Film-Philosophy Conference
6-8 July 2016
University of Edinburgh

Conference Director
Dr David Sorfa - david.sorfa@ed.ac.uk

Conference Committee
Dr Anna Backman Rogers, University of Gothenburg
Dr Tarja Laine, University of Amsterdam
Dr Richard Rushton, Lancaster University
Dr Catherine Wheatley, King's College London
Dr Daniel Yacavone, University of Edinburgh

Conference Assistants
Ellie Lewerenz, Tara Noonan, Chiara Quaranta, Chris Smurthwaite, Ioannis Tsirkas, Finn Daniels-Yeomans

Venue: 50 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LH
Rooms: Ground Floor: G.03, G.04, G.05, G.06
First Floor: Project Room

Keynote Lectures: G.03
Panel Presentations: G.03, G.04, G.05, G.06
Catering and Coffee: Project Room
Publishers’ Tables: Project Room

Dynamic Map: https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1jqYpf-s0D9wlDSNczppRGQNNL98

Full details: http://www.film-philosophy.com/conference
WELCOME

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 9th annual Film-Philosophy Conference at the University of Edinburgh.

Film-Philosophy is a conference, a journal and a community of scholars that has grown and developed substantially over the past decade. After many years of publishing our journal in a samizdat fashion, in January 2016 we joined forces with Edinburgh University Press and became EUP’s first fully Open Access journal. Film-Philosophy was started in the mid-1990s by Daniel Frampton and we would like to note that 2016 is also the tenth anniversary of the publication of his book *Filmosophy* with Wallflower Press. Our Editorial Board members and journal contributors work with many other academic presses and it is gratifying to see the way in which film-philosophy has become an established part of their publishing profiles as well as appearing as a subject in university syllabuses across the world.

I would like to thank the conference committee for helping with the always difficult process of choosing papers for presentation, the conference assistants for helping with the smooth running of the conference, the various publishers who are here at the conference, the Editorial Board of Film-Philosophy and of course the University of Edinburgh and the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures for allowing us to host the conference here.

Thank you most of all for coming to the conference and supporting the work of Film-Philosophy and of the other scholars working in our field.

Welcome also to the city of Edinburgh. We hope that you will have the opportunity to explore this wonderful city and its many delights, cinematic and otherwise. We have a dynamic map which you may find useful.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1jqYpf-s0D9wIcLzppRGQNHL98

I would like to draw your attention to an exhibition by one of our PhD students, Isabel Rocamora, which is currently running at the Summerhall very near to us. The film exhibited, *Faith*, is also the subject of one of the papers at the conference (C.03).

Please do not hesitate to ask me or any of conference assistants for any further help or advice you might need.

David Sorfa
Conference Director and Managing Editor of Film-Philosophy
## DAY 1: Wednesday 6 July 2016

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<tr>
<td>11.15-11.30</td>
<td>G.03</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Davina Quinlivan (Chair: Catherine Wheatley) <strong>Broken Embraces: Filming the Body in Crisis, Reparation and Resistance in Broken Embraces, Hunger and Exhibition:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30-12.45</td>
<td>Keynote 1 G.03</td>
<td>Davina Quinlivan</td>
<td>Broken Embraces: Filming the Body in Crisis, Reparation and Resistance in Broken Embraces, Hunger and Exhibition:</td>
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<td>12.45-2.00</td>
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### Panels A

<p>| 2.00-3.30 | A1 G.03 | Open Chair: Christian Keathley | Stage Fright and the Plague of Fascination - Murray Pomerance, The Trouble with Comic Theory - Alex Clayton, Dead Funny: Laughter, Life and Death in Philibert’s Nénette and Un animal, des animaux - Laura McMahon |
| 2.00-3.30 | A3 G.05 | Existentialism Chair: Daniel Shaw | ‘Killing is not nearly as easy as the innocent believe’: Does Woody Allen Condone Murder? - Sander Lee, Autopoietic Existentialism: Memory, Signification, and Communicative Action in Christopher Nolan’s Memento - Daniel R White, Nihilism, Miserabilism and Ambiguity in Art Cinema - Emre Çağlayan |
| 2.00-3.30 | A4 G.06 | Ethics Chair: Oisin Keohane | Remarriage of the Self; Clones and Cavell - Mashya Boon, The Melodrama of the Unknown Man: Serial Drama, Genre and Po-ethics - Timna Rauch, The Failed Education of the Woman in the Films of Robert Siodmak: Towards a Cavellian Concept of Film Noir - David Hayes, Peter Hajnal |</p>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.30-4.00</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>Project Room (1st Floor)</td>
<td>Panels B</td>
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| 4.00-5.30 | B1     | G.03 | Gender and Sexualities | A Market of the Senses; Your Relations Are of Power: ‘The Female Body as Decorative Object and Commodity in Sofia Coppola’s Marie Antoinette - **Anna Backman Rogers**  
- The Crystalline and the Vegetable: Brigitte Bardot as the Doubled Aphrodite in Le Mépris - **Oisín Keohane**  
- Body Hair, Embodiment and Film - **Francesca Minnie Hardy** |
| 4.00-5.30 | B2     | G.04 | Video Essays / Essay Films | Contemplation as Utopia: James Benning and the Look of the Landscape - **Daniele Rugo**  
- Futile Looking: Chantal Akerman’s From The East - **Christopher Malcolm**  
- American Landscapes, American Pathologies: The Films of James Benning - **Nikolaj Lubecker** |
| 4.00-5.30 | B3     | G.05 | Film and the Other Arts | Reenactment of Cinematographic Past: Complex Temporal Objects Situated Between Cinema and Contemporary Art - **Lukas Brasiskis**  
- Moving Images Posing as Pictures: Rethinking the Intermediality of the Cinematic Tableau - **Ágnes Pethő**  
- Painting on Film: Cavell and the Quattrocento - **Peter Hajnal** |
| 4.00-5.30 | B4     | G.06 | Form and Evaluation | Three Iterations of An American Tragedy: Cinematic Quotation, Adaptation & Entertainment - **Dominic Jaekle**  
- Thinking Cinematically - **Victoria Walden**  
- The Elastic Set - **Dennis Rothermel** |
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<th>Time</th>
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<td>5.30-5.45</td>
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| 5.45-7.15  | C1          | G.03     | Film and Religion  
Chair: Saige Walton  
- The Opposite of Faith: Film Style and the Miraculous in Stations of the Cross and Breaking the Waves - Catherine Wheatley  
- For a Phenomenology of the Temporality of the Sacred: Matters of Style between Ayfré, Schrader and Dreyer’s Representation of a Miraculous Event - Fabio Pezzetti Tonion  
- Faith in Film: On Isabel Rocamora’s Faith - Mark Cauchi |
| 5.45-7.15  | C2          | G.04     | Political Philosophy  
Chair: Richard Rushton  
- Trials and Tribulations of Contingency-politics - Teet Teinemaa  
- The L.A. Rebellion: A Politics of Love, A Politics of Resistance - Jamie A Rogers  
- Trouble Breathing: neoliberal poetics in ’71 - Andrew Jarvis |
| 5.45-7.15  | C3          | G.05     | Global Film-Philosophy  
Chair: James Harvey  
- Philosophy Through Film: How Conceptions of Philosophy Influence This Possibility - Diana Neiva  
- Film Philosophising: A Ricœurian Methodological Approach - Alberto Baracco  
- That Obscure Object of Realism: Chinese Docufiction as Ontological Fabulation - Bruno Lessard |
| 5.45-7.15  | C4          | G.06     | Open / Video Essays  
Chair: Laura McMahon  
- Into the Universe of (Three-Dimensional) Technical Images: Jean-Luc Godard’s Flusserian 3D Cinema - Andrew Utterson  
- Mapped and Monstrous Spaces in Digital 3D Cinema - Nick Jones  
- ‘The Equalized Pulse’: Digital Humanities and Videographic Essay Research - Christian Keathley |
| 7.15-8.30  | Project Room|          | Welcome Drinks Reception                                                                         |
## DAY 2: Thursday 7 July 2016

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Presentation Titles</th>
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| 8.00-9.00 | Coffee in the Project Room | Panels D | Palliative Island: Work in Progress - **Steven Eastwood**  
Defacing the Close-Up - **Kriss Ravetto**  
Lovers in Time: An Essay Film as Practice Research in Times of Patriotic Journalism in Harare - **Agnieszka Piotrowska** |
| 9.00-10.30 | D1 G.03                       | Video Essays / Essay Films  
Chair: Nikolaj Lubecker | Towards a Feminist Dancefilm Philosophy: Martine Rousset’s Carolyn - **Ros Murray**  
Cinema as Gesture... Gesture as Politics - **Adam Kossoff**  
Imagining a Form of Life in the Coils of the Serpent: The Human Figure and Digital Cinema - **Scott Birdwise** |
| 9.00-10.30 | D2 G.04                       | Open  
Chair: Davina Quinlivan | The Fine Line: Existential Themes and Cinematic Metaphors in The Walk - **Shai Biderman**  
Roy Andersson’s “Living Trilogy” and Cinematic Metaphysics - **Bob Hanke**  
Existential Jouissance in Leos Carax Holy Motors - **Dario Llinares** |
| 9.00-10.30 | D3 G.05                       | Existentialism  
Chair: John Mullarkey | Towards an Authentic Representation of Conflict, Trauma, and the Bosnian War - **James Keyes**  
Ethics, precarity and universalism in Abderrahmane Sissako’s Bamako - **Kate Ince**  
The Torture of Etiquette/The Etiquette of Torture: On Michael Haneke’s Funny Games - **Daniel Varndell** |
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<td>11.00-12.30</td>
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<td>11.00-12.30</td>
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**Panels E**

**E1 G.03**
- Gender and Sexualities
- Chair: Anna Backman Rogers
- Akerman, Irigaray and the Figure of the Girl on Screen - **Elspeth Mitchell**
- Documenting Sex: Realism and Utopia in Feminist Pornography - **Sara Janssen**
- The Maids of Dishonor: Unruly Bodies, Embarrassment, and the “Womance” Genre - **Tarja Laine**

**E2 G.04**
- Form and Evaluation
- Chair: Richard Rushton
- The Form of Form: Haneke, Malabou and Plasticity - **Ben Tyrer**
- The Different Meanings of ‘Film Form’ - **Melenia Arouh**
- On Our Filmic Body - **Joerg Fingerhut**, [Katrin Heimann]

**E3 G.05**
- Political Philosophy / Existentialism
- Chair: Martin O’Shaughnessy
- An Ecosophy for Bioregionalism: Anti-Paranoia and Eco-Terrorism in Night Moves - **Matthew Holtmeier**
- Landscape, Myth, and Anti-Myth in Meek’s Cutoff - **Tyler Parks**
- Peckinpah’s Existential West: some Heideggerian motifs - **Keith Hennessey Brown**

**E4 G.06**
- Film and Religion
- Chair: Mark Cauchi
- Deleuze and Kierkegaard on the Paradox of Belief: Strange Encounters at the Cinema - **John Caruana**
- Reimagining Faith: Hope and Belief in Tarkovsky’s Stalker: A Modern Spiritual Journey into Disaster, Darkness, and Redemption - **Colin Heber-Percy**
- Cosmic Visions of the Past: Kracauer’s Revision of Faure’s Cinematic Cosmology - **Hannah Goodwin**
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| 1.45-3.15 | F1   | Video Essays / Essay Films | ● St Mary Magdalen’s Home Movies (or, The Sexuality of Space) - William Brown  
● Entreprise de terrorisme cinematographique: Violence and detournement in Guy Debord’s film - Alex Corcos  
● 拆 (CHĀI demolish) 哪 (NĀ what-ever) 夢 (MÉNG dream): On China’s Dream, and the Transformation of Material Things - David H Fleming |
| 1.45-3.15 | F2   | Existentialism / Other Arts | ● Understanding Cinematic ‘New Sincerity’ and the Case of Frances Ha in Light of Sartre: A Proposal for an Existentialist Conceptual Framework - Allard den Dulk  
● ‘A Boy Pretending to Be a Wolf Pretending to Be a King’: Nature, Childhood and the Romantic Quest in Where the Wild Things Are - Michelle Devereaux  
● Cinema and the Expulsion from the Paradise of Childhood - Philipp Schmerheim |
| 1.45-3.15 | F3   | Ethics | ● Time and the Other - Orna Raviv  
● Take Your Time: Towards a Theory of Experience and Ethics of Contemplative Spectatorship in Slow Cinema - Jakob Boer  
● Ethics of Hyper-Chaos: Time Without Becoming and the Emergence of the Other - Frederic Brayard |
| 1.45-3.15 | F4   | Open | ● Science Fiction’s Facial Optics - Allan Cameron  
● Disidentification in Faces: From the Ethical to the Political in Cassavetes’ Facial Close-Ups - James Harvey  
● The Films of the Dardenne Brothers in Light of Stanley Cavell’s Writings - William Rothman |
| 3.15-3.45 | Project Room | Coffee |                                                                        |
| 3.45-5.15 | G1   | Gender and Sexualities | ● Queering Cult Cinema: Performances of Gendered Reception - John Lynskey  
● YouTube and Parodic Disidentifications: the Re-Insertion of Marginalized Voices into Film History through the Viral Videos of Todrick Hall - Amanda Greer |
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<td>3.45-5.15</td>
<td>G2</td>
<td>Form and Evaluation</td>
<td>- Re-Locating Silence and Subversion in Early Assamese Cinema from North East India with Particular Reference to Bhabendranath Saikia’s Films - Farddina Hussain</td>
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<td>G.04</td>
<td>Chair: Dennis Rothermel</td>
<td>- Repetition and Rythm: Play and Performance in the films of Ugo Nespolo - Paul Sutton</td>
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<td>- Nietzsche and Doctor Who: The Serial Form and the Three Teachings of Zarathustra - David Deamer</td>
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<td>- Free Will and Film: A Cinematic Exploration of the Deep Self View - James Mooney</td>
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<td>3.45-5.15</td>
<td>G3</td>
<td>Film and Religion / Existentialism</td>
<td>- The Ambiguous ‘You’ in the Voice-over of the films of Terrence Malick: Talking to God or Dramatising His Redundancy? - Britt Harrison</td>
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<td>G.05</td>
<td>Chair: Catherine Wheatley</td>
<td>- The Soul’s Journey: A Semantic and Narrative Approach to Nostalghia’s Final Sequence - Pablo Alzola</td>
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<td>- Under and On the Volcano. How Rohmer Rejected Existentialism and Inaugurated the Politique des auteurs, in front of Rossellini’s Stromboli - Marco Grosoli</td>
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<td>3.45-5.15</td>
<td>G4</td>
<td>Political Philosophy</td>
<td>- The Cultural Techniques of Gesture and Working-Class Corporeality in Aki Kaurismäki’s Proletarian Trilogy - Angelos Koutsourakis</td>
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<td>G.06</td>
<td>Chair: Nikolaj Lubecker</td>
<td>- The Body’s Spacing: The Carceral Body as Heterotopia in Contemporary Palestinian Cinema - Robert White</td>
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<td>- The Dardenne brothers, Marcel Mauss and the Gift - Martin O’Shaughnessy</td>
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<td>5.15-5.30</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>5.30-6.45</td>
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<td>Keynote 2</td>
<td>- Daniel Shaw Chair: David Sorfa - Heidegger’s Poetics and the Truth of War in The Thin Red Line</td>
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<td>7.30-22.00</td>
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<td>Playfair Library</td>
<td>CONFERENCE DINNER</td>
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## DAY 3: Friday 8 July 2016

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<td>Coffee in the Project Room</td>
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| 10.00-11.30  | Panels H               | H1 G.03                | ● Forms of Matching: Love, The Lobster - *Eugenie Brinkema*  
● Coldness and Cruelty: Cinematic Ethics in Haneke’s The White Ribbon and Amour - *Robert Sinnerbrink*  
● Trust and Truth in Shutter Island - *Suzanne Cataldi Laba* |
|              |                        | H2 G.04                | ● The Auteur in Deleuze's Cinema 1 and 2 - *Niall Kennedy*  
● Gemeinschaft Versus Gesellschaft: Robert Altman's Search for Community - *Robert Niemi*  
● Reconstructing Autobiography in Boris Lehman’s A la recherche du lieu de ma naissance - *Tom Cuthbertson* |
|              |                        | H3 G.05                | ● Kill Bill with Flying Daggers: Aesthetic Violence and Women in Film - *Joseph H Kupfer*  
● Hollywood’s Sovereign Exception: Revisiting Film Noir’s Masculine Biopolitics - *Tamas Nagypal*  
● Rethinking Scopophilia in the New Media Era: Self and Surveillance in Hideaki Anno’s Love & Pop - *Jeeshan Gazi* |
● Escaping the Moment: A Hobbesean take on Nolan’s Memento - *Asaf Sokolowski*  
● Rawls and Emerson on Happiness with Continual Reference to Top Gun - *Detlef von Daniels* |
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<td>Panels I</td>
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<td>12.00-1.30</td>
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<td>Open Chair: David Deamer</td>
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<td>G.03</td>
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<td>- The Three Burials of Jean Baudrillard - Russell Manning</td>
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<td>- Arthur Lipsett and the Pedagogy of the Schizo-Thinking-Machine - Joff P N Bradley</td>
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<td>- The Precarious Aesthetics and the Sublime: The Case of Alejandro González Inárritu’s 11’9”01, Segment: Mexico - Arild Fetveit</td>
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<td>12.00-1.30</td>
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<td>I2</td>
<td>Open Chair: Mark Cauchi</td>
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<td>G.04</td>
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<td>- Bazin and Merleau-Ponty: Film and Its Ontological Bet - Julio Bezerra</td>
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<td>- If I Had a Hammer: Amateur Filmmaking and the Camera as Heideggerian Tool - Danièle Wecker</td>
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<td>- ‘Let the Ghosts Come Back’: Raising the Spectre of Senna - Stephen Mitchell</td>
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<td>12.00-1.30</td>
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<td>Ethics Chair: Catherine Wheatley</td>
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<td>- On Technology and Being-With: The Heideggerianism of Claire Denis’ 35 Rhums - Eddy Troy</td>
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<td>- The Ethics of the Local View, or, Cinema as a Medium of the Self - Kate Rennebohm</td>
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<td>- Visibility and Extremity - Oliver Kenny</td>
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<td>1.30-2.30</td>
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<td>2.30-3.45</td>
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<td>Keynote 3</td>
<td>Martine Beugnet Chair: Daniel Yacavone</td>
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<td>G.03</td>
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<td>(S)wipe: Phenomenology of a Filmed Gesture</td>
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<td>Closing Remarks: David Sorfa and Richard Rushton</td>
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<td>Announcement of next Film-Philosophy Conference: University of Lancaster (July 2017)</td>
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Broken Embraces: Filming the Body in Crisis, Reparation and Resistance in *Broken Embraces* (Pedro Almodóvar, 2009), *Hunger* (Steve McQueen, 2008) and *Exhibition* (Joanna Hogg, 2013)

A close-up does not constitute an embrace, yet it affords us entry into a zone of relationality in which we find ourselves increasingly vulnerable, especially when what we see invites compassion. This paper considers cinema’s representation of trauma and its implications for the study of the healing body, as well as its evocation of catharsis through the specific notion of ‘hopefulness’. It reflects on the usefulness of a psychoanalytic framework, especially, and its concordances with current theories of phenomenology and embodiment in Film Studies. Attention is drawn to the object relations theory of Melanie Klein, a Freudian whose interest in the development of the child’s unconscious perception of the world raises important questions about our mediation of trauma through the physical environment in which we live in. These questions are further explored and stimulated via a series of analyses which examine the central representation of bodily and psychological crisis in the haptic and sensory images contained within *Broken Embraces* (Pedro Almodóvar, 2009). This leads me to question the ways in which *Hunger* articulates a perverse reckoning with the notion of political freedom and bodily destruction; I also re-examine the peaceful conclusion it reaches in spite of the physical pain endured by the protagonist. Finally, in dialogue with Klein’s theorisation of ambivalent drives, which constitute the subject’s experience of wholeness, and post-structuralist, Deleuzian, affective models of film viewing, I suggest how the ethics and formalism of *Exhibition* emphasizes, at its very heart, a cinema of compassion.
It is natural to associate the films of Terrence Malick with the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Malick earned a graduate degree in Philosophy from MIT in the mid 1960’s, traveled to Germany, met Heidegger, and was the first to translate Heidegger’s late philosophical treatise The Essence of Ground into English (1969). Only then did he enter film school and embark on a cinematic career. Stanley Cavell talked about Malick’s Days of Heaven in Heideggerian terms the year after it came out, and many book chapters and articles have appeared since, mining this connection for all it is worth. My presentation will be applying late Heidegger's theory of art to Malick's The Thin Red Line.

Whatever the other differences between early and later Heidegger, one thing is clear: his published writings shift their emphasis from the largely abstract task of proposing a fundamental ontology in Being and Time to analyzing the relationships between Poetry, Language and Thought (the title of a prominent collection of his later essays) in particular works of art and in science and technology. The pivotal essay in that collection is called "The Origin of the Art Work", written in 1935. There, Heidegger proposes an influential aesthetic theory that provides some classic examples of what preserving the truth of such works involves.

The proposed presentation will apply this theory of truth as aletheia to an analysis of Malick’s cinematic treatise on war. It will elucidate the truths, in Heidegger’s sense of the term, that the film reveals about the essence of war, and whether it is simply an extension of the struggles at the heart of nature. It will argue that The Thin Red Line is a particularly good example of a Heideggerian approach to cinema, because its central themes are the most characteristic existential concerns in Heidegger’s writings: being towards death, caring for others, authenticity, future projection, reflection on the past, the call of conscience, and the oneness of Being. Its use of unconventional cinematic techniques (long takes, interior monologues, strange camera angles, voiceovers not clearly attributable to particular characters, lingering shots of the surrealistic beauty of nature, posing questions that remain unanswered, etc). is also Heideggerian.
(S)wipe: Phenomenology of a Filmed Gesture

This talk will focus on issues of gesture and affect and the articulation of vision and touch. Using Vilém Flusser’s work on gestures as a starting point, I will explore the ways in which film and video contribute to the defamiliarising of gestures that have passed into the habitual or automatic to the point of becoming invisible. In doing so, I will also consider the question of evolving forms of spectatorship in the context of the contemporary economy of attention.
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Religion

The Soul’s Journey: A Semantic and Narrative Approach to Nostalghia’s Final Sequence
Andrei Tarkovsky’s penultimate and most personal film, Nostalghia (1983), summarizes the filmmaker’s understanding of human life as a gift, but also as a task to be fulfilled. These two aspects reach their semantic plenitude at the final sequence of the film, when the Russian poet Andrei Gorchakov (Oleg Yankovsky) carries out the mission entrusted to him by Domenico, the foolish vagabond met by Gorchakov in an enigmatic Italian village: to walk a lit candle across a drained thermal pool. A close analysis of both the formal and narrative language of the sequence shows how this action, outwardly simple, reveals a profound change in the poet’s existence: from incredulity towards faith and, so to speak, from mere nostalgia towards sacrifice. In this regard, the use of a long tracking shot –longer than eight minutes– is highly significant. This long sequence condenses Gorchakov’s journey throughout Tuscany and, in general terms, his wandering life. However, the most relevant journey conveyed through the tracking shot is the character’s spiritual journey. “I have always been interested in a person’s inner world, and for me it was far more natural to make a journey into the psychology that informed the hero’s attitude to life” (Sculpting in Time, 204). The juxtaposition of Domenico’s and Gorchakov’s sacrifices gives way to a deep connection between faith and sacrifice. This semantics is expressed through the lit candle, frequently used in the Christian liturgy as a symbol of faith. In connection with Dostoyevsky and Kierkegaard, Nostalghia appeals to a faith that goes beyond reason and, therefore, is considered as foolishness. As Tarkovsky stated, “it is often absurd and unpractical. And yet—or indeed for that very reason—the man who acts in that way brings about fundamental changes to people’s lives and to the course of history” (217).

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Form

The Different Meanings of ‘Film Form’
For many philosophers ‘form’ determines the way a film is, the way we experience films and evaluate them as an audience. ‘Form’, however, is a concept that has troubled philosophers of art, and although its meaning and significance has been debated since Aristotle, little agreement has been reached. In this paper I wish to examine certain ambiguities regarding ‘form’ and discuss how these affect philosophical discourse on cinema. I will begin by briefly considering the concept of form as this has been traditionally used in aesthetics and note a diversity of definitions. Form is often an ambiguous term, its meaning varying from shape, appearance or organization, to mode of expression, half of the distinction between form and content, or vaguely as whatever is non-representational. I will then proceed to discuss how this troubled understanding is also present in philosophical writings about cinema. Specifically, I will focus on two confusing aspects of the use of ‘form’ in the philosophy of cinema. First, I will discuss how ‘form’ is often used interchangeably with ‘medium’. For example, the physical aspects of the work, or the presentational features seem to refer both to the medium and the form of a film. Or, cinematic space and time are discussed as features of both cinematic form and medium. Second, I will examine the interchangeable use of the terms ‘form’ and ‘style’. For instance, the style of a film, if understood as the type, sort or appearance of the film, is also the form, whereas if it is understood as the technique used, or even in terms of fashion, it seems different from form. Noting these ambiguities and explicating the different uses of these terms is an important enterprise in the philosophy of cinema. Clarifying the meaning of ‘form’ becomes the first step in explaining the value and function of form.
Film Philosophising: A Ricœurian Methodological Approach

Despite widespread interest in film philosophy, there is little research on film hermeneutics and into the effectiveness of a methodological approach to FaP. Ricœur’s philosophy offers us a hermeneutical methodology that can be fruitfully reapplied in the interpretation of film philosophical thinking. In fact, while theories in film philosophy often appear to be universalistic as they develop transcendent all-encompassing analyses of the film medium, a methodological approach can instead offer film scholars an inclusive framework that operates immanently with film, encouraging and supporting an open and effective dialogue between different perspectives. Consistently with John Mullarkey’s non-philosophy of cinema (2011) and in keeping with its performative nature, a film hermeneutic method seeks to re-enable the material parts of the Real of Film, interconnecting and reconciling different interpretations with each other. In the proposed method, the film world becomes the hermeneutical horizon from which the origin of a film and the history of its interpretations can emerge to be philosophically re-interpreted again. In this light, the film world is not (only) the narrative structure represented by film, but rather, in a broader sense and independently of the film genre, it is the perceived unity that supports the process of interpretation on the part of the filmgoer. In this paper, I present a possible Ricœurian hermeneutic method for film interpretation through which film philosophical thinking can be expressed and interpreted. In order to apply the method and show film philosophical interpretation in action, I use Allen’s Manhattan, Lars von Trier’s Dogville, and Hayao Miyazaki’s Spirited Away as three examples of film world and different hermeneutic horizons.

Bazin and Merleau-Ponty: Film and Its Ontological Bet

Maurice Merleau-Ponty approached film in two moments. In “The Film and the New Psychology,” early in his philosophical career, he identified a convergence between phenomenology and cinema: a common intention to make us relearn how to see the world. By the end of his life, when he realized that his first works had been unable to conceive of the unity of the phenomenal body and the objective body, film was approached one more time, albeit briefly, in a line of thought interrupted by the philosopher’s premature death. What is noticeable is the possibility of an ontological account of film, emphasizing, particularly, its non-mimetic aspect as a presentation of the unpresentable. At this moment, in the notes of one of Merleau-Ponty’s last courses, the philosopher cites Andre Bazin, expressing his desire to incorporate the cinema into the reflections that he had been developing about literature and painting, which were able, each in their own way, to establish the relationship between the visible and the invisible. To talk about André Bazin could not be more exciting. There is indeed a harmony between the critic and the phenomenologist. Bazin and Merleau-Ponty see cinema as a new imperative language to express the Being, capable of reflecting on our promiscuity with the world and things. Both realized this ontological bet that the game of imagination contains: the emergence of the image wrapped in a back and forth movement, from things to form, from fact to sense and meaning, and vice versa. Our purpose is to discuss Merleau-Ponty’s and Bazin’s interest in an ontological investigation of the cinema, analyzing their affinities and differences, identifying paths to be explored and affirming a certain idea of cinema.


Robert Zemeckis’ The Walk (2015) tells the story of Philippe Petit, whose walk between the Twin Towers riveted onlookers and became a global sensation. Though based on a true story, the film
should not be reduced to its factual origins. Instead, one is liable to notice the Existentialist lineage of the film, fleshed out by the diegetic usage of the tightrope walker as a cinematic metaphor which, as such, captures a paramount Existentialist motif. The tightrope walking metaphor has a long and storied philosophical lineage in Existentialist writing. One can think of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra (who encounters a tightrope walker which symbolizes the immersion of man and the rise of the overman) and of Kafka’s First Sorrow (which presents a trapeze artist in an existential crisis) as two prime examples to this effect. The cinematic equivalence of these examples are Chaplin’s The Circus (1928) and Wenders’ Wings of Desire (1987), respectively. All four instances of performing artists, struggling to define themselves through their art—which is the art of living in-between earth and sky, challenging/overcoming the abyss which threatens their existence—are metaphorically organized in way which vividly expresses the existential notion of life as a high-wire act. Following these literary and cinematic instances of the tightrope walker metaphor, and, in no lesser extent, the subversive role of this metaphor (and of metaphors in general) is the existential recapitulation of meaning and life (Jakoff & Johnson, 2003; Cazeaux, 2007), I intend to investigate the ways by which Zemeckis—who has dealt with existential themes in works such as Contact (1997) and Castaway (2000), but especially in the Back to the Future trilogy (1985, 1989, 1990) and Forrest Gump (1994)—is willing to reshape the existential crisis in America, via the multilayered impact of cinematic metaphors.

**Imagining a Form of Life in the Coils of the Serpent: The Human Figure and Digital Cinema**

This paper explores the rise of digital imagery of the abstract(ed) (in)human figure in the cinema in relation to an emerging modality of the “vision of control” linked to what Gilles Deleuze identifies as a crisis of the image following WWII. I will trace a specific lineage of digital cinema and cybernetics from the early experiments with computerized abstract motion graphics conducted by John Whitney Sr. through the first application of digital imagery in a Hollywood feature film in the raster graphics designed by John Whitney Jr. for the rogue robot gunslinger in Westworld (1973) (which culminate in a pixelated depiction of the human as abstracted silhouette and heat source) to later developments in first-person perspective and (heads-up) display from a digitally “inhuman” point of view enmeshed in an apparatus of control (The Terminator [1984], Predator [1987], Robocop [1987/2014], Iron Man (2008), etc.). I suggest that the evolution and integration of the abstract and the figurative, the cybernetic and the representational in these digitally-integrated films emblematizes and symptomatizes a transformation in how cinema imagines humanity’s form-of-life in a post-human (and post-sovereign) historical epoch, what Deleuze characterizes as the “society of control.”

**Take Your Time: Towards a Theory of Experience and Ethics of Contemplative Spectatorship in Slow Cinema**

This paper addresses a fundamental lack of knowledge of what film scholars call ‘slow cinema’: its experiential and ethical value. I propose that the experiential value of slow cinema – a film genre characterized by its durational aesthetics and formal minimalism – lies in the contemplative viewing mode it affords. Combining insights from films studies with relevant knowledge from psychology, phenomenology and philosophy, I analyse contemplation on three levels: attention, affect and cognition. I suggest that the viewer’s contemplative engagement with slow cinema consists of the viewer’s 1) controlled or ‘deep’ attention, 2) foregrounded affective experience of film and viewing time, and 3) self-reflexive awareness. This analytical delineation has a triple relevance. Firstly, for the field of film studies, it results in a more nuanced and fine-grained understanding of the various dimensions of the contemplative viewing experience of slow cinema and thus makes it stand out against different types of (inter)active engagement with various film genres and media. Secondly, it challenges the flawed notion of passivity of the film audience -
common to discourses such as the 1970’s Apparatus Theory as well as contemporary new media debates of interactivity - that erroneously conflates bodily passivity with mental passivity, uncritical awareness and regressive consciousness. On the contrary, I argue for slow cinema’s contemplative spectatorship as a form of attentive, mentally active, and critical reflection. Thirdly, this theory consequently has a significant societal relevance: it provides a slow and deliberate counter-argument to reductive claims, persistent in the heated contemporary debate on social acceleration, that hold the alleged scarcity of time and diminishing capacity of attention to be the sole, undisputed causes of an irreversible decline of the capacity of personal reflection. I refute this defeatism and plead for the ethical value of slow cinema as a vital space for untimely reflection on ideological notions of time and attention and for profound personal transformation.

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A.06 Ethics

Remarriage of the Self; Clones and Cavell
This paper will try to make the notion of ‘a split in the human self’ – a concept prominently prompted by Stanley Cavell within the first pages of his book Cities of Words: Pedagogical Letters on a Register of the Moral Life (2004) – and thus simultaneously the philosophical outlook of ‘moral perfectionism’ he advocates, more intelligible by problematizing these concepts through analyzing ‘the cinematic figure of the clone’ within the filmic text of Moon (Duncan Jones, 2009). This elegant film forms a curious exception to the vast range of cloning-movies that exist within the cultural imaginary of cinema. This ‘status aparte’ stems from the fact that the film does not explicitly focus on ‘the front-page moral dilemmas’ the theme of cloning can bring forth. Moon should rather be considered as a philosophical and perhaps anthropological thought-experiment of a sort concerning how mundane, everyday interaction between clones could possibly unfold itself and even how an uncanny friendship might be forged between two selves. This film can be perceived as giving an alternative to the Cavellian ‘remarriage’ of ‘the principle pair’. This principle pair forms an important notion within Stanley Cavell’s conception of how the outlook of moral perfectionism relates to his ‘comedies-of-remarriage-genre’. In these films an older couple who are working themselves through a crises, function as each other’s helpmate to make each other intelligible to the world as well as to one another, within a continuous process. However, in Moon the two protagonists, who have to come to terms with each other and make each other intelligible, are in fact each other’s clones. Therefore, one can argue that Moon exhibits a kind of remarriage of the self – a narrative that potentially stretches and supplements one of the key concepts of moral perfectionism, namely ‘the unattained but attainable self’.

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I.03 Open

Arthur Lipsett and the Pedagogy of the Schizo-Thinking-Machine
This paper explores how the experimental collage documentaries of Canadian avant-garde film director Arthur Lipsett (1936-1986) - delicately and then perilously - traverse the tightrope between delirium qua processual schizophrenia or breakthrough and the ever present risk or breakdown as clinical entity – oscillations between anarchy-schizophrenia and paranoia (Massumi, 1992). His oeuvre – especially the last work Strange Codes (1974) – confirms the argument of Buchanan who insists that ‘the royal road’ to a schizoanalysis of cinema lies via delirium rather than pre-ordained dream or fantasy. The genre of collage is therefore read as a schizoid apprenticeship in and a scrambling of signs. The subversive manipulation of incongruous, dissonant images and sound – a chaos which breeds images as Deleuze says - can be understood as a poetic means of communication, as something which must be created rather than understood. We shall thus undertake a schizoanalysis of Lipsett’s evocative messages, eccentricities, the power of affect in his films, to show the dimensions of extraordinary experimentation and the risks in delirious thinking.
Reenactment of Cinematographic Past: Complex Temporal Objects Situated Between Cinema and Contemporary Art

In the last twenty years reenactment as a common strategy for re-articulation of film history and reconstruction of screen memories has gained a huge popularity among contemporary artists (e.g., installation films by visual artists Candize Breitz, Douglas Gordon, Paul Pfeiffer, among many others). In this paper I suggest that reenactment of the cinematographic past in contemporary art has to be considered not simply as reiteration of the images that have appeared on the cinema screen before, but as a spatial and political reassessment of how these images had initially been represented, who played them, and what implications for existing screen memories they generated. In order to theorize a possibility of a productiveness of the reenactment of the cinematographic past with respect to screen memories, I will consult French philosopher Bernard Stiegler’s thoughts on the technological externalization of memory and its implications for human consciousness. I will closely analyze how functioning of tertiary memory is complicated in Deimantas Narkevicius’ Revisiting Solaris (2007), as well as Pierre Huyghe’s L’Ellipse (1998) and Third Memory (2000), three works by two well-known contemporary artists. Through establishing a-synchronicity between screen memories and their reenactments (the actor re-enacting his previous film character is a shared aspect of all three works) these installation films, I will point out, indiscernibly conjoin primary screen memories with secondary screen memories and assemble more complex technical spatio-temporal objects. In other words, I will argue that instead of routinizing the flow of cinema’s history, these gallery installations produce new images of the consciousness that are not repetitions of the same film (hi)story, but are new creative interpretations of it. The importance of questions such as: How the aging actor reenacting his previous roles epitomize the complexity of technical temporal objects?, How can creative strategies of the cinematographic reenactment counter existing screen memories? and What role does new space for of exhibition play in the processes of cinematic reenactment? will be accentuated in the paper.

Ethics of Hyper-Chaos: Time Without Becoming and the Emergence of the Other

Mapping the links between cinema and the anthropocene has become a central concern in film studies and, recently, scholars such as Irmgard Emmelhainz, David Martin-Jones, William Brown and Selmin Kara have developed various theoretical perspectives for a non-anthropocentric film philosophy. Nevertheless, the concepts of ‘hyper-chaos’ and ‘absolute contingency’ developed by Quentin Meillassoux, and their capacity to address some of the ethical issues raised by cinema have not yet been explored. The focus of this paper is to suggest that Meillassoux’s hyper-chaos redefines the condition of emergence of alterity, and thus provides an ethical framework for a non-anthropocentric bound of humanity and the world. In a universe ruled by the law of becoming, in which we experience incessant processes of becoming-other by experimenting the transformative potential of life, ‘difference’ annihilates otherness, since the other is not what we become, but what is incessantly withdrawing, the inaccessible ‘more than real’. I argue the ‘other’ can only arise, therefore, from a’ time without becoming’ or hyper-chaos, that Meillassoux specifies as a time that physics cannot conceive and that can destroy or create any substance or law, in an absolute contingency that knows no cause nor reason. In this contingent time, any law – whether of nature or human – being free from the principle of sufficient reason, is, therefore, a mere fact that is not regulated by any (meta)physical reasons. From this time only can a real ‘other’ emerge, a radical ‘other’ unreachable through any becoming. As an example of the emergence of such an absolute other, I discuss Rubber (Quentin Dupieux, 2011) in which the advent of life in an inanimate object, without cause and for no reason, forces us to reconsider our relation with the world in a universe ruled by absolute contingency.
Yorgos Lanthimos’ The Lobster (2015) traffics in general and nominal categories of a dystopian disciplinary society in which the Rules of the City are that Single people be transferred to a Hotel where they must find an amative Match within forty-five days; if they fail, they will be transformed into an Animal and released into the Woods—and it would be simple enough to treat Lanthimos’ formalism either film-historically, within the framework of “Greek weird wave,” or purely compositionally, as a study of enclosed space, natural light, and highly restricted and codified bodily gesture. However, The Lobster is, above all, a film about love, and my argument is that the film’s rigorous attention to forms of deadline and matching are in the service of an abstraction of the amative, a theory of love sustained by a tension between unity and dispersion. Unlike the philosophical dogma of love since Aristophanes as the yearning to be grafted together from halves, the fusing numerically offered as “being two you shall become one” (hen ek duo-in; the one-out-of-two)—this one-out-of-two a philosophical refrain as recently as Badiou’s On Love—Lanthimos’ formalism of matching and deadline is radically impersonal and redistributes love according to the inhuman term of number and correspondence. Love—which absorbs within its affective extremity philosophical figures of completion, unity, fulfillment—is thereby radically altered. When read through the formal notions of match and deadline, love comes to name the very aesthetic project of formal resemblance as such.
film, however, is not simply to demonstrate an esoteric pattern exclusive to the analysis of an equally exclusive place. Rather, it is to suggest that there is a ‘sexuality of space’ that both is expressed by and which expresses places that regularly we see on film. That is, beyond the case study given here, the essay film will demonstrate a new way of looking at how particular locations are treated in cinema – while at the same time using the essay film form itself as a means of providing a ‘queer’ (back) entry both into film studies and, in this particular instance, into a space that is otherwise accessed only by a privileged few.

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A.05
Existentialism

Nihilism, Miserabilism and Ambiguity in Art Cinema

Themes of nihilism and existential anxiety have been consistently ascribed to characterize modernist art films of the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, in an age dominated by a lack of moral certainty, relentless industrialization and consumerism, spiritual crises featured a major interest for filmmakers. The films, in turn, concretized this philosophy in their formal structures in the disguise of ambiguity and vagueness. If the foundational framework for nihilist belief is the absence, or better yet the inexistence of meaning and purpose, then narratives should equally be incomprehensible – or so the filmmakers thought, along with their literary sources. Ever since David Bordwell identified ambiguity as a fundamental feature of art cinema, its application in film narrative and style evolved in myriad arrangements. This paper seeks to offer some preliminary ideas towards understanding the various roles and applications of ambiguity in art cinema. I argue that the expression of ambiguity and the absence of causality are rooted in philosophical discourses that concern nihilism, in effect a blend of continental existentialism and postmodern anxiety. My focus will be the what I call the miserabilist tradition of Eastern and Central European cinema – particularly the works of filmmakers as varying as Kira Muratova, Šarūnas Bartas, Béla Tarr and the late Aleksei German. This strain of miserabilist cinema can be distinguished from other notably nihilistic filmmakers; from the misanthropic antagonism of Lars von Trier, to the cold cinema of disturbance of Michael Haneke, and to the nihilist smart films (to borrow Jeffrey Sconce’s phrase) of the American independent scene of the 1990s. The crucial difference in sensibility between these films and the miserabilist tradition, I suggest, is the lack of humour (or irony, in particular), an inclination towards grotesque forms of representation, and, perhaps most importantly, the absence of moral and narrative closure.

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Science Fiction's Facial Optics

This paper explores the distinctive relationship between the eye, the face and the screen in space exploration films, including 2001 (1968), Solaris (1972), Gravity (2013) and Interstellar (2014). In such films, both electronic screens and the astronauts’ space helmets serve as mediating interfaces, providing a channel for two-way communication that abstracts the face from the body. In reflecting its immediate surroundings, the helmet’s visor produces a secondary interface, opening inwards on the face and outwards onto the space it overlooks. Its curved, reflective surface, moreover, combined with its severing of vision from the other senses, turns the helmet into an analogue for the eye. The convex dome of 2001’s iconic computer Hal 9000 captures this metaphorical overlay perfectly: he is at once an eye that looks out on the world and an expressionless, glassy face. This merging of screen, face and eye separates vision from the other senses and projects human consciousness into the vastness of outer space. This projection of the human has its own formal logic: like the helmet’s visor, it transforms straight lines into curves, bending spacetime to return us home - to human faces. These ambitious space journeys, in other words, ultimately conform to a curved trajectory, leading humans back to encounters with themselves and their earthly origins. The ethical model proposed by these films thus seems to depend on an alignment of instrumentalism with affect, of the desire to colonize space with the desire to experience empathy and wonder. They arguably produce an impoverished ethics of
encounter, as the subject comes face-to-face not with the other but with his/her own reflection. Yet I will argue that such films also, by melding physical and technological forms, suggest alternative conceptions of the human, in which both vision and faciality are turned inside out.

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Deleuze and Kierkegaard on the Paradox of Belief: Strange Encounters at the Cinema

In Gilles Deleuze’s important seventh chapter of Cinema 2, the neo-Nietzschean philosopher makes some tantalizing and surprisingly sympathetic remarks about the Christian existentialist thinker, Soren Kierkegaard. In that chapter, Kierkegaard is mentioned – along with a group of other Christian philosophers and filmmakers, including, Pascal, Dreyer, Bresson, Rohmer, and Rossellini – in a context in which Deleuze turns his attention to what he takes to be the critical issue of the modern world, namely, the “[broken] link between man and the world.” Deleuze characterizes this disconnection as a crisis in belief: “we no longer believe in this world.” No doubt, some of Deleuze’s comments about Kierkegaard – especially, in the first volume – betray Jean-Paul Sartre’s influential, but, one-sided reading of the Danish philosopher. Nevertheless, Deleuze’s invocation of Kierkegaard in relation to the crisis of belief does suggest – even if this was nothing more than an undeveloped intuition on Deleuze’s part – that Kierkegaard is potentially an important resource for coming to grips with what Deleuze enigmatically dubs the “paradox” of belief. Indeed, I contend that Kierkegaard can help to shed important light on the kind of belief that Deleuze feels must replace the untenable belief system that subtends the modern age and that also informs the normalizing perceptual gaze of the movement-image of classical cinema. An encounter with Kierkegaard’s own views on the paradox of faith will help us to better understand Deleuze’s otherwise startling claim that the “return of Christian belief” in a filmmaker like Rossellini represents an expression of the “highest paradox” for a much-needed transformative belief in our time. Much hinges, of course, on what Deleuze has in mind with this “return.” To that end, as I will show, his decision to reference Kierkegaard will prove remarkably fertile.

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Faith in Film: On Isabel Rocamora’s Faith

Unlike most video art, which developed out of the anti-aesthetics of conceptual art, the film art of Isabel Rocamora is deeply cinematic. Drawing upon the aesthetics of European art film, Rocamora makes filmic works that straddle the line between the traditions of visual art and cinema. This is evident in her most recent work, Faith (2015), which will be exhibited in Edinburgh at the Summerhall Gallery during the Film-Philosophy conference. In it, we see presented simultaneously on three separate screens three 21-minute sequence shots of an Orthodox Jew, a Greek Orthodox Christian, and a Sunni Muslim performing their morning prayers, each at a different historically-significant site in the Judean desert. While the film is, at it’s most overt level, concerned with questions about the similarities and differences of these faiths and their peoples, my essay will focus on the film’s innovative use of mise-en-scene and cinematography and how Rocamora’s use of them raises, and responds to, profound questions about the relationships of transcendence, faith, and the cinematic image. Drawing on the Biblical discussions of images and idolatry, Levinas on transcendence, Derrida on faith, and Cavell on the cinematic response to scepticism, I hope to show how Rocamora’s film deconstructs the conception of faith as dogmatic certitude about the world and God, and the attendant segregation of the world that takes place on its basis, and how it suggests, instead, that transcendence and faith are a part of our condition in the world. But I also hope to show how built into these claims is an understanding of the relationship of cinematic images to transcendence and faith: for transcendence and faith can only be captured or evoked cinematically if cinema already in itself is capable of it.
The Trouble with Comic Theory
The paper will start by showing, with the help of Frank Cioffi’s account of Wittgenstein, why the central question in the philosophical tradition of comic theory – ‘why do we laugh?’ – is bound to result in dissatisfaction, if not outright misrepresentation, so long as the answer is seen to require a causal hypothesis rather than aesthetic explanation. A recent example is McGraw & Warren’s ‘benign violation’ hypothesis, which is seductive in its synthesis of incongruity and taboo theories, but, as the paper will show, misleading even for instances where it should seem most apt. The problem will be illustrated by offering an account of a celebrated Morecambe and Wise sketch, where the explanatory power of ‘benign violation’ would only be satisfying for those who fail to find the sketch profoundly funny.

Entreprise de terrorisme cinematographique: Violence and détournement in Guy Debord’s film
For Franco Berardi, the actions of James Holmes, who murdered twelve people at a Colorado cinema in 2012, ‘carried a tang of Situationism’. This association of the Situationists, the cinema and violence is not without cause: Guy Debord described his first film, Hurlements en faveur de Sade (1953), as an ‘enterprise of cinematographic terrorism’ and justified his frequent recourse to the imagery and vocabulary of war as an antidote to ‘the silly chatter of optimism’. In this paper, I will look at the two short films Debord made during the time of the Situationist International (1958-1972), both of which, in their stylistic and thematic contents, recognisably prefigure the film usually considered Debord’s masterpiece, In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni (1977). Scenes of riots, protests, and battles taken from newsreels, documentaries and mainstream cinema are employed throughout all three of these films, juxtaposed with still photographs and footage shot of Debord and the Situationists themselves, drinking in Parisian cafés. It is the relationship between these sequences that has led Jacques Rancière to describe an ‘exercise in identification with the hero’, as opposed to the typical characterisation of Debord’s work as a negative labour of ‘anti-cinema’. Such categorisations, however, belie the self-proclaimed dialectical theory underpinning the Situationist technique of détournement, which cannot be reduced to the ‘supersession of art’ (as Berardi’s ‘tang’ suggests). With reference to the disruptive, critical relationship between image and sound in these films and to his theoretical writings on the cinema, I argue that Debord self-consciously resists conceptualisation. The Situationists were not shy of referring to their work as propaganda, and the seductive and pedagogic aims of détournement will be examined in order to propose a critique of the particular conception of political action that Debord’s films, and Situationist theory more generally, can be said to imply.

On pièce touchée: Physical and Ontological Touch
In his book, Being Singular Plural, Jean-Luc Nancy articulates a theory of Being that moves beyond singular, coherent subjectivity. Instead, Nancy postulates, existence can – and must – be understood only as co-existence. Key to this configuration is the concept of touch because following Nancy, Being is grounded in touching. As apparently individual beings, none of us is responsible for our own existence – no one can be their own origin – we exist in a state of contact with other beings, even when we do not touch them physically. Co-existence, then, is framed as singular-plurality in order to articulate the point of contact between a seemingly singular being and the others with which s/he always exists even as s/he remains simultaneously distinct. For Nancy, this moment of touch reveals the always-operative relationship between self and other – singular and plural – such that these distinctions become negotiable, or, at the very least, fluid. He explains that this contact allows for one to understand oneself through another as well as another through oneself, collapsing the sense of boundary between them. This paper will extend Nancy’s notion into a particular form of filmmaking: avant-garde found footage. Using Martin Arnold’s pièce touchée (1993), I will argue that this genre highlights how filmmaking can become a process whereby filmmaker and image enter into a reciprocal relation – the filmmaker both touches and is touched by the images. Through the use of the optical printer, Arnold makes these registers of touch possible and legible. On the one hand, the nature of this touching is certainly metaphorical, in that, when choosing which texts to remix, the filmmaker must first have an experience – presumably a memorable one – of viewing the film. “Finding” the footage occurs when the filmmaker is touched by the it – akin to the way in which we might speak of being touched by an image as a means of describing its emotional resonance. Additionally, Arnold’s process of found footage filmmaking involves a physical touch. By literally touching the celluloid, he opens a space in which the ontological touch can be considered. The collaboration between the found footage filmmaker and the material serves to highlight the unique ontological possibilities of being-with moving images enacted by touch. Though, in a certain sense, this practice of touching is not specific to piece touchée – since Arnold is far from the only filmmaker to use the optical printer – but, as I will show, in its very title, the film announces the role touching plays in both its origins and the artist’s approach. Translated a “touched piece” the title refers to both a chess rule (related to the illegality of touching a piece on the board and then refusing to move it) and to Arnold’s own contact with the celluloid. Ultimately, then, what this paper suggests is that the film explicitly engages with its material in reciprocity; reciprocity that begins with physical touch in such a manner that reveals the ontological touch.

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Reconstructing Autobiography in Boris Lehman’s A la recherche du lieu de ma naissance (1990)

When considering the work of the Belgian filmmaker Boris Lehman, one is immediately struck by its prodigious volume. Author of over 400 productions, Lehman continues to expand his vast body of films, many of which are the fruit of a sustained autobiographical inquiry. This paper considers one fragment of Lehman’s autobiographical work: A la recherche du lieu de ma naissance. In this film with its evident Proustian overtones, we learn that Lehman was born in the Swiss city of Lausanne to Jewish parents fleeing Nazi persecution in Poland. Lehman asks at the film’s beginning what it means to have been born in a neutral country whilst the rest of Europe was torn apart by war and whilst millions of Jews were perishing in the death camps. A la recherche du lieu de ma naissance sees Lehman return to the city of his birth for the first time in four decades in an attempt to answer this question; in search of lost origins, knowledge and identity. Dissatisfied with the answers offered by official archives and the selective national narratives they sustain, Lehman proposes a more performative mode of proof for experiences that do not always leave a visible trace behind. Lehman reconstructs autobiography, explicitly recreating a past moment of experience within the filmic present. He develops a corporeal mode of historical consciousness where past and present are brought into sensual contact through the body and the cross-temporality of its gestures, poses and sensations. Through an embodied act of temporal reconstruction, Lehman reconnects both with a personal past and with a cultural identity marked by erasure, allowing the repressed voices of history
to rise to the surface. Lehman’s film allows us to think about autobiography as a temporally dynamic practice of self-editing and to consider the expressive possibilities film offers to autobiography.

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**Rawls and Emerson on Happiness with Continual Reference to Top Gun**

In my presentation I want to discuss a topic that is rather quaint in today’s political philosophy, the topic of happiness. Instead of explaining how the arts can help us to have a ‘better’ or ‘more successful life,’ or arguing (even worse) for a specific philosophical account of happiness I will show how different philosophical notions of happiness lead into an aporia, and how this aporia is reflected though not resolved in popular culture. John Rawls holds a person is happy when she is successfully executing a rational life plan she has previously made up. Ralph Waldo Emerson disagrees: “A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly!” These two models of happiness, the planning model and the self-reliance model, can also be found in one of the seminal movies of the 1980s, Top Gun. There it is played out as the confrontation between Iceman and Maverick, both in academia and in real life. I will conclude by arguing that the solution of the aporia proposed in the movie, “let’s work together,” is not an aesthetic one but sentimental (kitsch).

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**Nietzsche and Doctor Who: The Serial Form and the Three Teachings of Zarathustra**

Perhaps you can imagine the encounter? A philosopher out for a walk amongst the hills and forests of Engadin. Then, a cyclic ‘wheezing, groaning’ sound; a London 1950s-style police box (necessarily unrecognised by the philosopher) materialises, cleaving time and space. Out bobs a strange man calling himself a doctor – human-like, but (as the philosopher will soon realise) very alien. The two figures spend an afternoon in conversation. What was or will be discussed is unknown. This paper proposes, in lieu of the above, a rather different kind of encounter between Nietzsche and the Doctor. It explores the resonances between the eponymous tv show and Thus Spoke Zarathustra. The programme rises to the challenges of, I will claim, the three central teachings of Nietzsche’s book. These three teachings are the interweaving trefoil knot of the overhuman, will to power and eternal recurrence. These three teachings unground notions of chronological time, comprehensive space and comprehensive consciousness. Doctor Who will prove to be an affirmation of Zarathustra founded upon three interrelated narrative disciplines: the atemporal (time travel), the aspatial (many worlds) and the ahuman (alien states). Taking a taxonomic approach (teachings and disciplines which cut across one another), this paper focuses upon the fundamental serial form of both Zarathustra and Doctor Who. Douglas Burnham and Martin Jesinghuasen describe Zarathustra as having ‘aphoristic discontinuity’ (NTSZ:47). Doctor Who is similarly productive of such discontinuities: the Doctor is a multiplicity of being; and spatio-temporal events are endlessly problematized and ungrounded. This paper is part of a wider project attacking the a priori categorisation and hierarchization of popular and modernist art through limit cases; and a fragment toward a new book on Nietzsche, Deleuze and Doctor Who.

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**A Boy Pretending to Be a Wolf Pretending to Be a King: Nature, Childhood and the Romantic Quest in Where the Wild Things Are**

Director Spike Jonze has stated that his 2009 adaptation of Maurice Sendak’s beloved children’s book Where the Wild Things Are is not intended to be a film for children, as such, but “a movie about childhood.” In fact, Jonze’s film encompasses more complex thematic territory than even this might imply. Through its appropriation of the Romantic quest narrative, it traverses the relationships between childhood imagination, creative maturity, and the natural world. The film is a solipsistic tale of solitude and rebirth, one that involves the harnessing of often cataclysmic, wild creativity into the
pointedly self-actualizing imagination of the artist. This paper will show how, through the grappling with themes of savagery, animality, unbridled emotion, the social order, and a Melvillean approach to Romantic pastoralism, Jonze, the quintessential contemporary artist-filmmaker, creates a highly personal portrait of artistic growth. It will also describe how the film attempts to portray a more universal story of the recapitulation of general cultural growth through the figure of the (problematically white, male) child. Jonze’s protagonist, Max, represents the “ideal” Romantic child. According to Ann Rowland, this child is “a figure for the autonomous and self-engendering Romantic imagination or self”. Max’s growth, as such, represents the growth of humanity from the stage of animal savagery to that of self-realising civilisation. The film is, at its heart, a quasi-autobiographical account of navigating what Geoffrey Hartman calls the “dangerous passageways of maturation” on a journey toward visionary enlightenment. In Where the Wild Things Are, it is the child’s regretful separation from nature that marks this journey’s successful completion. While Jonze’s film mourns this separation, it also acknowledges that “animal nature” remains a crucial component in the unconscious recesses of the creative imagination.

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Understanding Cinematic ‘New Sincerity’ and the Case of Frances Ha in Light of Sartre: A Proposal for an Existentialist Conceptual Framework

There is a growing discourse on ‘new sincerity’ (and related terms like ‘quirky’ and ‘metamodernism’) as a ‘movement’ or ‘sensibility’ in contemporary cinema, exemplified by the work of filmmakers such as Wes Anderson, Charlie Kaufman and Lars von Trier. However, what ‘sincerity’ (itself a widely debated philosophical concept) means in the context of cinema and in this supposedly ‘new’ form, has so far remained under-defined and requires further philosophical analysis. In this paper, I aim to provide such an analysis, by offering a critical reconstruction of Sartre’s existentialist-phenomenological concepts of ‘good faith’ and ‘sincerity’, in relation to a case study of Frances Ha (2012, Noah Baumbach). This approach builds on my publications on American novelist David Foster Wallace, whose work (and its central role in the similar trend in contemporary literature) is often explicitly referred to in discussions on ‘new sincerity’ in cinema. I will propose (against Sartre’s own preference for the problematic term ‘authenticity’) to understand ‘sincerity’ as the reflective resumption of the (pre-reflective) ‘good faith’ acceptance of ‘human-reality’. Subsequently, I will show that this conception of sincerity as reflective (i.e. as chosen) allows us to accurately understand the combination of ironic self-awareness and spontaneity that characterizes ‘new sincerity’ cinema: its self-awareness does not serve the postmodern strategy of endless self-ironization and -undermining; instead, its portrayals retain the desire for meaningful representation and expression of the world, while also being aware of itself (of film as medium), precluding a naïve belief in natural, direct representation or expression. Through an analysis of Frances Ha I will illustrate how this concept of sincerity might be seen to function both on the level of story world, characters and themes, and on that of narrative structure and audio-visual style, thereby showing how we can meaningfully speak of sincerity in and of film.

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Palliative Island: Work in Progress

Throughout 2015 I have been making a film with Earl Mountbatten Hospice on the Isle of Wight. Made through close engagement with individuals experiencing death and dying, the film consists of long sequences showing people, environments and activities in and around the hospice, exploring what happens at the end of a person’s life. Only accessible by ferry, the Isle of Wight is a unique environment, beautiful, isolated, a close-knit community with an ageing population. As filming took place it became clear that the hospice acts as the island’s beating heart, with its community team operating as an artery system, reaching out to every locality. This is a palliative island, a place where dying is visible. With this notion of an island as ecology, one familiar with end of life, I began to notice complex and coexistent movements and practices associated with dying. Filming with people during the last weeks of life, in family homes and on the ward, extended out into the landscape, taking in
blood donor sessions, chemotherapy, bereavement seminars, but also ferry crossings, druid death ceremonies, ghost walks, coastal Beadlet anemones (organisms which continually regenerate) and palliative care given to ageing big cats at the island zoo... There is a deficit of films looking at end of life, and the project attempts to engender a space where the phenomenon and phenomena of dying and death can be given an image. This reflects changing attitudes in palliative care and society around the visibility of death and dying. What emerges is a slow cinema description of the temporality of dying, an image of care and alterity in its many forms, of waiting, and the unspokenness of death. Prior to the screening I will discuss how Levinas’ concepts of creative production and alterity, and Sobchack's film phenomenology, inform the philosophical framework of the piece.

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The Precarious Aesthetics and the Sublime: The Case of Alejandro González Iñárritu’s 11’9”01, Segment: Mexico

This paper examines the productivity of obscurity for effecting sensations of the sublime. It involves an exploration of how obscurity is featured in the philosophy of the sublime, predominantly drawing on Edmund Burke and Jean-François Lyotard, and an exploration of the ways in which the Mexican filmmaker Alejandro González Iñárritu, in his powerful film addressing the attack on the Twin Towers, 11’9”01, Segment: Mexico (2002), makes use of obscurity for effecting sublime sensations. I will show how Burke’s philosophy of the sublime is, in effect, an exploration of the productivity of obscurity, of partially fragmented or precarious mediation. Moreover, although Burke has been highly influential, obscurity—the lack of clarity he sees as a vital source of sublime sensations—appears to be widely sidelined in the later history of thinking about the sublime. However, it returns again as a key aspect of the sublime in the philosophy of Lyotard where obscurity and fragmented mediation again become central. This time not as a means to produce sublime sensations through the delightful terror Burke was addressing, but rather as a means by which avant-garde modernist art can articulate the predicament of our knowledge; its radical uncertainty. Iñárritu’s Mexico, which is one of the most controversial films addressing 9/11 curiously seems to open towards Burke’s as well as to Lyotard’s conceptions of the sublime. By orchestrating forms of privation, of image as well as of sound, and by subjecting us to various forms of vastness which leaves both our imagination and our understanding grappling, Iñárritu opens to experiences of the sublime effected through multiple sources. In this way he produces divergent sensations which yet are well attuned, sensations which help us understand some of the resonances between Burke’s and Lyotard’s conceptions of the sublime, as well as fundamental aspects of our existential predicament.

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On Our Filmic Body

One prevalent thought in Cognitive Film Theory is that the formal features of film have been adjusted to our perceptual and bodily habits in order to more fully immerse the viewer in the action on screen. Film thus progresses in concealing the differences between film perception and the perceptual routines we apply in the extra-filmic world (Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson, 1985). It has therefore been suggested that filmic narrative devices, such as montage and specific camera techniques (camera and lens movements), have evolved “to match our cognitive and perceptual proclivities” by, for example, making use of the natural dynamics of attention and other structural features of human perception (Cutting & Candan, 2013, p. 27). Yet we should treat claims with great caution that see cinema as simply and smoothly approximating our given biological apparatus in the aforementioned sense. The converse might also be true: we have adapted to the technological and filmic means of the medium that—despite its ability to engage and immerse the viewer—still differs from everyday perception in substantial ways and provides perceptual interactions that are outside our behavioral bodily repertoire. By habituating ourselves to the medium of edited film, we might also have transformed some of our ways of experiencing the world—ways that are scarcely understood. Through this process we develop a “filmic body” that has incorporated regularities that pertain the
optic flow presented by film and that becomes activated during film watching and, possibly, also off screen. The aim of the proposed paper is to provide insights into what this filmic body might consist of. Such questions will be addressed by employing an embodied perspective on the mind to our understanding of film that recently has become known as 4EA (embodied, embodied, extended, enactive, and affective) cognition.

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Video Essays

The film-philosopher and guerrilla filmmaker William Brown recently visited China on a RKE visiting scholar scheme. There, he delivered a series of talks and workshops on zero-budget filmmaking, and his forthcoming work on 'non-cinema' and 'barbarian philosophy.' In a magazine interview Brown argued that: 'zero budget filmmaking is, in the contemporary era, enabled by digital technology – and that the technology, in conjunction with the low budget, often leads to formal innovation that makes of this kind of filmmaking a vibrant and important form. Nonetheless, distribution remains a key issue for such films and filmmakers, in spite of the utopian promise of online distribution and exhibition sites [...]. Basically, how do you get people to watch you work?' For Brown, academia increasingly appears 'the only realm left where zero-budget filmmaking might thrive.' Inspired by Brown's work, I present my own zero-budget non-film debut 拆(CHĀI demolish) 哪(NĀ what-ever) 夢(MĒNG dream) to the Film-Philosophy audience. [Synopsis:] In China’s most sceptical fable Master Zhuang recounts awakening from his dream of being a butterfly, and thereafter being unsure if he might not simply be a butterfly who had begun dreaming it was a man. The philosopher went on to say: 'Between a man and a butterfly there is a distinction. The transition is called the transformation of material things.' In this short essay-film, made from the perspective of an alien outsider looking in, I focus upon some of the material transformations bound up in what many call the modern ‘Chinese dream’(中国梦/zhōngguó mèng). Is this simply the (re)awakening of the American-style consumerist dream in China's post-socialist reality? Is there a more sinister transformative and morphogenetic side to this individual and national dream? In this film I specifically focuses attention upon the changing materiality of faces and facades defining contemporary China's 'cinematicity.'

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Rethinking Scopophilia in the New Media Era: Self and Surveillance in Hideaki Anno's Love & Pop

Originating with Freud, the term “scopophilia” relates to fetishisation and the sexual pleasure gained from looking. Yet the proliferation of screen-based technologies in the 21st century suggests an era in which a love of vision itself, of viewing and recording both by and of the public, is prevalent. Rethinking scopophilia in regards to this tendency towards image-making has implications for the way we read film. My paper employs Hideaki Anno’s 1998 film Love & Pop as a demonstrative example of the diversity of meanings that arise within a rethought scopophilia. The film has been chosen for its unique aesthetic which demonstrates a love of vision, having been shot via a multitude of mini-DV cameras attached to body parts, placed on toy trains, behind television screens, etc. One function of its video gaze is the communication of the fetishising male gaze, as Timothy Iles points out. However, Catherine Zimmer has argued that while the conflation of watching and of voyeurism has become entrenched in film studies, the emerging field of surveillance studies offers another angle on the phenomenon of watching in the context of cinema. I suggest that Love & Pop is particularly useful here: it demonstrates the difference between a surveillant gaze and voyeurism by way of the embodiment of the image, and also points us towards a representation of the self surveillance that occurs in social media usage. The self-surveillant image is embodied by extension; it is an image watched from outside, which is to say the protagonist projects an image of herself as she would be seen by someone else. Such video images thus break the loop of narcissistic enclosure that Rosalind Krauss attributes to the medium.
Cosmic Visions of the Past: Kracauer’s Revision of Faure’s Cinematic Cosmology

This paper explores an astronomical metaphor employed by both Elie Faure and Siegfried Kracauer to explain the power of film to transport us to the past. Drawing on Gertrud Koch’s and Miriam Hansen’s analyses of Kracauer and Mary Ann Doane’s argument for the urgency of the filmic archive in a world where time is irreversible, I argue that Faure’s and Kracauer’s interpretations of the same imagined trip through the archives of the night sky demonstrate changing attitudes toward the meaning of film’s access to the past, moving from a cosmic pantheism in Faure’s case to an interrogation of the margins of the past in Kracauer’s. Faure, in “The Art of Cineplastics” (1922), draws on scientific ideas popularized widely in Europe to explain how light’s limited speed means that Earth’s past is preserved as archives of light in the sky, with hypothetical observers on increasingly distant stars seeing ever deeper moments of our history. This preservation would enable an observer propelled away from earth faster than light to relive the moment of Christ’s crucifixion again as if it were the present; in his view, visualizing history is about reliving moments central to dominant historical narratives, and film’s power is in documenting such moments for the future. As Faure imagines Christ’s resurrection in secular terms, enabled through scientific principles rather than faith in a Biblical text, he places visual preservation of the past—a key part of film’s power—at the center of a new cosmology that simultaneously replaces and is anchored in religiosity. Filmic preservation of human form draws on similar needs for both a sense of duration beyond individual lifespans and a larger order of meaning. Writing in 1960, Kracauer draws on the same image, but with a more eccentric vision of the consequences of such an archive: even as he reiterates the image of Christ as an anchor for an astronomical trip to the past, he moves out from the center of this image, and uses Faure’s cosmological imaginary to insist that film’s preservative quality allows access to the marginal material reality of which we may otherwise lose sight. For Kracauer, I argue, a cinematic cosmos becomes a metaphorical matrix for reexamining a past from which a dominant narrative has emerged but which has suppressed other voices and details that must be revived—not, as in Faure, to reassure us of our eternality, but to claim justice for those history has overlooked.

YouTube and Parodic Disidentifications: the Re-Insertion of Marginalized Voices into Film History through the Viral Videos of Todrick Hall

In his essay, “Disidentifications,” Jose Esteban Munoz writes that, “Disidentification is meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere” (4). This paper explores how disidentifying with a film allows spectators to adopt a unique subject position, one that can simultaneously critique and champion the work in question. As a result, parody is a logical outgrowth of disidentification, as it exposes the social constructedness of the original work while still containing genuine affection. Central to this paper are the YouTube parody videos of performer/director Todrick Hall. As an openly gay African-American performer, Hall operates outside of the dominant sphere of spectatorship. However, he does not solely resist this dominant sphere, but disidentifies with it through videos parodying classic musical numbers and film scenes, exploring the tension between film history and contemporary popular culture. This paper explores how Hall uses his parody videos to queer film history—to reinstate the voices of several marginalized groups, including (and most particularly) members of the LGBTQ community. Several of Hall’s videos are examined in this paper, including such parodies as “Twerkin’ in the Rain,” “Beauty and the Beat,” and “CinderFella,” which, through their emphasis on same sex couplings and drag performances, critique the repression of queer thought and desire throughout the musical genre’s history. Though they might appear at first as simple entertainment, Hall’s parodies effectively expose the LGBTQ community’s elision from or exploitation throughout film history, employing the platform of digital media to call for social change. Ultimately, this paper finds that Hall’s works are indicative of a modern tendency to re-evaluate film history, to reclaim lost voices, and to navigate the dynamic tension between the old and the new. For Hall, nostalgia, digital media, and parody through disidentification all combine to produce an environment supportive of cultural
experimentation and rediscovery, one that allows for elided groups – marginalized sexualities in particular– to retroactively insert themselves into film history.

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Existentialism

Under and On the Volcano. How Rohmer Rejected Existentialism and Inaugurated the Politique des auteurs, in front of Rossellini’s Stromboli

In the 1950s, the Politique des auteurs trend in film criticism (animated by Cahiers du Cinéma critics Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette, Eric Rohmer, François Truffaut) put forward the idea that authorship was what mattered most in films. The widespread belief that this trend stemmed from the intellectual environment of French Existentialism is far from being incorrect, but needs some clarifications. Rohmer never concealed that in his younger days he was greatly influenced by Husserl, Sartre and the phenomenological legacy generally. However, he also declared that the Politique’s original spark was ignited in 1950, while attending a screening of Roberto Rossellini’s Stromboli: before that film wrapped up, he had decided to reject Existentialism, and to embrace a different philosophical perspective. Around that new perspective, departing from Existentialism, the group which would eventually elaborate the Politique des auteurs decisively started to gather. My paper would closely analyse Stromboli to pin down the relationship between it and Rohmer’s “departure” from Existentialism, as well as the philosophical/theoretical direction he subsequently followed. In its first hour, Stromboli stages a downright existentialist quest for freedom: a subject (the heroine) strives to be free by means of a “game of musical chair” (in Being and Nothingness’s own phrasing) between her and her Other. However, in the last few minutes, the film’s perspective shifts from being Sartrean to being Kantian: the heroine experiences a lacerating conflict between humanness and the might of nature (the same conflict underpinning Kant’s Sublime) that she eventually solves by postulating a God whereby she can impose upon herself what Kant called the “moral law”. This would lead me to briefly sketch, in the last part of my paper, why Rohmer’s return to Kant has been the background against which the Politique des auteurs could be elaborated.

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Other Arts

Painting On Film: Cavell And The Quattrocento

In The World Viewed Stanley Cavell develops his particularist approach to the filmic medium working up against Erwin Panofsky’s definition of the medium of film as reality itself while criticizing Panofsky’s more general theory of artistic media. We might speculate that Cavell is also implicitly rejecting the notion that film is in some manner reviving or perfecting Quattrocento perspective, and thereby relates inwardly to its technological and dehumanizing pre-Cartesian goals (as formulated for instance by (Jay 1988)). In other words, Cavell implies that in order to do justice to the novelty of the manner in which early cinema presents us with a “new concept of the human” (Cavell 1981), we need to break with any theoretical association of cinematic art with Renaissance tradition. My main purpose in this paper is to show that Cavell is probably throwing out the baby with the bathwater in the sense that his implicit critique of Panofsky’s championing of the canonical significance of Quattrocento perspectivism (Panofsky 1997b) in fact opens the way towards an original and constructive approach to thinking about relationship of film and the Quattrocento. Relying on Cavell’s seminal idea that films themselves philosophize by reflecting on the conditions of their own possibility (Mullhall 2007), I would like to develop this account by a close reading of the use of Renaissance works of art in the films of Andrei Tarkovsky. The way in which Tarkovsky’s films rely on painting and sculpture to reflect philosophically on the ontology of cinema is closely related to the possible critique of Panofsky’s concept of space in Quattrocento art, and speak about film as exhibiting a unity of the somatic and the visual which originates in the Florentine Quattrocento rilievo schiacciato and the organic unity of painting and sculpture at the origins of Western perspectivism (White 1967).

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Existentialism
Roy Andersson's "Living Trilogy" and Cinematic Metaphysics

This paper reflects on Roy Andersson's film-philosophy and cinematic metaphysics of "what it means to be human." His aesthetic of "trivialism" is an "abstracted style" that draws on painting, photography, poetry, literature and music to expose everyday existence. How should we understand his cinematic way of looking and production of sense? Drawing on Jean-Luc Nancy's philosophy of the distinct image, sense at the limits, and being-in-common, I reflect on Songs from the Second Floor (2000), You, the Living (2007), and A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence (2014) as an existential film-philosophy of being. Beyond representing unhappy consciousness, I suggest that Andersson's living still images present fragments of a world by attending to ordinary, everyday life as it passes. In reaction to "feel good" movies, there is a presentation that passes from the banal to the absurd. By using a fixed camera, precise framing, nonlinear vignettes, flat lighting, slow pace, amateur actors in whiteface, simple body language, painted studio sets, dioramas, and deep focus, his films express a form of a world. His post-neorealist, post-mimetic art of film presses upon us – as passive spectators accustomed to narrative conventions, shot-reverse shot formula, a mobilized virtual gaze and computer-generated imagery – to use our eyes to look at scenes of everyday encounters and concerns. Affirming a distinct image heightens the reality of the quotidian and draws out a presence of Swedish history and welfare state politics. His film practice of collecting and arranging scenes, building images from mental images, portraying common persons, and exposing trivial events provokes contemplation of everyday being. By mixing past and present, accentuating the "right timing" and introducing the notion of surprise, this trilogy returns us to film humanism, offers an "oblique critique" of neoliberal economy, and brings forth a Nancean sense of being-in-common.

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Body Hair, Embodiment and Film

Body hair as a scholarly subject raises eyebrows. The reason for this is simple: it is not something to be taken seriously. Whilst the intertextuality of head hair is celebrated across the arts, sustained engagement with body hair risks derision. Body hair, however, is far from trivial. Indeed, it is fundamental to identity given how intimately and anxiously its distribution is anchored to the presiding conceptions of gender. Men are hirsute. Women are hairless. Body hair thus offers an unrivalled material means with which to better understand what it means to inhabit a body and that is any body whether male, female, trans, gay, straight bi, poly because culturally, corporeally, economically, socially, symbolically body hair very much informs our worldly, embodied experience. Existing interventions on embodiment, however, say next to nothing about body hair. Indeed, they stop at the skin suggesting that the experience of being in our bodies ends there too. This paper begins by asking why theories of embodiment have thus far been resistant to body hair. Is it too coded? Too raw? Too unruly? It continues by highlighting how body hair firmly roots us in and extends us beyond our fleshy frames and as such situates our bodies as both a subject in and an object of the world in order to sketch out an account of embodiment which fully acknowledges body hair in our encounters with the flesh of the world. It will do so by drawing on a series of cinematic case studies which demonstrate a particular sensibility for body hair on sites from whence visible hair is ‘compulsively’ removed: eyebrows in Shirin Neshat’s Women without Men, nipples in Luca Guadagnino’s I am Love, armpits in Chris Marker’s La Jetée, legs in Gillian Robespierre’s Obvious Child and mons pubis in Andrea Arnold’s Fish Tank.

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The Ambiguous ‘You’ in the Voice-over of the films of Terrence Malick: Talking to God or Dramatising His Redundancy?

In Malick's 2005 film The New World, Pocahontas’ voice-over is aimed at number of different addressees: ‘Father’, ‘Mother’, her beloved Captain Smith, her husband, the sun, the sky and more. Voice-over lines like, "What else is life but being near you" oscillate with multiple resonances, as Pocahontas speaks to (on- and off-screen) human beings, natural features of the world and/or spiritual forces or beings. Using the pronoun ‘you’ she summons, challenges, questions, thanks and
confesses to the object of her voice-over. At times, she seems to speak to multiple addressees simultaneously, at other times she moves fluidly between different ‘yours’, often with within a single context or sequence. This ambiguous ‘you’ technique is also to be found in the voice-overs of Mrs O’Brien and Jack in The Tree of Life, as well as those of Privates Bell and Witt in The Thin Red Line. So when Bell confesses, in v/o, “I can’t tell you from me. I drink you… You are my light, my guide,” we might reasonably ask if he talking to God, his wife, or both. In this presentation, I explore three questions. Firstly, what, if anything, does this ambiguous ‘you’ contribute to Malick’s films. Secondly, might it illuminate, or be further illuminated by, Martin Buber’s notion of the I-Thou relation and his account of an ‘eternal Thou’? And thirdly, are the characters in Malick’s films, and their so-called ‘journeys’, incarnating a specifically pro-religious or pro-Christian argument? Or, alternatively, dramatizing a non-religious source of - or route to - life-sustaining meaning?

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Disidentification in Faces: From the Ethical to the Political in Cassavetes’ Facial Close-Ups
John Cassavetes relatively late recognition in Film Studies was, for George Kouvaros (2004), related to his escaping of traditional analytical paradigms: from or identification towards ‘the shifting surface of bodily gesture, human relation and emotion’. The turn away from identifying or relating to the subjects of these films could be understood as symptomatic of the ‘free indirect affect’ of his actors’ performances (King, 2004); but, it might also, as I shall argue, be the consequence of the many intense facial close-ups that fuel much of the drama and ambiguity of his films. I wish to take up the reconsideration of Emmanuel Levinas’s ethics of ‘radical alterity’ (led by Film-Philosophy in 2007) in order to argue that Cassavetes’ affective but alienating facial close-ups regularly ‘overflow the idea they leave behind’ (Levinas, 1969: 51) to stage a positive portrayal of ‘the incomprehensible nature of the other’ (ibid.: 195). Moreover, recognising both the social limitations of Levinas’s ethics (Rose, 1996) and the political revision of his writings (exemplified by the writings of Enrique Dussel), I shall argue towards the political potential of Cassavetes’ close-ups in Faces (1968). Perhaps the most conceptual of all his films, Faces regularly places the spectator in a position of unnerving proximity with subjects at their most vulnerable, hysterical or maniacal. In so doing, the face becomes an assault on the spectator, confounding our comprehension, challenging ideas on ‘emotional contagion’ (Plantinga, 1999) and offering instead what Jacques Rancière termed a ‘disidentification’ (Rancière, 1999). I shall argue that these close-ups evade a clearly defined emotional response, staging encounters with otherness that are at once ethical and political.

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Ethics

The Failed Education of the Woman in the Films of Robert Siodmak: Towards a Cavellian Concept of Film Noir
By Stanley Cavell’s account, the Hollywood Comedies of Remarriage are about the “new creation of a woman” that is also a “new creation of the human.” The creation takes places through a reestablishment of marriage as a unity of the sexual and the everyday, effecting the symbolic reconciliation of the private and the public: the “redemption of dailliness.” For Cavell, this nothing less than metaphysical task is coincident with a Hegelian link between America to successfully pursue happiness, and of film to establish its identity as an artform. Within many of these films, Cavell argues, the accomplishment of the task crucially depends on the man’s successful “education of the woman.” Like the Comedies of Remarriage of the 1930s and 40s, the Noir genre in the same period is concerned with establishing film’s identity as an art form through its wrestling with the problem of the relation of the daemonic and the everyday. (The Noir protagonist is characteristically in a quest for the everyday.) In the Noir, the attempt to synthetize fails—for more than one reason: because the (American) “green world” in Comedy is displaced by the (European) Expressionist landscape or cityscape; because the public world symbolized by the newspaper is displaced by the police. But most importantly, perhaps, in Noir there is an incapacity of the man to “educate the woman.” These
ideas will be explored with the films of Robert Siodmak, especially The Phantom Lady and The Suspect, partly to investigate whether it makes sense to think of the Noir as a “minor” tragic genre to the “major” comic genre of the Remarriage Comedy in terms of Cavell’s aesthetics.

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Religion  
Reimagining Faith. Hope and Belief in Tarkovsky’s Stalker: a modern spiritual journey into disaster, darkness, and redemption.

Halfway through Tarkovsky’s masterpiece, Stalker (1977), the film’s protagonist prays for two men travelling with him: “May they believe… but mostly may they have hope and may they become as helpless as children. For weakness is great and strength is worthless.” I intend to take this complex, countercultural ‘prayer’, and the film itself, as a hermeneutic for exploring the notion of faith as searching, as hopeful / hopeless quest. Crucially, I am not rethinking the notion of faith, or redefining it; I am specifically reimagining it. Imagining sets no boundaries, makes no prescriptions or rules; but it does ask us to investigate, to wonder, to inhabit. Ultimately I aim to show that faith cannot be thought, taught, learned, or defined; it can only be imagined into being. Stalker’s undercurrents of despair, loss and failure, suggest that ‘religious faith’ is an oxymoron, that all faith is fruitless. But this is clearly at odds with Tarkovsky’s intentions. Tarkovsky described all his films as being about one thing: “an extreme manifestation of faith.” But Stalker’s backdrop of environmental degradation, surveillance and the threat of violence poses the question: how are we to understand faith here? More, how are we to live faithfully in a context of hostility, disillusion and denial? I suggest that Tarkovsky’s eschewing of easy answers to these questions offers a timely and prophetic opportunity – to re-appropriate faith from doctrine, from theology and to restore to it a restless, heuristic character. This may play fast and loose with traditional ‘faith’ definitions, but it is challenging for a skeptical contemporary audience. I argue for faith as a recognition of our existential incompleteness, our helplessness, our weakness. And weakness, as the stalker tells us, is great. Who finally reaches the Room? The stalker suggests: “Not the good, or the bad, but wretched people.”

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An Ecosophy for Bioregionalism: Anti-Paranoia and Eco-Terrorism in Night Moves

Kelly Reichardt’s Night Moves (2013) is popularly known for its eco-terrorist protagonists, but such a focus overlooks the ecosophical aesthetics and bioregional communities surrounding these principal characters. Exploring this premise, this paper argues that both the form of the film, culminating in an aesthetics of anti-paranoia, and the politics of its bioregional-communities provide an indictment of eco-terrorism by favoring an alternative production of political subjectivity. Night Moves models this alternative subjectivity through Felix Guattari’s ‘three ecologies.’ Towards the end of his life, Felix Guattari integrated his previous philosophical work into a treatise on the environment, which he termed an ‘ecosophy.’ It built upon his work as a psychoanalyst and collaborations with Gilles Deleuze, which led him to complex systems thinking. A political praxis emerges in The Three Ecologies: to make an impact upon the environment, one must understand the relationship between social formations, individual subjectivities, and physical environments. The farming communities of Night Moves model his ecosophy through the social organization of their cooperatives, the emergence of political subjectivity in relation to the land, and their impact on the environment and local communities. In addition to this ecosophical/bioregional model, Night Moves gestures towards the futility of violent action through an aesthetics of anti-paranoia. Friedrich Kittler develops this concept of anti-paranoia in relation to narratives, “which [do] not allow linear chains of cause and effect to emerge” (91). Sounding much like Deleuze’s time-image, Kittler develops a premise where narrative possibilities proliferate to the level of impossibility. In Night Moves, these causal breakages come from the eco-terrorists’ fear that the FBI is just off-screen – a fear/desire that is never fulfilled. As a result, the eco-terrorists of Night Moves are driven to madness, despair, and desertion: antitheses to the sustainable political subjectivity of the cooperative farming community.
Re-Locating Silence and Subversion in Early Assamese Cinema from North East India with Particular Reference to Bhabendranath Saikia’s Films

The paper looks beyond the western philosophical traditions towards a wider world of philosophy and cinema of the periphery following David Sorfa’s statement in What is Film-Philosophy?; it proposes to highlight cinema of Assam, situated in the North Eastern part of India which has a long cinematic history of 80 years beginning with the first award winning (feminist) film Joymoti that was premiered in March 1935. Considering both the history of Assamese cinema and the contribution primarily of Dr. Bhabendranath Saikia (a writer, filmmaker, director and Physicist) the paper would discuss the adaptations of his novels/short stories on screen highlighting the thematic patterns of the filmmaker who has also written the screenplays of his novels/short stories and directed them. During 1960s onwards, when the feminists of the second wave in the West were busy advocating ‘personal as political’, Assamese cinema has already witnessed the coming of women in the cultural space. However it was Saikia’s films with women protagonists who dared to reject and fight for their rights, that saw a new turn in Assamese film industry. All his eight films distinctly challenges normativity, class, ethics that reveal the filmmakers conviction of newer possibilities of space and understanding. Some of his best known films both nationally and internationally are Saandhya Raag (The Evening Melody), Agnisnaan and Uproar and History (1996). His women fall into two different cetegories: one who are echoes of men and the other who experience marginalisation differently and use silence as a weapon of power against patriarchal systems and conventions. Silence reverberates a positive active association. Set within the local world of culture, his films addresses the universal as it foregrounds the positions of the other, their existential struggle as they act/ ‘participation’ in order to debunk and rebel.

Ethics, precarity and universalism in Abderrahmane Sissako’s Bamako

Abderrahmane Sissako’s Bamako (2006) screens the injustices faced by the populations of developing countries in a manner that meets debates among recent theorists of ethics head-on. The ‘ethics of precarity’ Judith Butler first proposed in the essay ‘Precarious Life’, the recent work of Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, and the ‘new humanism’ proposed by Julia Kristeva in the 2000s are the most recent additions to established philosophies of ethics such as that of Emmanuel Levinas, but there are notable disagreements among these thinkers about self-other relations, the role psychoanalysis might play in theorizing the ethical, and the importance of vulnerability, (self-)exposure and precarity in that theorizing (Badiou and Žižek have, for example, been criticized by Mari Ruti (2015) for their relatively ‘macho’, Nietzschean approaches). Comments Sissako has made about how to address injustice suggest a universalism paralleling the ‘reluctant universalism’ Ruti sees in Butler’s ethics of precarity, and the semi-comical juxtaposition of global institutions and everyday life in Bamako, in which the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are put on trial in the front yard of a couple who live in Bamako (the capital city of Sissako’s native Mali) dramatizes this inter-implication of the global with the everyday in a manner film may be able to achieve more efficiently and convincingly than other art forms and media. By employing some of Robert Sinnerbrink’s recent insights into film as a medium of ethical experience, this paper will consider Bamako in relation to recent approaches to ethics, using its staging of injustice and ethical testimony to interrogate some of the contradictions in Butler’s recent theorizing that are highlighted by Ruti in Between Levinas and Lacan: Self, Other, Ethics.
Three Iterations of An American Tragedy: Cinematic Quotation, Adaptation & Entertainment

This video essay will explore the relationship between cinematic quotation, political poignancy, allegory and entertainment through a scrutiny of three adaptations of Theodore Dreiser’s 1925 novel An American Tragedy. Dreiser’s Tragedy is typical of the themes that overarch a reading of his oeuvre; screening social alienation through the allocation of guilt bred by expectation rather than empiricism, the novel allegorises its proletarian protagonist with which to isolate and identify broader social issues at work in America’s consumer culture of the early twentieth-century. Following Paramount’s acquisition of rights to the text, and Patrick Kearney’s adaptation of Dreiser’s work for the stage, we are left with three iterations of “Tragedy.” Eisenstein and his associates were attracted to the sharp political implications of the work; considered too contentious, his screenplay was never realised and the project abandoned. In 1931, Josef von Sternberg would produce an adaptation of Kearney’s script; Dreiser loathed the treatment and distanced himself from the production, dismissing the work on account of its remoteness from the political intentions of his initial text. In 1951 Paramount would return to the text; Harry Brown and Michael Wilson would pen their own script, and a further adaptation of Dreiser’s work, with George Stevens as director, would emerge as A Place in the Sun. Chaplin hailed the film as “the greatest movie made about America;” critic A. H. Weiler, writing for The New York Times in 1951, suggests that the film validates a view of the “remake” and its role in Hollywood, charging that the film represents a return to “the author’s major intentions.” Reading these three iterations of Tragedy, we see the content of a given work shift from allegory, to indication, to romance – allowing a work of social symbolism to recondition itself as myth, as morality tale, and finally as entertainment. This shift in emphasis will provide the punctum of this video essay that, interpolating footage from the two completed adaptations of Dreiser’s text, will explore these three iterations... employing their alterations as a lens with which to explore the function of adaptation and cinematic quotation in mainstream American cinema.

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Documenting Sex: Realism and Utopia in Feminist Pornography

With the notable exception of some narrative features made during the Golden Age of Porn in the late seventies and early eighties of the twentieth century, the genre of hard core moving-image pornography is not usually known for its creative and elaborate storytelling or its innovative use of film techniques. Indeed, as a genre of film, pornography has often been defined precisely by its lack of any substantial narrative contextualization of the sex scenes— with what little narrative there is consisting primarily of formulaic and much spoofed plot devices such as the pizza delivery guy or the handy man, instead foregrounding the rudimentary and goal-oriented narrative of the sexual act itself (Dyer 1994). Moreover, pornography’s obsession with representing “real” sex, that is, explicit and non-simulated sex, comes to the fore in its organizing principle of “maximum visibility”, as it is guided by a desire to uncover the “truth” of sex (Williams 1989). This shared interest in uncovering truth by making it visible, can be said to relate the genre of pornography and the medium of film, with the transparency of the image perfectly suited for the objectives of pornography (Levinson 2002), and the obscenity of pornography functioning as a metaphor for the specificity of the medium of film itself (Jameson 1990). This paper investigates pornography’s reliance on realism, by engaging with a recent wave of feminist pornography which not only reworks the conventional mode of documentary realism but uses the formal conventions of the documentary film in order to frame its pornographic narrative. Rather than presenting the sex in a decontextualized and idealized “pornotopia,” (Marcuse 1966) then, these films appeal to a different kind of utopia, firmly rooted in the feminist and queer communities from which they emerged, with the films themselves functioning as a creative process of world-making, self-consciously blurring the boundaries between reality and fantasy, fact and fiction, pornographic and non-pornographic.
Trouble Breathing: neoliberal poetics in ’71 (Yann Demange, 2014)

Upon its release, Demange’s award-winning ’71 was reviewed and celebrated as an unusually dynamic British contribution to the sub-genre of the modern chase movie, following in the footsteps of Escape From New York (Carpenter, 1981) and Apocalypto (Gibson, 2006). Certainly, ’71 offers the pleasures of the action genre, but this line of appeal is complicated by the film’s historical setting during the British military occupation of Northern Ireland, the Irish Times described the film as ‘A visceral reminder of dark days.’ However, ’71 has very little to say about the ‘dark days’ and the facts of the conflict, indeed it reverses ‘good’ political filmmaking by enacting a decontextualisation. There is neither a political content nor a related politics of representation in the film. Its politics, I argue in this paper, are in the formal patterning of its chase narrative and it is political precisely as a genre film informed by a hyper-kinetic poetics of neoliberalism. Drawing upon conceptualisations of cinematic cartography in relation to the ‘poetics of circulation of commodity chain narratives’ (Toscano, A. Kinkle, J., 2015), I examine how ’71 constructs its cinematic city as a spectacular zone of commodification, filmed on largely abandoned housing estates in northern England, with Sheffield’s Parkhill estate standing in for Belfast’s Divis flats. This merging of the iconic “failed” post-war architecture of welfare-state modernism with 1970s’ Belfast’s powerfully resonant aura of national crisis enables the film to create an abyssal, fractured city of neoliberal control. Within this zone - across markets of territory, bodies and weapons - the chase proceeds at frenetic, generic pace, opening up a space of encounters and ethical reflection. ’71’s chase, it will be argued, creates a paradoxical breathing space in which breathing itself – as a figure for contemporary precarity and resilience - becomes political.

Mapped and Monstrous Spaces in Digital 3D Cinema

In his book The Production of Space (1991), philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre describes how space is neither neutral nor pre-existing, but is rather an ideologically-loaded and actively produced category in both everyday life and conceptual thought. He therefore urges us to pay more attention to how space is produced and whose ends these productions serve. In this paper, I will explore digital 3D cinema within this critical framework, positing two opposing models for a philosophy of stereoscopic cinematic space, models which nonetheless co-exist in the digital era. More successful than previous moments of mainstream 3D adoption, contemporary blockbuster 3D cinema relies on digital production pipelines and computerised tools for the successful alignment of images and the ‘post-conversion’ of 2D content. The functioning of these pipelines and tools are frequently narrated by digital 3D blockbusters in their own mise-en-scene – an indicative moment can be found in Prometheus (2012) when autonomous robots laser-scan an alien base and create a glowing digital schematic of it. Such scenes speak to the colonial logics of the blockbuster (Bennett 2013) and emphasise how digital 3D technology is conceptualised as instrumental and user-oriented in its creation of intensely Cartesian virtual spaces. Nonetheless, digital 3D still retains the ‘monstrous’ qualities of earlier stereoscopic technologies (Bantjes 2015), creating ‘ghastly or impalpable’ spaces (Bazin 1997/1953, 88) that are powerfully contingent and ephemeral. This paper will investigate these seemingly opposed ways of knowing and representing the world, connecting them to broader ideas around space, virtuality, and interactivity in an age of digital media.

‘The Equalized Pulse’: Digital Humanities and Videographic Essay Research

In the ‘digital humanities’, computational methods are applied to cultural works that are traditionally researched via interpretation, contextualization, and other forms of qualitative analysis. These
computational methods transform the works into quantifiable data that can then be analyzed algorithmically and rendered as visualizations such as maps or complex graphs. Unlike their colleagues in literary studies or history, film scholars have been reluctant to explore such computational techniques, largely because transforming moving images and sounds into data that can be treated algorithmically is far more challenging than giving such treatment to the written word. But while they have not embraced quantitative computational methods, film scholars have developed a unique mode of digital scholarship: videographic criticism – the expression of scholarly ideas via moving images and sounds in video form, an approach that would not seem conducive to representing quantitative information. And yet, there is one area of film research where the quantitative method has been employed, one that predates digital humanities: the Cinemetrics project of quantifying motion picture average shot length (ASL). Might such an approach be productive for videographic criticism? My colleague Jason Mittell and I are gambling that it might. Instead of treating ASL as a calculated average abstracted from the film, we force a film to conform to its own average by speeding up or slowing down each shot to last precisely as long as its ASL. This videographic experiment, which we call the "equalized pulse," forces one filmic element that is variable within every film (shot length) to adhere to a constant duration that emerges quantitatively from the original film. This presentation will consider the ways in which the ‘equalized pulse’ can be a productive first step of research in videographic scholarship.

The Auteur in Deleuze’s Cinema 1 and 2

Interpretations of Gilles Deleuze’s Cinema books, and of his work generally, emphasise the importance of the ‘nonhuman’ and the ‘anti-identitarian’ in his philosophy. In cinema this means the conceptual privileging of a radically decentralised or acentred perspective which threatens, in the words of critics such as Gregory Flaxman ‘our belief in that stability which constitutes identity itself’, and challenges an auteur-centric understanding of film production. The film critic is called to practice experimentation and not interpretation. As against this dominant trend some recent scholarship has sought to reintroduce the human, re-emphasising the role of the ‘auteur’ in Deleuze’s writings on cinema. However, in doing so John Mullarkey challenges Deleuze’s reliance on the figure of the director-auteur on the grounds that it does not reflect the complex and collaborative nature of film production, and criticises Deleuze for offering only vague and abstract notions of the diverse cultural influences on the cinematic image. I will argue that Deleuze’s conception of the auteur is the definitive tool he uses to structure his analysis of film, but is also nuanced enough to embrace a collective authorial subject. I will examine Deleuze’s treatment in Cinema 1 and 2 of notions of style, collaboration, and apprenticeship. I will further argue that Deleuze’s analysis does not support a spectator-centred theory of the free play of interpretations of a cinematic text. My paper challenges an understanding of Deleuze as a post-structuralist thinker of film.

Visibility and Extremity

Questions of visibility and obscurity have been an important if not always explicit presence in Western philosophical discourse. Frederic Jameson declared that an ontology of the modern world would have to be an examination of “being as the visible first and foremost”. While scholars such as Martin Jay have furnished expansive discussions on the place of vision in contemporary thought, there has been less interest in the philosophical import of something being rendered visible to or obscured from the eye. New extreme films, which feature graphic violence and explicit sex, place this question at the forefront of the spectator’s mind by examining the limits of visibility. Most simply we can see this in censorship, when classification boards judge scenes or films unsuitable to be made publically visible. Pushing something to the limits also asks us about watchability (what are our personal limits on what is made visible to us) and realism (is there something more real about visible penetration than visible tears?). This paper will examine films by Lukas Moodysson and Gaspar Noé to explore what contributions they make to discussions of visibility. I will suggest that the particular ways in which sex,
surgery and violence are made visible and are obscured in their films demonstrate the importance of visibility in the construction of their ethical frameworks. Visibility can evoke absolutes (real sex, real surgery, real violence) but these films also problematize such absolute notions and in their sometimes disorienting, obscuring, obfuscating approach to sex, violence and surgery demand that the spectator reflect on these acts, these images and their own role within such images. Visibility, I will argue, is far from a simple concept and its detailed examination alongside these films can provide deep insights into challenging images as well as into the nature of visibility itself.

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Sexualities

The Crystalline and the Vegetable: Brigitte Bardot as the Doubled Aphrodite in Le Mépris

In Plato’s Symposium, the character Pausanias distinguishes between two kinds of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The first is associated with the creation myth of Hesiod, the second, with Homer. There is ‘Heavenly’ Aphrodite (Aphrodite Urania), born out of Uranus’s castrated genitals and the foam of the sea, and there is ‘Common’ or ‘Pandemic’ Aphrodite (Aphrodite Pandemos), daughter of Zeus and Dione. The art critic Kenneth Clark in 1956 famously posited that the history of the female nude is the history of these two Aphrodites, which Clark distinguishes as the ‘crystalline Aphrodite’ and the ‘vegetable Aphrodite’. My paper will explore these two Aphrodites – also called Venus Coelestis and Venus Vulgaris – by examining Brigitte Bardot in Jean-Luc Godard’s Le Mépris (1963). My association of Bardot with the twinned Aphrodites, known for their links with beauty and prostitution, will be explored via the film’s images of the sea, statues of deities, and Bardot’s nudity. While the nude scenes of the film – and the reasons for their insertion into the film – are well known, little work has been done to position them in the long lineage of the female nude. I will argue that the nude scenes both invoke and rework the pictorial language of nudity in painting (especially Velasquez’s La Venus del espejo), and sculpture (particularly what I will identify as copies of the ‘Medici Venus’ and the ‘Venus of Cyrene’ briefly gimped in the film). This analysis will make bare not only the significance of Bardot’s nakedness in Le Mépris, but also, arguing with and against Stanley Cavell, the ontological conditions of naked flesh – or what Cavell calls the undressed woman – in film more widely. Accordingly, I will argue that Godard’s film not only explores the complex history of carnal hermeneutics and the very idea of the ‘sex goddess’, but exposes the ontological conditions of how film gives flesh to, as well as transforms the flesh of, the two Aphrodites tradition.

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Ethics

Towards an Authentic Representation of Conflict, Trauma, and the Bosnian War

Networked screens broker the presence of traumatic images in everyday life. When coupled with around-the-clock news they create the potential for the anaesthetisation of trauma. In this context it is worth evaluating film’s role in constructing cultural narratives, and to scrutinise the logic that governs those narratives. The suffering of the Bosnian War was unprecedented in the context of the European Union – more than a million people were displaced and over 275,000 people were killed or went missing. I am interested in the question of how that conflict can be adequately translated to the screen. What follows is a discussion about the relationship between film style and the representation of conflict in Michael Winterbottom’s Welcome to Sarajevo (1997) and Juanita Wilson’s As If I Am Not There (2010). My argument is that Winterbottom incites criticism of fact-based historical discourse by raising questions about its construction, and that Wilson avoids historicising conflict altogether by representing it subjectively. I argue through the theory of Walter Benjamin that Welcome to Sarajevo makes conflict available for understanding through its narrative. In doing this, I suggest, the film risks historicising the Bosnian War. I then turn to As If I Am Not There and discuss how the film’s visual style works in tandem with its story to resist such temporal compartmentalisation. I use Piers Paolo Pasolini’s ground-breaking essay ‘The Cinema of Poetry’ to show that the representation of personal trauma demands a unique visual style. My findings are useful because they systematise two diametrically opposed ways of representing conflict onscreen – exposition and expression.
Cinema as Gesture... Gesture as Politics

In my film, How They Hate Us... (2016), the gestural is used to acknowledge the politics of fear and anxiety in Israel. In Notes on Gesture (1992), Giorgio Agamben argues that early cinema ‘reclaimed’ the gesture that was on the point of being lost to the world. Reminding us of Christian Metz’s view that cinema is a language without a code, he claims cinema as a gestural form, “remains outside of language”. In his essay Agamben fails to acknowledge Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht both of whom theorised the gestus as an aesthetics of resistance. The gesture has been picked up as a potent way of theorising film by philosophers and film theorists, for example Benjamin Noys (2004), but none of them have attempted to contextualise the gesture with reference to Brecht or Benjamin. Consequently, there has been a failure to locate how the gestural in cinema might relate to a reflexive aesthetics and as a politics of engagement. Given that cinema as gesture is, according to Agamben, “the exhibition of mediality”, an historical context is important as it helps locate a continuing relevance to a politicised aesthetics and an awareness of technics and performativity. Agamben has elsewhere explored Benjamin’s view of technology and technics. This debate can be extended by reference to Bernard Stiegler’s theorisation of cinema as mnemotechnology, one that he argues illuminates the shortfalls in Deleuzian cinematic theory. Does Agamben’s cinema as gesture provide an alternative to Deleuze’s theory of cinema, as Noys claims? (Is it in fact a ‘theory’ at all, or more of a gestural notion?) And so, does its reflexivity, referencing of mediality and technics, point towards a more political tradition within the cinema, one that works against a vitalist conception of cinema?

The Cultural Techniques of Gesture and Working-Class Corporeality in Aki Kaurismäki’s Proletarian Trilogy

Drawing on German Media Theory and Bernhard Siegert’s discussion of cultural techniques, this proposed paper discusses “the techniques” of gesture and the working-class body in Kaurismäki’s Proletarian Trilogy (Shadows in Paradise 1986, Ariel 1988, The Match Factory Girl, 1990). According to Siegert the concept of cultural techniques refers to operations that minimize discussions of human agency in favour of questions of the mediation of everyday life. As he says, “The concept of cultural techniques clearly and unequivocally repudiates the ontology of philosophical concepts. Humans as such do not exist independently of cultural techniques of hominization, time as such does not exist independently of cultural techniques of time measurement, and space as such does not exist independently of cultural techniques of spatial control” (Siegert 2013). By addressing questions of performance and gesture in Kaurismäki’s Proletarian trilogy, I analyse the cultural techniques of class as manifested in the expressive arrangements of corporeal movement in space. The proposed paper intends to intervene in a critical approach to Kaurismäki’s work but also to the recently reanimated interest in questions of gesture as mediation in the discipline of film studies.

Kill Bill with Flying Daggers: Aesthetic Violence and Women in Film

A beautiful young woman leaps into the air, executes a series of gravity-free somersaults and then swiftly disarms a throng of lumbering male thugs. We are in the rarefied cinematic atmosphere of surrealistic violence. A recent trend in film uncharacteristically positions women as the heroes of movie violence that emphasizes its aesthetic qualities; color, line, composition and movement take precedence over realism. When films make violence look beautiful, they employ female form, action and interests. Although this trend may not characterize a robustly feminist approach, the centrality of women and their needs suggests a feminist orientation. Before analyzing surrealistic violence through two representative films, it is distinguished from excessive and hyper-violence. Excessive
violence, such as characterizes many Schwarzenegger films, does not present images that delight in their mere appearance. Instead, the films simply heap violence upon more violence. Increase in amount of bloodshed and carnage does not produce transformation; quantitative expansion does not qualitatively alter the violence portrayed. In contrast are two modes of film violence that do aesthetically reconfigure mayhem. Hyper-violence goes beyond simple excess. Dwelling on the sensuous surface of human destruction in visually captivating ways, it vivifies the artistic qualities of cutting and rending, maiming and killing. Hyper-violence exaggerates the consequences of combat, for example, by enriching the splatter of blood or focusing on its pattern. In surrealistic violence, bloodshed and gore are replaced by graceful movement and acrobatic creativity. Surrealistic violence departs further from realism by transfiguring violence more aesthetically through cinematic artifice. The concerns of women and their social constraints are also more pivotal than in other genres of film violence. The spectacle and import of magical female motion are investigated through analysis of Crouching Tiger/Hidden Dragon and House of Flying Daggers.

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Trust and Truth in Shutter Island  
This paper examines questions of trust in cinema. With its self-referential allusion to the mechanical 'eye' of a camera, a stage-managed fantasy embedded within its plot, vividly atmospheric air of uncertainty and image of a dark lighthouse, Shutter Island (2010) explores its spectators' and its own cinematic sense of suspicion. Pathologies and therapeutic aspects of trust are linked in this film with issues involving interpersonal, self and institutional trust in ways that blur distinctions between trusting others and trust in oneself and those between traditionally narrative and self-reflexive film. Focusing on particular cinematic techniques and construing trust as a type of 'participant attitude,' its emergence and erosion over the course of the film is tracked, both in terms of the diegesis and its bearing on film spectatorship. Fleeting moments of exposure to intolerable truths are brought to light in ways that sustain the tension between their acceptance and denial. Examining epistemic alignments with the characters on the part of the audience and complicity on the part of spectators in constructing the illusions into which the protagonist is locked, it is shown how the “morals that can be found about perceptual malfunction and misalignment within the boundaries of the film also effectively double back upon the viewers themselves” (Wilson). Finally, temporal dimensions of trust and disturbances in subjectivity through projections of ‘monstrosities’ depicted in the film are connected to Epstein’s notion of ‘something monstrous’ in cinematic imagery.

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The Maids of Dishonor: Unruly Bodies, Embarrassment, and the “Womance” Genre  
Over the past decades a new subgenre has developed within romantic comedy, a subgenre that is best described as “womance.” Combining the words woman and romance, the term describes a strong and vibrant friendship between two or more (heterosexual) women. This paper will define the genre by paying attention to the role of the unruly body in womance films such as Bridesmaids (2011), Bachelorette (2012) and The Sweetest Thing (2002). I shall argue that this unruliness functions to undermine the notions of love and romance in order to celebrate female friendship. The second focus of my paper attempts to answer the question: what makes these films funny? I shall argue that this has to do with embarrassment not only experienced by the female characters themselves, but also regularly by the spectators as if “by proxy.” The laughter is a coping mechanism arising from the unruly female body, eliciting a surge of embarrassment. This means that in these films embarrassment is laughter’s counterpart, and not its opposite. Laughter is the way to privately negotiate and adjust our viewing mode as well as our affects before we can look at the embarrassing scene again, but this time with amusement. For many scenes in the genre of womance are deliberately designed to elicit embarrassed reactions, which demonstrates the contagiousness of this affect. Furthermore, not only are these scenes hilarious to look at, but also the laughter they evoke is far from inevitable. Womance films are affectively provocative because the comedy is often based on embarrassment created by
tension built in social interaction. In other words, embarrassment is a characteristic feature in womance, which defines the uniqueness of the genre.

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**“Killing is not nearly as easy as the innocent believe”**

**Does Woody Allen Condone Murder?**

In Woody Allen’s masterpiece Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989) the main character, Judah Rosenthal (Martin Landau), comes to “see” that in a world devoid of a divine presence, all acts are permissible, even murder. The apparent philosophical despair of this film, in which the most moral individual, Ben (a rabbi played by Sam Waterston), is shown gradually going blind, has been taken by many to symbolize Allen’s ultimate sense of hopelessness. Yet, I have argued that Judah, despite his assertions to the contrary, has not really escaped from his deep sense of guilt. Allen has revisited the moral implications of murder in his films Match Point (2005), Cassandra’s Dream (2007), and, most recently, in Irrational Man (2014). Match Point appears to be an updating of Judah’s story to England, while Cassandra’s Dream tells the story of two English brothers who murder a stranger for money. Finally, Irrational Man features an American philosophy professor who thinks he can escape from existential despair by murdering a judge solely on the basis of a conversation he overhears in a restaurant. I will compare the themes in these films in order to determine whether Allen takes a consistent philosophical stance on the moral issues raised by murder. Ultimately, I argue that in these films the murderers pay for their crimes.

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**That Obscure Object of Realism: Chinese Docufiction as Ontological Fabulation**

With Speculative Realism and the object-oriented ontology (OOO) developed by Graham Harman and Timothy Morton, there has been a resurgence of interest in realism lately. Inspired by these recent developments in continental philosophy, this paper will make a contribution to global film-philosophy by exploring the potential contribution of Speculative Realism and OOO to the study of realism in film studies by staging a dialogue between Western philosophy and Chinese cinema. Is it possible to construct a philosophically informed discourse that would not immediately resort to the notions of identity, history, and memory predicated upon human actors? Stemming from the need to rethink the undeniable anthropocentric nature of film analysis, the paper will focus on how various nonhuman objects (cigarettes, liquor, tea, banknotes, photos, ID cards, ruins, etc.) function in two celebrated Chinese productions, Jia Zhangke’s Still Life (Sanxia haoren, 2006) and 24 City (Ershisi cheng ji, 2008), that can be labelled “docufictions.” One of the goals of this paper is to understand the kind of realism put forward in these two works straddling fiction and documentary via their recourse to a vast array of objects in their construction of what I will call “ontological fabulation.” What is an ontological fabulation? Creatively restructuring Deleuze’s famous discussion of the “powers of the false” and documentary “fabulation” in Cinema 2 by de-emphasizing the human to think a “flat ontology” establishing a more democratic mode of coexistence between human and nonhuman objects, I will explore the type of fabulation that can emerge from a non-anthropocentric perspective privileging objects. Ontological fabulation reveals a more complex way of expressing “reality” (and of discussing realism) by accentuating what had been left in the background of Deleuze’s analysis of filmmakers’ intercessors “making up fiction or legends”, that is, objects of all kinds that equally “make up fiction.” Rebooting the Chinese notions of “bizhen” (true to life) and “xiancha” (on-the-spot realism) that have been used to describe post-socialist works such as Jia’s films, this paper will thus offer a speculative take on the potential of OOO to reconsider nonhuman objects in film-philosophy.

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**Existential Jouissance in Leos Carax Holy Motors**
For those whose experience of life is bound up with their love of cinema, debates suggesting its demise possesses a profound existential resonanace. Filmmakers, film critics, academics and fans have innumerable ways of articulating a blurred boundary between a sense of the material/rational self in the world and a self imagined, experienced or constructed through cinema. Godard’s “truth 24 frames a second”, Bergman’s “I live permanently in my dream, from which I make brief forays into reality” or even writer Dom Dillio’s statement that film “is the world seen from inside” all allude to an ontology, a sense of being through film. If, in the digital age, cinema’s obituary is in the process of being drafted, for cinephiles of every kind, it might read like a ghost written suicide note. It is somewhat paradoxical therefore to experience a film which, on the one hand, meditates on the ‘crisis’ of cinema, and in turn, a crisis of being through cinema, while on the other hand, displays an overwhelming aesthetic jouissance reminding us what cinema was, is, and still could be. This is the ironic genius of Leos Carax Holy Motors (2012). This paper explores the existential turmoil at the heart of Carax’s masterpiece; turmoil caused by a series of symbolic deaths. The film presents us with the death of authorship, the death of performance, and the death of narrative, all of which assert the death of cinema itself. The invisible yet always present audience is implicated as a sceptic of the cinematic illusion, yet seemingly unaware that such scepticism is destructive of the spectating self. Holy Motors, I will argue, offers the viewer a Sartrian contemplation of the questions “what is cinema?”, and “what is the self through cinema?:” questions that emerge from a medium on the precipice of its demise.

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B.04
Video Essays

American Landscapes, American Pathologies: The Films of James Benning
For four and half decades, the avant-garde director James Benning has been making short films and feature films, on 16mm and digital video, carefully watching and listening to the world around us. Many of his films present long, static shots of landscapes, and it is therefore not surprising that Benning has become increasingly visible as the field of ecocinema continues to develop. At the same time, Benning’s films offer a chronicle of North American history, and in particular raise the questions of how and why violence may erupt in a specific individual. This talk is concerned with such violent crystallizations: Arthur Bremer’s failed plans for the assassination of either Richard Nixon or the democratic presidential candidate George Wallace in 1972 (in American Dreams – Lost and Found (1984)); the famous Ed Gein case that also inspired Psycho, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, and the various Hannibal Lecter films (in Landscape Suicide (1986)); and the terrorist activities of Ted Kaczynski, aka the Unabomber (in Two Cabins (2011) and Stemple Pass (2012), for instance). Drawing on Félix Guattari’s idea of a socio-political, a mental and an environmental ecology, I will examine how Benning places individual histories (including his own) in relation to (1) the socio-political context and, in particular, (2) the natural environment. What role – if any – do landscapes play in the formation of pathological subjectivities? This unusual question is explicit in Landscape Suicide where Benning brings together Gein’s violence and the rough wintery landscapes of Wisconsin, and it reappears in the recent projects on the Unabomber that combine terrorist activities with beautiful forests. Exploring the relations between violence, nature and subjectivity, this talk aims to bring out a provocative dimension that sometimes remain occluded in environmentali

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Sexualities

Queering Cult Cinema: Performances of Gendered Reception
“Gender” has been a commonly explored topic in the study of cult cinema, in particular with Joanne Hallows exploring “The masculinity of cult,”(Hollows) and Ernest Mathijs and Jamie Sexton discussing gender and sexuality in their analysis of cult cinema (Mathijs and Sexton). However, there exists an unexplored gap between gender and queer studies in relation to cult cinema audiences, namely concerning performativity and audience participation. This presentation will explore how queer film audiences have developed performances of gender by “queering” films that are not originally or
purposefully constituted as “queer.” This “queering” involves 1.) seeking performances of non-normative sexuality and 2.) recognising elements that might represent (or relate to) queer identities, subcultures, and aesthetics, such as camp and gender fluidity, even against the original intentions of the filmmakers. These films are queered to the point where a film’s reception might be altered and develop a cult status. Through this cult status comes performance and representation of gender or “performances of gendered reception” in the space/venue of the cinematic screening. In the reception of these queered films, the audience might respond and engage either through genuine reactions or performed reactions. These reactions and performances will be analysed in this presentation through textual readings of several “queered” cult film texts, juxtaposed with films initially intended as queer (or containing intentional queer elements). Some examples of these films where “queering” has occurred include The Wizard of Oz (1939), Calamity Jane (1953), Grey Gardens (1976), Mommie Dearest (1981), and Top Gun (1986). Intentionally queer films include The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975), Pink Flamingos (1972), Paris is Burning (1990), and The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert (1994). By analysing several of these texts, a clearer understanding will be developed between what constitutes performances of gender in cult cinema audiences, particularly in terms of what is genuine and what is intentionally performed.

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B.04 Video Essays

Futile Looking: Chantal Akerman’s From The East

In her essay, "D’Est," on her essay-film, From The East (1993), Chantal Akerman suggests that she wanted to film Eastern Europe, "while there’s still time." Later in the same essay she retracts, "I was saying: "while there’s still time." Time for what, and why? Time before the Western "invasion" becomes too blatant? As if there had been a before and after, before and after the Ice age or the cold war." Neither a memorialization, nor a documentation as such, From The East concerns what is looked at when one is without time. At the end of Cinema 1, Gilles Deleuze names the frame of a situation where it could be said that the time of a certain action has passed as "after the war": "the crisis which has shaken the action-image has depended on many factors which only had their full effect after the war." In Deleuze’s terms, "we hardly believe any longer that a global situation can give rise to an action which is capable of modifying it—no more than we believe that an action can force a situation to disclose itself, even partially." If the possibility of acting by way of disclosure does not exist, as Deleuze suggests, what are we left with? Reflecting on those she films in From The East, Akerman remarks, "beneath [their] laughter you get a sense of impending disaster. It is impending from week to week but never comes—quite simply, perhaps, because it is already there." If everything is too late, perception, like it is in From The East, shows itself to be non-teleological. For Deleuze, it is because the "global situation" doesn’t seem like it can be changed, that it paradoxically releases that which was thought to be otherwise futile. For Akerman, futility is no longer a reason for not looking.

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I.03 Open

The Three Burials of Jean Baudrillard

In 2010 Film-Philosophy devoted a special issue to Jean Baudrillard and cinema. These incisive essays outlined novel and creative ways to conceptualise a relationship with the cinematic image and offered important insights into our ethical engagements by deploying Baudrillardian concepts. This engagement established precisely how important he can be to film studies and film philosophy. We are still obliged to pursue this relationship between Baudrillard and cinema because in the six years since this publication (in Baudrillard’s terms) things have deteriorated. What we sense, following Baudrillard and his hyperbolic term for the contemporary milieu is ‘the fractal’. This is the fourth level of simulation. Here the (film) object has no referent, no need of a history or transcendent meaning. We may now ask two important questions of Baudrillard. How is the fractal manifesting in contemporary cinema? How can the fractal be observed? What many conclude as a problem with Baudrillard, that is his impenetrable, inconsistent irrationalist thinking in the time of the fractal becomes his strongest creative strength. A détournement with the banal ideas of the world that underpin the fractal provoke the potential for change; an antidote to the fractal. This paper will pursue
a Nietzschean manifestation of Baudrillard and trace his thinking of the fractal by marryng two moments in recent films. Wes Anderson’s funeral scene in The Royal Tenenbaums and Charlie Kaufman’s funeral scene in Synecdoche New York point us clearly towards the fractal. I argue that Wes Anderson and Charlie Kaufman have filmed funerals that prosecute a détournement with traditional cinematic signifiers thus exposing where we might be at the moment. A study of these two scenes will illuminate how this Nietzschean application of Baudrillard can animate further forays into film philosophy from this important thinker.

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An Introduction to Tatiphysics: On Film-Philosophy Without Platonism

Can film be philosophical in its own right, not merely by proxy of its scriptural elements (plot and dialogue) resembling extant ideas in philosophy books, but directly through its own audio-visual form or structure? I believe that it can: a film-philosophy that is genuinely autonomous with respect to standard, written, philosophy can be generated – by only by taking its structural form directly from film itself. My last work, All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Thought (University of Minnesota Press, 2015) utilizes one particular film form to generate a philosophy, that of Lars von Trier’s The Five Obstructions (2003 – as was discussed at Film-Philosophy at Glasgow in 2014). In the following presentation, I will endeavor to take this approach further again, only now not by using the structure of a single work but the entire oeuvre of one filmmaker – that of Jacques Tati. There exists in Tati’s five major films, I’ll argue, a wholly indigenous and novel metaphysics. Undoubtedly, Tati’s work is about space and time: this much is a common observation (one made long before Gilles Deleuze and his notion of the ‘sonsign’ in Cinema 2, where Tati is briefly discussed). More than that, however, Tati’s metaphysics concerns very specific issues is space, time, movement, and matter: it tackles physical objects such as cars (Traffic deals with the very notion of a ‘concept’ car) and bicycles (Jour de Fête (1949) shows how the body and bicycle are both machines for perpetual movement); material processes such as arriving and departing at a scene or venue (Playtime (1967) and Les Vacances de M. Hulot (1953)); sensual experiences such as being on a beach (Les Vacances); interspecies relations – especially between humans and stray canines (Mon Oncle); and indeed the weird, ‘unfaithful’ experience of sound too (on which Michel Chion has commented so well as it works through all of Tati’s films). What I hope to show in all of this, though, is that what counts as ‘metaphysics’ need not match the abstractions normally associated with the most stereotypical, that is to say ‘Platonist’ metaphysics that abstracts a (verbal) content away from the world: it can also be seen, albeit in a wholly new way, operating in the visual form of this world, and, in one particular instance at least, in Tati’s metaphysical world. This is Tati’s film-philosophy, the film-metaphysics that ultimately belongs to his cinema alone, a ‘Tatiphysics’.

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While Thomas Lammarre situates Miyazaki’s work ‘on a Japanese Heideggerian trajectory’ (Lammarre), there seems to be a basic problem that Miyazaki’s medium of animation is incompatible with Heidegger’s approach. This dilemma is directly expressed by Heidegger in ‘A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer’ where there is a discussion of Kurosawa’s film Rashomon. Although ‘the Inquirer’ initially expresses some sympathy towards Rashomon, ultimately both the interlocutors conclude that it technologically objectified the Japanese World. Heidegger extends this suspicion to film media in general seeing it as objectifying and incompatible with the Japanese World as he understands it, producing westernised consumer products. Such a suspicion might apply to Miyazaki’s medium of animation as much as to Kurosawa’s films. This paper will consider Miyazaki in the context of Heidegger’s dialogue with Japanese tradition and his critique of technology. I will focus on Miyazaki’s Spirited Away, in which elements of Folk-Shinto are shown in a contemporary Japanese setting, exploring Miyazaki’s relationship to Heidegger and argue against this Heideggerian suspicion toward his animations. I will consider the Heideggerian suspicion that,
despite Miyazaki’s apparent critique of technology in other animations such as Princess Mononoke, he still seems to have appropriated Japanese folk-lore technologically, offering it for the gaze of the western audience. This position would be consistent with an understanding of Miyazaki as a Japanese Disney, presenting a technical-aesthetic fantasy. Against such an interpretation, I will demonstrate that through Spirited Away Miyazaki has indeed attempted to present an ancient non-technological world associated with Folk-Shinto practice and kami (gods) within the high-tech contemporary Japanese society. These aspects of the animation challenge the expectations of the technological gaze and resist objectification. This resonates with Heidegger’s project of recovering the mystery of Being from within technology, thus a parallel of Heideggerian thought through animation.

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Dead Funny: Laughter, Life and Death in Philibert’s Nénette and Un animal, des animaux
Nicolas Philibert’s Nénette (2010), a documentary about an orangutan living in the menagerie in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, places the laughter of visitors at the centre of its reflections on the zoo, while also attending to the lived time of captivity, and to the orangutan as something more than merely an object of fun. Nénette is often seen as a companion piece to Philibert’s Un animal, des animaux (1996), which documents the renovation of the Natural History Museum’s zoology gallery, principally comprising a vast taxidermy collection, located next door to the menagerie in which Nénette is housed. But it is not only the spatial proximity between animal specimens living and dead that prompts my pairing of the two films here. Un animal’s wry investment in incongruities and visual gags finds continuation in the uneasy humour at work in Nénette. Drawing on Bergson’s theory of laughter as a negotiation of boundaries between the human and the animal, and between the animate and the inanimate, I read the zoo animal in Nénette as inextricably bound up with the taxidermied animal in Un animal. Chris Marker’s La Jetée (1962) acts as an intriguing urtext here, with one of its scenes set in the same zoology gallery at the Natural History Museum, thirty years before Philibert filmed there. Like La Jetée, Nénette and Un animal suggest cinema as a privileged space of reflection on life, death and temporality — and as in Marker’s museum scene, Philibert organises these questions around the animal. But, with the silent laughter of the couple during the museum visit in La Jetée in mind, I want to suggest that humour in Philibert’s two films marks a series of moments in which boundaries between the living and the dead, and the human and the animal, become especially fragile.

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"Let the Ghosts Come Back": Raising the Spectre of Senna (2010)
In his limited discussions of cinema, Jacques Derrida positions the moving image as a “spectral” form that unsettles the hierarchical separation of presence and absence that underlies Western metaphysics. In doing so, he argues that the cinematic subject is always already “spectralized,” haunted by the moving image’s ability to reproduce them in absentia. Thus, film’s iterability ensures a “disappearance…which promises and conceals in advance another magic ‘apparition,’ a ghostly ‘re-apparition’” (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002: 117). In this paper, I explore how Asif Kapadia’s Senna (2010) represents its deceased subject as a means of foregrounding the spectrality of cinema. Constructing a documentary narrative of the life (and death) of Brazilian formula 1 driver Ayrton Senna, the film is assembled entirely from contemporary race footage, news reports, and home videos. By appropriating and recontextualising pre-existing images of Senna, the film highlights the iterative potential of cinema; each shot of the racing driver is suspended between presence and absence, an ontological paradox foregrounded by their “re-apparition” in a new cinematic context. Furthermore, as Derrida notes in “Spectrographies,” the moving image’s “hauntological” effect is heightened by the subsequent death of the cinematic subject (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002: 120); the spectral form of Senna is emphasized by Senna’s appearance as an on-screen phantom. In answering Derrida’s call (from Ghostdance [1983]) to “let the ghosts come back,” Senna figures its own spectrality through
the inclusion of narrative repetitions and circular motifs. Throughout the film, attention is drawn to visual loops and circuits, exemplified by the inclusion of extended on-board race footage. In turn, Senna’s thematic preoccupation with recurrence and circularity is internalized in its own narrative structure, establishing the film itself as an endlessly repeatable circuit. The film’s final moments return the spectator to the beginnings of Senna’s career, instituting a narrative loop that facilitates limitless future retellings and reproductions. Thus, Senna formally embodies the iterative potential that resides within its constituent images, and, in doing so, exhibits the deconstructive “logic of the spectral” (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002: 117).

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Akerman, Irigaray and the Figure of the Girl on Screen

In this paper I explore the figure of the girl in the moving image by means of a close reading of Chantal Akerman’s Portrait d’une Jeune Fille de la fin des années 60 à Bruxelles (1993) and the feminist philosophy of Luce Irigaray. Akerman’s Portrait d’une Jeune Fille de la fin des années 60 à Bruxelles (1993) is a moving depiction of close friendship and love between two adolescent girls set in Brussels in April 1968, just a month before the student protests in Paris in May 1968. In earlier films by Akerman, such as Saute ma Ville (1968), Je, tu, il, elle (1974), J’ai faim, J’ai froid (1984) and the more recent La folie almayer (2011), we can trace Akerman’s sustained concern with girls and young women in her filmmaking. Portrait d’une Jeune Fille de la fin des années 60 à Bruxelles is thus positioned in conversation with these earlier films, yet it also engages with the move by contemporary artists and filmmakers in the 1990s to explore the figure of the girl on screen. Engaging with a recent shift in film theory that takes up feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray’s writing in the context of narrative cinema, this paper explores how Irigaray’s emphasis on sexually differentiated modes of corporeality and gesture offer a way to read the encounter with girls on screen. I argue that Akerman’s film, in conversation with Irigarayan philosophy, addresses the figure of the girl and signals to the importance of closely reading for the specificity of the girl in filmmaking of this kind. The paper then suggests how films such as Portrait d’une Jeune Fille de la fin des années 60 à Bruxelles speak to, and intervene in, the important feminist and philosophical debates surrounding sexuality, subjectivity and screen-based practices.

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Free Will and Film: A Cinematic Exploration of the Deep Self View

In urban Australia, Bubby is a 35-year-old man-child has spent his entire life imprisoned in one small room by an abusive mother, who tells him the air outside is poisonous (Bad Boy Bubby, Rolf de Heer, 1993). In Greece, three siblings are trapped in their home by a patriarch, who tells them that they cannot leave until their dogtooth falls out and grows back again (Dogtooth, Giorgos Lanthimos, 2009). In a vast television studio in the USA, Truman is unaware that his entire world is manufactured for the purpose of a television show, of which he is the star (The Truman Show, Weir 1998). This paper aims to explore what the scenarios presented in these films, as well as the films qua films, can contribute to the free will debate, particularly with reference to contemporary compatibilist ‘Deep Self View’ accounts of freedom and responsibility. The Deep Self View (Frankfurt 1971; Watson 1975; Taylor 1976; Wolf 1990) claims that an agent’s action may be free - and he may therefore be held responsible for it - if it is the result of desires which are governed by and expressive of his ‘deep self’. I will explore to what extent the situations the protagonists of the our three films find themselves in limit their ability to form appropriate ‘deep selves’ and, as such, whether they support or undermine the Deep Self View. Throughout, it will be demonstrated that the contribution these films make to the philosophical debate is especially cinematic through formal analysis of their narrative strategies and stylistic elements.
Towards a Feminist Dancefilm Philosophy: Martine Rousset's Carolyn Trilogy

This paper focuses on Martine Rousset’s Carolyn Trilogy (1978-1980), a series of films on the dancer Carolyn Carlson. I seek to place Rousset’s work within a lineage of feminist dancefilm, from the work of Loïe Fuller, to Germaine Dulac, via Yvonne Rainer, Maya Deren, and more recently Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz’s installations. I argue that dance presents a challenge to filmic form, and for this reason has been a preoccupation of filmmakers seeking to explore and to expand the perimeters of corporeal expression in film. Dance also shares a privileged relationship to feminism; from a feminist perspective dance engages a kind of movement that transforms everyday gesture, disrupting and challenging linguistic expression, textual language and dominant forms of symbolism. If dance is established as ‘an exceptional mode of corporeal activity that can be described as “oppositional”’ (Erin Brannigan), it interacts well with an oppositional film practice concerned with the irregular and disruptive movements of bodies that refuse to conform. The Carolyn trilogy is a remarkable contribution to this account of feminist dancefilm. Carlson’s own attempts to access a what she calls a ‘state of pre-dance‘ posits fascinating challenges to the filmmaker. Carlson writes: ‘every creative act is at the same times a destructive act.’ How does this process of ‘unlearning’ play out in Rousset’s trilogy? I draw on Maya Deren’s work on ‘vertical’ film structure, as well as considering Rousset’s explicit references to Benjaminian notions of absolute presence and Blanchot’s irreversible effacement, in order to investigate the connections between film and dance as explorations of embodied experience.

Hollywood’s Sovereign Exception: Revisiting Film Noir’s Masculine Biopolitics

This paper reexamines the debate around film noir’s generic status through the lens of its gendered biopolitics. Drawing on Giorgio Agamben’s and Roberto Esposito’s theories of modern biopower, it argues that noir should be considered a sovereign exception to the Hollywood genre system which itself already develops, as Rick Altman notes, as a temporary suspension of the social norms expressed in its Production Code. However, these generic practices that aim to limit the abstract universal rules of the dominant culture to the lived experience of smaller communities are incapable to ground themselves. Film noir offers a much needed meta-discourse for Hollywood in a time of crisis, fixing the content of its hegemonic biopolitical body as the vulnerable white male flesh. Through a series of examples like The Killers, Out of the Past, and Gun Crazy, the paper shows how men in film noir fall victim to an eternal and unforgiving force of law they themselves perpetuate by fatalistically evoking it against the femme fatale. To cover up the circular logic of the patriarchal law’s self-presupposition, noir’s male hero is abandoned and punished by the homosocial brotherhood for his illicit violence against his female rival, for the arbitrary act of sovereign exclusion which serves as the unacknowledged condition of possibility for that masculine community.

Philosophy Through Film: How Conceptions of Philosophy Influence This Possibility

The relationship between Philosophy and the movies is virtually as old as them. However, more recently (e.g. Carroll, 2006; Wartenberg, 2011) a discussion about the possibility of production of Philosophy through Film has emerged in the Analytic Philosophy tradition (a possibility which I will abbreviate as “PtF” for Philosophy through Film). Although it is a recent discussion, it actually has conceptions about what Philosophy and Moving Image are as a background. In this paper I will try to expose the discussion about PtF, its main theses and its limits, and explore what I think that is in the origin of the diverse theses relative to PtF. Those positions about PtF vary from the ones that 1) support this possibility completely – the “extreme pro-cinematic philosophy position” (EPCP) (cf.
Wartenberg, 2011: 13), a position accepted, for example, by Stephen Mulhall; 2) the ones that radically and moderately deny them – the “extreme anti-cinematic philosophy position” (EACP) (cf. Idem, 11), for example Murray Smith and Paisley Livingston’s positions, and the “moderate anti-cinematic philosophy position” (MACP) (cf. Idem, 15) with the example of Bruce Russell’s position; 3) and the ones that accept it in specific conditions that accept the “moderate pro-cinematic philosophy” (MPCP) (cf. Idem, 16), such as the positions of Thomas Wartenberg, Noël Carroll or Tom McClelland these last more “moderate” theories, for their diversity of conditions, will help us to better understand how, in fact, the conceptions of Philosophy and Moving Image imply this diversity of conditions proposed by those who accept it. I will explore in more detail what are specifically the conceptions that origin these different positions relative to PtF that are present in its protagonists writings. I will also try to present my own idea about the case whether or not movies can produce Philosophy and under what conditions.

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Gemeinschaft Versus Gesellschaft: Robert Altman's Search for Community

Over a storied career that spanned some 45 years, American director Robert Altman (1925-2006) made three dozen films, several of which rank among the greatest films of the post-war era: McCabe & Mrs. Miller, 3 Women, Thieves Like Us, California Split, The Long Goodbye, Nashville, The Player, Short Cuts, Gosford Park, etc. Though Altman’s films encompass many genres, locales, and time periods, his work overall is marked by a salient theme: the search for authentic community (Ferdinand Tönnies’ notion of Gemeinschaft) in a modern world dominated by alienating corporate structures (Tönnies’ Gesellschaft). This presentation will consider a number of Altman’s major films to argue that Altman sought to create a series of fully realized artistic communities (his own brand of Gemeinschaft) in the production process by building elaborate location sets that were essentially inhabited by cast and crew during principal photography (e.g., an authentic fin de siècle mining town in Vancouver, B.C. for McCabe & Mrs. Miller, a frozen dystopian city in Montreal, Quebec for Quintet, a fanciful fishing village on Malta for Popeye, a desert motel in New Mexico for Fool for Love, etc.). Altman also sought to foster community by working with many of the same actors and technicians over a series of pictures, requiring that everyone stay for the entire shoot, attend daily rushes, and socialize and bond with each other, so as to create a truly collaborative and holistic artistic endeavor, something like a modern day guild experience— as opposed to Hollywood corporate filmmaking, which treats the filmmaking process as work to be accomplished as efficiently as possible. I’ll also argue that while Altman attempted to create examples of Gemeinschaft on the set, most of his films critique and satirize the absence of Gemeinschaft in everyday life in the modern world.

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The Dardenne brothers, Marcel Mauss and the Gift

The Dardenne brothers’ The Promise (1996) opens by showing an apprentice working in a garage. An elderly lady arrives: he repairs her car for free but also steals her purse and buries it after first removing the money. The garage owner gives him an exhaust pipe for his go-kart but chides him for leaving early and demands he complete some soldering before he goes. The film thus inaugurates the brothers’ continuing project of investigating ways to live in a world where each is pitted against each and the thing often preferred to the person. It clearly responds (and has responded) to some form of ethical analysis that focuses on the inter-personal. What interests me, however, is how the interactions it and the later films show never simply involve people but also involve people in their relation to things and the material world: things that bear memories; things that circulate and accumulate or block meanings; things that bear traces of their owners; skills, too, that relate to how we interact with objects and through objects to others, building or breaking social links in the process; gifts, finally, of time, of things, of skills, with their own obligations and temporalities, and debts, material and moral, accepted and denied. It is here that I turn to the work of Mauss and his famous theorization of the gift as a total social phenomenon. My argument will be that Mauss’s thought,
because of, rather than despite, the impurity of its notion of the gift (as famously critiqued by Derrida), allows for an engagement with the brothers’ films that is more socially grounded and better able to explore human interconnectedness and / through connectedness to the material world than a narrowly ethical approach. I will also suggest that, elaborated after a global conflict, Mauss’s theory of the gift can help illuminate how, making their own gift to us, the brothers’ films seek ways to move us beyond the cycle of predation, violence and punishment that so marks the current time.

**Landscape, Myth, and Anti-Myth in Meek’s Cutoff**

While Kelly Reichardt has claimed to be no aficionado of the Western, in a number of ways Meek’s Cutoff (2011) seems to directly address and revise the dominant depictions, in the classical version of the genre, of women, American Indians, and what Richard Slotkin calls in Gunfighter Nation “the man who knows Indians”. Furthermore, the film has been read variously as an allegory of American military actions in the Middle East, of Americans being “taken for a ride” by a boastful, dishonest leader, or of tactics employed and assumptions made in the internment of prisoners at Guantánamo Bay. My principle interest here, however, will be the film’s deployment of landscape, which I will argue not only aligns us with the film’s female characters, but also disturbs the human orientation to the world that is characteristic of both classical Westerns and the majority of revisionist Westerns.

According to Reichardt, the composition of many of the film’s landscape images and her choice to shoot in Academy ratio were motivated by her desire to capture to some degree the perspective of women traveling westward as part of a wagon train. Here, I will explore the way in which this strategy is bound up with a use of landscape that also seems to critique the typical treatment of nature as an arena for human action in the Western. In developing my arguments, I will make use of Martin Lefebvre’s work on landscape and narrative, and will elaborate Charles Baxter’s suggestion in an essay on literary fiction – a passage of which was included in the film’s publicity materials – that turning toward the open space of the West may give rise to meditative dispositions, rather than the violence that prevails in the masculine set of myths that dominate our historical imagination of the frontier.

**Moving Images Posing as Pictures: Rethinking the Intermediality of the Cinematic Tableau**

From the fashionable cinemagraphs breathing life into photographs on our portable screens to the monumental photo-filmic installations exhibited in art galleries, the fascination with moving images posing as pictures and vice versa, is not only ubiquitous in our digital age, but perceptible in all layers of contemporary visual culture. The tableau form combining stillness with motion has emerged as an extremely versatile and widely used template of digital imagery, connecting the new media of moving images with traditional arts. In the “slow movies” of recent art cinema we often see entire films based on the aesthetic of the tableau which blur the boundaries between cinema and installation art.

Although the durational aspect of these films has prompted most of the theoretical discussions, I suggest that we focus on the similarities between sequences of slow movies and installations of moving image tableaux in order to highlight the way in which they revitalise and re-configure the traditional, intermedial figure of the tableau vivant in art, and foreground the single, photographic frame within moving images. Based on the recent reinterpretations of the notion of the transmedial dispositif, on the revisions of the tableau mode in art (and following the ideas of Jean-François Chevrier) I propose to contest Raymond Bellour’s idea on the “battle of the dispositifs” and concentrate on the changing relationship between traditional visual arts and the new media of moving pictures underlying the tableau aesthetic in post-cinema. The films of Béla Tarr, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Tsai Ming-liang, Lav Diaz, Raúl Perrone, James Benning or Gustav Deutsch, for example, display a set of gestures and actions of folding together photography, painting and cinema
that may not only define the post-cinematic ‘mise en tableau’, but may also challenge us to rethink the theory of intermediality along some of its most pertinent questions. Is the tableau still a veritable “battlefield” of media, of image and narrative? In what way can we still attribute a performative quality to such figurations of intermediality? Most importantly: by probing the tableau can we still grasp the “in-between” involved in the idea of intermediality in the age of convergence?

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Lovers in Time: An Essay Film as Practice Research in Times of Patriotic Journalism in Harare

The presentation features my practice research in Zimbabwe and my essay film Lovers in Time or How We didn’t Get Arrested in Harare (2015). I present the film and the work on the play against the background of the media furor, which surrounded its production in Zimbabwe. I see the press reactions, which changed from very positive to irrationally vitriolic, as an example of Althusserian interpellation under the guise of ‘patriotic journalism’. Under the particular circumstances in Zimbabwe, my whiteness, gender and European background was an issue discussed both in the media and amongst our theatrical company when decisions had to be made where the lines of belonging lie and why. The paper poses some ethical questions too regarding the process of putting on the play and making the film. As a white European woman I dared challenged some historical taboos in Zimbabwe. Was this an issue of freedom of speech or some form of neo colonialism or at least a lack cultural sensitivity on my part?

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The Confluence of North Indian Classical Music on the Cinematograph through the films of Kumar Shahani

The Classical Arts of India have deposited folds of knowledge in the historical understanding of music that flourished over centuries. It was always untouched by eurocentric aesthetic influences and thrived in the form of closed musical gharanas - a similar aesthetic inquiry occupies the cinema of Kumar Shahani. In this paper, I look at an aesthetic that gives birth to spheres of influence from one art form (music) to another (film). For instance, a composition in Khayal - a North Indian Classical style of music rests on three parameters - time and space constructed on X and Y axis and the voice (vocalist or instrument) which adds a third dimension in the form of a spiral. Khayal composes time, space and voice, together allowing a sensuous experience, which is further enhanced by movement in the voice as it scales in notes (Sa-Re-Ga-Ma-Pa-Dha-Ni-Sa). This sensuality presents a complete or an absolute range of emotions without delving in the depths of a singular emotion; the way a western classical piece has known to yield. In the cinema of Kumar Shahani, the formation of sequences distinctively incorporates the understanding of spatio-temporal-modulation through Khayal. Shahani uses colour, movement and song to build a sensory experience that manifests in a visual medium like the Cinematograph. The paper will also acknowledge the violation of one art form into another. Furthermore, by appropriating the visuals in his films on a plane of immanence Kumar Shahani arbitrates a dialogue between Indian Classical Music and Cinema while infusing a conceptual personae to his work. Through the study of four specific works - Char Adhyay, Bamboo Flute, Khayal Gatha, Bhavantarana this paper will attempt to create a concept as Deleuze formulated. This concept will facilitate an aesthetic perception that will be in line with what Kumar Shahani and others had proposed as the subject of Cinema.

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Stage Fright and the Plague of Fascination

Exploring St. Augustine’s idea, referenced by both Artaud and Jean-Louis Schéfer, that there is a close connection between the plague and theatricality and the phenomenon of widespread belief and affect as shared by both, this paper will look at Hitchcock’s Stage Fright as an étude upon the problem of fascination and its possible links to performance, staging, the manipulation of awareness,
and the prevalence of dis-ease. Of fundamental importance is the film’s essential character as one of Hitchcock’s “British movies,” regardless of its having been made as late as 1950. We find intensive reference to what David Kynaston calls “austerity Britain,” that is, postwar London culture as “plague-ridden” in particular ways; thus the revealing importance in Hitchcock’s setting the film as explicitly about the theatrical environment, actors and their attitudes, and the perversity of fascination as evidenced in London after the Blitz.

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A.06
Ethics

The Melodrama of the Unknown Man: Serial Drama, Genre and Po-ethics
Serial drama has drastically changed the way we think of- and watch television. Over the past decade viewers have proved willing to invite serial killers, drug king pin, vampires and other morally ambiguous characters into their homes; protagonists that are more than mere anti-heroes. These men, and the occasional woman, challenge the still often binary opposition between wrong and right. They find themselves in a grey, and academically underexplored, area wherein morality is all but straightforward. By employing Breaking Bad (AMC, 2008-2013) – a series that has arguably one of the most morally complex characters at its center – as central case study, this paper aims to explore the moral challenges and ethical ambiguities presented in recent serial drama, by exploring these as genre conventions. Jason Mittell, in his work on a ‘poetics of serial drama’ (2011) already stresses the importance of genre to understanding serial drama. By combining his poetics based approach with Stanley Cavell’s ideas on the intertwinement of genre and moral philosophy (1981, 1996, 2005) it is possible to understand Breaking Bad as a series that, through its moral ambiguity, confronts its viewers with the moral struggles they face in daily life. By deeming such ideas as a genre – ‘melodrama of the unknown man’ – this paper will stress the need for-, and the possibility of an approach to understand serial drama itself as an art form that will change the way we traditionally think of ethics in a revolutionary way. Therefor this project works two ways. On the one hand the understanding of serial drama as a sort of meta-reflection of daily (moral) life, challenges deontological and utilitarian notions of ethics. On the other moral ambiguity as a generic feature will help to further understand serial drama and its place in the cultural field.

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D.03
Video Essays

Defacing the Close-Up
When confronted by the camera poised to capture his image, Roland Barthes famously reflected: “I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image.” For Barthes the encounter of the signifier (the cinematic apparatus) with the signified (the face) always results in an inauthentic pose before the camera. In 20 Cigarettes (2011), and Two Faces (2010), James Benning takes a different approach this encounter. These two moving-image works do not point to the instantaneous yet inauthentic moment in time recorded for posterity, rather they point to the shifting architecture of the close-up, its untimely duration, and the ungrounding of the pose itself. Two Faces stretches two three-second close-up shots of a face (one woman and one man) into a twenty-minute installation piece. These portraits have been digitally scanned from footage Benning shot on 16mm in 1973. The scanning process makes these seemingly still portraits change in color and brightness, animating and blurring the features of the faces as it blurs the distinction between movement and time. Instead 20 Cigarettes captures twenty people (10 men and 10 women of different ages and backgrounds) smoking one cigarette (a whole pack in total). Each shot lasts as long as it takes the subject to smoke the cigarette, and each sequence is clearly demarcated by a fade to black — it is formal exercise in duration. Benning’s work has often been described as observational cinema — rigorously formal, and deeply aware of its own construction of time and attention to detail. In this essay I would like to focus on how Benning’s work also makes us aware of a complex set of relations — between posing, acting, setting up a shot, shot-consciousness, casting a glance, recording, scanning and reflecting back.
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F.05  Ethics

Time and the Other
My paper proposes to look at the question of cinematic temporality through an ethical lens. I am especially interested in this question as it applies to films that deal with archival materials, where the past, present and future come across one another in unusual ways. Levinas offers a concept of time that is grounded in an ethical relation in which the other remains transcendent and is not assimilated by the same. He opposes synchronous and diachronic time, arguing that while in synchrony the distinction between time past and future is blurred so that they become present, in diachrony, the other is forever beyond me, irreducible to the synchrony of the same. I will make a link between Levinas’s ethical discourse and documentary films to the effect that their modes of temporality seem to me to embody the possibility of engaging with the Other’s radical alterity. My motivation for research into the ethics of film viewing is directly connected with my artistic activity, where as a documentary filmmaker I am very involved in social and ethical issues. My current documentary project: “Reframing Palestine: the story of the American Colony Photo-Department,” focuses on a group of American and Palestinian photographers active in Palestine from 1898-1933. With this film I explore the relationship between the still photography of the past and the current practice of cinematic viewing. I will examine how Levinas’s discussion of the relationships between time and the Other can be linked to the different modes of appearance of time in documentary cinema, explaining how they make room for new insights relating to ethical concepts such as Otherness, responsibility, and transcendence. This also will be accompanied by concrete examples from documentaries from Israel and elsewhere.

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I.05  Ethics

The Ethics of the Local View, or, Cinema as a Medium of the Self
This paper will look at the local view film, an under-studied genre of early cinema, as an entrée into explicating the role cinema has played within ethical thought in the 20th century. In local view films, the individuals being filmed were also the intended audience of the film: crowds face and wave to the camera, jostling to attract the attention of their future spectatorial selves. Archival discoveries of recent decades – notably the rediscovery of over 900 films by Sagar Mitchell and James Kenyon in 1994 – have shown such films to be a mainstay component of early cinema, a fact belied by the lack of widespread knowledge of this practice and its global popularity, even dominance, during cinema’s first forty years. Taking methodological inspiration from Michel Foucault’s late ethical investigations, this paper therefore approaches early cinema as a ‘medium of the self.’ For Foucault, ethical thought and practice form a long-standing engagement with questions of how the self relates to the self (and how those relations open onto the good, truth, the other). Cinema’s moving but fixed self-images irrupted into both late 19th century visual culture and this history of thought. This presentation will examine particular local films and the documented reactions to them – reactions ranging from joyful fascination to something like moral terror – in order to show how these images – images that, to borrow Andre Bazin’s phraseology, have an independent ethical destiny from that of their human progenitors – opened up new concerns and challenges for ethical thought and practice in the 20th century. These reactions to cinema’s new, mandated, forms of self-viewing, examined within the framework of the contemporary moment’s philosophical and moral discourses, ultimately shed light on how, in the last century, ethics, cinema, and the perceived reviewability of life have come to be seen as inextricably linked concepts.

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B.03  Sexualities
‘A Market of The Senses; Your Relations Are of Power:’
The Female Body as Decorative Object and Commodity
in Sofia Coppola's 'Marie Antoinette' (2006)

Marie Antoinette evinces a fascination with surfaces and materiality; the film abounds with tightly framed shots of food, drink, fabrics, furnishings, shoes, clothes, hairpieces, and jewelry. It is, markedly, a film that is concerned with the mechanics and fetishized objects of rabid consumption. It is also, fittingly, a film that is about images: both historically or culturally inscribed images and images that work on us internally as a form of psychic structure. Its politics lies in the image, then. The film’s insistence on surface and cliché as a form of (gendered) politics seems to have caused scholars and critics alike to argue that the film’s very form attenuates or precludes any kind of political engagement with the images it sets forth. This conflation of the image’s surface with superficiality is an erroneous interpretation that has marred the reception of many of Coppola’s films, but Marie Antoinette’s flagrantly anachronistic and postmodern approach to French history and its indulgent exploration of material culture renders it especially susceptible to critical misunderstanding and misappropriation. It is my contention, alongside Rosalind Galt, that implicit within such cavalier dismissal of the film as being too engrossed in its own superficiality is a misogynist agenda. Coppola’s devotion to exploring feminized and feminist space and female subjectivity through ambiguous imagery that draws directly upon prefabricated forms of visual culture, such as the cliché, precipitates a tendency to elide image and meaning too closely; the location of crisis – and by extension a politics - within the adolescent female body radically troubles the psychoanalytic notion (after Freud and Lacan) that a woman is too close, too approximate, with/to her own body and speculare image to have perspective or knowledge and thus, to engender critique. As such, critical eschewal of images that explore female experience through deliberately feminized space, as is the case Marie Antoinette, is telling: the clear assumption being that the ‘feminine’ - or to use Galt’s terms ‘pretty’ or ‘decorative’ - image is devoid of political import and substance. By way of stark contrast with the majority of critical readings of this film in the vein of ‘all style and no substance’ and scholarship that has characterized it almost exclusively in terms of post-feminism (See Diamond in Munich 2011: 203-232), this paper will argue, drawing predominantly on the feminist philosophy of Luce Irigaray (1985), that the film elaborates on the theme of commodity fetishism (through both form and content) in order to reframe history as ‘herstory’. That is, Marie Antoinette delineates precisely the manifold and insidious ways in which a young woman’s body is divested of identity and autonomy and turned into a commodity to be traded amongst and owned by a divisive, hierarchical and fundamentally patriarchal society. The film’s politics lies in its visual alliance of decorative and pretty objects with the female body. As such scholars are not mistaken in identifying a post-feminist strain in the film’s mise-en-scène, but it is my contention that the film enacts a critique rather than an outright endorsement of such a de-politicisation. Furthermore, the film’s resolutely contemporary and postmodern recuperation of history – which made many critics uncomfortable - enables engagement with, and critique of, both historic narratives that falsely and exhaustively pertain to accuracy and truthoid, as well as current and neo-liberal forms of feminism. Marie Antoinette may be a film of surface and appearances, but one should not simply infer therefore that its politics is superficial and its form hinders access to interiority: for above all, its very structure demands that the viewer identify with a beleaguered female subjectivity. It is, at its very core, a feminist film.

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Politics

The L.A. Rebellion: A Politics of Love, A Politics of Resistance

In this paper, I articulate a theory of political self-making developed in certain films and filmmaking practices of the post–Civil Rights era “L.A. Rebellion” film movement. While films identified with this movement offer images and narratives of radical resistance, I argue that many also position Black struggle as exceeding the limits of radicality and militancy. I specifically examine the cinematic language of Charles Burnett’s Killer of Sheep (1978), Haile Gerima’s Bush Mama (1979), and Allie Sharon Larkin’s A Different Image (1982), which exposes struggle as the very condition of Black life in the United States, and renders everyday acts as acts of resistance. These films echo what Black feminists such as Audre Lorde and June Jordan began to posit during the same time period: That everyday acts of enduring are acts of great courage, that loving Blackness in a culture based on anti-
Black hate is radical, and that conscious cultivation of and caring for alternatives to that hate — self-love, self-care, self-valuation — is part of a dynamic and active political process. As such, I argue that these films and the community-based, independent filmmaking practices that developed around them offer a radical political philosophy that challenges traditional “event” theories of revolution, emphasizing instead the quotidian and the affective as forms of political life. Each film, for example, utilizes the long take to repeatedly focus on images signifying self-possession and communal self-worth — the lingering close-up of a woman, alone and unafraid, of estranged friends meeting one another’s eyes once again, of one hand gently touching another. Such imagery is especially salient in the U.S. today in the face of both reinvigorated anti-Black violence and Black movements for social justice. As movements such as Black Lives Matter, for example, gain momentum and increase their militancy, I argue that a politics of self-love such as that expressed in these films is all the more necessary for their survival.

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The Elastic Set

Rock Ridge Sheriff-designate Bart rides across the desert landscape. Proud and elegant, erect and joyful, with a big smile and leading his beautiful palomino horse on in a gentle canter, Bart rides along. He wears a tailored and stylish set of hat, shirt, and trousers in a Western fashion. His saddle bags are by Gucci. We hear Count Basie and his Orchestra in the soundtrack, performing a flamboyant arrangement of April in Paris. Bart rides along some more, and there, set up in full bandstand with logos on the music stands, but isolated, as if the Arizona desert were its audience, is Count Basie conducting his orchestra. Bart and Basie greet each other, and Bart rides on, as the rendition of April in Paris concludes expansively with the lead trumpeter’s wailing up and down in the register above high C. It’s a wonderful gag, built upon a set of gags, and leading to an unending series of gags in Blazing Saddles (1974), by the filmmaker who has revealed in outrageous gags as much as any other. It’s the surprise violation of the separation of nondiegetic music from the diegesis that makes the gag work. Riggan strides down the street in Manhattan, calmly conversing with a friend, but consumed with the stress of the imminent opening to his stage adaptation of Raymond Carver stories on Broadway. Antonio Sanchez’s insistently obtrusive staccato drum solo plays in the soundtrack, as it has for much of Alejandro González Iñárritu’s Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance) (2014). Riggan continues down the street, passing by the drummer performing the soundtrack solo. It’s the same gag that Brooks exploited — still a gag, but less just a gag. It renders the supposition of a coherent spatiotemporal verisimilitude moot. It’s one of a repetition of transgressions of spatial coherence in the film, which popular reception reveals enjoyed an open acceptance among some viewers (mostly young), but to confound viewers who need some sense of a causal explanation for any such aberration. Perhaps it’s supernatural, or Riggan’s subjectivist experience of his world, or the filmmaker’s expressionism, or fantasy, or science fiction — but all of these suppositions retain rather than abandon the supposition of spatiotemporal verisimilitude. Such resurrection of realism, however, only trivializes the film’s pleasant indulgence of transgression by imposing a structure of explanation that otherwise has no basis in the photoplay. The film retains an indefeatable hilarity just insofar as it doesn’t reduce to any such easy explanation. More stylistically striking in Iñárritu’s Birdman is the extremely rare composition of the montage as if it were a single continuous long take. Ordinarily that would suggest the unfolding of the narrative in real time, but of course that’s not the nature of the narrative at all. The free extrapolation of temporally separate events aligns with how the film in its momentary fusing of diegetic and nondiegetic sounds and images to weave a cinematic fabric that aims to frustrate the craving for plausible verisimilitude such as the moving image industry has very assiduously cultivated in the decades since its emergence. Interestingly, and importantly, Gilles Deleuze’s explication of the divergence of what he calls crystalline cinema from the established tradition of organic cinema hinges upon how the crystalline explodes the “continuity shots which establish [the real] and by the laws which determine successes, simultaneities and permanences” The long-established conventions that pervade common analytic montage that compress, expand, interrelate, or leap around in time and space – jump cuts, intercutting, flash-back and flash-forward, undercranking and overcranking, freeze frame, and so on – effectively only preserve the establishment of the real and its solid continuity. The crystalline flouts this continuity. Deleuze’s best examples focus more upon temporal spatial transgressions. The transgressions in Birdman, though, are more
dominantly spatial than temporal. Deleuze hardly means to adumbrate a formulaic projection of the crystalline – which effectively would be just a replacement set of conventions. The point, rather, is to open up a spectrum for convention-less cinematic poetic inventiveness – which becomes more freely intellectual and more readily philosophical. So, the advent of the transgression of the continuity of space that dominantly guides transgression of time as well offers a different spectrum of possible crystallinity. Iñárittu has done that in his Birdman. Joe Wright has done that in his Anna Karenina (2012), and more overtly by playing upon the imaginative elasticity of the set. Less consistently, Raul Ruiz played upon that elasticity in his La temps retrouvé d’après l’oeuvre de Marcel Proust (1999). Jean-Luc Godard’s first foray into 3-D cinema, Adieu au langage (2014), outrageously undermines the power of 3-D by finding a dozen ways in which to use this exotic medium to bend, distort, and obliterate recognizable normal space, one of which is to place the standpoint of the narrative in a dog.

The Films of the Dardenne Brothers in Light of Stanley Cavell’s Writings

In 2005, Luc Dardenne published a volume of journals covering 1996-2005. In 2014, he published a second volume covering 2005-2014. With candor and philosophical sophistication — he has a degree in philosophy from the Catholic University of Louvain—his journals chronicle the making of the Dardenne brothers’ films and trace the evolution of their thinking as they searched for ever better ways to create “films that are also handshakes,” in Luc’s words — to develop a cinematic style that would enable their films to be ethical in Lévinas’s sense. Between these volumes, he published Sur l’affaire humaine, explicitly a book of philosophy, in which he articulates the philosophical position that underwrites, and is underwritten by, that style. Sur l’affaire humaine never mentions Stanley Cavell. And yet, the book calls into question aspects of Lévinas’s understanding of the relationship of self and others in terms that resonate profoundly with Cavell’s thinking. It should come as no surprise, then, that when in 2011 he had his first direct encounter with Cavell’s writings—he read Cities of Words, then newly published in French translation—he was moved to write, in a journal entry, that he had discovered an "abundant" thinker with whom he felt deep affinities. My paper will explore those affinities. In doing so, I will reflect on a number of philosophical passages from Luc Dardenne’s writings, and focus primarily on the brothers’ two most recent films, whose screenplays the brothers were working on—they were still striving to come up with the right endings—at the time Luc “discovered” Cavell: Two Days, One Night, the only Dardenne film that takes the form of a veritable remarriage comedy, and especially The Unknown Girl, whose very title resonates with Cavell’s writings.

Contemplation as Utopia: James Benning and the Look of the Landscape

In a number of essays British filmmaker Patrick Keiller associates landscape filmmaking with the pursuit of a radical transformation of everyday reality and with a commitment to demonstrate the possibility of creating a better world, ‘even if only by improving the quality of the light’. The utopian strands of the practices that inform Keiller’s work, running from the Surrealists to the Situationists and beyond, seem to contrast with another longstanding tradition, reaching to the Middle Ages, for which landscapes are objects of contemplation. Elements of this tradition survive in many contemporary filmmakers and are particularly evident in the work of James Benning. Whilst duration has been an important component of Benning’s work from the beginning, the length of individual shots has progressively increased – thanks also to the move to digital cameras – from two and a half minutes in the California Trilogy (El Valley Centro [1999], LOS [2000], Sogobi [2001]) to the hour-long shot of a coke-processing tower in Ruhr (2009). Benning has justified this evolution of his style as the attempt to show ‘landscape as a function of time’. Benning pairs this radical duration with the complete reduction of contextual information. Whilst his earlier works included testimonies, voice-overs and
on-screen text films such as El Valley Centro and Ruhr offer no expository element. The audience has to work harder, but this means at the same time being able to simply endure, to do nothing. These films demand at once responsiveness and relinquishment, activity and passivity, and producing an environment dominated by patience, understood at once as reception and compulsion. This paper asks to what extent Benning’s extreme contemplations are meant to and can produce the very radical subjectivity invoked by Keiller.

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Cinema and the Expulsion from the Paradise of Childhood

Children are an integral part of cinema history, most importantly as the protagonists of film classics such as The Kid, The Wizard of Oz, Ladri di Biciclette, The Exorcist, Cinema Paradiso, Scorsese’s Hugo, the Harry Potter films and Linklater’s Boyhood. Being childhood films rather than children’s films, they explore conceptions of childhood and the transition from child to adult. My paper discusses those childhood films that explore cinema’s existential role in shaping a child’s imaginations of adulthood as well as an adult’s nostalgia for a childhood lost and a life not (fully) lived. By staging a nostalgic reencounter of grown-ups with the cinematic child they once were, they cinematically negotiate cinema’s ambivalent belief restoration discussed by Cavell and Deleuze: For the child, the films screened in the womb of the movie theatre project a promise of a future adult life worth living, worth the ensuing expulsion from the paradise of childhood. This is cinema’s promise that there is a Deleuzian link between humans and their world, which for the child has not yet been, and for the future adult will not be broken—a promise that eventually fades into nostalgia. Tornatore’s Cinema Paradiso revolves around exactly this transition, mirrored by its main character Totò, but adds another turn to this narrative of decay, since Totò’s (cinematic) paradise of childhood lives on in the memories of his favourite films, yet again inciting hope that Totò’s belief in the world, and in life, can be regained. Thus, my paper will explore how Cinema Paradiso and other films such as Hugo, The Cider House Rules, The Green Mile, or The Majestic are cinematic meditations on the mnemotic traces of cinema, sustaining yet varying Stanley Cavell’s aphorism that "[m]emories of movies are strand over strand with memories of my life."

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Coldness and Cruelty: Cinematic Ethics in Haneke’s The White Ribbon and Amour

Despite its relative neglect within film theory, the relationship between cinema and ethics has recently begun to attract attention within film-philosophy. Although ethical issues in film have often been addressed, and the approach to cinema as moral ‘thought experiment’ has proven fruitful, the idea of ‘cinema as ethics’—an extension of the ‘film as philosophy’ thesis—remains largely unexplored. Cinema, however, is a medium with the power to evoke ethical experience—through affective response, emotional engagement, and cognitive understanding—that invites, and sometimes demands, critical reflection. It can be an aesthetic means of imaginative transformation revealing obscured or marginalised elements of a world or the ethical complexities of a moral or social-political situation. It might even have the capacity to effect an ethical conversion, altering our horizons of understanding and transforming how we think, feel, and respond to the world. The cinema of Michael Haneke provides an ideal case study of cinematic ethics understood in this sense. Given their disturbing subject-matter, alienating aesthetic, and lack of moral resolution, his films challenge viewers to think cinematically about the images that we consume—images that constitute our shared sense of social and cultural reality. They confront viewers with morally ambiguous actions and normatively conflicted situations—with experiences of emotional estrangement and moral-cognitive dissonance—that demand further critical reflection, thus enacting the philosophical potential of cinema understood as a medium of ethical experience. Focusing on his later films The White Ribbon (2009) and Amour (2012), I analyse the aesthetic strategies Haneke deploys to enact a cinematic ethics that works through emotional estrangement, ethical proximity, and moral-cognitive dissonance. Haneke’s cinematic ethics enacts an affective and cognitive shock to the viewer: one
that forces critical reflection on the ethical significance of our relationship with images, and a philosophical questioning of our historical, cultural, and moral understanding.

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Politics

**Escaping the moment' - A Hobbesian take on Nolan’s Memento**

The consequences of interrupted memory and consciousness are well illustrated in the short story Memento Mori by Jonathan Nolan, and its subsequent film adaptation Memento. Due to an ‘incident’, the main protagonist of the story suffers from the inability to form a continuum of new memories. His world disintegrates every time his attention is distracted. Curiously, Gabriella Slomp has argued (in a book that oddly enough coincides with the release of film in 2000) that Hobbes’s political thought is an attempt to solve an identity problem similar to that which Nolan confronts his protagonist. Now, having toyed with the connection between Memento and Hobbesian thought, I was certain that the striking similarity between the plot of Nolan’s short story and the thought experiment proposed by Slomp in order to uncover the crucial importance of imagination and memory for Hobbes’s conception of man, could not be a mere coincidence; yet, Slomp has assured me that it is. Still, it is an interesting coincidence that draws one to reading Hobbes into Nolan and Nolan into Hobbes: on the one hand entertaining the thought that in Memento, Christopher Nolan may have brought to life aspects of the condition that confronts Hobbes’s fool thereby potentially improving the understanding of the Hobbesian argument, and on the other hand examining the makeup, and dare I say organising, Nolan’s fragmented creation by employing Hobbesian thinking. Identity, and more specifically the construction of a ‘system’ (a term borrowed from the film) that artificially maintains a natural identity, or order, that has broken down and can no longer sustain itself is the crux of my paper, from which spawn questions that range from personal accountability to the motivational consequences of being ‘caught in the moment’, seemingly unable to generate a future.

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Sexualities

**Rearranging Time: Temporalities in Contemporary Brazilian Queer Cinema**

A contemporary queer trend in Brazilian cinema focuses on the affective force of performance where bodily matter is inscribed in the image in order to resist and/or disrupt normatization and normalization. These films introduce temporalities generated by performances engaged in forms of re-creating the social which are in constant tension with a chrononormativity that both demarcates the times for work and leisure and uses time to organize individual human bodies towards maximum productivity. Bodies are “timepieces” - as Dana Luciano describes the generation, in the nineteenth century, of "the deployment of the feeling body as the index of a temporality apart from the linear paradigm of ‘progress’" (Arranging Grief 1) - that emanate temporalities that counter the abstract, empty and homogeneous time of the nation and the productive time of representational narrative film language. Films like Futuro Beach (Praia do Futuro, 2014, Karim Aïnouz), Tattoo (Tatuagem, 2013, Hilton Lacerda), Sweet Amianto (Doce Amianto, 2013, Guto Parente and Uirá dos Reis), Harmonica’s Howl (O Uivo da Gaita, 2013, Bruno Safadi) create a queer temporality that halts narrative cinema’s apparently inexorable pace forward, towards closure, towards productivity. Each film explores non-hegemonic desires and affective bonds in a particular way, so the objective of this proposal is to explore queer temporality and the emergence of queer bodies as “timepieces” in Futuro Beach and Tattoo: the former gives us an account of a transnational relationship between a Brazilian lifeguard and a German mechanic, and the latter shows the romance between a recruit and the ringleader of an anarchist cabaret during the dictatorship of the 1970s. This comparative gesture aims at discussing how, between Brazilian historical past and the projection of a politics of resistance for the future, a new queer Brazilian cinema resists the normative time of the nation and of globalization.

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Repetition and Rhythm: Play and Performance in the films of Ugo Nespolo

This paper will consider the formal characteristics of Nespolo’s films by examining individual works in detail, extrapolating from these qualities certain key theoretical and philosophical concerns that appear throughout Nespolo’s oeuvre. Performance is fundamental to Nespolo’s filmic output, whether in terms of the documenting of a gallery exhibition as in Boettinbianchenero (1968) and its ‘performance’ in terms of the interaction with the work and the gallery space by contemporary spectators, or the ‘creation’ of a performance through its very documentation, as in the case of the celebrated Buongiorno Michelangelo (1968-9) or perhaps simply in the traditional sense of an actor’s performance, as in the communal Con-certo rituale (1972-3). Nespolo offers a continual challenge to his spectators, pushing the boundaries of the viewable and repeatedly and self-reflexively exploring the very notion of what might constitute ‘art’, filmic or otherwise. Repetition and play, often interlinked, are also central to the films, as evidenced in the frantically paced Le gote in fiamme (1967). This repetition is a question of ‘playing’ with the spectator, a certain testing their endurance almost but it is also a conscious reflection on film form. Clips illustrating its key concerns will support the paper as Nespolo’s films are not easily accessible.

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Trials and Tribulations of Contingency-politics

Although more than a decade has passed since some of the early Anglophone interpretations of Rancière’s thinking on cinema, scholars have generally been slow to make use of the rich potential that his philosophy offers. While “Rancière and Film” contributes to covering this gap in contemporary understanding of film, a number of avenues for further research remain unexplored. This paper considers one of the possible ways in which Rancière’s political philosophy can be fruitfully applied to cinema by closely analysing the complex representation of contingency in Thirteen Conversations about One Thing (Sprecher, 2001). “He could have been me, for God’s sake!” is the revelation experienced by a central character who has heightened awareness of social inequality after his recent mugging. In the proposed paper I will analyse such nuanced representations of contingency via Rancière’s understanding of the matter. For Rancière, and in the film, contingency is seen to play a central role in everyday life and is used for criticising the dominant status quo. I will take a novel approach to Rancierian film analysis by looking at Thirteen Conversations from the prism of Rancière’s political thinking, rather than his understanding of aesthetics. Rancière claims that the truly political has the potential to bring attention to “the sheer contingency of any social order”. Thirteen Conversations likewise places a number of its characters in life-changing situations after which they come to realise their own equality to everybody else. Nonetheless, like some of the criticism directed against the Rancierian notion of contingency, Thirteen Conversations questions the actual impact of the characters realising the contingent nature of all hierarchies. Despite certain difference between Thirteen Conversations’ and Rancière’s take on the possible political effect of contingency, the film’s emphasis on the matter serves as a perfect illustration to Rancière’s claim that cinema is inherently political.

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For a Phenomenology of the Temporality of the Sacred: Matters of Style between Ayfré, Schrader and Dreyer’s Representation of a Miraculous Event

In Transcendental Style in Film (1972), Paul Schrader - starting from the premise that every culture expresses an idea of the sacred and that there are forms and styles common to all cultures – affirms the existence of a cinematic style used by filmmakers originating from different cultural areas to express the transcendent. The transcendental style, although characterized by the tension towards an ineffable dimension and striving for the ontological representation of what cannot be represented, is first and foremost a style: it therefore uses the specific means of cinematic language to clarify the
otherness of the sacred, which can manifest itself epiphanically in the realistic context guaranteed by
the cinema-medium. This paper, starting with a reflection on the relationship between
phenomenology, cinema, and the representation of the sacred proposed by Amédée Ayfré (Dieu au
cinéma : problèmes esthétiques du film religieux, 1953; Conversion aux images? Les images et Dieu,
les images et l’homme, 1964), will investigate the representation of a miraculous event in the context
a kind of film-making characterized by the tensions of modernity, re-contextualizing and questioning
the category of transcendent proposed by Schrader. The case study will be Ordet by Carl Th. Dreyer,
namely one of those authors, according to Schrader, in which the dynamics underlying the
possibilities of the transcendent style (characterized by three phases in which the everyday,
disparity, and stasis are progressively manifested) a
re only partially implemented. In particular, it will
seek to show how the representation of the sacred embodied in the act of a miracle gives rise to a
dimension of time that makes the phenomenological order of reality explode, thus creating a
suspension: a seemingly imperceptible interruption, in which a temporal art such as cinema could
possibly find a way for expression of the transcendent in the physical concreteness and
representability of the miracle.

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On Technology and Being-With: The Heideggerianism
of Claire Denis’ 35 Rhums
Revisiting Claire Denis’ 35 Shots of Rum (35 Rhums, 2008), this paper argues for the value of a film-
philosophical analysis of technology’s role in organizing human relationality. Long before the
contemporary proliferation of worries concerning the technological mediation of life, Martin Heidegger
warned that a technological interpretation of being had thoroughly compromised Western thought.
This interpretation, Heidegger believed, threatened that which is most human about humanity,
namely, the capacity to question and to think. Today, the question concerning technology has
become a popularized topic of debate, though too often framed in overly dichotomous terms—one
is either a Luddite or a naïve adherent of the inevitability of technological progress. By way of an
analysis of Denis’ visual style, this paper takes up both of these discourses—the Heideggerian and
the contemporary—in an effort to think, in both cinematic and philosophical terms, the technological
in tandem with an “authentic” or interrogative mode of being. Indeed, I make the case that 35 Shots
of Rum offers an unusually rich cinematic vocabulary of the everyday and its technological mediation.
Uninterested in the usual polemics around smartphones and social media, the film encourages a
consideration of intersubjectivity and the everyday as deeply embedded and mediated by technology.
Denis’ film demands a rethinking of the relationship between what Heidegger calls Mitsein (Being
with)—our existence as mutually constituted by/with others—and various modalities of technology
(particularly objects, appliances, equipment, and tools). Both narratologically and visually, the film
establishes a rhythm of the technological object, one that affirms the ethical relations between
characters without thereby reducing their lives to mere products of instrumentality. Denis thus
provides what I argue is a timely rejoinder to Heidegger’s influential writings on technology by moving
beyond his almost wholly negative critique.

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The Form of Form: Haneke, Malabou and Plasticity
In the character of Anne, who suffers a series of debilitating strokes, Michael Haneke’s Amour (2012)
presents a form of post-traumatic subjectivity that Catherine Malabou – in her project of combining
of philosophy, psychoanalysis and neuroscience – has identified as the “new wounded”. It is one
shaped by the “destructive plasticity” of cerebral trauma: the “dark double” of the constructive
plasticity that moulds connections, which then makes form through the annihilation of form (2012:
xix). Malabou makes almost no reference to cinema in her work but she does ask, “What mirror could
both psychoanalytic mirrors and Deleuzian brains. Certainly, Patricia Pisters’ The Neuro-Image (2012)
offers one possible answer to this question, where the film takes on the form of neuropathology itself.
And while the “coolness” of Haneke’s cinematic style could indeed be thought to mirror the “affective coolness” of the new wounded, I want to offer a slightly different approach. The concept of form is central to Malabou’s work: plasticity is, above all, “an elaboration of form” (2012: 20), and finding a “form” appropriate to the new wounded is vital for her description of this post-traumatic subjectivity. While the cerebral trauma is, for Malabou, an accident that resists all hermeneutics she notes, nonetheless, that “cases of brain damage can be written and narrated” (2012: 53). The question thus becomes – following Adam Philips – one of finding a form for trauma, rather than what I might call Pisters’ traumatised form. This paper will focus on what we could recognise – in a Malabouan context – as “the moment of the accident”: the first stroke that precipitates the destruction of Anne’s psychic life. Through an examination of the formal qualities of this scene (in particular, its framing, blocking and mise-en-scène) in relation to its narrative “content”, I will argue that Amour presents but does not represent the unexpected, unpredictable, unthinkable moment in which the radical supervision of trauma creates a new form of form, that the film elaborates as a living death where “Anne is no longer Anne”.

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Into the Universe of (Three-Dimensional) Technical Images: Jean-Luc Godard’s Flusserian 3D Cinema

This paper analyses Jean-Luc Godard’s 3D films Adieu au langage (Goodbye to Language, 2014) and Les trois désastres (The Three Disasters, 2013) as reflexive meditations on the changing technologies and aesthetics of cinema, which collectively critique and ultimately circumvent the realm and mode of technological imaging described by philosopher Vilém Flusser as “the universe of technical images” (2011 [1985]). The result, this paper proposes, is an approach to 3D imaging that rejects the apparatus and aesthetics historically associated with 3D cinema in favour of a deliberately “low-tech” apparatus and anti-“technical images”. Notably, this representational reworking occurs within a milieu more typically characterised by spectacular scale, visual effects and heightened realism – decidedly high-technology, high-definition and fundamentally rooted in the “technical image”. By contrast, for Godard, “If I hear ‘high-fidelity’, I wonder what ‘low-fidelity’ is...” As cinematographer Fabrice Aragno affirms, “If we start to consider the creative defects in digital, we will find ourselves at the beginning of an exciting journey through the lost continent of cinema”. In search of this “lost continent”, far removed from Flusser’s “universe of technical images”, Godard customises, reorients and otherwise interrogates a combination of consumer and prosumer cameras and formats, each with distinctive technical features and representational qualities, now employed within the specific technological-aesthetic realm of 3D cinema. Godard’s anti-technical apparatus and associated aesthetic construct a complex dialectic concerning the very status of cinematic representation, not least in relation to Hollywood’s industrial model of 3D imaging and a broader culture of digital effects built precisely on the “technical image”. Negotiating between such images and their customised alternate, this paper argues that Adieu au langage and Les trois désastres exist as technological-aesthetic interventions that use (or rather, deliberately misuse) contemporary digital imaging devices to liberate 3D cinema from its Flusserian universe of three-dimensional technical images.

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The Torture of Etiquette/The Etiquette of Torture: On Michael Haneke’s Funny Games

One way of putting it: had Ann simply been rude to the young man who arrives on her doorstep asking ever-so-politely if he may borrow some eggs, things might have turned out differently. Dressed immaculately in golfing whites and speaking in the delicate tones of one with impeccable manners, the young man – Peter – tests to the limit Ann’s neighbourliness as he clumsily drops the eggs she gives him and importunately, while remaining polite, insists on being given more. It is with this seemingly deliberate abuse of Ann’s good manners that Michael Haneke begins the ‘funny games’ that Peter and his friend Paul inflict on Ann and her family. Sadistic torture then, in Haneke’s film, begins with the question of how far one is willing to go so as not to cause offence. Etiquette, as Herbert V. Prochnow suggests, ‘is knowing how to yawn with your mouth closed’ (quoted in Rees,
Good Manners, 1994) and Funny Games is a film which explores the suffering of this experience. There is, after all, something torturous about remaining civil to boorish guests. The second part of this paper looks at the concomitant idea that there is an etiquette of torture too. It looks at the connection between torture and etiquette in a film where, no matter how violent the young men turn in their sadistic games, good manners are not only upheld but worse – they play a key part in those games. The escalation of violence in Funny Games occurs through degrees as Haneke turns the screw on his viewers as much as the poor family. In the same way one boils a frog by turning up the heat slowly, Haneke acclimatises us to violence by appealing to our sense of correctness and propriety.

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Thinking Cinematically

Many academics have considered the relationship between thinking and cinema, from Daniel Frampton’s filmind to Hunter Vaughan’s notion that cinema offers alternative relational organisations which have the potential to challenge how we think. In recent years, there has been a turn towards the video essay as an appropriate medium through which to analyse film in order to enable scholars to get closer to their subject by thinking through it. In this paper, however, I ask, as film scholars, is it possible for us to think cinematically in the way we construct our academic arguments? Can adopting cinematic tendencies actually enable processes of academic thought? I think about ‘cinema’ as a broad concept, considering the different ways contemporary technology allows us to engage with films and offer an introduction to the methodology I am proposing to adopt for my postdoctoral project. I work through a technological methodology of replay, rewind, remix and remake, considering these terms as academic processes for developing a closer analysis of a range of moving-images related to the same context. Focusing particularly on the process of ‘remixing’ in this paper, I consider how montage might be used as a thinking tool for interpreting how the Jewish Holocaust on the Channel Islands has been remembered through British screen media in which it has mostly been suppressed. Montage here then serves as an archaeological tool, excavating remnants of the past and uniting disparate images to discover traces of a much forgotten history.

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Heart of a Dog (2015): Depth, Flesh and Film-Philosophies of the Fluid

As it derives from the Latin sorbere (to suck in or swallow), absorption has been theorized as a deeply embodied event in which boundaries between inner and outer and body and world become shifting and porous. Drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s flesh, Jennifer M. Barker has detailed absorption in film as an intersubjective contact ‘between film and viewer [that] moves through the body and opens onto something larger than either film or viewer’ (2009: 149). In this paper, I explore how our absorption into ‘something larger’ can occur through films that foreground fluidity and an expansive sense of being (human and non-human). Concentrating on Laurie Anderson’s Heart of a Dog (2015), I examine how Anderson’s poetic exploration of death, grief and love immerses us in a sense of being as winding, circulation, stream and flux. Combined, the film’s meditative atmosphere, its fluctuations between subject and object, its journeying outward and inward, rippling imagery, water motifs and its privileging of the in-between (of human and animal, past and present, life and death) lends powerful liquid expressivity to the film’s own quasi-spiritual concerns. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty’s flesh articulates being as a vital surging forth and material existence as vortical. Flesh can be brought into useful dialogue with film-philosophies of the fluid (Epstein, Deleuze) that speak to being and to cinema itself as a sensuous current. As I will argue it, our absorption into the ‘something larger’ of Anderson’s film is not premised upon transcendence. It occurs through the relational bonds that subtend the human and the non-human. Furthermore, the fluid images, sounds and rhythms of Anderson’s film express human and non-human being as infinite circulation and as movement. While concerned with death, the film ultimately emblematizes the joys of immanence through the loving heart of a dog.
If I Had a Hammer: Amateur Filmmaking and the Camera as Heideggerian Tool

This paper contests that a neo-phenomenological approach to technology in the lifeworld provides rich insights into the imaging practices that constitute amateur filmmaking. Based on neo-phenomenological understandings elaborated by Don Ihde and Vivian Sobchack amongst others, this paper draws on Heideggerian principles that situate technology, more specifically the camera, not as a neutral instrument, but as means of technique that comes to represent a relational 'in-between'. This relationality is elaborated in accordance with principles of 'I' and 'world' in which the Heideggerian tool that is the camera becomes a constitutional part in a project governed by intentionality. The tool of the camera proves interesting in that it produces a visual remnant of an intended trajectory rather than a transparent record of a “past world.” A neo-phenomenological approach allows for an unrestricted analysis that accords to the amateur film the status of a distinctive phenomenon in and of the world instead of reducing it to notions of deterministic representationalism. As such this paper takes Don Ihde’s statement that within phenomenology visual technics can be posited in a paradigm of an intentionality of seeing as the basis of its elaboration of the phenomenon of amateur filmmaking. Consequently, this analysis relays perception and praxis back to the lived body whose sensual spatiality, in a phenomenological understanding, is extendible through artifacts in use. I will draw on specific examples from my corpus of amateur films taken from the archive in Luxembourg to analyse whether a neo-phenomenological approach might help us re-think imaging technologies and the way they represent embodied artifacts in use. Such an approach might illustrate an alternative entry point to the meaning-making processes that underlie amateur filmmaking.

The Opposite of Faith: Film Style and the Miraculous in Stations of the Cross (2014) and Breaking the Waves (1996)

Since 2005, a number of European films have emerged examining the legacy of Christianity in Western Europe, and the ways in which men, women and children struggle to negotiate questions of religion and secularity, the personal and the institutional. The proposed talk looks at one of these films - Dietrich Bruggeman’s Stations of the Cross (2014) - in relation to questions of religious experience and film style, comparing it with Lars von Trier’s Breaking the Waves (1996). In both films the battle between these opposing categories is played out on the female body whose sensual spatiality, in a phenomenological understanding, is extendible through artifacts in use. I will draw on specific examples from my corpus of amateur films taken from the archive in Luxembourg to analyse whether a neo-phenomenological approach might help us re-think imaging technologies and the way they represent embodied artifacts in use. Such an approach might illustrate an alternative entry point to the meaning-making processes that underlie amateur filmmaking.

Autopoietic Existentialism: Memory, Signification, and Communicative Action in Christopher Nolan’s Memento

Critical commentary on Memento has focused on narrative reconstruction of memory, self-deception, self-actualization, and other salient aspects of Christopher Nolan’s memorable film. I intend to provide
an ‘autopoietic-existential’ perspective on the text’s progressive and regressive sequences of action, focusing on how the self is re-constructed narratively out of recollection, demarcation, and dialogical communication with ‘oneself’ and others to provide a structure for action. Sartre argues that, “. . . man is nothing other than that which he makes,” and that, “the other is indispensable to my existence, as well as to the awareness I have of myself” (L’Existentialisme est un humanisme, 30, 59). Thus the film’s protagonist Leonard, beset by anterograde amnesia after being assaulted during his wife’s murder, virtually navigates a course through perceived events and reconstructed memory, as well as through a welter of deceptions, to realize his ‘project’ (Sartre 30) to find and take ‘action’ in the form of revenge on one of the assailants. Along the way he engages in a loop of signifying practices—his body becoming a book of clues rendered as tattoos in mirror images, his memory a collection of Polaroid photographs—as he progressively solidifies what has happened, who is responsible, and out of both what it means to be-through-action. Key to the construction of self and identity here is the process of recursion: Leonard’s narrative recurs in a series of self-referential approximations, captured in still images made into time-images—of the ever-receding truth conjured by his ‘choice’ to act; in the process he realizes his project through ‘engagement’ with his ‘situation.’ In this light, “human existence” as it is rendered in Memento recalls the Deleuzian “spiritual automaton”: film as cybernetic self-making (autopoiēsis) — cyborg art. Hence Christopher Nolan’s protagonist might have paused to reflect on Descartes’ self-reflection: je filme, donc je suis.

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Politics

The Body’s Spacing: The Carceral Body as Heterotopia in Contemporary Palestinian Cinema

In Of Other Spaces (1967), Foucault defines heterotopias of deviation as ‘those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed.’ The biopolitics of discipline necessitates the separation and distribution of individual bodies in space in order to render them docile. For Foucault ‘Discipline sometimes requires enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself. It is the protected place of disciplinary monotony’ (Foucault, 1975). This paper seeks to read Foucault’s spatial ordering of (docile) bodies with Jean-Luc Nancy’s (2008) ‘spacing [as] tension of place where bodies are not in space but space in bodies’. The world of bodies, Nancy tells us, ‘is a world where bodies initially articulate space.’ The body itself becomes enclosure, a heterogeneous space of disciplinary monotony. Building on these theoretical premises, this paper will explore the Palestinian cinematic body in crisis, a body not in space, but articulating space, thus becoming itself a carceral space. It will argue that docile, carceral bodies articulate biopolitical space, becoming heterotopic sites in a network not so much bodies in space as bodies as space. This concept will be explored through a close reading of the carceral body-space as heterotopia in films of Kamal Aljafari and Elia Suleiman.