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Title	Architecture, Film, and the In-between: Spatio-Cinematic Betwixt, edited by Vahid Vadat and James F. Kerestes
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Publication date	2024-07-02
Original Citation	Weidner, S. (2024) 'Architecture, Film, and the In-between: Spatio-Cinematic Betwixt, edited by Vahid Vadat and James F. Kerestes', Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media, 27, pp. 317–322. https://doi.org/10.33178/alpha.27.34
Type of publication	Article (not peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	10.33178/alpha.27.34
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Download date	2026-11-07 05:16:39
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/16087



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Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media
no. 27, 2024, pp. 317–322
DOI: https://doi.org/10.33178/alpha.27.34

Architecture, Film, and the In-between: Spatio-Cinematic Betwixt, edited by Vahid Vadat and James F. Kerestes. Intellect, 2023, 256 pp.

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In the foreword to *Architecture, Film, and the In-between: Spatio-Cinematic Betwixt*, Mark Foster Gage opines that the architectural discipline has reached an ideological and creative "wall". Devoid of a dominant ideological force in architecture to subvert or rebel against, and competing for the attention of an increasingly overstimulated public, he asserts that modern architecture lacks a taboo, set of building materials, language, or style that is revolutionary enough to make people pay attention to innovative design. However, Gage and the book's editors Vahid Vahdat and James F. Kerestes suggest that the future is not entirely bleak: one simply needs to look inside the liminal spaces—whether between literal walls or academic disciplines—to find meaningful and engaging solutions. The central organising theme of this collection is "the betwixt", a concept first coined by the Scottish cultural anthropologist, Victor Turner. Originally used as a term to explicate his theory of liminality, particularly as used to describe rites of passage within different cultural systems, the editors and contributors of this volume find numerous challenging and insightful ways of applying "the betwixt" to both architectural and cinematic design.

Featuring contributions from scholars across the disciplines of architecture, film studies, visual media, engineering, sociology, philosophy, and environmental studies, the collection relies on an equally diverse range of methodologies to "frame the coming and going", as Gage describes (5), of multi-disciplinary scholastic inquiry regarding the "spatio-cinematic betwixt" (5). Close examinations of film narratives, individual film frames, book illustrations, and architectural renderings (drawn plans and building photographs) abound as do uses of historical and archival material from the likes of such architects and visual artists as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Tobias Putrih, and John Lautner.

The book intentionally lacks a clear layout or set of organising principles, save for the aforementioned central theme of liminality/the in-between/"poché"/the "betwixt". As emphasised by series co-editors Vahid Vahdat and James F. Kerestes in the volume's introduction, the book's goal is not "to offer some illusion of coherence or singularity to the fragmented body of text that follows" (5), but instead to be a neutral and fertile site to creatively interrogate screens, volumes of space, and the meaningful liminalities that lie in between environments, disciplines, and artforms. Vahdat and Kerestes delineate clear boundaries around the work and the limits to the types of films discussed in the chapters. Recognising that the volume examines predominantly Western, canonised

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films, usually from white directors, including *Cleo from 5 to 7* (*Cléo de 5 à 7*, Agnès Varda, 1962), *Tenet* (Christopher Nolan, 2020), *Hellraiser* (Clive Barker, 1987) and *Hugo* (Martin Scorsese, 2011), they aim to hold the door open for future volumes of work which will focus on the intersections of architecture and non-Western films outside of the traditional film canon.

In the absence of a top-down approach to organising the book chapters, my approach to categorising the volume's components is two-tiered: in the first category, I include chapters that deal directly with cinematic and/or televisual texts. In the second category, I include chapters that primarily explore the work of prominent architects, architectural theorists, and/or technologies that are currently expanding the possibilities of designed space. The first, film-forward category includes Chapters One, Three, Four, Six, Seven, Eight, and Thirteen while the second, architecture-forward category contains Chapters Two, Five, Nine, Ten, Eleven, Twelve, and Fourteen. In creating this system of organisation, I do not mean to argue that readers should think of these two disciplines as separate or that the editors or contributing authors wish to isolate architecture and cinema from each other. The scholarship produced in this volume recognises and productively interrogates the multidisciplinary contributions of diverse fields in answering questions surrounding the intertwined futures of architecture and the moving image.

In Juhani Pallasmaa's opening chapter, "Veracity of Experience", the author finds fundamental similarities between the ways in which architecture and cinema rely on multisensory, kinaesthetic experiences of space. Sampling a cornucopia of philosophical and theoretical work from such minds as Walter Benjamin and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and applying the results to major case studies including the spatial layout of Fritz Lang's *M* (1933), Lars von Trier's *Dogville* (2003), and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), Pallasmaa ultimately contends that the fictive spaces of impactful books and films are just as "real" for audiences as any of the material spaces in which one has lived.

Building on the multisensorial realities of fictive film environments, the third chapter, "Walled Fantasies" by Vahid Vahdat and the fourth, "Horrific Transitions by James F. Kerestes", both engage with the whimsical or horrifying liminal spaces of Martin Scorsese's *Hugo* and Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*, respectively. In the first entry, Vahdat celebrates the oft-overlooked architectural poché—spatial elements on architectural drawings that are filled in or cross-hatched and represent the inside components of walls, ceilings, columns, and other leftover spaces. Anchoring his analysis on both Brian Selznick's 2007 children's historical fiction novel, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, and Scorsese's 2011 film adaptation, the author maintains that the film frame works hand in hand with architectural frames to expose what is hidden inside these pochés, resulting in engaging and spatially fantastical narratives. Kerestes' following chapter puts a terrifying spin on the analysis of pochés. Building on the substantial history of architectural pochés in horror cinema, including the bedroom closet in *Black Christmas* (Clark, 1974), the outside stairway of *The Exorcist* (Friedkin, 1973), and the base of the bathtub in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Craven, 1984), he asserts that the *Hellraiser* film franchise compellingly draws viewer attentions to the horrifying potentials of the pochés in our living spaces. Ultimately, through further research on the connections between popular cultural media and unconscious behaviours, these structural components will provide new tools for engaging structural and spatial design.

Chapters Six, Seven, Eight, and Thirteen in the collection pivot from strict examinations of formal elements of cinematic architecture to analyses of the socio-political, temporal, and ecological liminalities of fictive environments. "Varda Makes Her *Pointe*" finds architectural scholar Maria Sieira reconsidering the famed filmography of French New Wave directorial icon, Agnès Varda. Highlighting the particular spatial, cinematographic, and narrative liminalities of such works as *La Pointe Courte* (1955), *Cleo from 5 to 7*, and *Vagabond* (*Sans toit ni loi*, 1985), she argues for a critical reassessment of the spaces in Varda's films utilising her proposed framework of "cinearchitecture", or designing space with cinema, in order to more fully understand how the director combines both realism and artifice to craft artistically and socially powerful works. In Chapter Seven, Michael Young's "A Cross-Temporal Standstill", draws upon case studies from across the Western film and television canons to propose four distinct categories to classify the relations between cinematic motion and montage: 1) Forward 2) Reversed 3) Reversed-Forward and 4) Cross-Temporal. By manipulating cinematic senses of time in one of these four ways, especially the last two, the author contends that viewers are redirected to engage more fully with the architectural and spatial environments, resulting in feelings of enchanted awe, uncanny strangeness, or precarious standstill.

In "Rituals, Reality, and Its Double", authors Alican Taylan and Mehmet Şahinler apply an anthropological lens to the architecture of televisual liminal spaces, selecting the Black Lodge, an otherwordly site of sheer evil in David Lynch and Mark Frost's *Twin Peaks*, as their primary case study. The two scholars contend with the productive convergences of ritual, realism, estrangement, and defamiliarisation used in both architectural practice and filmmaking, arguing that such plentiful anthropological frameworks open up further engaging possibilities for the future of architectural and cinematic spatial inquiry. Finally, in Chapter Thirteen, "Projective Environments, Atmospheric Architectures" the scholar and design practitioner Jason Vigneri-Beane offers analyses of two cinematic examples illustrate transhumanist-design thinking in the imagined liminal spaces between the Anthropocene and the post-Anthropocene. Drawing on examinations of the allopoetic and sympoetic fictive ecologies of the science-fiction narratives in *Prospect* (Earl and Caldwell, 2018) and *Annihilation* (Garland, 2018), respectively, the author contends that by "deconsolidating architecture" and "dissolving its boundaries" these speculative, near-future cinematic scenarios offer examples of how innovative architecture might become in the post-Anthropocene (213).

The second, architecture-forward category of films begins with Chapter Two, in John Yoder's "Architecture after Affect". Seeking to move past phenomenology, cinema, apparatus, and automation, he situates the unconventional, technology-filled design approaches of American architect John Lautner as a primary example of an innovator whose spaces continue to produce hybrid relationships between "house, human, and horizon" (38). Similar to Yoder's approach to analysing the hybrid design innovations of a singular architect, Beatriz Colomina examines how liminal spaces take shape within the work of German American modern architect, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Structuring the chapter around individual commissioned spaces the famous designer was tasked with creating, she asserts that between art and architecture, Mies van der Rohe was obsessed with "new forms of exposure, new forms of display, new forms of transparency" (89) and created architecture through art, not architecture which simply contained art. Chapters Eleven, Twelve, and Fourteen together grapple with the architectural and atmospheric design of viewing spaces. Eva Perez de Vega's chapter, "In Between Body and Image", analyses three historical

moments to sketch how built environments for viewing and housing both still and moving artwork have maintained relatively strict or loose control on spectators. Giuliana Bruno's "Projective Environments, Atmospheric Architectures" picks up where Perez de Vega's project finishes and explores how contemporary artist and designer Thomas Putrih creates engrossing and transformative multimedia installations to watch motion pictures. Finally, the collection concludes with Patrik Schumacher's chapter, "A Realist Conception of Architecture in the Metaverse". Detailing the author's ongoing project, located at the intersection of architecture, cinema, the realist novel, and metaverse technologies, Schumacher ultimately contends that the metaverse, guided by the boundaries of realism, can bring revolutionary change to the aesthetics of architecture and "all that architecture frames" (228).

The primary focus on the in-between, while clearly not a new concept, for either film or architecture, is presented in new, novel, and productive ways throughout the collection. It is unsurprising that so much of the collection's architectural and cinematic theoretical underpinnings revolve around theorists with which both disciplines share common interests. One of the primary theorists mentioned liberally is the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. From the forward of the book, it is clear that contemporary architectural theory and experience has spent much time thinking about ontological states of being and the ways in which constant states of becoming rather than fully existing, impact the built environment, the natural world, and the living subjects and non-living objects of which they are part. In the foreword, Mark Foster Gage argues that this book marks a clear turning point in architectural scholarship in that the works of the volume presume that all cinematic and spatial entities studied, including their related "betwixts"/in-betweens/liminalities/pochés, exist in full and have become. It seems as though this volume does not rely on as clear a break from Deleuze and phenomenological experience of cinema and architecture as Gage asserts, with at least approximately thirty per cent of the book relying on theoretical underpinnings from Deleuze, Husserl, Heidegger, or Merleau-Ponty. However, many of the questions the volume's works ask about spatio-visual frames and the sensorial experiences of in-betweenness can be engagingly accommodated with phenomenological methodologies. What is perhaps most heartening about this collection is that the door is left open for the contributions of diverse theoretical and cinematic texts. In a second volume, it would be fascinating to see how cognitive, feminist, queer, disability studies, and post-colonial theories of cinema and architecture examine the specific experiences of liminal spaces by individuals who inhabit intersecting marginalised communities.

Of specific cinematic interest within this collection are the elements, technologies, and communicative aspects that non-cinematic theorists and practitioners find most useful in their respective disciplines. The centrality of the camera as frame, the temporal illusion of montage, as well as the three-dimensional illusions of three-dimensional space being projected onto two-dimensional planes have clear portability within both disciplines. From a technological and formal perspective, it is refreshing to see the capabilities of the camera frame compared to the illusory capabilities of windows, a clear and highly practical analogy, rather than imposing anthropomorphic limitations onto the technology by likening the camera to the metaphor of the human body and/or the "kino-eye." Some theorisations on cinema-space seem slightly redundant or invite further exploration, particularly theorisations on "cinearchitecture". At present, while perhaps linguistically satisfying to see a new take on Varda's own "cinécriture", it is unclear how such a term is any different than the cinematic concept of diegesis and the theatrical notion of

mise-en-scène. Further interrogation of the term in light of these existing spatial concepts will, perhaps, further sharpen the term's utility.

In closing, *Architecture, Film, and the In-between: Spatio-Cinematic Betwixt* provides a compelling, multidisciplinary snapshot of contemporary architectural and cinematic spatial design. While scholars and practitioners of both disciplines will likely gravitate more toward certain chapters, methodological tools, and ideas, the meeting of architecture, cinema, as well as philosophy, sociology, ecology, and anthropology proves to be fruitful and worth revisiting.

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Suggested Citation

Weidner, Shannon. "*Architecture, Film, and the In-between: Spatio-Cinematic Betwixt*, edited by Vahid Vadat and James F. Kerestes." *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*, no. 27, 2024, pp. 317–322. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33178/alpha.27.34

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