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"Cinema, Alone"/Multiple "Cinemas"

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Figure 1: Tony Oursler, *The Influence Machine*, 2000–2002. Video projections. Madison Square Park, New York / Soho Square, London / Magasin 3, Stockholm. Photograph: Tony Oursler.

This lecture was presented as part of a series of twenty-five conferences on cinema and the arts held between 2001–2002 at the Collège d'Histoire de l'Art Cinématographique, Cinémathèque française. It was first published in French, as "Le Cinéma seul/Multiples 'cinémas'". Le Septième Art. Le cinéma parmi les arts. *Ed. Jacques Aumont. Paris: Léo Scheer, 2003, 257–80. Print. Some elements of the essay have since been integrated in the introductory chapter of* La Querelle des dispositifs*. Cinéma – expositions, installations, coll. "Trafic". Paris: P.O.L, 2012. Print.*

Translation by Jill Murphy

I dedicate this lecture to the memory of my friend Serge Daney, who, as a result of his premature death, never had the opportunity to speak at this event. This dedication is not coincidental as the first half of the paper's title is his.

In his posthumously published diary *L'exercice a été profitable, Monsieur*—the title is taken from the little boy's response in Fritz Lang's *Moonfleet* (1955)—the first entry for 1989 reads: "Let's start again from here. This chronicle should be called 'Cinema, Alone'. It should talk of that which cinema, alone, has the mission to pursue. It should be the end of the period of "images" (157).

Strictly speaking, this chronicle existed only fleetingly in Daney's diary and some of his later texts. However, his concern gives rise to a search for a better understanding of these words: "cinema, alone". They can be understood as follows: "that which cinema, alone, has the mission to pursue", which seems to respond to the title of Chapter 2a, *Seul le cinéma* (*Only the Cinema*, 1997), of Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, which was in production at the same time. But it can also be understood as a situation of isolation, or even uniqueness, rather than of a reflection on the essence or excellence of cinema, which would then refer even more specifically to the title of Chapter 1b, *Une histoire seule* (*A History Alone*, 1989), also in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*.

These words "cinema, alone" thus make us think, perhaps incorrectly, of the present day, a time when cinema has for some time not been alone among the arts or among *dispositifs* to be what it is supposed to be, to show what it is supposed to show, which is *moving image and sound*, in contrast with a time, a moment in history, when *only* it would have been, or could have done, that.

I'll therefore try to elucidate this contrast.

A presentation such as this generally implies a hypothesis, which it tries to capture in its title. I have been prompted, in response to the kind invitation extended to me, and considering the suggested theme and my ability to respond to it, to divide the title between an assured hypothesis and a tentative hypothesis.

The assured hypothesis relates to the increasingly irreversible position of cinema within multiple image and sound *dispositifs* in locations and forms that circumvent the restriction that prevailed for so long that we came to believe that it was the *dispositif*. This situation makes us think, if we consider before and after the advent of cinema and its subsequent history, that cinema is really only one among many *dispositifs*, albeit one that has been particularly successful.

The tentative hypothesis is that the emphatic nature of this success supports what I call here, in league with Daney, "cinema, alone" and all that those words suggest.

I propose to divide this paper into two parts: in one part I will show clips from three films; in the other, I will show video and slides of installations in order to convey an idea of what is being projected outside the film theatre itself, since any installation reinvents its own *dispositif*, which also holds true for cinema, as a whole, and for the film, the auditorium and the fixed projection time.

I will start with the second part, in order to be better able to return to the idea of "cinema, alone".

1. Multiple Cinemas

For many years, one of my key areas of interest has been what I call "L'Entre-Images"—a permanent reevaluation of the mutations and exchanges between different image media, in which I have increasingly focussed attention on installations and different image and sound *dispositifs* at the forefront of cinema and the plastic arts.

Today, I would like to, as briefly as possible, present a somewhat arbitrary route, based on what I have had the good fortune to be able to see, since the Venice Biennale curated by Harald Szeemann in 1999—an important moment of transition in the view of attentive witnesses (such as Dominique Païni and Vincent Dieutre)—with a group of installations that departed from the traditional arts of painting and sculpture, and as a whole provided evidence of what seems to me an "other cinema" (Bellour), (what Jean-Christophe Royoux prefers to call "cinema of exhibition"). The 2001 Venice Biennale only served to confirm this further.

As it tends to cause most confusion, let's remind ourselves first of the existence of two installation categories that alternate between cinema and the museum:

Firstly, there are *the installations that use cinema as an object* to be reformulated, of which the most emblematic is probably Douglas Gordon's famous *24 Hour Psycho* (1993), which I will only mention in passing, while also stressing the polemic statement that seems to sum up this disconnected relationship with cinema: "for us, cinema is dead". Indeed the phrase's brutality seems central to it (and is taken from the title of an article by Emmanuel Hermange on "some cinephilic strategies for art" in a recent special issue of *Parachute* on "Mouvances de la image" ("Movements of the image").[1]

The second category refers to filmmakers' installations, which have grown in number recently. Without even mentioning Chris Marker, Raúl Ruiz, Peter Greenaway, Alexander Sokhurov, Hans-Jurgen Syberberg or Raymond Depardon, we can take the example of the last Venice Biennale as a quick summary (really a reminder without being able to show examples):

Close (Atom Egoyan and Juliao Sarmento, 2001) involves, as its title suggests, a story told in close-up, on a colour screen in a corridor so narrow that the spectator is brought into close proximity with the image, without the possibility of viewing it at a distance (Egoyan's other two installations, *Early Development* (1997) and *Steenbeckett* (2002),[2] also test the

dispositif, the title of the second work suggesting in its title an instrumental, nostalgic relationship with the cinema as a material art of montage).

Going beyond the simple projected installation of *Visione del deserto* (*Visions of the Desert,* 2000),[3] as the title suggests, *La marcia dell'uomo* (*The March of Man,* Yervant Gianikian-Angela Ricci Lucchi, 2001) forces the spectator to follow, by moving his/her own body, the arduous journey of the colonised, from Marey's historical images to those of an amateur filmmaker shown on the three screens variously located in the darkness.

Again, as the title suggests, in *Sleepers* (2001), Abbas Kiarostami shifts the projection by reflecting it on a mirror on the ceiling, so that the image is projected onto the ground, forming a square measuring approximately two metres in length that brings the viewer to a halt in front of the image of a sleeping couple, whose sleep moves between calm and agitated, under a cover with folds rendered like a painting by Veronese or Poussin, convincing those who stay watching for the duration of one hour and forty minutes that a cinema of reality is taking place.

Subsequent to her two installations (The masterwork, *D'Est, au bord de la fiction*, 1995, and *Self-Portrait/Autobiography: A Work in Progress*, 1988),[4] and prior to participating at Documenta (*From the Other Side,* 2002), in her *Woman Sitting Down After Killing* (2001) in Venice*,* Chantal Akerman used six monitors to show the seven-minute sequence in which the heroine of her film *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce 1080 Bruxelles* (1975) sits in her dining room after killing one of her occasional male clients, experiencing the passage of time. The small amount of movement that remains in the image from the original film is captured and increased by the installation through a series of almost imperceptible increments.



Figure 2: *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (Chantal Akerman, 1975). Criterion Collection, 2009. Screenshot.

We should also add to these four examples from Venice, two other filmmakers:

Jonas Mekas, who rearranges the elements of his five-hour film *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2000), under the title *Autobiography of a Man Who Carried His Memory In His Eyes* (2000)[5] on monitors, over three small connecting rooms and a window display filled with documents.

For several years, Harun Farocki has been working on three two-screen installations (*Section* 1995; *I Thought I was Seeing Convicts*, 2000; *Eye Machine*, 2001), the exhibition conditions of which vary according to the exhibition and the curator (monitors, full screen or angled projections); a single-channel image for television and film festivals is also available, in which the two images overlap in the same way as in the exhibition versions.

We should also recall that in 2001, the same year as the last Biennale, a thought-provoking institutional exchange between cinema and museum took place at the Rotterdam International Film Festival. I found myself then in a similar position to the one I put myself in when I accepted to speak here today; I was invited to speak at the 8th Serge Daney conference, in tribute to the individual that Godard symptomatically called the "cinéfils",[6] but, paradoxically, was requested by Simon Field, Director of the Film Festival, and Chris Dercon, Director of the Boijmans Museum, one of the most prestigious museums of painting in the world, to assess the effect of a group of artworks gathered together under the title *Exploding Cinema/Cinema Without Walls*, spread over three museums: the Chabot Museum, showing the works of Czech artist Jan Svankmajer (drawings, paintings, installations, animations); Witte de With, a contemporary art gallery with two groups of installations and then, the major exhibition, with fifteen installations, created by Chris Dercon and Simon Field within the "walls" of Boijmans was this "cinema without walls". To take one example, *Zócalo: May 22, 1999* (1999), by Francis Alys, is a video that documents in real time an imperceptibly moving image recorded over twelve hours in a square in Mexico, which is very aptly "hung" opposite one of Guardi's many versions of *Santa Maria della Salute*, which was hanging in its normal location in the museum, and which appeared, according to the curators of the programme, to show paradoxically more movement and life than its animated counterpart.

But let's return to the installations in Venice, this time in the company of Dominique Païni, who has already used them as the central example of one of the most inspired chapters in an inspiring book titled *Le temps exposé. Le cinéma de la salle au musée* (*Exposed Time. Cinema from the Film Theatre to the Museum*).

To briefly summarise Païni's main argument, in its more progressive margins the art of cinema has experienced an aesthetic revolution that has encouraged its importation into the museum. In this regard Païni stresses the importance of the DVD, which has greater capability than the video disc or cassette to loop a projection infinitely, something that gives a kind of mobile immobility, of which certain films already provide a perfect example. He emphasises, citing Alain Badiou, whose observations seem to him to follow the same direction, that the cinema would thus carry out, by these new means, a sort of ideal synthesis of painting and music (which moreover recalls, as one might remember, a similar fusion forecast by Elie Faure in *Fonction du cinéma*). Païni concludes thus: "[c]inema is founded upon a constant forgetting ... in order to present the illusory restoration of life. Would filmmakers like to find a new location today in order to preserve the ideas that gave rise to it?" (*Le temps exposé* 78).

I feel that I should reinterpret the title of Païni's five-year-old essay "Faut-il finir avec projection?" ("Should we put an end to projection?") from the catalogue for his exhibition "Projections: les transports de l'image" ("Projection, Transports of The Image"). Would this "new location" therefore be a new way of reactivating as a possible end—in both senses of the word, finish and destination—the old theme of metamorphosis, which is in a certain sense

as consistently false as one might want the "death of cinema" to be true? I recall Rilke's definitive words quoted in passing by Païni in his argument that speak of "the evermore rapid fading away of so much of the visible that will no longer be replaced" ("Projections" 172).[7]

Is it then the virtual announcement of the death of cinema that occurs in the passage of cinema from "the film theatre to the museum"; the still unrealised prospect of a time when this passage would lead continuously from museum to museum? With a twisted ambiguity attached to the fact that the museum may also shelter within its walls classic projection specific to cinema, removed from its normal screening conditions in a social place of spectacle, to become the place where this projection dies, one would say, itself losing its inalienable *dispositif*; its limits of space and time.

I cannot respond to that directly, but will instead outline the contrast that was originally indicated. In "D'un autre cinéma", I've attempted to set up some models according to which the cinema of installations can be viewed—specific conditions of the *dispositifs*, that can be found to a greater or lesser extent in exceptional works: a wall of screens, a room (or an image environment) / a suite (of rooms) / an all-encompassing screen (in which anything can make/be/become a screen) / direct projection on a white screen (in other words a screen on a wall, which is closest to the cinema image).

As difficult as it might be within this constantly changing landscape, it seems possible to say that a certain number of installations have also, at approximately the same time, evolved towards the concept of *dispositifs*, in which one sees in very different ways, an increasingly evident element that is in competition with the cinematic *dispositif*—through the deconstruction and reassembly of its specific elements, and through inspiration from its history and prehistory (whether silent cinema or pre-cinema).

I am briefly going to discuss seven *dispositifs* that seem to me, through the great range that they display, to present the "multiple cinemas" inherent in contemporary installations. Together, they aptly depict the contrast with what cinema, alone, induces in us, the self-assured cinema that belongs to a specific time in its history, or, as it is today, in a tenuous minority state, through the same continuing experience of projection in film theatres: "cinema, alone".

I will begin—it will become apparent why at the end—with an installation by Pipilotti Rist, which I have already discussed in "D'un autre cinéma", and which continues to strike me as a mimesis of cinema using alternative means.

[Slide projection]

This is a slide showing *Suburb Brain* (1999) subtitled "a model in miniature of the outskirts of Zurich". A long circular ramp separates the installation from the visiting spectators. At the centre is a very elaborate model of a suburban house, with its garden and outhouses, on the edge of a forest. Everything is there, closely simulating real life in the tiniest details. Three projections are also displayed simultaneously, for thirty minutes (I don't have time to show it, but you can also imagine how much, both individually and projected at the same time, they reveal the single *dispositif* that brings them together). On the wall that serves as a backdrop, a huge blurred and shaky image of a changing landscape is seen. On a small screen in the right hand part of this backdrop, we see an extreme close-up of the mouth of a woman, which belongs to the artist, who provides a non-stop description of the utter

decay of her life in the family home and her struggle as a woman. This image moves: the mouth oscillating on the left edge of the frame, where it disappears sometimes, in front of a landscape that unfolds—which is more or less the same landscape as in the larger image. Finally, a front window of the house has been enlarged to the dimensions of a smaller screen: on it, at a ghostly remove, an overexposed video image shows a single shot of a large table, as in a home movie, a birthday party with a cake, candles, faces in ecstatic and almost monstrous close-ups. This expanded shot periodically alternates with disturbing scenarios: a manipulated, speeded-up image of the same setting as the birthday party depicts heads without bodies and bodies without heads, echoing the implied monstrosity. The inquiring spectator who moves to the left of the scene will also see on the side wall of the house, two smaller red and white windows that intermittently light up, resembling other potential screens.

This suggests that everything in the house is a screen; that it is both a place of projection and a support for it; that it becomes the space of a fiction told by the work as a whole, according to the conventional identification with the heroine whose voice guides us, through fragmented views that never stop combining with the unpredictable spectator. There is a seat available if the visitor wants to do more than just pass through. One also may be reminded, because of the title and theme, of *Numèro deux* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1975), an extraordinary film-*dispositif* of disparate images that Godard described as "a documentary on the sexuality of the inhabitants of lower Grenoble" (Delilia and Dosse 28). But, in that case, the spectator, whose attention is caught by a particular *dispositif*, knows that Godard is using television and video to invent another way of being at the cinema, opening up another dimension of cinema, while here the spectator finds him- or herself confronted by an *other cinema*, which in part borrows from aspects of cinema that relate to society and spectacle but is not reducible to only that.

Tony Oursler

As you are probably already aware, for many years Tony Oursler's work has been based on two governing principles. The first is the reinvention of projection by splitting and expanding it. Oursler projects faces and scenes that he has filmed or found onto exaggeratedly polymorphic creatures and materials, with accompanying monologues and dialogues. He also creates, in detailed mises en scène, beings whose images suffer terribly, mixing them through one room or several, taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the architecture of museums (doors, windows, beams, stairs...) using objects or elements of the rooms like a theatrical scene, creating terrifying worlds using what he has to hand. He also creates a cinema that is at once metaphysical and social and, simultaneously, fragmented and permanent, in the different elements, which one passes by but also stops to look at, caught in *a generalised mini-projection*.

The most appropriate example of this is *System for Dramatic Feedback* (1994). In effect, one sees in a single space three motifs that overlap: an isolated creature, crying fearfully in one corner; a sort of tower, several metres high, made of a heap of clothes and rags inhabited by a collection of pitiful creatures with mini-monitors, conveying the appearance of a building squatted by the homeless; finally, projected on a wall in front of the mound, is an image of an audience, their eyes raised towards an unseen image. The particular impact of this image is that it evokes both the classical situation of cinemagoers and those of a different type of spectator, which we become within the *dispositif* that it comprises.

[Projection of four slides]

This specific effect of Oursler's work can be considered in three works that further develop it to a limit that either decimates or expands the paradoxical space of the museum, depending on one's viewpoint.

The Influence Machine (2000)

Shown in London and, in particular, in Madison Square Park, New York, at nightfall, this installation uses similar projection effects in real urban space (Figure 1). The museum therefore becomes the city itself, making quasi spectators of its virtual passers-by. Two occurrences are particularly striking. The first relates to the movement of huge talking heads, images of which are formed on various backdrops, by moving the cameras on site, with the result that the images travel from the ground to the top of the trees, even to the surrounding buildings, where they continue speaking. The second series of projections is even more unexpected: it takes place on two screens formed by varying depths of smoke, (produced by a machine operated by two technicians to ensure a variable consistency); the projections can be seen as the smokescreens form. Thus two different sizes of image are created by the different distances, in which the full view of the larger of the two images is duplicated. The remarkable metamorphosis that occurs keeps these faces speaking to us at the edge of the intangible, floating between dissolution and reconfiguration of their features, between the real and the virtual.

A word that immediately comes to mind when faced with such a performance is phantasmagoria. We know that Robertson, who, at the end of the eighteenth century, invented what seems to be the first true prefiguration of cinema, sometimes used smoke to harness the quality of the fantastical and non-material movement of images, which he tried to impress upon the imagination of his audience. Oursler knows exactly what he is doing: Robertson is evoked in the fragmented text of these images, and the enunciation both fleetingly and frighteningly contributes to shaping the expression of the faces.

[Video projection]

I Hate the Dark, I Love the Light

This title refers to a long-term constantly updated, systematic inventory by Tony Oursler of all *dispositifs* relating to the production of sound and image, from ancient Egypt to today. An inventory in which one clearly sees the cinema appear as a transition point throughout the centuries. First published in one of his catalogues,[8] this inventory has been made available on the Internet in an interactive format.

Fantastic Prayers (2000)

This is a CD-ROM (produced in collaboration with the writer Constance de Jong and the musician Stephen Vitiello). I will be brief on this and only emphasise the fact that it is an astonishing body of images and sounds, aimed particularly at forming relatively refined groups of narrative, arranged in levels that extend infinitely in relation to each other. The CD-ROM puts the reader-spectator in the same position as the viewer of Oursler's installations:

on the edge of fictions that might be constructed, of an autonomous world to be produced, whose convincing degree of reality resembles a particular form of animated cinema used in life-size installations, an "other cinema" thus oscillating between computer and museum.

Zoe Beloff

This American artist is also the creator of two interactive CD-ROMs, closely linked to the archaeology of images from the second half of the nineteenth century and a digital reinvention of the panorama (*Beyond*, 1994, and *Where Where There There Where (Some Thoughts),* 1998). She has also created a 3-D film shown at the Rotterdam Festival, *Shadow Land of Light from the Other Side* (2000), which combines and borrows elements from psychic research and the spirit photo at the end of the nineteenth century. She has also created a piece using her small but comprehensive collection inspired by old magic lantern projections, from pre- and early cinema, which I will now show here.

[Slide projection]

With these in mind, I'd like to try to focus on her recent installation *The Influencing Machine of Miss Natalija A*. (2001, for "Bits and Pieces", curated by Timothy Ruckrey, Joseloff Gallery, Hartford Art School/University of Hartford. Figures 8 and 9).[9] I saw this work at the artist's home in New York—it is in any case a work that is aimed at a single spectator (like Edison's Kinetoscope). Beloff was particularly inspired by Victor Tausk's famous text "On the Origin of 'the Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia" (1919), which analyses a typical case of schizophrenia in which a young woman imagined that a bizarre electrical apparatus, secretly operated by doctors in Berlin, was manipulating her thoughts.

Firstly, from your position, you see this image on the ground in front of you. It is difficult to see on the slide that at the centre of these strange forms, composed of overlapping lines is a tiny screen, positioned on a tube in the *dispositif*.

[Slide projection]

The unusual quality is due to the fact that as you are wearing 3-D glasses, the structure displayed appears to float in space, extending beyond the screen. If you get up, it follows you—the same thing happens if you sit down. But the remarkable thing is that, by touching any spot on the screen with a pointer, you can play a video projection, with sound, on the small screen. Twenty-five thirty-second films "fragments of videos created from German home movies from 1920–1930, as *Transmission des images par câble,* in 1928" can be viewed in this way (Beloff).

The extraordinary thing is that these films, which are supposed to interpret the stress caused by the influence machine images on the body of the patient, in other words, her hallucinations, also become evidence of a historical situation (the rise of Nazism in Germany), and its technological dimension, while these hallucinations consciously gave rise to a new type of spectator, in the grip of an unprecedented *dispositif*.

[Video projection]

We are also aware of the importance of the word "influence", which describes both Oursler and Beloff's installations. It reminds us that an influence exists in every image

dispositif, in other words, that a type of hypnosis is performed on the spectator, and that cinema is located in the interval between the old *dispositif*s that prefigured it and those that, coming after it, have transformed it.

Janet Cardiff

The duplication of a cinematic equivalent and, consequently, of a spectacular *mise en abyme* of its various components, comes even further to the fore in the work of Janet Cardiff. Visitors to the recent Venice Biennale were struck by the ritual involved in viewing *The Paradise Institute* (2001). Eighteen spectators are brought in to see a scheduled screening, in contrast to the open-entry that applies to most of the exhibition. Equipped with specific headsets/headphones, they enter a small cinema divided into two unsymmetrical sections. On one side there are two rows of seats, almost identical to two small row of seats in the upper circle of a cinema; on the other side, on an exaggeratedly smaller scale, we find the stalls of a large old Italian-style theatre, where the projection *dispositif* has so often taken place and to which the spectator's attention is drawn. The spectator is immediately distracted by two occurrences: firstly, the extraordinary amplification of sounds from the imaginary theatre, which he or she experiences through the headphones as emanating from the real theatre, with a consequent dizzying sense of disconnection; secondly, the film is shown after a short period of time, thus emphasising how much it itself shares in the nature of a *dispositif*, of this *dispositif* with which the spectator becomes one.

With regard to this relationship with the film, a previous, more modest installation by Janet Cardiff and Georges Burer Miller, which is also of interest, is *Muriel Lake Incident* (1999), reshown at Mamco in Geneva as part of an exhibition on the image in movement, the theme of the 2001 Biennale. In this case, the entire *dispositif* is a scaled-down model, which the visitor approaches equipped with headphones. The same classical, Italian-style theatre and the same principle of the projected film are present. The dramatic impact comes from the element of the film itself. In the last scene, the cowboy hero lights a fire. This fire suddenly spreads from the diegesis to the real projection image, the same jumping, burning image as in *3rd Degree* (1982) by Paul Sharits or as in the last frames of Monte Helleman's *Two Lane Black Top* (1971). The cries of horror mix with the sounds of the fire, as if the action of the film has spread into the auditorium by means of the *dispositif* itself. The simulation *dispositif* suddenly becomes, through the emotions produced, more real than the real and perceived effects of cinema, of which it offers a distorted version.

[Video projection]

Dara Birnbaum

[Projection of five slides]

Created for the Kunsthalle in Vienna in 1995, in the form of an outdoor installation consisting of a series of fifteen projected slides of an enormous computer-generated reproduction of a painting by Schoenburg, *Erwartung/Expectancy/Attente* (1995/2001), which was shown in 2001 in the Galerie Marion Goodman, Paris, on this occasion using a DVD projection of these images on four panels with a silkscreen of the painting mounted on a large plexiglass screen. This painting is one of six created by Schoenburg for the set of a

one-act monodrama for one voice and orchestra in 1924. The libretto, composed in 1909 and published in 1916, was written by Marie Pappenheim, a medical student in Vienna. It describes in four scenes a woman's romantic wandering (which may be a dream) in a forest on a moonlit night, looking for her lover, whom she finds murdered. From the thirty-minute score that Schoenburg created for this work, the twelve-and-a-half minute installation only uses twenty seconds, which are electronically sampled and reworked. The image, as you will see, despite its loss of intensity, is composed of a close association between its three components: the almost abstract motifs painted by Schoenburg; the body of the actress, often blurred depending on her position within the frame; and the fragments of her monologue taken from the narrative. It should also be mentioned that the Plexiglas causes two complementary effects: the image passes through it and is projected, like a weak shadow, on the wall behind the screen; it is then reflected on the ground and extends as far as the opposite wall.

The impact of this work lies in its presentation in a contemporary setting of a shifted synthesis of 1920s' modernism that goes hand-in-hand with the development of silent film. The actress's emphatic poses, the image *tableaux* that undergo a series of slow dissolves creating a quasi movement (not dissimilar to James Coleman's photographic installations), and the on-screen texts that resemble intertitles all contribute to the sensation of an intermedial revisiting of silent cinema, under the combined driving force of theatre, opera, painting and music. Everything elicited by this installation, in the absolutely singular form of a *dispositif* suggesting a sort of postcinema, shifts spectacle from the film theatre to the museum.

Bill Viola

Predating his fresco cycle by six years, in a previous Venice Biennale in 1996, *Buried Secrets* brought together five of Bill Viola's works, in a series of interconnected rooms, that serve as examples of a video-*dispositif*, which explore by means of logic and history the reality of their components. I will show them in order.

[Projection of five slides]

A suite of monitors immersed in shadow, close-ups in black and white of gagged faces (*Hall of Whispers*, 1995); two alternating images projected on two opposing walls, like a spatial shot-reverse-shot, accelerating so as to blur into in a single mass of intermittences with the spectator incorporated (*Interval*, 1995); a purely sound-based piece with calming music (*Presence*, 1995); a suite of translucent screens arranged so that a body can move between them and capture the effect of the split projection crossing them section by section (*The Veiling*, 1995); and, finally, the famous reworking of Pontormo's *Visitation* (1528) in a vertical video *tableau*, as if expressing, like so many others, but with an unusual insistence, the debt of the supposedly moving image to the supposedly immobile one (*The Greeting*, 1995).

Going Forth by Day (2002), shown in February 2002 at the Guggenheim Museum Berlin (the title is taken from a literal translation from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*) is quite different. Also composed of five images, here the interest lies in their relationship with each other, but this time they cover all the walls of one large room.

[Projection of five slides]

Each of the five works runs for thirty-five minutes (*The Birth*, *The Path*, *The Deluge*, *The Voyage*, *First Light*). They can and/or should, paradoxically, be seen both separately and together, with a panoramically impossible single eye—the compromise solution consists of moving from one image to the other without gaining or losing sight of all the videos. Moreover, it is striking to see how many visitors seek out rather risky viewpoints, the majority lies prostrate on the ground, looking for the best angle to follow several images at the same time, having rapidly absorbed the first two, they concentrate on the last three. Therefore *The Birth*, framing the entry door, and *The Path*, along one wall, are almost uniquely metaphorical. Fire and water forms, and the work of the elements appear in the first piece; then, in the second, an incessant, slow-motion human parade in a forest, brought to life as a long narrow image. The three images that follow, instilled with an intense, spiritual metaphoricity, are also fully narrative. In the sense where, without going into detail, simple or surprising events continually occur, and captivate, both in themselves and through the relationships that they imply (in *The Deluge*, a house is emptied, pieces of furniture transports one by one, while in *The Voyage,* a boat is filled up, without really knowing if this is related to reality and/or allegory).

Ten years previously, Viola created an installation that I have discussed on several occasions (*Slowly Turning Narrative* 1992), the title of which brilliantly suggests what the *dispositif* achieves by means of a double revolving screen that captures the spectators in a virtuality of infinite narratives. This is perfected in *Going Forth by Day*, thanks to the new digital imaging technology and studio production conditions that are close to cinema quality, through the use of an unusual "polyvision" mode that yields a kind of cinematic equivalent.

The comparison that comes to mind, more directly related to the reality of cinema, is a recent Sam Taylor-Wood installation, shown during the last Biennale de Lyon: *Third Party* (1999). This is composed of seven images of one evening spread across four walls of a huge room, on seven screens each corresponding to a fragment of action, which is never shown as a whole (a mundane party, with music in the background and barely audible voices). The choice of images also achieves a carefully controlled mimesis of the principle effects of cinema-découpage achieved over many years by the English artist through simple actions, such as splitting between two or three screens, which is taken to an extreme here.

Frank Castorf

The seventh and last *dispositif* leaves the domain of the plastic arts for that of theatre, with the mise en scène of *Humiliés et Offensés* (*The Insulted and Humiliated*), an adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel by the Volksbühne director Frank Castorf, which was performed at Chaillot in Spring 2002. This is a complex piece, using aspects of theatre and cinema, of which I can only give a simplified description here.

Projection is fundamental to the work, and its setup is reminiscent of Pipilotti Rist's installation on several levels.

[Projection of three slides]

You will see in these images that the unique set depicting a middle-class house is formed by a rectangular parallelepiped, one of the corners of which is made of glass partitions so that the interior of the room is fully visible, as are the scenes that take place in there, and as are the actors, coming and going between the living room and the garden. Two windows with changing lighting, similar to those in *Suburb Brain*, can also be seen on the side.

(I am simplifying greatly, as the whole house-block revolves from one sequence to the other in this three-hour show, making the interior of the house appear in a more elliptical way, in addition to which other effects also contribute to what I'm trying to identify.) However, the fundamental element is a screen, like a large advertising hoarding, positioned on the roof of the house, on which images continually appear, doubling the action on the stage through a non-continuous series of projections, which splits the attention of the spectator, who can focus either on the screen or on the exchanges between the actors. Four major categories of images accumulate on the screen, which combine relations of an ever-changing complexity with the progress of the play. These include clips:

- recording and sampling what is taking place on stage, which is duplicated and reworked;
- taken from documentaries on urban, social and architectural issues affecting contemporary Berlin;
- from advertising and pornographic films;
- of some of the actors speaking directly to camera, in a very similar manner to a television-style presentation (particularly towards the end of the show, when one sees the only screen lit up saturated with close-ups of faces).

Thus two contrasting effects predominantly influence reception by the spectator, who is obliged to switch continually from one to the other.

Firstly, the spectator's attention is drawn to the independent sequences. For example, at the beginning of the second part, three characters, (the son, the father and Natacha) converse, at the bottom right of the illuminated cube, while at the top left, on the screen, we see an adolescent in an urban setting on a swing. There are three different types of shot at different distances (a medium shot, a zoom-in, and a close-up, which is still a relatively wide view), so that the light foliage in the foreground takes up almost the whole shot. The action is minimal but regular, which, along with the variations in shot lead to a constant micromovement that continually forces the spectator's eye to return to it, in spite of the intensity of the exchanges between the three characters on stage.

The strange resonance of the recorded clips of what is taking place on stage should also be particularly emphasised. The clips actively demonstrate the powerful mystique of the recorded image as a continual transformative process, whether this impact is due to on-screen or off-screen effects, that is to say, the cinema itself, in addition to its difference to theatre—and the difference of both to "the life" or "the reality" of this production, which gives rise to a sort of continual reinvention of cinema. It is sufficient to note, for example, the striking close-up in several scenes of the young orphan, Jelena—shots that suddenly appear on the screen, which are reminiscent of the overwhelming impact of Lillian Gish's face in Griffith's films.

The *dispositif* that gives rise to these effects is extremely complex. Jan Spekenbach filmed and edited the documentary and found images, according to Castorf's instructions. He transmits them during the performance from a video system concealed inside the house. This is composed of a fixed remote camera and four remote-controlled cameras, which, most importantly, allows shooting and editing of the live action scenes featuring the actors. These shots are edited as the play is being performed, but are constantly updated and therefore differ to some extent from one performance to the next.

The scope of this wholly enigmatic interlinking between theatre and cinema can be considered within the framework of the many film-based installations that create a similar sort of unique theatre, which range from the diorama-panorama that is on view to all to a projection-reading installation created for a single viewer.

In the installations by Pipilotti Rist and Castorf, based on the dual social ritual of theatre and the museum, their polar mirror opposite can be seen: the cinema of the future as the fourth wall of the bedroom or living room with the unattainable eclipse of the film theatre.

Finally, one cannot help but be struck by the various elements of silent cinema or pre-cinema present in these works, the highly advanced technological resources of which obviously place them after the cinema rather than before it.

2. Cinema, alone

Now, I come to my tentative hypothesis. The cinema was only really alone, truly alone, between the arrival of the sound film and the arrival of television, which more or less applies to what André Bazin called the cinema of reality (even if his description has assumed many more definitions than he could have imagined).

There are three ways of posing the problem of this uniqueness of cinema.

First, historically, as a historian; which I am not. But other histories could be used: histories from cinema, or from a book, for example, which seeks to make a comparative history of television and cinema: Siegfried Zielinski's *Audiovisions. Cinema and Television as Entr'actes in History* published in 1999 (a translated version of the original 1989 German edition).

As is often the case in books written by scrupulous historians, there is a certain amount of confusion as regards boundaries, relationships and periods. Here, therefore, is Zielinski's general thesis: "it is almost impossible to separate the two projects of cinema and television, although the two intrinsic targets of the projects were poles apart and seem to run parallel to one another without direct contact" (50).

It is essential to realise that during the entire period of silent film, during which it had scarcely begun to define its own specific *dispositif*, the disorderly, but nevertheless systematic, invention of television was in progress, on the margins of the extensive development of radio. It therefore is striking that, in the United States particularly, the invention of the television was anticipated until the outbreak of the First World War, and indeed, at the end of the war, it was expected to develop anew in earnest. It seems that the

invention of sound film and the extraordinary speed with which it was incorporated into the classic studio production mode temporarily took the place of the potential advent of television.

It is also striking to see that the two countries where television was most developed before the war were England and Germany: the first, a country in which, without being as radical as Truffaut ("there is no such thing as English cinema"),[10] it can at least be said that cinema was never able to forge a real tradition, but which, as if as a result, would have the best television in the world. In Germany, cinema was destroyed by the Nazis, and television and cinema became two linked instruments of propaganda. We can reflect on the words (which Zoe Beloff comments on in her discussion of "Influence Machine") of Eugen Haramovsky, the Nazi responsible for the nascent television industry in Germany, who stated, in 1935: "Henceforth, the television is called upon to fulfil the greatest and most sacred mission, to implant indelibly the image of the Fuhrer in all German hearts" (qtd. in Uricchio 51).

In France, where, since the era of silent film but particularly thereafter, the concept of cinema was avidly presented as an art or as a site of critical thought, television did not achieve significant penetration until the 1950s. Other countries such as Italy, the Soviet Union and Japan could also be used as examples in this respect.

"Cinema, alone", would be at this time almost completely dominated by the major American studios, where the marriage of image and sound, in its three aspects of dialogue, noises and music, produced the entirely new phenomenon of "realism", distinct to anything that had come before it, and without the *dispositif* of television encroaching on it. After which, in a sense, the beginning of the end—which has no end—occurs, up to the advent of this "advanced Audiovision" as described by Siegried Zielinski, and of which he says, at this point, shows "a heterogeneity similar to that which was characteristic of a large part of the nineteenth century" (19).

Two examples can be used to illustrate this bold argument. The first comes from Abel Gance. Twice in his long career he sought to go beyond the unique characteristic of the cinema screen. The first, as is well known, was in 1927 in *Napoléon vu par Able Gance* (*Napoleon*, 1927) during the opening night in one auditorium, he showed some scenes on a central screen and two lateral screens in order to increase the panoramic effect of certain shots. The second instance of Gance's ambition is not so well known: the "polyvision" that Gance reformulated in 1953 at television's moment of triumph. Of course, this "Time of the fragmented image" that he prophesised is a super-hypnosis, a cinema super-*dispositif* that Gance creates. And, when he contrasts "the multiplied images" with "the added images", he enters into the increasingly prevalent logic that resolutely places the "blocked vision" of the cinema spectator in opposition to that of an "other cinema" or expanded cinema (qtd. in Bellour, 16).

The second example is more trivial, but no less telling. This occurred at the 2001 Berlin Film Festival during the magnificent Fritz Lang retrospective with its brand new copies—the clear black and white tones of *The Big Heat* (1953) gave the image a perfect intensity. The main event of the retrospective was the projection of a restored and remastered copy of *Metropolis* (1927). In an immense auditorium, the orchestra took up half of the space, leaving the spectator far removed from the image. However, in addition, the image seemed denaturalised, as the lights on the musicians' lecterns overexposed the lower third of the

picture. I had the feeling of watching a film installation exhibit rather than a projected film, as the screening took place in the actual hall where the retrospective was taking place. (Similarly I remember the violin bows in the orchestra jutting into the lower half of the frame for a screening of Paul Leni's *The Man Who Laughs* (1928) at the New York Film Festival some years ago).

One will guess that this suggests that silent cinema, with its intertitles inherited from literary tradition, its orchestra or piano, and sometimes its narrators or benshis, with their origins in the theatre and other forms of spectacle, has in part remained as a type of installation, despite the instant magic of its projection *dispositif*, and that only sound cinema can be classified under the form "cinema, alone".[11] Because this exceptional situation also necessarily ended with the arrival of television and the development of all the new media images, a revival occurred leading to the development of an intense curiosity for early cinema as well as a new and almost museographic interest in the performance of silent movies.

The second way of seeing things is more theoretical and seems to be the best response to the fundamental phenomenological rupture caused by sound cinema. It can be found in "The Components of the Image", the wonderful final chapter of Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*.

To summarise Deleuze's well-known argument in brief, he states that in silent film in addition to the visual image, the text forms a read image, of a different order. Music is a different case, because, while also external to the image, it corresponds to it. Conversely, in sound film, voice and sound "are heard, but as *a new dimension of the visual image, a new component* ... It is likely, from this point, that the talkie modifies the visual image … it *makes visible* in itself something that did not freely appear in the silent film. It is as if the visual image is denaturalised. In effect, it takes on an area that might even be called *human interactions*" (218; emphasis in original). Deleuze concludes about this upheaval produced by sound film as follows: "instead of a seen image *and* a read speech, the speech-act becomes visible at the same time as it makes itself heard, but also the visual image becomes legible as such, as the visual image in which the speech-act is inserted as a component" (224). This also applies to music "in a sense emancipated and [which] can take flight" (229).

Deleuze then makes a second distinction, this time not between silent and sound film, but rather between classic and modern cinema: "The modern implies a new use of the talking [*sic*], sound and the musical" (232). It is the new independence of the speech-act in relation to the linking of actions and reactions. A tendency toward free indirect discourse is noted here. The image becomes even more fundamental than the word. It becomes "readable" in a new sense, "at the same time as the speech-act becomes for itself an autonomous sound image" (236).

(I can't resist highlighting the connection that Deleuze makes with television and this second stage of sound film, when the cinema is no longer alone: "undoubtedly this second stage would never have arisen without television; it is television which made it possible; but, because television abandoned most of its own creative possibilities, and did not even understand them, it needed cinema to give it a pedagogical lesson" (241).)

The third way of identifying the uniqueness of cinema, and for us the most accurate, is the singular position taken on *this mixture of theory and criticism that gave rise to French cinephilia*, whether Bazin, *Cahiers du cinéma* or the *Politique des auteurs.*

It is striking that if one disregards the texts of Rohmer and Astruc on Murnau, one only finds American, French or Italian filmmakers in the quintessential texts of *Cahiers*, with the emphasis being on Hollywood classicism or the second stage of sound film as defined by Deleuze; specifically, Rossellini, Renoir, Hitchcock and Hawks, in addition to Welles and Bresson.

It should also be borne in mind that *Cahiers du cinéma* was, at a crucial juncture, both premonitory and (fortunately) timid: from Issue no 48, April 1951 to July 1955 the journal's subtitle was "Revue du cinéma et du television"; the second half of which was eventually dropped, as if to concentrate on "cinema, alone". At that moment—and here is the nub of the argument—the cinema ceases to be what it was, being now viewed as belonging to the past, in an almost Hegelian sense of art as a thing of the past, and thus all the more likely to designate and identify itself as possessing a unique essence, defined by its *dispositif*, in an architectural, psychic and social sense.

In relation to the "cinema, alone", it's therefore at the very time when its uniqueness began to disappear that the consciousness and love of the cinema were first forged (which led, in those most modern filmmakers, to Straub/Huillet referencing Ford and Godard referencing Lang). Subsequently, it became a question of maintaining this point steadfastly, through all the mutations it might undergo, and for which it becomes the reference point and the challenge.

It is of course a very personal matter as well: what I call cinema identifies a way of seeing films that has been part of me since I really began to do just that, in the mid-1950s in the cinemas of my local town, or when I used to go to the Cinemathèque in Langlois's era to see silent films that were missing the intertitles and fortunately had no music. (An unforgettable memory of seeing Murnau's *The Haunted Castle* (*Schloß Vogelöd*, 1921), which was like a book by Blanchot—or the strange experience at the Belfort Festival in 2001 of seeing a perfect copy of Sternberg's *Underworld* (1927) with subtitles but no music—and the leaking of music from the other auditoriums in the multiplex!)

To use Jean-Louis Schefer's timeless words: these films that watched us in our childhood; this is the perspective of the "cinema, alone", which watched us, and continues to do so.

To come to the films finally, I would like to use three examples, two of which seem to be exemplary of the consciousness and feeling that I seek to describe.

Returning to Daney's *L'exercice a été profitable, Monsieur.*

> With JCB (who agrees): the time-image is *our* cinema (movement is already behind us and the cerebral is ahead) but everything indicates that we are in the minority. Time came to cinema with the sound film. Filling time assumes a spectator who is capable of *memorising the film as a sum of information*, a high-level popular spectator, as distinct from today's spectator who has no expectation of this experience". (253; emphasis in original)

One will have observed how a relationship is formed between today's cinema and the original cinema on which it depends: "time came to cinema with sound".

Those of you who are avid readers of Louis Skorecki's cutting columns in *Liberation* may have observed how much the point of nostalgia—to name this unique thing, which has been lost—in relation to the "cinema, alone" varies chronologically, as an impossible point to pin down, from the end of the 1950s to the beginning of the sound film, according to the antinomies of myth and everyday melancholy humours.

Benoit Jacquot, speaking about French cinema and sound in relation to his film *Le Seventh Heaven* (*Septième Ciel,* 1997), says:

> It's a film based on the fact that the people in the film are first and foremost speaking human beings. That occurs elsewhere, the films of Mankiewicz or Dreyer are like that, but when films are in French, it makes them extremely French. That doesn't mean literally. The bodies in the films are those bodies because they speak like that; it relates to the French language. That may seem like a paradox, but it occurs from Lumière to Godard: the films of Lumière are for me really sound films. Since its invention, cinema is a form of speaking and the Lumières' films need speech, speech that comments on what is happening or speech from the bodies we see on screen. *L'Arrivée du train en gare de La Ciotat* calls for the "Ah" of amazement that one hears in one's head. And that is the same up to Godard and beyond, Rivette, Rohmer and then Doillon, Téchiné and me, then Assayas, Despleshin and whoever else, it always relates to spoken bodies. Mankiewicz, who is an extremely speech-based filmmaker, does not observe the same relationship between bodies and words, even if words are a driving force in his films. They always play an instrumental, magnificent, brilliant role, but a behavioural, gestural, very Anglo-Saxon one. Whereas for the French, it is an almost ontological determination: these bodies are only bodies because they talk". (43)

I will leave it to you to interlink the various references, to form the logical and illogical connections between them, as providing evidence of the same thing.

And now, perhaps a little late for you as viewers, are my two examples of "cinema, alone", like the cherries on an austere cake. I will be brief as far as these are concerned, because they might be said to speak for themselves.

La Régle du jeu (Jean Renoir, 1939)

[Projection: The party at La Colinière; the piano that plays automatically, 5']





Figures 3 and 4: *La Régle du jeu*. (Jean Renoir, 1939). BFI, 2003. Screenshots.

Firstly, I want to recall the contrast developed in an installation by Stan Douglas called *Pursuit, Fear, Catastrophe: Ruskin B.C.* (1993), in which, to the side of a screen on which an early film was shown, the artist placed a mechanical piano that played a single excerpt from Schoenberg. I will ignore the possible connotations that could be attached to this choice of music to focus instead on the piano to the side of the screen, which is so emblematic of silent film.[12] Perhaps Douglas also envisioned it as an inverted echo of Renoir's magnificent gesture in which he identifies the excellence of "cinema, alone" using the image of a piano that suddenly becomes automated, in which the sound becomes incorporated in the very fabric of the image. One will observe that the piano is first played normally, to accompany the pantomime as in the very early days of cinema, it then plays alone under the horrified gaze of the pianist played, appropriately, by Mary Meerson) and that, in tandem with the camera, the music forms a commentary on the actions and emotional responses of the characters.

Night of the Demon (Jacques Tourneur, 1957)

[Projection: Public hypnosis and auto-defenestration scene, 7']



Figure 5: *Night of the Demon* (Jacques Tourneur, 1957). Mediumrare, 2010. Screenshot.

The choice of this second extract is due firstly to the need to choose a classic American film. And, moreover, in sequence, (even if this one, filmed in 1957, comes slightly late in Jacques Tourneur's filmography). The second reason is that it is a wonderful example of a mimesis of the cinema *dispositif*, including the auditorium, the actors and the audience. The third is that the implied relationship between the spectator and the image reaches an extreme here, from the general shots of the audience to the extreme close-up of the mentally ill patient forced to view in front of all the onlookers what he does not want to see, to the extent that he jumps out of a window to escape from the horror of what he sees. The fourth is that, as in Renoir's film, the scene relies on an interlinking of the words of the three principal actors (the two doctors, and the patient). Finally, all the traits of the *dispositif* and the figures are related to hypnosis, which I have long thought is central to any description of the cinema effect.

[Projection]



Figure 6: *Night of the Demon* (Jacques Tourneur, 1957). Mediumrare, 2010. Screenshot.

Of course, there are different degrees of hypnosis, in the cinema, that vary between what we might call classical narrative film and experimental film, from Tourneur to Michael Snow. However, forcing the point a little, one could say that hypnosis is more similar, between these two extremes, than it is in the case of a film taken from its projection context (which is doubtlessly why Snow, although he makes installations, does not want to see his films transferred to video).

Consequently, I've thought, while reading Païni, of "this new exhibition of moving images" in installations by filmmakers, about which he says "it is an unusual experience, hypnotic and conscious at the same time" (*Le temps exposé*). It seems to me that these words describe exactly the high-level popular spectator of whom Daney spoke: the thinking spectator in the unique situation that occurs when a film is projected in a cinema theatre, where he or she is rendered immobile for a period of time, and thinks during this interval through the figures presented to him or her, whether they form a story, as in classical film, or are identified as themselves, as in modern cinema. Like Barthes, who was not fond of films, one could surrender completely to the *dispositif* itself, considering it a mild hypnosis by "this blackness of film", this "dim, anonymous, indifferent cube, where this festival of affects known as a film will be presented" (346). But that is the time of the "cinema, alone".

For this reason I want to show you one more clip, taken from a film that I have selected to illustrate this evening's presentation: Chris Marker's *Level Five* (1997).

Level Five may not be Chris Marker's best film. *Sans Soleil* (1983), to which it forms a kind of sequel, seems more consummate and produces a purer emotional response. But it is this very fault that makes *Level Five* a more significant film, like Marker's masterwork *La Jetée* (1962) in its time. *La Jetée* was the first stop-motion film, the purest time-image film. *Level Five* is the first somewhere-else film, evidence for the book on the virtual that Deleuze never wrote.

The film is significant in that it is the first to create an intimate relationship between memory, the creation of image and shots, and the computer as a machine and generalised *dispositif*. Thus it opens a wound in the cinema-*dispositif* and places itself within it. Those who were irritated by the actress confused the person and the position. Her image irritates or wounds something in us insofar as through the choice of filming *dispositif*, she undermines the conventional distance between the spectator and the image: her face is too close to us, because she is constantly at her computer, from where all the images originate and are distributed. She thus becomes, since she speaks to us continuously from the very core of her private life, at once the emblem of the most private life imaginable and the parodic realisation of that most intolerable icon, the television announcer.



Figure 7: *Level Five* (Chris Marker, 1997). Optimum Home Entertainment, 2011. Screenshot.

This film was made with the most modest of means, "in a room six foot by ten, with no crew, no technical assistance", which seems to bring to fruition the prophecies of "comrade Astruc" on the *camera-stylo* made fifty years ago; Marker claims that he opened up "one of several possible kinds of cinema, that's all. … You could never make *Lawrence of Arabia* like this. Nor *Andrei Rublev*. Nor *Vertigo*. But we possess the wherewithal—and this is something new—for intimate, solitary film-making. The process of making films in communion with oneself, the way a painter works or a writer, need not be now solely experimental" (qtd. in Walfisch).

This film was produced in parallel with Marker's masterful CD-ROM, *Immemory* (1997). In it he writes, at the very end of the "Cinema" zone, about a possible scenario that lies ahead of us: "Perhaps the cinema has given us all it can give us, perhaps it should make way for something else. Jean Prévost wrote somewhere that death is not so serious, it only involves rejoining everything that has been loved and lost. The death of cinema would be like that, an enormous memory. That's an honourable fate/destiny".

This space—lost but always rekindled by the true films of cinema that are still made—represents "cinema, alone". Each time, they accomplish what the only *dispositif* at the time promised and allowed. Cinema is still therefore present in a certain way in *Level Five.* This presence is achieved through a reference to a past example taken from "cinema, alone". Thus Daney set out in the prologue to *L'exercice a été profitable, Monsieur* the image of cinephilia as an incorporation of the world and even one's own identity through cinema. Marker, as part of his personal agenda in *Sans Soleil*, recalls his fascination with *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958), shared by many, but which he imagines to be unique; in the same way in *Level Five*, he recalls another American classic of romantic sensitivity: Preminger's *Laura* (1944).

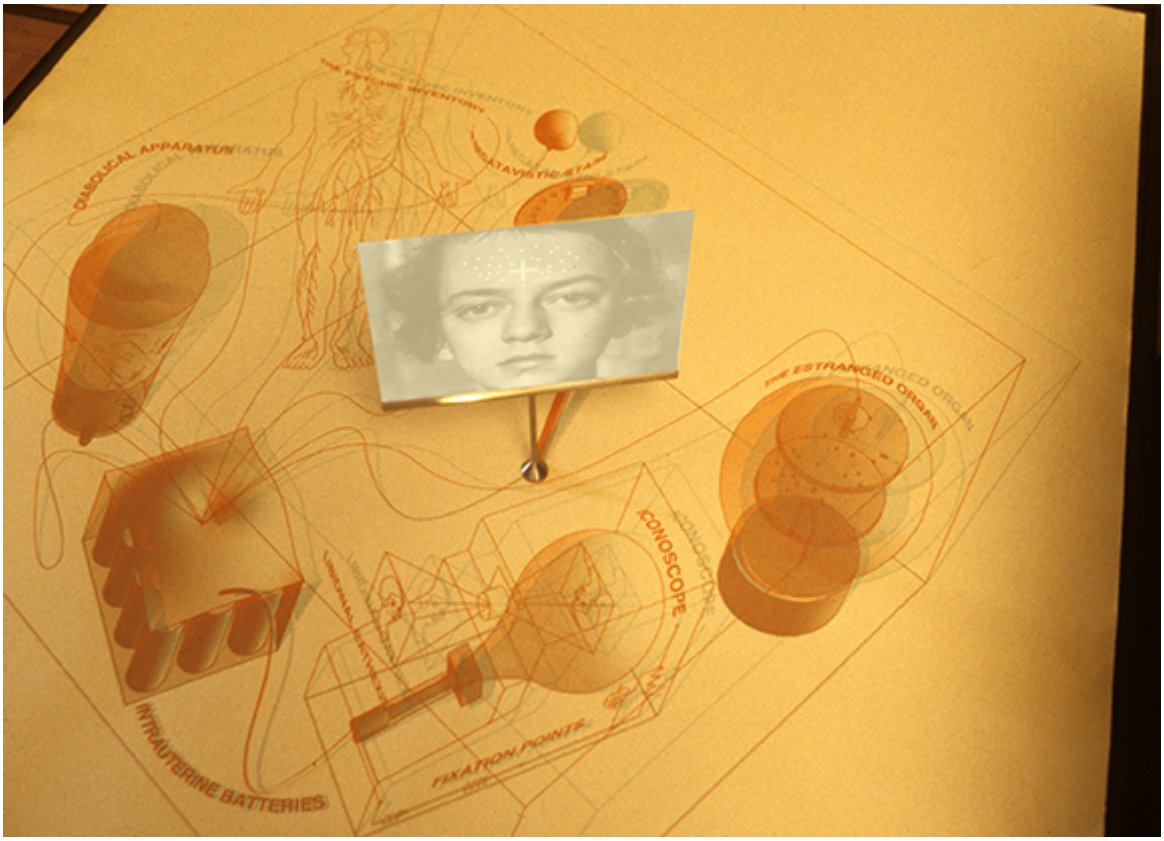
This allows me to make a bad pun, which nonetheless is apt. It is the aura (*l'aura*) of *Laura* that Marker asks us to acknowledge, as evidence of what cinema fulfils within him—even at a time when cinema is changing to the point of extinction. And the aura of Laura, as you doubtlessly know and will rediscover, also relates to a song, as only a cinema that creates the complete illusion of real presence could evoke.

I leave you with these images of *Level Five* that show on the one hand the adoring, pleasurable signs of cinephilia, and, on the other, the face of the woman who echoes and interprets it. But precisely because cinema that portrays cinema will sometimes find itself compelled, in referring to itself, to enunciate what gives it its value, I shall take the opportunity, remembering the projection that the written text excludes, to present to the reader what film offers of itself when it invites the spectator to read within this gesture the mirror image of his/her own inalienable relationship to cinema—"cinema, alone".

> LAURA: That's when you started calling me Laura. We loved the movie. We didn't know about the song yet. I was so amazed you could fall for an image then have a real woman appear in its stead. Can one be as lovely as an image? As memorable as a song? I remember about David Raskin, commissioned to write the song over the weekend for Mr Preminger. You don't keep Mr Preminger waiting. He had got a letter from his wife, which he couldn't decipher. He wasn't shortsighted but something odd inside him prevented him from being able to read it. He used to compose by placing a sheet of paper on the piano to focus his attention, so the music flowed from a void not from an idea. And he took his wife's letter and put it on the piano. Then the notes started to flow and as they flowed, as they fell, he began to decipher the words. They said his wife was leaving him...
>
> I'm scared that I'll find something there that is going to happen, which I can't see yet, something that suddenly will seem as potent as a song that's not ours anymore but everyone's to share just as Laura's song became ours, now...
>
> [She takes the sheet music and reads, hesitating a little.]
>
> Laura
> Is the face in the misty light
> Footsteps
> That you hear down the hall

[Projection 7']





Figures 8 and 9: *The Influencing Machine of Miss Natalija A.* (Zoe Beloff, 2001). Interactive video installation (overview, detail and photograms). Photographs: Zoe Beloff.

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I wish to thank all the artists who kindly sent me documentation on their work, as well as Agnes Fiérobe and the team at the Marion Goodman Gallery, Paris, André Iten who filmed the Janet Cardiff installation in Geneva and Jan Spekenbach who spoke to me in Berlin about his work with Frank Castorf. R.B.

Notes

[1] For more comprehensive information see Moisdon-Tremble, and his proposals outlined by Ferguson (60).

[2] Respectively, in *Projections, les transports de l'image*, November 1997–January 1998, at Fresnoy, Studio des Arts Contemporains, and Artangel, London, February–March, 2002.

[3] For the exhibition *Déserts*, Fondation Cartier, Paris. June–November 2000.

[4] Respectively, at the Walker Art Center at Minneapolis (June–August 1995) and at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris (October–November 1995) and among others at the Musée d'Art moderne de la ville de Paris for the exhibition *Voilà* (June–October 2000).

[5] Again, for the exhibition *Voilà* (June–October 2000).

[6] Translator's Note: A French play on words between *cinéphile* and *ciné-fils* (son of cinema) that does not translate directly to English.

[7] Translator's note: English translation taken from Bate (264).

[8] This was published in French in *Trafic* (see Oursler).

[9] For an exact description of her installation and 3-D film see Beloff ("Deux femmes visionnaires"). She had previously described her first interactive CD-Rom, which formed a prelude to her archaeological work on cinema and media, in "La vie rêvée de la technologie".

[10] Translator's Note: Truffaut remarked to Hitchcock that there was "a certain incompatibility between the words 'cinema' and 'Britain'" (124).

[11] Benshi were live performers who were present during the screening of silent films in Japan in the early era of cinema. They played an intercessionary role that incorporated narration, commentary and voiceover.

[12] See Douglas and van Assche (128–31).

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