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## CINEMA: REVISTA DE FILOSOFIA E DA IMAGEM EM MOVIMENTO 10, "Pintura, Imagens em Movimento e Filosofia"

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## ABSTRACTS

### PAINTING AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME: DELEUZE ON THE IMAGE OF TIME IN FRANCIS BACON AND MODERN CINEMA

David Benjamin Johnson (School of the Art Institute of Chicago)

“There is a great force of time in Bacon, time itself is being painted.” Gilles Deleuze’s short study of the work of the painter Francis Bacon, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, contains numerous assertions of Bacon’s ability to paint time. These assertions are in every instance brief; apart from some oblique references to *Chronos* and *Aion*—the Stoic time concepts Deleuze develops in *The Logic of Sense*—Deleuze does little to spell out this idea that Bacon is a painter of time—or, more generally, that time admits of being painted. In this paper, I argue that Deleuze’s understanding of Bacon’s painterly presentation of the “force of time” can be fruitfully explicated through comparison with the text that immediately follows *Francis Bacon* in Deleuze’s oeuvre: his two-volume study of cinema. Focusing primarily on the second of the *Cinema* volumes, I argue that Deleuze’s account of post-war cinema’s composition of a “direct presentation of time” parallels his account in *Francis Bacon* of the composition of the eponymous painter’s pictures and thereby points us toward the fundamental temporal dynamism Deleuze discovers in painting. At the most general level, I argue, these parallel accounts of painterly-cinematic composition identify three essential compositional steps, which I analyze in depth:

- 1) The elimination of clichéd forms of perception through the careful application of chaotic pictorial elements. This is achieved in cinema through the use of what Deleuze calls *aberrant movement*; in Bacon’s painting, through what he calls *the diagram*.
- 2) The emergence from this chaos of a new, clear image, unclouded by clichés. Deleuze’s name for this clarified image in cinema is *pure optical and sound situation*; in Bacon, *the Figure*.

3) The establishment of linkages within this emergent image, through which time is made sensible. In cinema, this linkage occurs between the pure optical and sound situation and a *virtual image*, and its result is a *time-image*. In Bacon's painting, this linkage occurs between the Figure and the color-field surrounding it, and its result is *color-modulatory pictorial rhythm*.

It is here, I argue, in Deleuze's analysis of Bacon's color modulation and the rhythm that underpins it, that we find the sense of his claims for Bacon as a painter of the force of time. Bacon, I argue, creates a kind of painterly image of time through the use of a compositional procedure which is remarkably similar to that employed by the great post-war directors: eliminate clichéd modes of perception through a controlled deployment of chaos, allow a clear image to emerge from this chaos, establish synthetic linkages within this new image.

*Keywords:* Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon, Rhythm; Time; Cinema; Color Modulation.

"EACH SINGLE GESTURE BECOMES A DESTINY": GESTURALITY BETWEEN  
CINEMA AND PAINTING IN RAÚL RUIZ'S *L'HYPOTHÈSE DU TABLEAU VOLÉ*

Greg Hinks (Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge)

Paintings do not show, they allude. Paintings, staged through the  
technical method of the *tableau vivant*, do not allude, they *show!*  
—The Collectionneur, *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (1978)

With a chiasmic flourish, the Collectionneur of Raúl Ruiz's 1978 film essay *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* rises to his feet, points definitively towards the frame and, with rising intonation, signals that unlike a painting, the *tableau vivant* reveals in its motility what a static painting cannot. The self-reflexive delivery, and the grandiosity of his gesture, indicate that the same gift has been bestowed upon cinema. While the ensuing narrative may portray him as an isolated eccentric, his words and actions speak to a long-held fascination with the relative capacities of painting and cinema when it comes to capturing gesture.

Both cinema and painting can lay claim to an indexical intimacy with gesture: when we look at a painting we can discern the individual gestures of the artist's hand which brought it into being. At the same time, cinematographic arts allow the gestures themselves to be displayed onscreen, although the apparatus which captures them is mechanical. In his foundational 1992 essay "Notes on Gesture", Agamben explicitly cites painting as a medium which is gesturally inferior to cinema: "Even the *Mona Lisa*, even *Las Meninas* could be seen not as immovable and eternal forms, but as fragments of a gesture or as stills of a lost film wherein only they would regain their true meaning." This study will show that it is not singularly in cinema or in painting that pure gesturality might be found, but rather in intermedial spaces such as those opened up by the interactions between cinema and painting.

Ruiz lures the viewer into searching for clues to solve the conspiracy around the paintings by scanning for the smallest movements onscreen. The reconstruction of the paintings as *tableaux vivants* allows the gestures to be interpolated between stillness and movement, between fiction and reality, between paint and the moving image. The *tableau vivant* constitutes an attempt to halt gesturality between two media, to interrupt its ceaseless mediation and discern some deeper meaning through an enhanced interstitial perspective and by perceiving the movements of both the figures in the painting and the actors, who cannot help but tremble as they hold their poses.

This study will explore techniques of anamorphosis, Diderotian dialogue and elliptical production design to observe how cinema and painting gesture towards each other. The opportunity to combine close scene analyses with more abstract forays into psychoanalysis and art history is a luxury afforded by these kinds of interstitial considerations. Gesturality beckons, but as we approach it we cannot help but re-enact its ceremony and gesture towards or beyond ourselves.

*Keywords:* Giorgio Agamben; Gesture; Intermediality; Painting; Raúl Ruiz.

WHITHER THE SIGN: MOHAMMED KHADDA IN ASSIA DJEBAR'S *LA NOUBA DES FEMMES DU MONT CHENOUA*

Natasha Marie Llorens (Columbia University)

This paper analyses several key scenes in an Algerian experimental film directed by Assia Djebar, *La Nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua* (1978). The scenes in question depict “Reflets et ronces”, a painting made by Algerian artist Mohammed Khadda in 1976. Beginning in the 1950s, Khadda synthesized modernist techniques of abstraction borrowed from a European visual syntax with Arabic calligraphic marks and references to Amazighen or Berber aesthetic traditions. The linguistic sign is also the basis for Khadda’s early theories of postcolonial abstraction, his commitment to abstraction and his rejection of “realism” or visual narrative in painting. *La Nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua*, on the other hand, suggests that renewal and healing from the trauma lingering from the war of liberation (1954-1962) results from conversation among women, and it posits the exchange of language as the basis for transformation. At the same time, the film figures an important contradiction in a postcolonial *mise-en-langue*, or existence in language; the language (French) that wounds is also the language that grants mobility. This paper’s central argument is that Djebar positions Khadda’s painting in two key scenes as a prism through which to examine a rupture in her own relationship to language, especially as this rupture in language is borne out simultaneously in her intimate life.

*Keywords:* Assia Djebar; Mohammed Khadda; Algeria; Postcolonial Film; Postcolonial Feminism; Language.

#### MANET AND GODARD: PERCEPTION AND HISTORY IN *HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA*

Pablo Gonzalez Ramalho (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro)

This article intends to analyse Manet’s painting occurrences in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (9, quoted on Céline Scemama’s *Partitions*), in order to evolve a possible sense to Godard’s statement that Lumière was the last impressionist painter. As Godard’s audiovisual claims require aesthetic parameters to reveal historical thesis, philosophy and intermediality are confronted with the commentaries on Manet’s paintings. Godard’s claim functions as a catalyst to investigate historical relations between culture and art through *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, in chapters 1B, 2B, and notably 3A, the one with a greater number of Manet’s paintings’ occurrences. Lumière’s invention was to prolong

impressionism in the sense that it has the power to *make us think* as well. In *Histoire(s) du cinéma* Godard quotes Georges Bataille's *Manet*, to show the difference between an artform in which the figures seem to say *I* (romanticism), and the other one in which the figures seem to say *I know what you're thinking of* (modernism). But this historical development would have been stopped by wars and imperialisms, and then we should see other kinds of figures, astonishingly, spread through the entire art history, as Godard shows us. They are figures which see and show undoubtful agonies such as war agonies, hideous agonies.

*Keywords:* Painting; Cinema; Impressionism; Édouard Manet; Jean-Luc Godard.

#### A WORK OF CHAOS: GIANLUIGI TOCCAFONDO'S ANIMATED PAINTINGS

Paulo Viveiros (Luosfona University)

Gianluigi Toccafondo is a painter, an illustrator and a director of animation films, born in San Marino in 1965. His films are a reference in the technique of "animated painting". This essay is an analysis of his work from a phenomenological point of view, and a reflection about the uses of drawing and painting in animation too.

*Keywords:* Gianluigi Toccafondo; Animated Paintings; Formless; Animation; Phenomenology.

#### ILL SEEN, ILL SAID: THE DELEUZIAN STUTTER MEETS THE STROOP EFFECT IN DIANA THATER'S *COLORVISION* SERIES (2016)

Colin Gardner (University of California, Santa Barbara)

In his essay 'He Stuttered', Deleuze demonstrates how a dominant language might be 'minorized' from within by placing it within a constant state of disequilibrium or bifurcation, by making it vibrate or stutter, creating, as he puts it, "an affective and intensive language, and no longer an affectation of the one who speaks".

But what if we were to destabilize this disequilibrium still further by creating a rupture between language and sensation, between color and space, stasis and movement? Instead of a Saussurian-based semiotics based on the arbitrary nature of the sign, Deleuze and Guattari turn to the Danish linguist, Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965), whose system abandons all privileged reference and instead treats language as an organization of mass/matter, which more readily opens it up to the discourse of painting-as-flesh.

Drawing upon the painterly vocabulary of Jasper Johns, amongst others, Los Angeles-based film and video artist Diana Thater explores this pattern of interference or inhibition—a form of “stutter that stutters”—in *Colorvision* (2016), which consists of eight individual monitor pieces, each displaying the name of a color along with a bouquet of flowers in a different, complimentary, color. As in her previous works, Thater uses the colors of the video spectrum: red, green, blue (primaries); cyan, magenta, yellow (secondaries); purple and orange (tertiary). The word “RED”, for example, appears with cyan flowers, while the word “CYAN” appears with red flowers.

This slippage between reading and perceiving is based on a series of neurological tests developed by the psychologist J. Ridley Stroop (“The Stroop Effect”) who discovered that when the meaning of a word and its color are congruent (e.g. the word BLUE written in blue color), it is easy to recognize and ‘read’ the actual color of the word). Conversely, when the meaning of the word is incongruent with the color, such as BLUE written in red color, it creates a conflict between the color and the word’s meaning and takes slightly longer to read. Conversely, it is also difficult to name the color “red” when it constitutes the word “BLUE”. This conflict between word-recognition (which is faster) and color recognition (which is slower) requires extra processing time for the brain to resolve, further exacerbated by Thater’s monitor works because we also have to negotiate the vibrating movement of the image as a whole.

This may be a problem to be solved in psychological terms but of course from an artist’s and Deleuze’s point of view, this *aporia* between reason and sensation is the very definition of a multiplicity: “Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium: *Ill Seen, Ill Said* (content and expression). Being well spoken has never been either the distinctive feature or the concern of great writers”,

or, indeed of great artists who exploit the stutter to create an even greater incidence of cognitive-perceptual skidding.

*Keywords:* Gilles Deleuze; J. Ridley Stroop; Stutter; Jasper Johns; Joseph Kosuth; Diana Thater; Hjelmslev.

#### BLUE RESIDUE: PAINTERLY MELANCHOLIA AND CHROMATIC *DINGNITY* IN THE FILMS OF DAVID LYNCH

Ed Cameron (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley)

David Lynch's cinematic masterpieces circulate around his twin obsessions: the color blue and melancholia. Lynch simply makes visually literal the colorful allusion to the "blues" to signify a melancholic mood in his films. From Dorothy's infamously fetishistic velvet dress in *Blue Velvet* and the enigmatic blue rose in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* to the mystifying blue box and key in *Mulholland Drive*, Lynch has always linked the color blue, this essay argues, to melancholia. In her examination of color in the Padua and Assisi frescoes of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Florentine painter Giotto, Julia Kristeva argues that color is the primary method whereby instinctual drives get translated into painting and the means whereby imagery decenters narrative convention. Drive, she argues, emerges most forcefully and disturbingly in the color blue. Since blue is perceived only in the retina's periphery, it operates as a means to decenter the object's form, and, since short wavelengths prevail in dim light, blue is the first color seen before sunrise, figuring the interval before the advent of the symbolic exchange. In these ways, blue indicates that which is in excess of the signifier and that which is situated at the heart of melancholia: the Thing.

Coincidentally, in psychoanalytic parlance, the Thing is that enigmatic pre-symbolic leftover to which the melancholic clings and which sustains the depressed state at the edge of significance. Therefore, through a psychoanalytic lens, this essay argues that Lynch's use of blue in his films that specifically deal with depression demarcate that point in the field of representation that remains, much like the melancholic herself, detached from the field of the Other and, therefore, the field of significance. Because

color is fundamentally disruptive to symbolic stability, I argue that the color blue in Lynch's cinematic universe functions in the manner of what Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok would call a cyptonym. Like the *objet a* of psychoanalysis, the color blue in Lynch stands for nothing, for the Thing at the limit of the circuit of significance. Being an accomplished painter himself, Lynch fetishizes the color blue in several of his features to demarcate his aesthetic liberation through and against the narrative norms of cinematic convention. Ultimately, this essay shows that Lynch's strategic use of the color blue to represent the lacking lack—the over-presence of the Thing—minimizes his film's meaningful reception while simultaneously and paradoxically providing poetic insight into the melancholic condition.

*Keywords:* David Lynch; Melancholia; das Ding; Cyptonym; Anamorphosis.