

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.
D. N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007): 1-24.

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

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), p. 1-60.
Andre Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" in *What is Cinema? Vol. 1* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967): 9-16.
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)

Suggested: Rene Predal, "Robert Bresson: L'Aventure Interieure," in *Robert Bresson* (Indiana University Press, 2000): 73-115.

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

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

Sigmund Freud, "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'"
Mary Anne Doane, "Temporality, Storage, Memory: Freud, Marey, and the Cinema," in *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002): 33-68.
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

Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (Dover, 1998): 304-308.

Gilles Deleuze, "The Crystals of Time," in *Cinema 2* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989): 68-97.

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

Michael Witt, "Montage, My Beautiful Care, or Histories of the Cinematograph," in *The Cinema Alone: Essays on the work of Jean-Luc Godard 1985-2000* (Amsterdam University Press, 2000): 33-50

Suggested: Jacques Ranciere, "Godard, Hitchcock, and the Cinematographic Image" in *Godard For Ever* (Black Dog, 2004): 214-231.

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

Mar 15: Early Video

Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" in *Perpetual Inventory* (MIT Press, 2010): 3-18.

William Kaizen, "Live on Tape: Video, Liveness and the Immediate" in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader* (Tate Publishing, 2008): 258-272.

Callie Angell, "Doubling the Screen: Andy Warhol's *Outer and Inner Space*"

Millennium Film Journal no. 38 (Spring 2002)

(<http://www.mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ38/angell.html>)

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

Michele Pierson, "Introduction: Ken Jacobs – A Half Century of Cinema," in *Optic Antics: The Cinema of Ken Jacobs* (Oxford University Press, 2011): 3 – 24.

Malcolm Turvey, "Ken Jacobs: Digital Revelationist" in *October* 137, 2011, p. 107 – 124.

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

Mar 29: Code

Timothy Binkley, "Refiguring Culture" in *Future Visions: New Technologies of the Screen* (British Film Institute, 1993): 90-122.

Gene Youngblood, "Cinema and the Code," *LEONARDO: Computer Art in Context Supplemental Issue*, 1989 ([http://www.vasulka.org/archive/4-20b/Leonardo\(9002\).pdf](http://www.vasulka.org/archive/4-20b/Leonardo(9002).pdf))

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

Laura Marks, "How Electrons Remember" from *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 161-175.

James Gleick, "Information is Physical" from *The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood* (Pantheon Books, 2011): 355 – 372.

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

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

Apr 19: Embodiment

Vivian Sobchack, "The Scene of the Screen: Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic 'Presence'" in *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (University of California Press, 2004): 135 – 162.

Laura Marks, "Video's Body, Analog and Digital" from *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 147-159

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

Tom Gunning, "Moving Away from the Index: Cinema and the Impression of Reality" *Differences* 2007 Volume 18, Number 1 (Duke University Press): 29-52.

Maurizio Lazzarato, "Video, Flows and Real Time" in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader* (Tate Publishing, 2008): 283-291.

D.N. Rodowick, "The Digital Event" from *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). p 163-174

Suggested: Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Observations on the Long Take" in *The Cinematic* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007): 84-87.

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

May 3: Circulation & Speed

Paul Virilio, "The Vision Machine" from *The Vision Machine* (Indiana University Press, 1994) p. 59-77.

David Bordwell, "Intensified Continuity: Visual Style in Contemporary American Film," *Film Quarterly* Vol. 55, No. 3, Spring 2002, p. 16-28.

Leah Churner, "High-Definition Video Guide"

<http://www.eai.org/webPage.htm?id=79>

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

May 10: Animation and Special Effects

Tom Gunning, "Gollum and Goelm: Special Effects and the Technology of Artificial Bodies," in *From Hobbits to Hollywood: Essays on Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006)

Lev Manovich, "What is Digital Cinema?" <http://www.manovich.net/TEXT/digital-cinema.html>

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

May 17: Final Projects