Screen/Space

The projected image in contemporary art

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In the mid-1960s, the Sony PortaPak changed the history of the moving image, cementing what many film critics of the 1970s and 1980s proclaimed as a 'death of cinema' through the increasing proliferation of a video and television culture. Around thirty years later, in 1995, the Sony digital camcorder helped to inaugurate another cultural transformation: together with the non-linear editing software and digital projectors introduced in the early 1990s, its digitisation of video would, ironically, herald a widespread transition away from the single channel video works of the 1970s and 1980s, towards what has been called an aesthetics of 'the cinematic' within contemporary video installation.[1]

Yet 1995 was also the year Stan Douglas produced one of the most iconic works of contemporary projected-image art, and his project – *Der Sandmann* – was both shot and projected using the supposedly anachronistic medium of 16mm film. Through this unusual choice of support, one quite intentionally out of sync with its historical moment, Douglas foregrounded his interest in the cultural history of the moving image across different technological forms, and the diverse sites of its production, exhibition, and reception. Already in his first work, *Breath* (1982), the artist had begun to interrogate the site of the cinematic without even employing the technology of cinema. Within a Vancouver movie theatre, Douglas played an audio recording of '*O ma belle rebelle!*' a love poem by sixteenth-century French poet and lyricist Jean-Antoine de Baïf, together with a series of slide projections. Yet the 'images' Douglas chose to accompany this song were all a simple, uniform grey, with a translation of the song's verse at the bottom like a running subtitle. Thus, within a cinematic theatre, Douglas effectively negated the expected 'narrative space' of the feature film and its particular mode of phenomenological transport. Just as the song's protagonist projects his desire upon an absent figure, Douglas's audience saw only the projection of their own desire upon the screen. Nevertheless, for all its austere self-reflexivity, the work is not simply a negation of cinema's concern with affect and movement, but is instead an attempt to re-imagine these dynamics for a new model of artistic practice – one which seeks to engage a hybrid phenomenological situation between the

proximity and material presence of the material object within the art gallery's brightly lit white cube, and the kind of distance and mobility promoted by the dematerialised image within the cinematic theatre's black box.

Within the general field of projected images, the particular technologies Douglas has employed vary greatly. He used slide projection in *Breath* (1982), *Mime* (1983), and *Onomatopoeia* (1985); 16mm film in *Overture* (1986), *Pursuit, Fear, Catastrophe: Ruskin, BC* (1993), and *Inconsolable Memories* (2005); analogue video projection in *Hors-Champs* (1992) and *Evening* (1993); and digital video within *Nu*tka* (1996) and *Vidéo* (2008). His *Television Spots* (1988) and *Monodramas* (1992) took place over the networks of broadcast television, while his recent 'recombinant narrative' works such as *Win, Place or Show* (1998), *Journey into Fear* (2001), and *Klatsassin* (2006) have utilised computational algorithms to sequence short clips into changing structures of near-infinite duration. Thus even the most superficial survey reveals that Douglas's production does not follow any straightforward trajectory from film to video under the sign of novelty, nor does it display a single-minded commitment to 'outmoded' technologies in some kind of nostalgic refusal of contemporary audiovisual culture. Rather, Douglas's oeuvre presents us with a serious, sustained engagement with the heterogeneous and often ambivalent location of the moving image as it enters and transforms the space of contemporary art.

Jean-Christophe Royoux has suggested that contemporary installation is a post-cinematic medium – that in the present moment, visual art takes place within a cinematically structured world.[2] Rather than simply propose an investigation of the material conditions of projection within literal space (the anti-illusionist paradigm), or a totalising attention to the narrative space of the cinematic image considered as a world in itself, a post-cinematic analytic explores the conjunction and imbrication of these two models through the hybrid form of moving-image installation. To understand today's most ambitious work in moving images – work such as Douglas's – it is necessary to examine a genealogy that leads not to structural film, single-channel video, or the so-called sculptural film, but to a less studied body of artist-filmmaking which takes up the cinematic image as a support for affective engagement and subjective dislocation. These practices engage with the cinematic as a transport away from the confines of a local material environment, even as they persist in maintaining a connection with the sedimented cultural and institutional histories of the 'white cube' that marks the site of their enunciation.

Writing in 1916, Hugo Münsterberg theorised film as an external materialisation of our internal psychic life, citing its uncanny ability to project an image of our basic capacity for attention, affect, memory, and imagination.[3] In her consideration of the contemporary intersection of film and museographic space, Giuliana Bruno has recently reconsidered Münsterberg's theories in

light of a heterogeneous pre-cinematic culture of installation as 'site-seeing'. Within devices such as the cabinet of curiosities, she suggests, we find a physical analogy of cinematic spectatorship – 'a mobilised architectonics of scenic space in an aesthetics of fractured, sequential and shifting views.'[4] We might here recall Walter Benjamin's account of the collector and the way in which his objects *screen* a spatial and temporal displacement: 'as he holds them in his hands, he seems to be *seeing through them* into their distant past as though inspired'.[5] Diverse practices of nineteenth-century visual culture, from the institution of the Paris Salon to the commonplace curiosity show, promoted a spectatorial labour of imagination and perambulation or 'site-seeing' as a kind of cognitive and affective displacement.

Developing from these architectures of 'site-seeing', cinema would become, in Bruno's words, 'an agent of intersubjective and cultural memory' by means of its particular ability to collapse distance – 'to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly', as Benjamin famously put it in his essay on the condition of art 'in the age of mechanical reproduction'.[6] Whilst the rise of commercial narrative cinema traded the physical engagement of spectatorial perambulation for a greater affective and cognitive immersion within the single 'narrative space' of the projected image, Bruno finds it 'only appropriate that the cinema and museum should renew their convergence' at a cultural moment in which the efficacy and legitimacy of both has been called into question.[7] For, while cinema has not died, it has become old. Like modernism itself, it is a history accumulated and archived to the point where its last hundred years of development are now both curiously familiar and increasingly distant to us in the present.

From canvas to window

The 'Expanded cinema', as identified by Sheldon Renan in 1967, can be understood as a reaction to this historical situation, as artists of the postwar period increasingly felt constrained by the pseudo-autonomy promised by abstraction and medium-specificity, and sought to wrestle with the profound transformations wrought on distance, time, and subjectivity by film and televisual media.[8] Whilst the rich and complex history of these practices lies outside the scope of the present essay, a single metonymic example might suffice to indicate the way in which this work sought to navigate a path between materialism and immersivity, between Minimalism's phenomenological concern with the local environment, and the internal landscape of the psyche transformed through the identificatory displacements produced by the moving image.

Coincident with the rise of sculptural Minimalism, Robert Whitman's *Cinema Pieces* (1964–65) complicate any straightforward phenomenology of the sculptural object or site through their incorporation of the dislocating

technologies of the moving image. These technologies allowed Whitman to investigate an entirely non-material property that, if not specific to the cinematic medium, was at least centrally evident within it – namely, the importance of affective identification in the workings of aesthetic spectatorship. Lynne Cooke has written that, 'while ostensibly sculpture, these works introduce mediated representation … they allow a new level of intimacy between the viewer and the work, a relationship that is familiar from cinematic experience (via the close-up and the zoom), and proper to sculpture (by means of a direct encounter in real space and time) but virtually unknown in the theatre'.[9] This new level of intimacy is indeed 'familiar from cinematic experience', but it far exceeds the spatial information afforded by the magnification of the close-up. Rather, it is an intimacy bound up with the processes of cinematic identification, and with the gendered form this identification often takes.

As if ripped from a dream, *Window* (1964) presents us with the concretisation of a metaphor. In it, a rather quaint-looking domestic window is physically set into the wall of the exhibition space. Looking through this window, into the space beyond, we see a pastoral landscape through which a woman will pass and disrobe. The scene of the nude in the garden may be as old as the picture-window of painting itself, but this window on the world provokes a spectatorial experience fundamentally different from that of the traditional painterly tableau. For one thing, the material construction of the work is a decidedly heterogeneous mélange. The window is a real, physical object – ordinary window glass and an ordinary wooden frame are physically set into the wall. Beyond this frame lies a darkened space – its physical dimensions uncertain – in which some real tree branches have been arranged like a crude diorama. Beyond that, space seems to continue back, deep into a forest glen, branches faintly shifting in a gentle breeze. But, of course, this final movement is not really beyond anything in the spatial sense – for it is upon the illuminated surface of a rear-screen projection that the 'space' of a forest, and a woman within that forest, is photomechanically depicted. Our phenomenal experience of space, in this construction, is thus split between that which we can navigate with our corporeal body and that which we navigate through our affective imaginations. The distinction is at first obvious, inconsequential, and even trite. But over time, as we fix upon the moving image depicted in the world beyond, the experience of space itself becomes strange and uncanny.

The glass and wood window calls attention to the putatively neutral gallery space as a specific, material site through the act of destruction that we realise the creation of the window would have necessitated. Cutting directly into the support of the gallery space, Whitman's act recalls Italian painter Lucio Fontana's infamous slashed canvases of a few years before. Fontana's cuts, conjoining surface and depth, repudiated the picture plane itself through a physical act of incision. Yet Whitman's hole was less a cut than a peephole

or viewfinder through which the viewer could exit the physical space of the museum, in order to enter the different space of the cinematic image. And, like a peephole, Whitman's window exchanges Fontana's purely formal articulation of presence and absence for a much more affectively oriented perceptual experience. Lacking the putative grace and stillness of the classical nude, the actress is presented in the process of disrobing, a temporal interaction which immediately suggests not so much the 'high art' of the classical nude as the 'low' genre of the striptease. But it is ultimately aligned with neither. The woman is a fleeting presence – like an apparition, she appears only for an instant before she is gone again. The majority of the time, we are watching an empty forest glen, waiting. Yet we yearn not for flesh but immersion, to be drawn more fully, more totally, across the threshold of the spectacle.

In the moments after the woman has walked out of the frame, or has simply vanished, but before she unexpectedly reappears a moment later, our gaze moves into the deep space of the forest glen. But alongside these branches, swaying gently in the wind, intrude those others, the real branches located in that curiously intermediary space beyond the window but before the rear-projection screen. These branches make an awkward incision into the cinematic tableau, drawing our uneasy attention out of the cinematic world and back into the physical, material space of the gallery – at least for a moment, before the screen's flickering movement, the subtle action within the cinematic tableau, grabs our attention again, beckoning us back inside, across the portal and into the space of the film. With this constant back-and-forth movement, we are asked, in effect, to look *at* the screen at the same time that we are being conjured away by a spectacle transpiring *on* the screen. Within *Window*, this specific materialisation of the screen and the quality of mediation or transport it effects is troped by the materiality of the wooden window-frame and the real foliage diorama. We are accustomed to understanding the cinematic image as a world unto itself, cordoned off by the impermeable frame of the darkened theatre. Yet here we are made to reconfigure our basic understanding of space around a phenomenological hybrid – gazing through a real window and real branches into the illusory space of a forest that begins to seem ever more real.

Reflexivity seems too blunt a concept to describe this delicate interplay of spectator, affect, screen, and material. For it is not simply a matter of the cinematic apparatus calling attention to the fact of its own materiality or to its own mechanical operation. Rather, the fetishistic transport or mediation of the cinematic screen – and the affective registers upon which this transport depends – is simultaneously invoked while being laid open to view. Whitman's field of operation is the subject's own desire for illusion, for transport – the fetishistic disavowal, 'I know very well, but all the same …' which subtends the entire history of the moving image, from the first Hale's Tours of the

nineteenth century to the CGI special-effects wizardry of the twenty-first. This incorporation of media technology brings with it a whole other scene of cinema – the workings of desire and identification, as well as the desire for identification – that takes us away from the white cube, transporting us into an imaginary, fantasmatic space. The scenes Whitman constructs within these works stand opposed to the phenomenological specificity of the Minimalist object in its relation to the space of the gallery as a material container. Rather, Whitman's *Cinema Pieces* take place within a newly hybrid, fantasmatic locale. They construct an other scene somewhere between the logic of the gallery's white cube and the cinematic theatre's black box, between the concrete perception of physical space and temporal duration, on the one hand, and the dream-like logic of the primary process, the identificatory conflation of subject and object, and the very different temporalities inherent in the space of the cinematic image.

In keeping with its hybrid location, the space within Whitman's cinematic Garden of Eden is a disjunctive one. Within this haunted, flickering space, the leaves and branches of the foliage alone remain constant, whereas the woman walks into and out of the frame, appears, then is suddenly gone, like the logic of a dream. This liminal visibility keeps us focused on the woman as spectacle, undercutting the reality of the narrative space as a stable and coherent site. Yet, even as we are pulled into the world of the projection, we are denied the fiction that it *is* a coherent world we might occupy. In constructing such a liminal space, Whitman focuses our attention not on the alternative world to which the theatrical cinema has become so adept at transporting us, so much as on the affective qualities of the mechanism of transport itself – our desire to pass over the threshold, to cross the screen.

It seems important that *Window* is not a sculpture, in the traditional sense, in that it does not rest wholly and visibly within the gallery space. The work is built directly into the gallery wall, literally trespassing upon the architectural boundary of the space, necessitating a separate and concealed location within which its scene can unfold. Thus, in quite material terms, it is not exactly 'within' the four walls of the gallery space. Yet the fracture, the breach it opens in the very space of the gallery, is indeed symptomatic, for it also operates outside the conventions of traditional aesthetic production and spectatorship that characterise that space as a *sociocultural* site. Thus, both literally and figuratively, we pass outside the white cube as we attend to these works, and are caught up in their operation.

Under the influence of Minimalist sculpture, as Brian O'Doherty has shown, the gallery space was in the 1960s becoming understood as a kind of illuminated laboratory, a container allowing everything within it a perfect and total visibility.[19] By contrast, the black box of the cinema theatre is not only dark, but the various devices making up the cinematic illusion are quite delib-

erately concealed. The sound system is covered over by the cinematic screen. The projector is not only above and behind the audience; it is also sealed from the audience in a noiseproof room. To ensure the seamlessness of the cinematic spectacle, the brute materiality of the apparatus must be concealed from both visual and audible perception. *Window* integrates media technology to introduce a distant spatio-temporal incident into the present time and space of the gallery. The fleeting image of a woman passing before us, disrobing, or moving out of the frame, captured by a camera some time before, and far from this particular site, is re-presented before us, *inside* a physical installation with its own experience of obdurate presentness. *Window* quite obviously rejects the idea of the self-contained object. Deliberately staging the work of technological mediation, it similarly foregrounds the historical association of erotic voyeurism with the development of moving-image technology. Like a striptease, Whitman's work both reveals and conceals its illusionistic operation. Rather than aiming to annihilate illusion in the name of a fully transparent and self-conscious reality, it speaks to the importance of the affective and the imaginary, drawing concrete, material space together with affective, fantasmatic space in order to explore their structural interdependence in an increasingly mediated age.

The expanded field of this sculptural practice includes not only the material technology of cinema, but also the identificatory or fantasmatic relations that have dominated the cultural history of that technology. Thus, within *Window*, real objects are presented interacting with realistic images, and vice versa, the illusory existing alongside the actual in a state of imbrication. Whitman writes, 'Fantasy exists as an object, as a central physical entity, and as part of the story that you tell about other objects', and clearly his sculptural practice is one in which the notion of 'object' must be expanded to include a whole range of phenomena outside the purely material.[11] Chrissie Iles has noted that Whitman's *Cinema Pieces* were 'one of the earliest examples of the projected image's shift away from the cinema screen into the medium of sculpture'.[12] But, perhaps more importantly, *they were also the reverse*: for Whitman, the tactile, material space of the sculptural installation – and, by its Minimalist extension, the whole physical space of the 'white cube' – becomes imbricated with the dematerialised dreamspace of the cinematic.

In creating this hybrid, ambivalent situation, with its complex intersection of real with imagined space, psychological affect, and concrete materiality, Whitman's *Cinema Pieces* model an engagement with place that eschews the literal emphasis on materiality or presence in favour of an often spectral engagement with the affective and mnemonic. Functioning between the habits and traditions of the cinema theatre's black box and the art gallery's white cube, these works made an early and prescient move away from an 'anti-illusionist' rhetoric of political modernism, with its dream of an affectless

sphere of deliberative rationality, towards an embrace of the cinematic as a source for a reconceptualisation of the political: examining the myriad ways in which our understanding of self and society are established through the sedimentation of media histories and networks of fantasmatic identification.

'Topical history: places remember events'[13]

By introducing this complex terrain of identificatory and fantasmatic relations, Whitman's *Window* sought to open up an expanded field of sculptural practice, one through which the richly sedimented cultural history of moving-image exhibition and spectatorship might be made a subject of investigation within contemporary artistic practice. Yet Whitman's *Cinema Pieces* invoked the history of these media histories only implicitly and in the most general sense. Stan Douglas, by contrast, has worked for over a quarter-century exploring the modes by which specific histories of media exhibition become intertwined with specific mnemonic sedimentations of place.

Guiliana Bruno writes, 'museums, like memory theatres, have genealogically offered to cinema the heterotopic dimension of compressed, connected sites', and throughout her works Bruno has laboured to establish an inherently *cartographic* dimension to the work of cinematic exhibition and spectatorship.[14] Similarly, Tom Conley recently cited Michel de Certeau's remark that the cinematic image, like a landscape, is a 'multiplication of texts and of their readings upon a single surface' in support of his conception of a 'cartographic cinema'.[15] Yet rather than remaining on the surface of the map, we might restore a depth to de Certeau's remark by invoking its properly archaeological or stratigraphic dimension. In his 1970 film *The Spiral Jetty*, Robert Smithson famously depicts a map, torn into pieces, falling past the striated layers of a broken landscape. In so doing, he links the work of location not only to space, but also to time – the invisible sedimentation of history through which the site is slowly built up. Rather than pieces of a puzzle laid out upon a table, the multiple texts of de Certeau's account might be understood as stacked one upon the next, where the most recent and familiar serves to actively conceal those supporting it just underneath. Smithson's evocation of what I have elsewhere described as a 'stratigraphic temporality' functioned as both theme and form within his own multilayered construction of *The Spiral Jetty*, a framework strategically enabling the artist to reach beyond the material dynamics of space of his earlier 'site/non-site' works, towards a more temporal investigation of cultural and representational history.[16] In his own complex and multilayered practice of moving-image installation, Stan Douglas has long sought to mine the depths of the 'cinema cavern' which Smithson's tragically foreshortened investigations sought to open.

It is this stratigraphic conception of cultural archaeology that animates

Douglas's moving-image installations in general, and is perhaps most hyperbolically and metonymically figured within Douglas's *Der Sandmann*. Like Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, *Der Sandmann* is not a singular, contained work, but rather a complex intertext built from distinct and heterogeneous forms of representation.[17] The dominant component of the piece is the black-and-white film which is projected inside the gallery space on a bare wall using two linked 16mm projectors. Set in one of the UFA (*Universum Film AG*) studios legendary in the heyday of German Expressionist cinema in the 1920s, the film's sombre aesthetic is deliberately juxtaposed with a series of large, colourful 'location photographs' that Douglas made during the course of the project. Set in present-day Germany, these feature modest gardens and brightly coloured foliage, and convey a pastoral, even bucolic sensibility that seems tellingly disjunctive. A text by the artist, entitled 'historical background', provides the connective tissue between these disparate elements.

In the text Douglas explains how the so-called *Schrebergärten*, which emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century coincident with the beginnings of urbanisation and industrial modernity, were razed after German reunification for a new phase of capital development and real-estate speculation. Originally called *Armengärten* or 'poor gardens', these individual small plots were instituted, under strict state regulation, as a means by which workers could grow food as a supplement to their meagre wages. An early form of social welfare, they were also a bulwark against the economy of industrialisation, a residue of the life the newly urbanised peasant farmers had left behind. A garden, offering growth, harvest, and seeding, is a quintessentially cyclical, natural phenomenon. Yet these particular gardens were kept under strict state regulation as to what could be harvested, how, and when. Thus, already at their origin, we can find a tension between natural cycles and political intervention that would mark the history of the *Schrebergärten* over the last two hundred years, a tension that seems to mimic the very complexities and contradictions of modernity itself as they came to be variously shut down and reinstated at various times for various reasons across the political spectrum. The Socialists used them to foster 'class consciousness', and were accused of reinforcing class divisions. The National Socialists managed to bury the socialist origins of the gardens in order to ground their nationalistic projection of 'blood and soil'. And the bourgeois social reformers of the late nineteenth century imagined the gardens as an individual therapy against the ravages of industrialisation.[18] The man who gave his name to these gardens, Moritz Schreber, was one of the latter group. He had been particularly concerned with industrialisation's effect upon adolescents, and saw the gardens as a place for refuge, exercise, and relaxation. Yet Schreber's therapeutic ideas would bear strange fruit. One of his innovations involved the construction of a mechanical chair by which a child's slouching at the dinner table could be 'corrected' by a sharp tug to

their head and neck. Schreber's sons Daniel Gustav and Daniel Paul were the trial subjects for this new mode of discipline. Schreber's first son committed suicide in his thirties, while the second became famously psychotic, recording his unbearable episodes in his *Memoirs*, and inspiring psychoanalytic philosophy from Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan to Gilles Deleuze, Elias Canetti, and Eric Santner.[9]

These cycles of nature and history, of nurturing and repression, are embodied in the cyclical format of *Der Sandmann*'s film. Using a motion-control device, Douglas shot a 360-degree arc of a fictional *Schrebergarten* on the outskirts of Potsdam, constructed in the aforementioned UFA studios. In its circuit the film depicts studio and garden both as a kind of split subject. But then the subject is split again, for Douglas shot an identical arc over a newly transformed set, made to appear as if twenty years later, with the gardens apparently being razed for development (the cabbage patch now dead, with cement blocks strewn about, and various parts of the house appearing aged and fallen into disrepair, etc.). Both loops were then projected onto a single screen, with half of each masked over, and the cycle one complete rotation out of phase (figure 7.1). The result was the creation of a 'temporal wipe', a split image that circles around the garden like the movement of the hands of a clock, within which, however, time jumps radically as it passes the central seam. The seam around which the passage is enacted is at first faint and barely visible. Our first encounter with it is likely to come as we pan across the narrator's face, as he stands reciting his lines from a page. We have been hearing a voice off screen, and as he becomes visible we expect to find him the source of the perceived narration. Something is wrong, however – the words he mouths do not correspond with the words we hear. Only when, over the course of time, we pass over that seam – or the seam passes over his face – do his lips suddenly come into sync, the sound and image now unbroken.

Nathaniel, the narrator of the story by E. T. A. Hoffmann, 'The Sandman', from which Douglas's work takes its name, is himself a kind of ghost, split between present and past. He is frightened by the sight of an ordinary gardener working outside in his small *Schrebergarten*, and is at a loss to explain why, but knows it has something to do with his childhood. 'It was as if I had seen it all before', he writes to his brother.[10] He is reminded that the gardener was not only their childhood neighbour, but the garden itself was the site of a profound trauma. As a child, he had been told the tale of the Sandman, who steals the eyes of children who refuse to go to bed. He had decided their neighbour was the Sandman, and had sneaked into the next-door garden late one night to find his sack of eyes. But the gardener had seen him and, shouting, terrified him. Returning home, his mother confronted him with horrible news: his father had died. Nathaniel thought the Sandman had done it to punish him, and that he was responsible for his father's death.

Stan Douglas, *Der Sandmann*, 1995. Installation composed of: two 16mm films, two manipulated optical sound 16mm projectors, two loop devices. 9 minutes 50 seconds (loop), black-and-white, sound. Dimensions vary. Courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner, New York. 7.1

Hoffmann's story contains another element which at first may seem absent from Douglas's rendition of the story: the figure of Olympia, the mysterious woman with whom Nathaniel falls in love, and who ultimately is revealed as a machine. Olympia is, however, not forgotten or repressed within Douglas's retelling, but is rather displaced onto the cinematic apparatus itself. Douglas's film not only takes place within the UFA studio, but also references it as the site of a particular cinematic and representational history. For it was here that Paul Wegener adapted Edgar Allan Poe's 1839 story of the *Doppelgänger* 'William Wilson' (a tale of Poe's own childhood, written seven years before Dostoevsky's 'The double'). Wegener's film *The Student of Prague* (1913) prompted two major psychoanalytic investigations of the subject – the first in Otto Rank's 'The double' (1914) and the second in Sigmund Freud's 'The uncanny' (1919).[21] The film was remade in 1926 by Henrik Galeen at the height of German Expressionist cinema, and exploited the new possibilities of the medium to present audiences with the first living *Doppelgänger* they had ever seen.[22] Galeen shot his actor with one half of the screen veiled; he then ran the same film through the projector to shoot the act again while veiling the opposite half. Douglas's

technique in *Der Sandmann* cites but inverts this historic moment of the German 'New Vision'. Rather than 'covering over' a split recording in order to present a unified spectacle, *Der Sandmann* brings together two individual recordings within an uncanny split projection in order to 'uncover' or 'unearth' a complex cultural and cinematic history. Douglas's film itself thus constitutes the uncanny, machinic 'double' – the equivalent of the figure of Olympia – by virtue of its own doubling and redoubling of cinematic history.[23]

Turning the soil: re-enactment and return

Freud interpreted Hoffmann's story as providing a quintessential example of that special 'class of the frightening' which he calls the 'uncanny'.[24] Freud bases his theorisation of this idea on his postulation of a fundamental proximity between the familiar and the uncanny, in a manner which he compares to the way in which the word *Unheimlich* contains within it an etymologically buried *Heim*, or 'home'. Thus Freud argues that the frightening effect of what we perceive as disturbingly 'other' arises from the repression of what is really 'known of old and long familiar'.[25] Douglas's cinematic *Schrebergarten*, however, moves the source of trauma from the repressed history of the individual subject to the repressed histories of the nation state, its cyclical break or tear seeming to stand in for both the continuity and the rupture of historical time. Within Douglas's installation, Freud's geography of the unconscious becomes the repression of 'other' histories and 'other' subjects: namely, those many who may live on the same soil, but are excluded from the collective *Geschichte* (both 'history' and 'story') of the nation (*Heimat*, or 'homeland'.) Like Freud, Douglas seeks to uncover a network of associations buried just beneath the soil or, as the expression goes, 'buried right in our own backyard'.

One aspect of the history Douglas's remake seeks to 'uncover' is made visible the moment the narrator appears on screen. Addressing us in English, yet in a German accent, the role of Nathaniel is played by a young, dark-skinned man of uncertain ethnicity. That such a figure may seem neither particularly striking nor unusual as a contemporary German attests to the historical and cultural displacement between our present moment and the early twentieth century of Schreber and Freud and, even more so, the early nineteenth century in which Hoffmann's story is set. A Canadian of African descent, Douglas's works have long explored the complex ways in which race comes to stand for (and against) particular conceptions of nationhood – specifically in the repressed 'others' whose historical association to particular places has been culturally effaced. Through the displacement of the traditional European protagonists from his stories, he challenges us to consider how these repressed histories live on within the present by observing our own reaction to the transformation.

Here we might again recall the large, colour 'location photographs' Douglas incorporates as part of the project. The aesthetic transition they provoke, from black-and-white to colour, recalls Alain Resnais's evocation of a living past hidden just below the calm surface of the present in his *Night and Fog* of 1955. In that film, we are led seamlessly from the empty, abandoned buildings of a concentration camp shot in colour into the black-and-white documentary footage of the Nazi period, and back again. Robert Smithson cites this landmark of stratigraphic cinema in the conclusion of his essay 'Art through the camera's eye', written just as he was planning *The Spiral Jetty*, and attempting to formulate his own vision of a post-cinematic practice of contemporary exhibition.[16] As we have seen, Douglas's landscapes ineluctably body forth a psychosocial geography, one grounded in the complex historical formations of culture. His conception of site – like Smithson's before him – lies at the intersection of a number of social, cultural, and even intellectual histories. But these large photographs constitute a paradoxical form of representation in this regard, for they seem less about imparting any specific information to the viewer than about depicting their own failure or inability to represent. We come to understand, over the course of our attention to the project, the complex histories to which these images are related. But perceptually and aesthetically the images persist at a distance from these histories. Unlike the complex staging and dramatic formal construction of his split-screen film, these photographs – taken with a large format camera, elegantly composed, colourful, and rich in detail – are deceptively traditional in form. Their superficial beauty plays off the obdurate, allegorical fragments they contain.

One way of reading this photographic practice is as a deliberate, almost programmatic refusal to represent. Not an inability to represent *tout court* – this is not a postmodern critique of representation – but rather an attempt to address the different forms historical representation can take, and the particular dangers it involves. In his book *Sustaining Loss: Art and Mournful Life*, philosopher Gregg Horowitz contends that the commercial cinema's attempts to represent history – and particularly traumatic historical events – have paradoxically given rise to an 'obscene visibility' on account of the 'fullness' of their representational goals.[17] For Horowitz, it is not particular representations of history which are obscene, but rather the ways in which historical re-enactments reinforce a sense of the past as a distant, foreign land, a place safely consigned to the imagination alone. However noble its intentions, the coherent world within which fictional re-enactments are set functions to create an unbridgeable chasm between the present and the past. Keeping the past at arm's length, these simulacra ask nothing from their spectator. In so doing, they work to efface history's motive force as a living, perpetual intervention within the present.

Douglas's historical 're-enactment' within *Der Sandmann* is, by contrast, quite palpably incomplete. The visibility of the scaffolding, the artificiality of the space, and, above all, the temporal schism created by the 'seam' running through the centre of our field of view all reinforce the idea that this representation of history remains a 'work in progress'. This progress, this process, is one with which we, as viewers, are crucially involved. *Der Sandmann* thus contains both representational plenitude and lack. Unlike the theatrical feature, we are refused access to a coherent cinematic diegesis, unable to enter fully into the 'world' of a cinematic 'narrative space'. Yet, far from simply returning us to ourselves, spinning in space in a purely formalist, self-reflexive gesture, the film encourages a whole range of travels outside our present time and local space. This travel comes both as a result of the narrative voiceover, and the chain of associations and correspondences it effects, and as a result of the imagery itself, as key elements function allegorically to participate in this metonymic chain.

While Douglas's conception of historical re-enactment is one which certainly partakes of Bertolt Brecht's suspicion regarding representational plenitude, his work cannot be easily situated within a neo-Brechtian art-historical discourse of 'institutional critique'. Douglas's chosen sites are not laid bare, but revealed as densely layered palimpsests whose meaning and relation to the present solicit our careful attention. Grounded in what Jeffrey Skoller has described as the unseen, unspeakable, and ephemeral impact of history living on in the present, the work of historical connection is left to the individual viewer to perform.[28] Rather than presenting a coherent, encapsulated story, these works stage an open-ended encounter, addressing the viewer like an invitation. Neither expressive nor polemical, Douglas's mode of post-cinematic exhibition is a kind of allegorical assemblage – an invitation to explore a particular web of cultural histories and their living, motive force within the present. Formally and thematically, these works require – and reward – an active, inquisitive, and interrogatory mode of spectatorship. Yet this vision of active spectatorship is quite different from the rigorous austerity traditionally associated with the framework of political modernism. Rather than aggressive confrontation, Douglas's works seduce the viewer deeper and deeper into their web of allusion and reference.

Der Sandmann affords us a window into the dynamic reconceptualisation of place occurring within contemporary moving-image installations. While not beholden to a material or even strictly geographic conception of 'site-specificity', the particular 'placelessness' invoked by the cinematic form does not float ungrounded, but is rather tied quite specifically to a foundation of land and history. Yet this foundation is neither uniform nor stable; it exists as an interlocking matrix of allusion and reference, constantly remade within the space of media representation. For Douglas, the 'post-cinematic' installation is a stratigraphic engagement with history, made tangible and sensuous

through a polyphony of dislocation. His works create a portal through which the spectator can travel, while underscoring the extent to which the most foreign lands are frequently those closest to home.

Notes

1 See Chrissie Iles, 'Issues in the new cinematic aesthetic in video', in Tanya Leighton and Pavel Büchler (eds), *Saving the Image* (Glasgow: Centre for Contemporary Arts, 2003), pp. 129–41.

2 Jean-Christophe Royoux, 'Towards a post cinematic space-time', in Sara Arrhelius, Magdalena Malm, and Cristina Ricupero (eds), *Black Box Illuminated* (Stockholm: IASPIS, NIFCA and Propexus, 2003), pp. 107–20; and Royoux, 'The conflict of communications', in *Stan Douglas* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1993), pp. 56–57.

3 Hugo Münsterberg, *The Film: A Psychological Study: The Silent Photoplay in 1916* (New York: Dover, 1970).

4 Giuliana Bruno, 'Collection and recollection: on film itineraries and museum walks', in Bruno, *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), p. 17. See also her *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (New York: Verso, 2002).

5 Walter Benjamin, 'Unpacking my library' (1931), in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Fontana, 1973), p. 61; my emphasis.

6 Bruno, 'Collection and recollection', p. 4; Walter Benjamin, 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', in *Illuminations*, p. 222.

7 Bruno, 'Collection and recollection', p. 17.

8 Sheldon Renan, *An Introduction to the American Underground Film* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1967). A much fuller genealogy is elaborated in my forthcoming study, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Site, Specificity, and the Emergence of an Expanded Cinema in Postwar Art* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press).

9 Lynne Cooke, Karen Kelly, and Bettina Funcke (eds), *Robert Whitman: Playback* (New York: Dia Art Foundation, 2003), p. 64.

10 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (1976; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999).

11 Robert Whitman, as quoted in Michael Kirby, *Happenings: An Illustrated Anthology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1965), p. 136.

12 Chrissie Iles, *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art: 1964–1977* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001), p. 86.

13 James Joyce, preparatory notebook for *Ulysses*, cited in Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 277. Casey writes, '[T]he initial spatio-temporal equipose of the phrase "topical history" is subverted by the claim that the active agent is place and not historical events, the former actively remembering the latter. Joyce calls into question the characteristically modern conception of viewing memory as exclusively time-bound, i.e. as recollection of the past. The

inherent localism of memory also obtains for narration, in which places, instead of merely settings or scenes, are active agents of commemoration.'

14 Bruno, 'Collection and recollection', p. 33.

15 Giuliana Bruno and Tom Conley have together written several book-length studies of the intersection of cinema and cartography. In addition to Bruno's *Atlas of Emotion*, see her *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) and, more recently, Conley's *Cartographic Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). Conley cites de Certeau on p. 215, n. 4 of the latter work.

16 I elaborate this idea in my '*La Jetée en spirale*: Robert Smithson's stratigraphic cinema', *Grey Room*, 1:19 (Spring 2005), pp. 54–79.

17 I discuss the contemporary cinematic installation as intertext in my 'Siting cinema: Janet Cardiff and Pierre Huyghe', in Tanya Leighton (ed.), *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), pp. 386–400.

18 See Douglas, '*Der Sandmann*, 1995: historical background and script', in Scott Watson, Diana Thater, Carol J. Clover, and Gilles Deleuze, *Stan Douglas* (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), pp. 124–30.

19 Sigmund Freud, 'The Schreber case (psychoanalytic remarks on an autobiographically described case of paranoia (dementia paranoides))', trans. Andrew Webber (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003); Jacques Lacan, *The Psychoses: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III, 1955–56*, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 1997); Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1983), pp. 1–50, 273–382; Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984), pp. 434–64; Morton Schatzman, *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1973); Eric Santner, *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

20 Stan Douglas, '*Der Sandmann*, Script, 1994/97', from Watson et al., *Stan Douglas*, p. 128.

21 E. T. A. Hoffmann, 'The Sandman' (1816), in *The Tales of Hoffmann* (London: Penguin Classics, 1982), pp. 85–126, and 'Die Doppelgänger' (1821, untranslated); Edgar Allan Poe, 'William Wilson' (1939), from *The Complete Tales of Edgar Allan Poe* (Castle Books, 2003), pp. 555–68; Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Double: A Petersburg Poem*, trans. Constance Garnett (Dodo Press, 2008); Ernst Jentsch, 'On the psychology of the uncanny', in *Angelaki: The Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, 2:1 (1997), pp. 7–16; Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971); Sigmund Freud, 'The uncanny' (1919), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. 17, pp. 217–56. Andrew Webber teases out the relations between many of these texts in his *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

22 Galeen's particular *Doppelgänger* was only the latest in a thirty-year history of illusionistic ghosts and doublings that began with Georges Méliès and his followers. Friedrich Kittler discusses the cultural dislocation of the double from the novel to the screen in his *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 153.

23 On the identification between the cinematic apparatus and the female body as a key fantasy of the cinematic form, see Annette Michelson's 'On the Eve of the future: the reasonable facsimile and the philosophical toy', *October*, 29 (Summer 1984), pp. 3–20.
24 Freud, 'The uncanny', p. 220.
25 Freud, 'The uncanny', p. 220.
26 Robert Smithson, 'Art through the camera's eye' (c. 1971), in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996). Interestingly, Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub's *Geschichtsunterricht* (*History Lessons*) was completed this same year, and employed a comparable stratigraphic or archaeological conception of historical inquiry.
27 Gregg Horowitz, *Sustaining Loss: Art and Mournful Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).
28 Jeffrey Skoller, *Shadows, Specters, Shards: Making History in Avant-Garde Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

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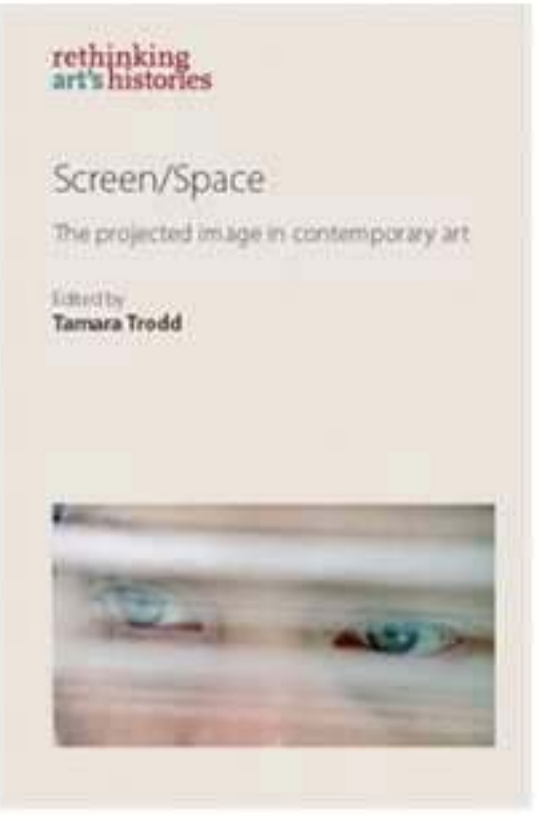
Screen/Space

The projected image in contemporary art
Edited by Tamara Trodd



Projected-image art occupies an increasingly important place in the contemporary art-world. But does the projected image have its own specificity, beyond the histories of experimental film and video on the one hand, and installation art on the other? What is a projected image, and what is the history of projected-image art? What is the relationship of the projected image to the museum, and is the museum being superseded by new media, digital and internet art? What are the specific forms of spectatorship which are encouraged by projected-image art, and how do these present challenges to existing critical and theoretical frameworks? Is there a politics of projection?

These questions and others are explored in this thoughtful collection of nine essays by leading international scholars of film and projected-image art. Clearly structured in three sections – 'Histories', 'Screen', 'Space' – the book argues for recognition of the projected image as a distinctive category in contemporary art, which demands new critical and theoretical approaches. The contributors explore a range of interpretive perspectives, offering new insights into the work of artists including Michael Snow, Carolee Schneemann, Pipilotti Rist, Stan Douglas, Gillian Wearing, Tacita Dean, Jane and Louise Wilson, amongst others. The Introduction supplies a concise summary of the history of projected-image art and its interpretation, and there is a focus throughout the book on detailed analysis of individual artworks. The breadth of historical material covered (encompassing developments from the late 1920s to the present) and the consistent referencing of canonical as well as newer works will ensure the book's continuing appeal to students and scholars alike of art history, film studies, fine art and visual culture.

Tamara Trodd is Lecturer in European Modernism at the University of Edinburgh

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