CS 572. **Elective: Born at the Death of Cinema**

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Office hours: Wednesday 10:00 – 12:00
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*Thursday 10:30 – 1:00, CCS, Seminar Room 1*

This seminar will survey ontological theories of the moving image, with an eye toward working through the problems, potentials, and curatorial implications of a totalized digital imaging environment. The course will begin by examining the claims made by classic film theory concerning the indexical nature of a medium understood as having arisen from photography. We will proceed through the introduction of analogue video and its attendant discourse; survey the practices and philosophies opened up by digital imaging technologies; reflect on contemporary hybridizations of film/video production; and ask how this genealogy might (or might not) be brought to bear in a post-cinema era of network culture and new media.

Drawing on the fields of film studies, art history, media theory, and philosophy, the course will examine such concepts as index and realism, memory and projection, coding and materialism, montage and special effects, distribution and post-production, animation and abstraction. We will closely interrogate the claims made on behalf of analogue and digital forms, as well as where those claims breakdown, trouble, or contaminate each other. While emphasizing the question of ontology – including why we might *want* an ontology of the moving image – the course will keep these theoretical concerns in contact with considerations of medium and material support.

In addition to the conceptual and historical concerns of the seminar, we will consider two cases studies in depth: Jean-Luc Godard and Robert Bresson – the latter of whom is the subject of a complete retrospective hosted by Bard College in the spring. Avant-garde filmmaker Ken Jacobs will visit the seminar on March 23, followed by a screening of his recent video work at Avery Film Center.

Classes will be structured by student presentations, analysis of texts, and the presentation and discussion of works. Readings will be supplemented by required screenings on a variety of formats (16mm and 35mm film, analogue and digital video) in a variety of contexts (CCS Video Gallery, Avery Film Center, home video, online, local multiplex). Seminar participants will be required to write short weekly responses to the assigned screenings, and to complete a final project that may take written, visual, or curatorial form.
Feb 2: The Death of Cinema

Film: Tacita Dean (Tate Publishing, 2011): 8-31, 58, 60, 80-81, 97.

Screening: Kodak (Tacita Dean, 2006, 16mm transferred to video, 44min) and Noir et Blanc (Tacita Dean, 2006, 16mm transferred to video, 4min)

Feb 9: Film via Photography

Lothar Baumgarten, Film: Tacita Dean (Tate Publishing, 2011): 52

Screening: Eadweard Muybridge, Zoopraxographer (Thom Anderson, 1975, 16mm transferred to video, 59min) and La Jetée (Chris Marker, 1962, 35mm transferred to video, 28min)

Feb 16: The Bressonian Model

Robert Bresson, Notes on the Cinematographer (Kobenhavn: Green Integer, 1997)


Screening: Two Bresson films from Avery retrospective.
http://www.bard.edu/news/releases/pr/lstory.php?id=2227

Feb 23: Time and Memory: The Mystic Writing-Pad

Sigmund Freud, “A Note Upon the ‘Mystic Writing-Pad’”
Michael Newman, Film: Tacita Dean (Tate Publishing, 2011): 102-103

Screening: Notes on The Death of Kodachrome (Jennifer Montgomery, 1990-2006, video, 80min)
**Mar 1: Time and Memory: The Crystal Image**


Screening: *Sans Soleil* (Chris Marker, 1983, 16mm transferred to video, 100min)

**Mar 8: Jean-Luc Godard: Montage as Ontology**

Jean-Luc Godard, “Montage My Fine Care,” in *Godard on Godard* (Da Capo Press, 1986): 39-41  


Screening: Selections from *Histoire(s) du Cinema* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1988-1998, video, 266min)

**Mar 15: Early Video**


Screening: March 15, Avery Film Center, 10am: *Outer and Inner Space* (Andy Warhol, 1966, 16mm double projection, 33min)
Mar 23 (Friday class, 2:00 – 4:30): Seminar Guest Ken Jacobs


Screening: Ken Jacobs at Avery Film Center, Friday March 23, 7:00 – 9:00

Mar 29: Code

Lev Manovich, “There Is Only Software” (http://www.manovich.net/DOCS/Manovich.there_is_only_software.pdf)

Screening: Zodiac (David Fincher, 35mm). Avery Film Center, Saturday March 24, 7pm.

Apr 12: Digital Materialism / The Informational Turn

Jeff Williams, Film: Tacita Dean (Tate Publishing, 2011): 139-141

Screening: Waking Life (Richard Linklater, 2001, digital video, 99min)

Apr 19: Embodiment

Suggested: Chrissie Iles, “Issues in the New Cinematic Aesthetic in Video” from *Saving the Image: Art After Film* (Glasgow: Centre for Contemporary Arts, 2003): 129-141

Screening: *INLAND EMPIRE* (David Lynch, 2006, video transferred to 35mm transferred to video, 180min)

Friday, April 13, Avery Film Center, 9:15: *Videodrome* (David Cronenberg, 1983, 35mm, 87min)

**Apr 26: Flow**


Screening: *Russian Ark* (Alexander Sokurov, 2002, video transferred to 35mm transferred to video, 99min)

**May 3: Circulation & Speed**


Screening: *War at a Distance* (Harun Farocki, 2003, video, 58min)

**May 10: Animation and Special Effects**


Screening: (local multiplex) *The Avengers* (Joss Whedon, 2002, 35mm, 143min)

**May 17: Final Projects**