Brando and Pacino in that story inspired Sidney Lumet's award-winning *Dog Day Afternoon*, again starring Al Pacino. Cinematic drama gives birth to real life drama, which, in turn, replicates the cycle. For Wojtowicz, Pacino's cinematic success serves to bookend, and thus bracket out, his own dramatic failure—illustrating the porous boundary between self and other forged through affective identification.

Since *Dog Day Afternoon* was released, there has been a general confusion between Pacino's character Sonny Wortzik and the real-life John Wojtowicz. Lumet's film intentionally precipitated this confusion with its

Film poster for *Dog Day Afternoon*, 1976.
Facing page: Pierre Huyghe, *The Third Memory*, 1999.
Install: The 13th and Marston Streets Gallery, New York & Paris.





beginning title sequence: 'What you are about to see is true. It happened in Brooklyn, New York on August 22nd, 1972.' The film presents itself as it came to be understood—as a representation of history. But it is a representation that does not acknowledge its character as representation, which contains and delimits the real life event within its fictional frame. Thus no reference is made, even in the final credits, to John Wojtowicz. Within Huyghe's reconstitution, by contrast, Wojtowicz is placed at centre stage. Yet the stage he is given is only schematic, deliberately unfinished. In this, Huyghe presents his remake of the robbery in a resolutely de-spectacularised manner. As twin cameras track and pan across the unfolding action, the scene is depicted from two perspectives at once, depriving the viewer of a single locus of cinematic identification. Focusing our attention only upon Wojtowicz's character and his narrative, Huyghe's reconstitution provides its image of this history only through the subjective lens of Wojtowicz himself—through the visible scars these memories have etched upon him as he goes about re-enacting the primal scene. Rather than the 'high drama' through which this story has so often been told, what stand out in Huyghe's reconstruction are the human qualities of 'Little John' as a person—his humour, his compassion, his intelligence and the underlying simplicity of his love for another man.

But Huyghe is not content to simply let Wojtowicz 'tell his side of the story', as it were—he is not interested in recreating the debased spectacle of the talk-show format. Rather, he creates a quasi-fictional space within which Wojtowicz is allowed to 'replay' events: to play the role of the bank robber within what he himself refers to as 'the real movie' of his life. Wojtowicz re-enacts his bank robbery on a movie set, amongst sound and lighting technicians, with two cameras capturing his every move from different angles. Wojtowicz is given the injunction to set the record straight, but while doing so he cannot help but blend fact and fiction. His memory of that fateful day is overwhelmed by the hundreds of stories he has read, interviews he has given and the indelible performance of Pacino resonating within his head. Given the opportunity to re-enact his own bank robbery, it is as if the bank

robbery is no longer his to re-enact. Thus we cannot simply say, as has been argued, that Wojtowicz is allowed to 'reclaim' his reality from the grip of its media (mis)representation.² Huyghe understands that any 'undoing' of this mediation — reconstituting Wojtowicz's story, as it were — cannot be simply *opposed* to the cinematic, for Wojtowicz's performance had been constituted through the language of the cinematic imaginary from the very beginning. In seeing the original release of *The Godfather* to 'inspire the troops', as Wojtowicz puts it in *The Third Memory*, he sought to emulate the same actor who was eventually cast to play his part. But even taking Pacino out of the picture, as it were, the whole *idea* of holding up a bank with a shotgun — like his phrase 'inspire the troops' — comes straight out of Wild West movies and *Hogan's Heroes*-style World War II films. Cinematic and extra-cinematic history would seem here to be hopelessly entangled.³ It is not simply that fact and fiction become blurred, but that history itself becomes incomprehensible outside the phantasmatic worlds of cinematic narrative when there is no longer a meaningful distinction between news and entertainment.⁴

In coming to grips with Huyghe's practice, we can no longer rely on a reductive conception of cinematic 'deconstruction' through which the hidden ideological structures are revealed and contested. Yet neither can we rely upon the model of the visionary avant-garde film-maker expressing his particular creativity. Huyghe's *Third Memory* might be more productively considered as a complex form of performative documentation. It is concerned with industrial cinema insofar as this cinema provides a nodal point from which to engage a larger field of questions concerning the imbrication and codependence of subjectivity, media and representation within the modern era. While offering a critique of *Dog Day Afternoon* and other media narratives of the event, it does not pretend to offer a final, clear, authoritative view — even, ironically enough, when the subject of these narratives is finally allowed to

2 Jean-Charles Massera, author of the companion text to Huyghe's *The Third Memory*, contends that the work models and effects a form of Situationist 'reconstruction' of lived experience over and against the mediation of spectacle culture.

3 The political implications of this confusion have been traced extensively within contemporary film scholarship. An early and important reference point is Michael Rogin's *Ronald Reagan, The Movie: And Other Episodes in Political Demagoguery*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. A more general argument is presented in Mark Crispin Miller's *The Bush Dyslexicon: Observations on a National Disorder*, New York: Norton, 2002.

4 A somewhat analogous story from this same period illustrates this point quite precisely. Nik Cohn, an early pioneer of rock journalism in the London *Mind* scene of the 1960s, came to America

to reinvent himself as a hard-boiled journalist. He sold a story titled 'Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night', about a suave dance hall king from Brooklyn, to *New York Magazine* for their 7 July 1976 issue. The fantastic true-life story of this 'Italian Stallion' gave rise to the Hollywood film *Saturday Night Fever*, which itself went on to define the era within American popular consciousness, eventually becoming a Broadway hit musical. Cohn was widely praised for having his finger on the pulse of a generation. The only problem is that the 'Italian Stallion' never existed outside Cohn's imagination. Cohn had originally stated: 'everything described in this article is factual and was either witnessed by me or told to me directly by the people involved. Only the names of the main characters have been changed.' Yet in 1997, for a *New York Magazine* story on the film's twentieth anniversary, Cohn finally admitted that his story was

a complete fabrication. 'I'd only recently arrived in New York. Far from being steeped in Brooklyn street life, I actually knew the place. As for Vincent, my story's hero, he was largely inspired by a Shepherd's Bush mod whom I'd known in the Sixties.' The original article had, tellingly, used illustrations rather than photographs. By the time of the second article, of course, it hardly mattered, for *Saturday Night Fever* had already claimed iconic status as a historical document, fictional or not. Fascinatingly, Cohn seemed to undertake a similar dissociation from reality as Wojtowicz: 'Spurred in part by retrospective conscience, I began to put in hard time in Brooklyn, steeping myself in Bay Ridge lore. Gradually, my invention became real to me; my hero came to life. In my imagination, I kept a detailed log of his progress, tracking him as he changed jobs, moved away from home, grew out of disco, left the neighborhood and then

speak directly. In fact, *The Third Memory* seems to point to the relative naivety of this earlier aesthetico-political ideal, because Wojtowicz, despite having been cheated by Warner Brothers, continues to identify with Pacino. While languishing in jail, Wojtowicz wrote of the great pleasure he continued to take in the occasional private screenings granted to him of *Dog Day Afternoon*.

If this is a form of alienation, it is not something that can simply be opposed to the spectacular culture of the cinematic. As Huyghe put it in a recent interview:

[S]pectacle has always been linked with illusion, with manipulation, with the culture industry ... simply rejecting the spectacle or entertainment as bad; this is a form of escapism. Nor is the point just to incorporate spectacle ... saying, 'I will also just be an entertainer'. The point is to take spectacle as a format, and to use it ... to 're-scenarize' the real.⁵

As Huyghe goes on to clarify, his work involves 'the reformulation of protocols of exhibition and representation' because these protocols have 'shifted the [very] notion of representation. Today, an event, its image and its commentary have become one object.' In so doing, Huyghe specifically rejects a longstanding paradigm within theories of film and visual culture by which the task of the critic is conceptualised as wholly anti-spectacular—locating and revealing media illusions so as to return us to an unmediated reality. Within Huyghe's work, suffused as it is by the complex affective identifications of cinematic culture, there is no clear and simple bedrock of 'reality' to which we can return. The work does locate, however, the changing protocols of exhibition and display through which media culture is born.

In attending to these protocols, *The Third Memory* ultimately directs our attention to the political control of information itself and the changing nature of news in the era of the ubiquitous broadcast stream. For Wojtowicz's bank robbery was not only the first ever to be captured live on national TV as it unfolded, it also took place on the very evening that then-President Richard Nixon was making a major political calculation. Rejecting both widespread expectations and the explicit advice of many within his party to balance the presidential ticket by nominating a moderate for his running mate, Nixon shocked the nation—and inaugurated a new Republican strategy—by nominating another hard-line conservative. Newspapers posted within *The Third Memory* show the two events competing for headlines. Though left out of the fictionalised account of *Dog Day Afternoon*, Wojtowicz alleges that the FBI was under direct orders from Nixon to keep the 'gay bank robber' from compromising the President's media attention. Later, he claims, the FBI shot his partner in cold blood, and his own life was saved only by the local New York Police's demand that the FBI surrender Wojtowicz into their custody. It's hard

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Night's Big Bang', *New York Magazine*, 8 December 1997.

⁵ George Baker, 'An Interview with Pierre Huyghe', *October*, no. 10,

Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2004, pp.80–106.

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to know what to make of Wojtowicz's assertion, though given our subsequent knowledge of Nixon and Agnew's long list of criminal activities — Nixon was forced to resign during the shooting of *Dog Day Afternoon* — it is certainly not implausible. Whether or not we believe Wojtowicz's assertions, we will never know either way. And this access to information, or lack thereof, is precisely the point. With our access so explicitly mediated, we are uncomfortably positioned in the realm not of knowledge but of belief.

Yet Huyghe's subtle opening sequence again calls our attention to the importance of the protocols of exhibition that lie invisibly anterior to the image itself. *The Third Memory* begins with an image from *Dog Day Afternoon*, but not one from its theatrical release. Instead, we first see the familiar FBI copyright warning prohibiting the film's unauthorised remediation through home-viewing technology. Over the familiar image, we hear Wojtowicz's voice as he begins to recount his own troubled history with the FBI. Juxtaposed with the opening title of *Dog Day Afternoon*, we begin to sense the precarious status of our access to information: while *Dog Day Afternoon* presents itself as historical fact, even Huyghe's modest attempt to contest this history is prohibited by monopoly copyright. Just as *Time Magazine* was once on the verge of purchasing history itself by acquiring exclusive copyright to Abraham Zapruder's film of JFK's assassination, so Warner Brothers' control of Wojtowicz's true story is, ironically enough, enforced by the FBI. Whether actively enforced through copyright law or passively propagated through the consolidation of a privatised media industry, the increasingly pervasive corporate monopoly over information is depicted by Huyghe as a literal matter of life and death.

In the face of an increasingly constrained and intimidated news media, consider journalist Ron Suskind's description of his meetings with two senior advisors to President Bush at the inauguration of his 'war on terror':

The aide said that guys like me were 'in what we call the reality-based community', which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality'. I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. 'That's not the way the world really works anymore,' he continued. 'We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality — judiciously, as you will — we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too ... We're history's actors ... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.'⁶

6 Ron Suskind, 'Without a Doubt', *The New York Times Magazine*, 17 October 2001, see 6 p.44. Suskind continues: 'Mark McKinnon, a longtime senior media adviser to Bush ... started by challenging me: 'You think he's an idiot, don't you?' ... all of you do, up and down the West Coast, the East Coast ... Let me clue you in. We don't care. You see, you're

convinced that by folks in the big, wide middle of America, busy working people who don't read *The New York Times* or *Washington Post* or *The L.A. Times*. And you know what they like? They like the way he walks and the way he points, the way he exudes confidence. They have faith in him. And when you attack him for his malapropisms, his

jabbed syntax, it's good for us. Because you know what those folks don't like? They don't like you.' In this instance, the final 'you', of course, meant the entire 'reality-based community'.

7 In her analysis of the Pentagon Papers, Arendt writes of the architects of the Vietnam War: 'the ultimate aim was neither power nor profit. Nor was it

Suskind's interlocutor foregrounds the manner in which the production and circulation of images has emerged as the very goal of contemporary politics. It is a situation that political philosopher Hannah Arendt had presciently described in 1972, the year of Wojtowicz's televised bank robbery, with the phrase 'Image-making as global policy.'⁸ But while I sympathise with Suskind's concern for something we might want to call 'reality-based' governance, I am wary of the way this kind of rhetoric inscribes a familiar trope of political modernism — from Marxist through post-Structuralist criticism — which is bound up with rigorously distinguishing 'reality' from 'illusion', whilst placing its collective energy in a naive aspiration to dispense with 'illusionism' once and for all. The resulting criticism has inhibited not only our knowledge of individual artists and works, but the possibility of a more sophisticated understanding of spectatorship itself — one which acknowledges, after a century of psychoanalytic philosophy, that a rational distinction between 'reality' and 'illusion' is often one of the *least* important considerations for a study of either aesthetics or politics. *The Third Memory* speaks to profound social and political questions within our time *from deep within* the phantasmatic worlds of the cinematic. Far from offering a simple deconstruction of the media spectacle, Huyghe illustrates just how dependent we have become — as individuals and as institutions — on the forms of exhibition and identification articulated within a century of moving-image culture.

Disciplinary Archaeologies: Beyond Film and Video, an Expanded Cinema

For artists of Warhol's generation, the cinema was the very site for the collapse of the modernist ontology of medium specificity. As a sickly child, Warhol experienced the glamour of the 'silver screen' not within the great picture palaces of yore, but isolated in his bed, through the interlaced lines of the cathode ray tube. In *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, he describes the most formative of his youthful activities — watching movies on television — as inherently paradoxical, because in appearing on television they seemed to be no longer movies, but television.⁹ Warhol was here less interested in making the now-familiar critique of television's uniformity than he was in calling attention to the processes — both formal and historical — by which the golden age of cinema was being remediated within the post-War televisual society. Rather than going out to the social space of the cinema theatre,

n influence in the world in order to a particular, tangible interest for the of which prestige, an image of the atest power in the world", was needed purposefully used. The goal was new image itself, as is manifest in the very gage of the problem-solvers, with f "ascendancy" and "audiences". rowed from the theatre... image-

making as global policy — not world conquest, but victory in the battle "to win the people's minds" — is indeed something new in the huge arsenal of human follies recorded in history." Hannah Arendt, 'Living in Politics: Reflections on the Pentagon Papers' in *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 17 no. 8, 18 November 1971.

⁹ Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: (From A to B and Back Again)*, New York: Harvest Books, 1977.



movies were originally a private experience that reached him in the most intimate of domestic spaces. For Warhol, the dislocation of the moving image was importantly bound up with a concomitant dislocation of subjective interiority within a post-War televisual society.

The generation of artists who began working in the early 1960s witnessed the incredible transformation of their newly televisual world when images of Kennedy's



assassination met them at home or at their local bar. Walking along a city street, one might be suddenly and decisively transported by the television in a shop window to those horror-filled streets of Dallas, Texas. Soon it would be Birmingham, Alabama. Later it would be the jungles of Indochina. As the ubiquitous televisual image brought that which was spatially and psychologically distant into precarious proximity, traditional psychological borders became less distinct, more permeable. The inner space of the psyche and the outer space of the world seemed to become interwoven through the ever-present display of the moving-image screen.

Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful, the photographic series that Martha Rosler began in 1967, succinctly illustrates the way in which the inner and outer spaces of both the post-War subject and the domestic space had become imaginatively shot-through with

such affective televisual imagery. While the first image in the series shows the atrocities to be uncomfortably proximate, they still remain outside the picture window, with the possibility of closing the drapes and exiling them from the home. In the second image, the window has been broken and a pleading villager holds her wounded baby within this elegant, modernist space. Standing upon or perhaps ascending a staircase which we have been invited to think of as our own, she transforms an image of purity into a paranoiac

vision of a haunting. That such an image would immediately provoke ideas of mental disturbance is at the heart of my argument, for what was at stake with the incorporation of television as both material and metaphor in the art of the 1960s was a psychodynamic reconceptualisation of the self-contained modernist subject, a reconceptualisation which found fertile ground in the post-War reappraisal of Freud's legacy in the seminars of Jacques Lacan.

Compelled to deal with this newly mediated reality in their artistic practices, artists of the 1960s went beyond the mere incorporation of media imagery into painting, taking up moving-image technology itself — its temporal rhythms and visual logic — as a medium for artistic practice. In so doing, they looked to the 'intrusive' quality of the moving image — its brazen link with the local and the distant — to reconceptualise the location, or 'sitedness', of aesthetic practice itself within a newly interconnected world. As images became unfixed as never before from the specificities of *physical* location, artists and critics were beginning to consider the institutional site within which images were encountered as perhaps the predominant frame through which those images would be experienced and understood.

When artists of the early 60s turned their attention to the technology of cinema, they discovered a pre-established cultural site that could never have the aesthetic or conceptual autonomy of painting or sculpture. Due to the economic importance of Hollywood's industrial practice, as well as the tradition of independent film-making that had already developed in opposition to this practice, the idea of film had already become a well defined domain of inquiry. Yet coextensive with the radical gestures of Pop and Minimalism, the artists who began to incorporate moving-image technologies into their practice in the 1960s were engaged primarily in an act of aesthetic and conceptual refusal. Refusing both the commercial cinema as well as its expressive, 'visionary' counterpart, they sought to reconsider both the institutional site and the affective economy of moving-image spectatorship as a novel and important domain of inquiry. This meant rethinking the embodied phenomenology of physical and perceptual transactions with the cinematic screen, as well as the social, cultural and political institutionalisation of cinema and what it had come to mean for the post-War audience. It meant considering the black box of the cinematic theatre together with the white cube of the gallery or museum space — attempting to discern in what ways they might be brought together, or how one might be approached from the perspective of the other.

The interest and anxiety over the cultural location of the moving image — the sense that it was no longer confined to the theatrical site but had spilled out into everyday life and precipitated a more general cinematization of society — constitutes a rich and fertile terrain within post-War artistic practice. Yet the discursive and institutional promiscuity of moving-image art — its failure to establish itself solely within the institutions of the theatre or the gallery, or within the discourses of either film studies or art history — has occasioned a critical blindness that cannot

Previous page:
Martha Rosler,
Cleaning the
Drapes, 1967/72
Below: Marina
Rosler, Balloons,
1967/72, torn from
Bringing me War
Home: House
Beautiful, 1967/72
2D photomontages
as C-Prints, 61 x 61 cm
each. Courtesy the artist
and Gagosian Gallery,
New York, Los Angeles and Berlin

be remedied through the simple reintroduction of a few neglected artists or works. The peripheral location of these practices is no accidental sign of neglect, no mere historical oversight. Rather, the difficulty of locating artist film-making in the aesthetic discourse of the 1960s and in the later discourses of art and film criticism is inextricably bound up with the difficulty of locating these practices within the physical, institutional or discursive space of either the art gallery or the cinematic theatre. This interstitial location has frustrated attempts to understand artist film-making since the 60s, as well as relegating it to the disciplinary periphery of post-War art-history and film studies. Any critical recovery of this important body of work must first work to bridge the unproductive and unnecessary chasm that has been built up between the art- and film-historical accounts of this period.

For many years, Structural film was considered to be the epitome of artistic modernism in the cinema. Breaking with the traditions of narrativity and theatrical representation within industrial cinema, it attempted to constitute a self-referential practice of 'pure film'. This dream of aesthetic purity had its discursive corollary in an unfortunate tendency within film and media studies to downplay or simply bypass the art historical context in a quixotic attempt to manufacture an autonomous history of experimental film. Thus the films of Michael Snow and Paul Sharits are considered in terms of their basic continuity with Maya Deren's 'visionary' cinema of the 1940s — or even Germaine Dulac's work of the 20s — but not in terms of the theories and practices in Minimalism, Op art, Conceptualism or Fluxus that were contemporaneous with their production. Within this historiography, even the most radical filmic practices are folded into a basic continuity with older traditions of underground cinema, or viewed in terms of their opposition to mainstream industrial practices. Despite the fact that so-called Structural film-makers — Snow, Sharits, Warhol, George Landow and Hollis Frampton among them — were artists whose work was not exclusive to film, and despite their profound links to the aesthetic and conceptual transformations of art in the 1960s and early 70s, the critical investigation of these artists' films tended to situate them within an understanding of the medium as conceptually and historically autonomous.

Correlatively, contemporary art historians and theorists have tended to consider video and performance art as if these practices were aesthetically and conceptually autonomous and unrelated to developments in avant-garde film and intermedia art. This reductive conception of medium specificity has led to serious historical omissions, when it has not led to outright factual error. Thus, while Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, Dan Graham and Vito Acconci are widely regarded as pioneering figures in the development of a domain called 'video art', it is seldom mentioned that much of this work was actually done on film rather than videotape, and that it was often in self-conscious dialogue with aesthetic and conceptual developments in avant-garde film. Neglect of the multiple contexts within which many of these artists worked has only increased the marginalisation of new media artistic practices,

isolating them from the larger development of post-War art and film history, and ultimately hindering attempts to understand the historic and conceptual roots of artists' film and video in the present era. The pervasive rhetoric of medium specificity has too long acted as a barrier to understanding the aesthetic and conceptual sophistication of these early hybrid modes of practice. The rich aesthetic and conceptual field to which these works gave rise only becomes accessible once we are able to recover a sense of the difficulty that the incorporation of the time-based media technology of film caused for artistic practices from the early 1960s to the early 70s. The fundamental question with which we might begin is not 'how was film (or video) imagined as an artistic medium?' but rather 'how is the very *idea* of the artistic medium transformed through its encounter with moving-image technologies?'

While the Minimalist paradigm that has dominated art-historical discussion of these years was largely involved in reconceptualising the gallery as a phenomenological space of perceptual transactions, a neglected theory and practice of expanded cinema was involved in a much broader re-evaluation of aesthetic institutions in the televisual age. Within this alternative tradition, it was not simply the material of film but the whole institution of cinema that was taken as the site of conceptual and aesthetic interrogation. Like the white cube of the gallery space, the black box of the cinematic theatre was understood as a historically sedimented cultural space of perception, one with longstanding codes of representation dictating what could transpire on the screen, as well as codes of behavior dictating how the spectator must relate to the screen. In attempting to reconceptualise and rearticulate these codes, the artists and critics of this tradition were interested in taking not the celluloid strip but this entire spectatorial economy as its medium. In so doing, expanded cinema constituted a bold and prescient shift away from the autonomous, medium-specific practices we tend to associate with high modernism, towards the more environmental, mediated and site-specific conceptual practices that came to follow in its wake.

Early in this century, the German critic Walter Benjamin wrote about how technologies become uniquely visible in their birth and obsolescence. The 1960s were a seminal moment for the emergence of the moving image in North American art because of a dramatic conjunction of birth *and* obsolescence within the cultural life of moving-image technologies: as broadcast television surged forward, the film industry was in a precipitous decline. The old glamour of the 'silver screen' was being presented between commercials on TV. Cheap B-movies and theatrical gimmicks signalled ever more desperate attempts to lure back the theatrical audience. Yet the generation of artists who first experienced this decline in the theatrical cinema were the first to grasp the possibility for its radical reinvention. With inexpensive small-gauge film becoming widely available, and video technology just around the corner, many established artists took up moving-image technologies while possessing little or no previous experience in the medium. Because Hollywood had already colonised society's relation to the moving

image, it became necessary for these film artists to deal with the cinematic *theatre* in contesting that naturalisation. Within their hybrid cultural and institutional location, these cinematic 'amateurs' gave birth to a conceptually rich and aesthetically compelling body of work that has, nevertheless, been forgotten in the history of post-War art and film. Yet the difficulty of definitively locating this work within traditions of art and film history is, in fact, a direct index of its contemporary relevance. For in their sustained effort to give birth to a radically new way of experiencing the moving image, these artists both necessitated and helped to create a novel institutional and discursive location between the white cube and the black box. Caught between these two sites, the dialectic of location and dislocation—both physical and psychological—was perhaps destined to become the dominant theme in the emergence of the moving image in contemporary artistic practice.

modern and contemporary art. He is the editor of *Minimal Art. Eine kritische Retrospektive* (Verlag der Kunst, 1995), *Jeff Wall. Szenarien im Bildraum der Wirklichkeit* (Verlag der Kunst, 1997), *Kunst/Kind. Jahresring 48* (Oktagon, 2001) and *Having Been Said: Writings & Interviews of Lawrence Weiner 1968–2003*. (Hatje Cantz, 2004; co-edited with Gert Fietzek).

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Stan VanDerBeek (1927–84) was a film and video artist. He began making independent art films in 1955 and was a pioneer in experimentation with the use of multiple screens, animated collages, drawn animation, live action, film loops, found footage and video and computer images.

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For Richard J. Leighton.

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