EXPERIMENTAL FILM AND ARTISTS' MOVING IMAGE

Memory and Intermediality in Artists' Moving Image

Sarah Durcan

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Experimental Film and Artists' Moving Image

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Existing outside the boundaries of mainstream cinema, the field of experimental film and artists' moving image presents a radical challenge not only to the conventions of that cinema but also to the social and cultural norms it represents. In offering alternative ways of seeing and experiencing the world, it brings to the fore different visions and dissenting voices. In recent years, scholarship in this area has moved from a marginal to a more central position as it comes to bear upon critical topics such as medium specificity, ontology, the future of cinema, changes in cinematic exhibition and the complex interrelationships between moving image technology, aesthetics, discourses, and institutions. This book series stakes out exciting new directions for the study of alternative film practice – from the black box to the white cube, from film to digital, crossing continents and disciplines, and developing fresh theoretical insights and revised histories. Although employing the terms 'experimental film' and 'artists' moving image', we see these as interconnected practices and seek to interrogate the crossovers and spaces between different kinds of oppositional filmmaking.

We invite proposals on any aspect of non-mainstream moving image practice, which may take the form of monographs, edited collections, and artists' writings both historical and contemporary. We are interested in expanding the scope of scholarship in this area, and therefore welcome proposals with an interdisciplinary and intermedial focus, as well as studies of female and minority voices. We also particularly welcome proposals that move beyond the West, opening up space for the discussion of Latin American, African and Asian perspectives.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

to say you will remember is to say you will not forget. (Ricoeur 2004, 87)

The departure point for this book is the phenomenal rise of the moving image in contemporary art since the early 1990s. Featuring moving image installations by Chantal Ackerman, Stan Douglas, Steve McQueen, Runa Islam, Mark Leckey, Jaki Irvine and others, it considers the role of memory in their work, a preoccupation which is a defining characteristic of the twentieth-century fin-de-siècle. The moving image is at the centre of contemporary art practices that mobilize memory in relation to contested histories and the disjunctive temporalities of globalized capitalism. What is at stake in these practices is the balance between remembering and forgetting and the innovative ways in which artists tackle the politics of memory. The selected artists are of a generation who have lived through the transition from analogue to digital and the increased mediatization of memory in media technologies. The emergent intermedial aesthetics of their artworks foreground the memory of analogue media in digital media. While artists' moving image has been largely theorized in relation to cinema, this study situates it in the context of digitalization meaning digital technologies and their infrastructures such as the increased availability of personal computers, software, the World Wide Web and the internet from the 1990s onwards.[1] This consideration of moving image art against a background of technological change is not undertaken in a spirit of techno-determinism but with

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the aim of analyzing how artists have drawn on the techno-aesthetics of moving image media to express memory. The emphasis here is on work featuring an intermedial aesthetics of film, analogue video and digital media, rather than the exclusive cultivation of film by artists of whom Tacita Dean would be the leading example. While film undoubtedly possesses its own unique texture and relationship to both recorded indexical time and cinema, analogue video and digital media equally bring other temporalities such as instantaneity, televisual networks and modular asynchronicity into play. The technical and cultural interrelationships between media are the ground from which the selected moving image artworks harness the force of memory. The hybrid, constantly evolving intermediality of contemporary artists' moving image underscores the fact that their mnemonic preoccupations are not reductive exercises in retrospective nostalgia or cinephilia but active repositionings of the past in relation to the present and future as memory intersects with history and personal experience meets collective experience.

Organized around five overlapping modes of 'critical nostalgia', 'database narrative', the 'echo-chamber', 'documentary fiction' and 'mediatized memories', which correlate to the individual artists' practices, this study aims to show how the selected works bring viewers into encounters with the agency of memory. My discussion draws on Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of the 'time-image' in exploring the capacity of the moving image to disclose the potential of memory as a circuit between the actual present and the virtual past and future (Deleuze 2005). Each mode highlights different ways in which memory is mediated in moving image media and how these technologies of time modulate our understanding of time and memory. The first mode of 'critical nostalgia' featuring work by Chantal Akerman and Stan Douglas deals with the conundrum of memory as an injunction not to forget but also raising the question of how to live with the ghosts of the past. Their very different artworks were each made in response to the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the breakup of the Eastern Bloc. These historical upheavals alongside the rapid development of computerized information technology contribute to the phenomenon of the 'memory boom' in the 1980s and 1990s and an attendant anxiety in relation to memory, forgetting and the temporalities of postmodernity as post-communist discourse proclaims a vaunted 'end of history'. Ackerman's and Douglas's installations along with the other artworks presented in this book participate in the significance of memory as a subjective practice that recalls the past through

temporal overlaps and reverberances in the present. These temporal overlaps are constituted in intermedial combinations where digital formats intersect with older media, such as Douglas's recombinant 'database narratives' and the documentary fictions of Pierre Huyghe and others. The last mode 'mediatized memories' looks at moving image works by Leckey, Irvine, James Richards and Elizabeth Price in relation to changing models of memory in a digital era. As artists engage with the mediatization of memory, they also contribute to memory culture, the object of the burgeoning and interdisciplinary field of memory studies.

Memory Culture

The notion of memory culture originates in Maurice Halbwachs's prewar study of social frameworks where individuals absorb history in school and from information passed down by older generations, gradually participating in what he calls a 'collective memory' (Halbwachs 1992). Memory culture can thus be understood in terms of three dimensions, the material, the social and the mental, in which different aspects of memory intersect and constitute 'cultural memory' (Erll 2011, 102). However, the Second World War and the Holocaust challenge the stability of Halbwachs's social frameworks and shared memory, affecting memory culture across the nation states of postwar Europe and contributing to the formation of a 'global memory'. Memory studies have expanded in conjunction with what Andreas Huyssen describes as a cultural 'obsession with memory' and a 'crisis of temporality' (Huyssen 1995, 6). Writing in the mid 1990s, Huyssen finds a 'mnemonic culture' that is symptomatic of the need for new forms of temporal orientation in the face of accelerated computer technology, and the instant availability of information. He perceives a cultural fear of amnesia that paradoxically arises alongside the 'waning of history and historical consciousness' and the expansion of data storage (Huyssen 1995, 9). In Germany, as Huyssen notes, the process of reunification brought up diverse views on the historical past and reactions to the unstable effects of socio-economic change just as the generational memory of Nazism and the Second World War began to fade away in the 1990s.

The French historian Pierre Nora also identifies a shift in the relationship between collective memory and history, contributing to what, in his view, has become a culture of commemoration that reduces history to a series of heritage sites. In a major study conducted between 1984 and 1992, Nora differentiated the emergence of '*les lieux de mémoire*' (places

of memory), such as sites, material objects and concepts in which traces of memory reside, from '*milieux de mémoire*' (environments of memory) rooted in rural traditions and social structures of school, church and family (Nora 1989). Stating that: 'we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left', Nora finds that the traditional cohesive relationship between past and future has been displaced into 'indirect' memory in the form of accumulated archival material (Nora 1989, 7, 13). Yet Nora's pessimism is countered by Huyssen who finds new paradigms of memory in the aftermath of technological and historical upheavals. Despite the 'synchronicity' of networked technological systems, he asserts that the actual experience of change is 'non-synchronous':

> rather than moving together, if at different paces, into the future, we have accumulated so many non-synchronicities in our present that a very hybrid structure of temporality seems to be emerging, one that has clearly moved beyond the parameters of two or more centuries of European-American modernity. (Huyssen 1995, 8)

In these circumstances, Huyssen emphasizes that the act of memory is a creative forging of the past constituted in relation to the present in contradistinction to the traditional function of the archive as a repository for storage and retrieval (Huyssen 1995, 3).

Replacing what Jean-François Lyotard styles as the 'grand narratives' of history, the 'memory boom' inaugurates a multiplicity of 'little narratives' in which memory is privileged as a different way of narrating the past (Lyotard 1984). The emphasis on memory marks the ways in which memory and history are interrelated and also distinct. History denotes both what has happened and quasi-scientific accounts of past events while memory is affective, subjective and virtual. Yet without memory there is no history as historiography depends on the transmission of memory in documents and testimony. The distinction between memory and history can be defined in terms of 'different forms of knowing' and 'different concepts of temporality' (Arnold-de Simine 2013, 19). Memory, by definition is selective and ambivalent, as significant as much for what it occludes as what it foregrounds. In memory studies, the emphasis shifts from the truth status of historical accounts to an interest in what motivates differing narratives and versions of events.

At issue throughout the consideration of memory in this book is what the historian Reinhart Koselleck defines as the 'experience of history' and

'historical time'. Koselleck dates the conceptualization of history as a 'collective singular' to the beginnings of the modern era in the late eighteenth century. Understood as a 'collective singular' history is a universalizing force gathering together individual and collective memory with historical events. In contrast to pre-modern eras where it was not expected that the future would be vastly different to the past, in modernity the relationship between past, present and future shifts to an opening up of the future in the name of progress. The modern temporalization of history is driven by concepts like acceleration and delay. Koselleck specifies 'historical time' as the balance between a 'space of experience' and a 'horizon of expectation' where experience is the 'present past whose events have been incorporated and remembered' and expectation is 'the future made present' (Koselleck 2004, 259). If modernity focuses on the present and future, by implication rendering the past inferior, postmodernity features an asynchronous experience of time as technological development advances while the understanding of history as a 'collective singular' comes under pressure. The experience of 'time-space compression' in postmodernity is distinguished by the disjunctive gaps between accelerated neoliberal globalized capitalism and the temporalities of local places (Harvey 1989, 240). It is in these gaps that contemporary artists explore historical time through the multiple temporalities of the moving image.

Aftermath

A difficulty with historical time is evident within the discourses of contemporary art as temporal categories such as the modern, the postmodern and the avant-garde become exhausted. Although it has superceded the postmodern as a descriptor of advanced art, the 'contemporary' is in many ways as deceptive and polyvalent a term as the postmodern.[2] Both the contemporary and the postmodern pose the question of the temporalities of art and the relationship of current art to art of the past.[3] The increase in moving image practices with their uniquely tempo-spatial axes during the 1990s and 2000s is symptomatic of the need for art to re-establish temporal and historical co-ordinates after the so-called 'end of art' and Hegelian history (Danto 1997). As Hal Foster expresses it, writing in 2002: 'contemporary art no longer feels "contemporary"' meaning that contemporary art no longer seems to have a sense of its own historicity as the dialectical relationships between the historical avant-gardes and the

postwar neo-avant-gardes have come to an end along with the implosion of postmodernism as a critical framework (Foster 2002, 124–25). Within this apparently posthistorical condition of 'aftermath', Foster finds a set of overlapping strategies in contemporary art: the 'traumatic', the 'spectral', the 'nonsynchronous' and the 'incongruent' which 'restore a mnemonic dimension to contemporary art' (Foster 2002, 130). The traumatic here refers to experiences which are not assimilated and are returned to belatedly while the spectral invokes Jacques Derrida's 'hauntology', a meditation on how ghostly entities such as Marxist thought persist and return (Derrida 1994). As Foster's categories imply, contemporary art participates in a wider cultural turn in which historical experiences are dealt with through processes of mourning and haunting associated with memory. Film's status as an outmoded medium is key to the 'nonsynchronous' with Foster comparing contemporary artists' interest in early cinema to the fascination the outmoded held for the Surrealists and Walter Benjamin (Foster 2002, 138–39). However, I would argue that the 'mnemonic dimension' of contemporary art derives not only from film's 'nonsynchronous' status but as it continues to exist in a spectral afterlife within the reconfigured and intermedial aesthetics of contemporary moving image art.

Intermediality

Digitalization is often associated with media convergence but as outlined in this study, it has actually engendered an intermedial aesthetics as hybrid combinations of film, video and software applications have developed in artists' moving image. Intermediality is understood here as the diverse relations between specific media and their historical and critical contexts. As recent studies in intermediality have shown, the question of what constitutes a medium is not simply its technological or physical characteristics but is also related to the way a medium is perceived and thought of over time (Pethö 2011; Houwen 2017; Kim 2016). This book takes the view that media are dynamic and evolving combinations of materials, conventions and technical bases. It focuses primarily on the intermedial aesthetics involved in the remediation of film with video within artists' moving image installations. In the intermedial exchange between film and video both analogue and digital, a mnemonic dimension emerges as film is remembered through video and digitalization affects cultural memory. These exchanges are unique to the transitionary period of the 1990s and 2000s as a chiasmic crossing of film and video occurs on the levels of

aesthetics and technology. Within this process the temporalities associated with film and video are reconfigured. The declining status of film as an incipient outmoded media is a key factor within the mnemonic aesthetics of the 1990s with film becoming a gateway to the past as the centenary of cinema precipitates a reflection on the simultaneous passing of film with the ascendance of digital imaging. In the intermedial aesthetics of film and video the 'ruins' of film coexist within the reconstructions of digital video, bringing different mediatized temporalities together.

The relatively recent use of the term 'moving image' within art criticism as a descriptor for artist's video and film installations has emerged in the aftermath of the technological upheavals of the 1990s. Within film studies by contrast, the moving image is not a recent term and denotes the origins of cinema in scientific as well as artistic experiment. In the art world, the category of moving image is indicative of the ways in which digital technologies have superseded and modified older technologies of analogue film and analogue video giving rise to hybrid combinations of media. The moving image is a catch-all term that both indicates and obscures the diverse media formats that can be involved in producing moving image artworks. On the one hand, the term moving image represents a liberating alternative to the historical and political legacies associated with the traditions of artists' film and video. On the other hand, the term can mask and occlude the nuances of the intermedial aesthetics articulated in different artworks. Nonetheless, the concept of moving image keeps at the forefront the idea that artists' moving image engages with the unique status of the moving image as a technology that is not solely defined in relation to cinema but is also involved in science, the military–industrial complex, communications and media industries.

It is worth noting that artists' film and video has been relatively under theorized and peripheral to the dominant historical accounts of twentieth-century art. Over the 1990s, artists' moving image installations have moved from the margins to the centre of art practice with a corresponding transformation of the discursive field of artists' film and video and a renewed attention to their histories. It should also be acknowledged that the rise of artists' film and video in the 1990s has led to a unique economy around the funding and distribution of these works. In contrast to artist led organizations like the London Filmmakers Co-operative (founded in 1966) and Anthology Film Archives (founded in 1970) which historically took an ideologically low budget, artisanal approach to the production and distribution of artists' film, the

involvement of galleries, museums and biennials in commissioning and funding artists' moving images has created a vastly different production model. Artists' films are typically produced as limited editions and access to viewing copies is strictly guarded.[4] Recognizing this economy, LUX, the current agency that supports and promotes artists' moving image in the UK now distributes artists' film and video in liaison with the gallery system through 'artists' copies' of films, online viewing and rental.[5] The art world economy of artists' moving image paradoxically confers them with an auratic scarcity in contrast to the reproducibility and availability of films made for cinema.[6] Thus the late film curator and artist Ian White states that on the one hand the reproducibility of film and video poses new questions for museums in relation to their traditional role as custodians of the values of 'originality, authenticity and presence' while on the other hand the museum becomes: 'perversely, where film and video as potentially infinitely reproducible objects make these same terms manifest in moving-images considered as works of art' (Sperlinger and White 2008, 13–14). The moving image installations discussed in this book exist in a more problematic space than traditional artworks. After their initial exhibition they pass into storage and in order to be re-experienced they have to be reconstituted as installations or viewed in reduced form as on-screen films. Therefore in a real sense they exist in a quasi-invisible world of remembered exhibitions and documentation and are only intermittently on view in curated selections from museums and private collections.

The restricted access to artists' film and video which results from the limited edition economy in which they circulate has both advantages and disadvantages for artists and their audiences. Limited editions allow artists' film and video to operate within the art world economy which has always been based on scarcity and collectors, both private and public in contrast to the mass market economy of cinema. Outside the gallery system, artists' film and video would remain in an underground sphere, perhaps in principle freely accessible to all as in the non-commodified experimental film practices of the 1960s and 1970s but in reality existing with scant funding and less visible in public museum collections. It is also important to remember that moving image installations have to be experienced through embodied spectatorship and are not primarily made for cinema or DVD distribution. As such they are positioned in an anomalous relationship to today's media world where consumers are given the impression that everything can be accessed on a variety of platforms. Moving image installations, by their very nature, draw attention to the

fact that some experiences cannot be easily represented and distributed as audiovisual 'product'. The restricted access to artists' moving image arguably allows artists to retain some control over the conditions in which their work is shown and experienced. Nonetheless the limited distribution of artists' films raises serious issues of access from the point of view of scholarship and the teaching of artists' moving image which regularly surface in discussions of these works.[7]

As artists' moving image moves between the venues and the economies of both museum spaces and cinema auditoriums a cultural interface occurs between the 'white cube' spaces of museums and galleries and the darkness of the cinema auditorium. There is an inherent irony in the fact that many moving image installations reflect on the collective experience of cinema from within the very different conditions of reception in the gallery and museum. Yet within the embodied spaces of installation, artists' moving image generates new ways of reflecting on both cinema and the mnemonic qualities of the moving image. The artworks that I discuss exist within the circuit of exhibitions, biennials and major survey shows that constitute the North American and European art world. I focus on artists who led the expansion of moving image installations in museum and gallery spaces as opposed to other public sites and situations. The discussion takes in significant international exhibitions where many of these works were first exhibited, sometimes alongside each other. These include 'Documenta 10' (1997), 'Documenta 11' (2002), the fifty-first 'Venice Biennale' (2005) and numerous survey exhibitions on the relationship between art and cinema.

From a theoretical perspective, this study addresses the interstitial position of artists' moving image between the discursive frameworks of art criticism and screen studies. It draws on media theory which values the material histories and the temporalities peculiar to technological media in order to enrich the discussion of moving image practices that stretch the terminology and boundaries of traditional art history and criticism. Thus, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's theory of 'remediation' and Lev Manovich's theorization of 'new media' and 'softwarization' are brought to bear on the intermedial aesthetics of artists' moving image installations (Bolter and Grusin 1999; Manovich 2013). In pursuing two axes of investigation, the intermedial and the mnemonic, the book also creates its own readjusted 'memory' of the divergent genealogies of artists' film and video. From a retrospective viewpoint, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the emphasis on 'presentness' within modernist avant-garde

film is made visible through the emphasis on 'pastness' in contemporary moving image. Valorized in modernist discourse as a technology of the new, film has become a deeply mnemonic medium in which the history of cinema is intertwined with major historical events, while video, television and radio are equally indexed to history. Part of the argument of this book is that contemporary moving image art uncovers resonances between itself and the historical avant-gardes as well as the avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s in its mnemonic trajectories.

The theoretical and historical frameworks to the themes of memory and intermediality in artists' moving image are established in Chapter 2. It begins by surveying the role of the moving image as a media of memory and reflecting on the key concepts of Deleuze's 'time-image' and Henri Bergson's virtual memory which inform the discussion of artists' moving image (Bergson 1991; Deleuze 2005). Intermediality is defined in relation to the theory and practice of artists' moving image and the diverse genealogies of artists' film and video. The following chapters present the five modes of moving image installations that emerge from the selected artists' investigations of memory: 'critical nostalgia', 'database narrative', the 'echo-chamber', 'documentary fiction' and 'mediatized memories'. Within each chapter, the singularity of the artworks forms the basis of a journey into different dimensions of memory and specific historical and sociopolitical contexts.

The third chapter's theme of 'critical nostalgia' is developed from Svetlana Boym's distinction between reflective and recuperative nostalgia (Boym 2001). Boym defines nostalgia as an impossible and thwarted longing to bring incommensurable temporalities together, often occurring at times of historical upheaval. In Ackerman and Douglas's installations, made in 1995, the 'impossible' temporality of nostalgia is located in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc. Both installations signal the entry of film into the gallery and museum space and the role of these institutions in reconfiguring and reflecting on the past of cinema and artists' film. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the 'cinematic' as a form of 'critical nostalgia' as 1995 also marks the centenary of cinema celebrated in numerous exhibitions.

In Chapter 4, I address the 'database narrative' as a mnemonic mode and an emblematic form of intermedial aesthetics. Identifying the emergence of a 'database narrative' mode in the work of Douglas, Harun Farocki, Candice Breitz and Christian Marclay, I argue that it marks a transition from film as the dominant cultural metaphor for memory

towards an intermedial memory model that combines the collective memory of cinema with the affordances of digital media. 'Database narrative' is a memory mode for the twenty-first century in which the modular logic of software transforms the traditional association of film with the representation and documentation of historical events. These recombinative strategies are related to the changing paradigms of memory in the post-digital era.

Chapter 5 titled the 'echo-chamber' proposes a reading of Islam and Steve McQueen's work in the mid to late 1990s as a return to the aesthetics of the historical avant-garde of the 1920s. The metaphor of the echo-chamber conveys the reverberation of historical film aesthetics within the space of artists' moving image installations. Both McQueen and Islam's work appears to replay and return to film form from avant-garde practices and historical cinema. This chapter locates McQueen and Islam's cinephilia in the historical context of the diverse and dissociated genealogies of artists moving image practices. It shows how their work synthesizes these fragmented traditions, reading them as a return to historical avant-garde film practices which developed in tandem with narrative cinema not in opposition to it. The chapter argues that the 'unfinished business' of the avant-gardes is taken up again in the 1990s through artists' dual engagement with both narrative cinema and the embodied spectatorship of artists' film. In their mnemonic trajectories, McQueen and Islam's installations connect a virtual memory of film with the time and space of the viewer.

Chapter 6 examines the emergence of a 'documentary fiction' mode in artists' moving image installations. Documentary fiction is defined with reference to Jacques Rancière's view of the creative and selective force of memory which overrides binary distinctions between documentary and fiction (Rancière 2006). In a discussion of the work of Pierre Huyghe, Omer Fast and Clemens von Wedemeyer the chapter considers why artists have chosen to engage with memory and historical events through aesthetic formats derived from cinema. By playing with the slippage between filmic mise-en-scène and profilmic reality, their work problematizes the role of cinema and television in contributing to collective memory and underscores the contemporary experience of historical time as mutable and chimerical. A recurring trope in these scenarios is the multivalent uncertain status of the film extra who becomes emblematic of the mediatization of historical experience in cinema and television.

As moving image media are associated with both the recording of events and their fictionalized representation they are deeply embedded in cultural memory. Throughout this book the interplay between memory, history and fiction is mined in artists' investigations of memory through the moving image and their appropriation of material from cinema, television and latterly, the internet. The sensation of experiencing memory through film has been controversially theorized by Alison Landsberg as 'prosthetic memory', suggesting that popular cinema can engender an empathetic 'taking-on' of other people's memories, transcending race, class, gender and other social divides (Landsberg 2004, 2). Critiquing 'prosthetic memory', Susannah Radstone argues that it underestimates the imbrication of media memories with personal experience and the distinction between representation and events (Radstone 2010, 335). Silke Arnold-de Simine also points out that the notion of 'adopting' memories overlooks the ideological and political implications of memory communities who claim the right to certain memories (Arnold-de Simine 2013, 34). However, 'prosthetic memory' is useful in acknowledging the reality of mediatized memories while alerting us to consider the multiple contexts that contribute to the politics of memory. As we will see, in the work of Huyghe and others, the idea that media representations have to a large extent overtaken the direct experience of events is pursued and exploited as a means of rerouting the flow of images from within the capitalist spectacle of mass media.

Mediatized memories are the subject of Chapter 7 which considers the impact of digital technologies and the Web 2.0 on artists' approaches to memory and the moving image. This chapter draws partly on 'The Memory-Image' screening programme I curated in Dublin, 2019 in association with *aemi*.[8] It explores how artists work with a memory of media and through moving image media to produce mediatized 'memory-images' that trigger the experience of memory. I begin by examining Leckey's autobiographical work *Dream English Kid, 1964–1999 AD* (2015), a video installation partly constituted from fragments of audio-visual media gleaned from the internet and Leckey's personal 'memory-images' which are enmeshed in his experiences of technology and the affective power of images and sound. Leckey's browsing of YouTube reflects the transformative effect of the Web 2.0 on the archive as it moves from a static repository into a digitalized archive that is dynamic and endlessly variable but also requires new methods of navigation and

narrativizing. Artists like Leckey, Lucy Raven, James Richards and Elizabeth Price have developed an archival approach, collecting and navigating their way through the contemporary sea of data. As highlighted by Price and Irvine, the intertwined politics of archives and memory continues to revolve around what the archive represses or disavows. In an analysis of their work I focus on their use of black-and-white and desaturated imagery, indicative of the enduring valency of analogue tactility and the notion of trace despite the apparent immateriality of the digital.

Spanning a time frame from the mid 1990s through to the 2000s and including works made within the last five years, the core of this study is a reflection on the reconfiguration of artists' moving image in the age of digitalization. The intermedial syntheses of film, analogue video and digital media in the selected artworks emerge from within the circulating and commodified image world of neoliberal capitalism, yet this does not preclude these works from interrupting, intervening in and rerouting the normative temporalities and rhythms of this system. As installations that are experienced in collective and immersive conditions, they individually and on their own terms involve us, the viewers in the practice and texture of memory through the moving image.

Notes

1. See Connolly (2009) and Balsom (2013a).
2. See Osborne (2013).
3. On the question of time in contemporary art, see Birnbaum (2005), Lütticken (2013), and Ross (2014).
4. See Lütticken (2009).
5. LUX replaced the London Film-makers Co-operative, London Video Arts and the Lux Centre in 2002.
6. See Balsom (2013b, 2017).
7. Curated viewing platforms like Vdrome, founded in 2013 give access to artists' moving image and indirectly, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, artists' moving image has become more available through galleries' and other arts organizations' websites.
8. 'The Memory-Image', IFI, Dublin, 29 January 2019 screened work by Mark Leckey, Lucy Raven, Rosalind Nashashibi and Alain Resnais. Founded by Alice Butler and Daniel Fitzpatrick in 2016, *aemi* is an agency and platform for the support and exhibition of artists' and experimental moving image work in Ireland.

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CHAPTER 2

Memory and Intermediality

> memory is not in us; it is we who move in a Being-memory, a world-memory. (Deleuze 2005b, 95)

2.1 Memory and the Moving Image

Concepts of Memory

The conceptualization of memory is riddled with metaphors, which range from Plato's wax tablet to comparisons between computer storage and human memory. No matter how divergent from the neuropsychology of memory as a cognitive function or the philosophy of memory as a mental state, metaphors of memory continue to shape the way memory is thought of. In comparing memory to an impression on a wax tablet, Plato instigated the notion of memory as a form of inscription and a trace of an original impression, while also raising the issue of difficulties with memory by analogy with the hardness or softness of the wax which receives the impression. Plato also introduced a storage metaphor for memory as an aviary albeit one in which birds have to be caught, indicating that memory is a searching activity. Such metaphors of memory as inscription and containment persist through changing social and historical contexts (Danziger 2008). The paradox of memory is that it is both there and not there; it refers to the past and it also denotes the activity of remembering which can be thwarted or unreliable. In everyday life

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we encounter mediated memory in diverse artefacts, monuments, social practices and media technologies that contribute to the conceptualization of memory and play a role in connecting individuals with collective frameworks of memory. Moving image media have a complex mnemonic function as they both record events as a form of external memory and they also narrate, represent and stage memory. The mnemonic modes of contemporary artists' moving image surveyed in this book draw on the close association between the moving image and how we conceive of memory. Here I briefly outline how the development of moving image technology accompanies the theorization of memory in psychoanalysis and philosophy from Freud to Benjamin, Bergson and Deleuze. With Deleuze's rethinking of Bergson in relation to cinema, the moving image is conclusively understood as a technology that discloses the operations of time and memory.

Since its inception, the moving image has elicited analogies between mind and screen, most notably in the psychologist Hugo Münsterberg's comparison of the film flashback with memory and his observations on how cinema acts on spectators, modulating their attention and responses (Münsterberg 2002). Friedrich Kittler further develops Münsterberg's term 'psychotechnics' to describe how: 'film techniques like projection and cutting, close-up and flashback, technically implement psychic processes such as hallucination and association, recollection and attention' (Kittler 1990, 246). Thus Kittler suggests that cinema does not merely represent mental states but actively co-ordinates experiences that involve time, memory and imagination. As a technology in which automated movement acts on human perception, film is part of an epistemological shift in modernity as the subjective and temporal dimensions of human perception became recognized. Film technology developed in tandem with the beginnings of the scientific study of memory in experimental psychology and physiology and the establishment of psychology as a discipline led by figures like Hermann Ebbinghaus who pioneered attempts to quantify and classify different memory functions. Experimental psychology, neurology and anatomy converged on the pathology of memory, investigating amnesia and failures in memory. In conjoining both quantitative automated movement and subjective qualitative responses in the viewer, the moving image parallels scientific research in which the boundaries between subjectivity and objectivity became blurred. As noted by Kittler, the tachistoscope, a device used to measure thresholds of memory in response to visual stimuli operates through

a system of automated movement comparable with the film projector (Kittler 1990, 251). In his revisionist theorization of early cinema, Pasi Väliaho also shows how the moving image pertained to the nascent field of psychophysics which measured the relationship between the psychic and the physiological (Väliaho 2010).

Ebbinghaus's quantitative, statistical approach was countered by different approaches to memory in other disciplines. The emergent fields of 'dynamic psychiatry' and psychoanalysis identified the temporality of the human psyche and the virtuality of memory. Freudian psychoanalysis marks a shift in emphasis from the outward signs of psychic disturbances in which film played a part as a quasi-diagnostic tool to a recognition of the less visible temporal dynamics of the psyche. In positing the existence of the unconscious mind, Freud recognized that memory and forgetting are crucial to the formation of the self while his contemporary Pierre Janet developed a psychodynamic view of memory, identifying the phenomenon of dissociated memory and the ways in which memory is narrated and constructed. Although Freud does not refer to the cinema per se, Väliaho argues that the moving image is inherent to the 'thinkability' of Freud's theorization of the temporality of the psyche (Väliaho 2010, 123). Referring to Freud's dynamic model of the psyche as a 'mystic writing-pad', based on a child's etching toy that is able to continuously receive and process impressions, yet also retain traces of these impressions in a deeper layer, Väliaho compares it with the moving image, an apparatus which involves a 'self-moving virtual image' (Väliaho 2010, 120–23).

Bergson and Virtual Memory

Freud's 'mystic writing-pad' is beset by contradictions involving the localization of the psyche and how infinite memories persist while his theorization of memory is dominated by an understanding of memory in terms of trauma, as a source of repressed 'screen memories' and repetition. By contrast, Henri Bergson's major philosophical investigation into memory, emphasizes the potential force of memory in conjunction with his concept of time as *durée* or pure duration (Bergson 1991). For Bergson time is not linear or mathematical, it is a continuous multiplicity of durations, that we experience in different intensities, including the rhythms of durations that are non-human. As time is continuous duration, the past persists and is called upon by memory in relation to the needs of the present and the future. Informed by contemporary scientific

studies in psychology and the pathology of memory, Bergson develops a metaphysics of memory that ultimately challenges science by rejecting the idea that memories are contained somewhere in the brain. Rather Bergson asserts an ontology of memory that works in tandem with human consciousness and perception. 'Pure memory', according to Bergson is by definition virtual, it exists outside the body. The brain, as the seat of human consciousness, acts as a 'conductor' between the actual demands of the present and the virtual existence of memories (Bergson 1991, 77).

The key to Bergson's theory of memory is the idea that memories are constantly created as the present continuously moves into the past. He asserts that: 'every perception is already memory. *Practically, we perceive only the past,* the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future' (Bergson 1991, 150). In his terms, time splits into the actual and virtual as the actual present passes, simultaneously creating a virtual memory. Thus, déjà vu is explained as the momentary awareness of these actual/virtual circuits or the paradoxical sensation of remembering the present (Bergson 2014). Bergson's famous diagram of an inverted cone is a schema of how memory is constituted in circuits between the actual and the virtual which correspond with the present and the past. The virtual past is understood to be coexistent with the present and opening into the future in a pressured way. The past is constituted in deep and expanding circuits of pure memory and radically, Bergson suggests that the totality of memory encompasses the entire past which exceeds individual memory circuits. In considering how memory is accessed, Bergson distinguishes between three different types of memory.[1] Firstly, habitual memory typically arising in immediate sensory–motor situations or the repetition of learned facts, secondly, 'independent recollection' which recalls specific memory-images from the past and thirdly, pure memory which is the accumulated virtual past (Bergson 1991, 77–82). The processes of pure memory, memory-image, habit and perception work in relation to each other and are largely driven by the needs of the present moment. Throughout *Matter and Memory*, Bergson articulates the great effort involved in attentive remembering as opposed to automatic 'habit-memory', describing the remembrance of personal memories as follows:

> whenever we are trying to recover a recollection, to call up some period of our history, we become conscious of an act *sui generis* by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first in the past

> in general, then, in a certain region of the past – a work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera. But our recollection still remains virtual; we simply prepare ourselves to receive it by adopting the appropriate attitude. Little by little it comes into view like a condensing cloud; from the virtual state it passes into the actual… (Bergson 1991, 133–34)

To remember, the conscious mind must leave the world of action for a dream state and speculative openness in which one enters into the depths of pure memory, selects a memory and actualizes it as a memory-image. This process does not work the other round as Bergson notes that: 'to *picture* is not to *remember*' (Bergson 1991, 135). For Bergson, although the past is always in existence, it 'is hidden from us', emerging as spontaneous memory most easily for children, in dreams and moments of extremis when one's life passes before one as recounted by survivors of near-fatal events (Bergson 1991, 154–55). Similarly, in regard to pathologies of memory such as aphasia and amnesia, Bergson believes that memories are not missing, they simply cannot be actualized.

The Experience of Memory

Although Bergson's conceptualization of memory is grounded in the body as a 'conductor' of memory, his account does not extend to the historical contexts in which bodies remember. The question of memory in relation to historical consciousness and technological modernity is taken up by Walter Benjamin who draws on Bergson, Proust and Freud in advancing a philosophy of modern experience. Following Bergson, Benjamin associates human experience with the ability to create memories. It is the recovery of memory, the individual's ability to 'take hold of his experience' that is at stake in his view of modernity as a rupture in historical experience (Benjamin 1997b, 112). Benjamin's theories on film and modernity form a paradigm for considering how artists' moving image practices engage with memory and history under the technological and cultural conditions of postmodernity. The traumatic experience of the First World War inflects Benjamin's initially negative view of modernity as the destruction of traditional cultural methods of reflecting on experience such as storytelling (Benjamin 1992). Across key essays of the 1930s he articulates the view that modern experience leads to a 'shattering of tradition' and has severely problematized the human ability to create reflective memories of experience (Benjamin 1992, 2002, 1997b). However, in his

remarks on cinema, Benjamin identifies a collective art form that has the potential to communicate the experience of technological modernity.

In considering the capacity of individuals to reproduce their experiences, Benjamin compares Bergson's theory of how pure memory is accessed with Marcel Proust's *'mémoire involuntaire* (involuntary memory)' presented in his monumental work of storytelling, *A la recherche du temps perdu (In Search of Lost Time)* (1913–1917) (Benjamin 1997b, 112). In contrast to Bergson's suggestion that pure memory can be reached through a contemplative state, Proust's *mémoire involuntaire* is a return to the past that can only be triggered by a chance encounter with an object or a sensation and thus is impossible to consciously remember. In the following lines from Proust, cited by Benjamin, the past is:

> somewhere beyond the reach of the intellect, and unmistakably present in some material object (or in the sensation which such an object arouses in us), though we have no idea which one it is. As for that object, it depends entirely on chance whether we come upon it before we die or whether we never encounter it. (Benjamin 1997b, 112)[2]

While he acknowledges Proust's achievement in recovering or 'synthesizing' such memories, the immensity of the undertaking underscores for Benjamin the limitations of using the private world of the novelist to communicate experience (Benjamin 1997b, 111). He suggests that an individual's experience of a 'collective past' in festivals and ceremonies produces the 'amalgamation' of two forms of memory (voluntary intellectual memory and involuntary deep memory) rather than their 'mutual exclusiveness' (Benjamin 1997b, 113). However, the capacity of the individual and the collective to reflect on experience are put to the test under conditions of modernity characterized as 'shock' and 'distraction' by Benjamin.

Benjamin understands shock in terms of Freud's theory that consciousness is based on not remembering in order to protect the individual from the shock of stimuli, thus shock is 'cushioned, parried by consciousness' (Benjamin 1997b, 116). According to Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1923), memory traces are: 'often most powerful and most enduring when the incident which left them behind was one that never entered consciousness' which Benjamin correlates with the idea of the

mémoire involuntaire as a memory that was never consciously experienced (quoted in Benjamin 1997b, 114). In Benjamin's interpretation of Freud, under the conditions of modernity the more consciousness screens against stimuli, the less experience—*erlebnis*—can become *erfahrung*, the communication of reflective experience. Experience becomes a series of fleeting moments in time, instantly forgotten. By theorizing the experience of film in terms of shock, Benjamin appears to imply that film technology precludes reflective experience:

> in a film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle. That which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of the rhythm of perception in the film. (Benjamin 1997b, 132)

Thus, he classes the camera's mechanical recording function as an extension of 'voluntary memory', or functional practical memory (Benjamin 1997b, 145). However elsewhere in Benjamin's work, the negative effects of shock are counterbalanced by other modes of perception associated with film. His term the 'optical unconscious' encompasses film techniques like slow motion, enlargement, distortion, montage and other film aesthetics.[3] He writes: 'it is through the camera that we first discover the optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis' (Benjamin 2002, 117). In conceiving of an 'optical unconscious' comparable with the unconscious, Benjamin implicitly suggests that the cinema apparatus is capable of disclosing the virtual dimension of memory, just as the unconscious accesses memories that the conscious mind does not retain. This suggestion can be further developed by returning to Benjamin's critique of Proust's remembrance based on individual experience where he suggests that a storytelling form equivalent to Proust's personal memory of the past might emerge from the co-mingling of individual and collective experience.

Despite Benjamin's ambivalence, it is the cinema as an art form based on collective experience which has the potential to fulfil the role of storytelling within modernity. His split theorization of film, on the one hand associating it with the alienating effects of shock and on the other hand associating it with an 'optical unconscious' parallels the distinction, following Proust, between two kinds of memory, 'voluntary' and 'involuntary'. Considered in these terms, film performs functional voluntary memory by recording events, however, through the aesthetics of

film-making including montage and camera effects film is also capable of creating involuntary memory which reflects on experience. Notably, in his more optimistic writings on cinema, Benjamin emphasizes the heterogeneity of commercial narrative cinema such as Charlie Chaplin and Mickey Mouse rather than a narrower 'abstract film' (Benjamin 1999, 395–96; 2005a, b). Writing on how to deal with the relation of art to kitsch he states: 'today, perhaps, film alone is equal to this task – or, at any rate, more ready for it than any other art form. And whoever has recognized this will be inclined to disallow the pretensions of abstract film, as important as its experiments may be' (Benjamin 1999, 395–96). Therefore, for Benjamin, the 'art of film' meant a hybrid collective cinema that was part of mass culture yet also exploited the aesthetics of film (Benjamin 2002, 102). In an appraisal of Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) he writes: 'with film there truly arises a new region of consciousness', and that: 'having discovered the dynamite of tenths of a second, film exploded this old world of incarceration' (Benjamin 1994, 626). According to Miriam Hansen, Benjamin's praise for the communication of the collective experience of historical and social change in *Battleship Potemkin* is suggestive of film's 'dynamic temporality' (M. Hansen 1999, 339).

As a 'dynamic temporality', film takes on a mnemonic dimension comparable with Benjamin's concept of a 'dialectical image' which would restore a historical consciousness to the present. The 'dialectical image' is a dynamic instant where the past and present momentarily converge and 'blast open the continuum of history' (Benjamin 2003, 396). The 'dialectical image' expresses a complex temporality related to the temporalization of modernity; as it asserts a radical '*Jetztzeit*' or 'now-time' over the ahistorical '*Neuzeit*' or the 'new-time' of modernity (Osborne 1995, 144–45). While 'new-time' connotes the vacuous 'eternal recurrence of the new', the time of the modern commodity object, 'now-time' crosses historical time with 'Messianic time' which 'comprises the entire history of mankind in a tremendous abbreviation' (Benjamin 1985, 46; 2003, 396). In Peter Osborne's analysis Benjamin aimed to: 'relaunch historiography as a form of remembrance (*Eingedenken*) which would not be merely backward looking, but would contain within itself the seeds of a new futurity' (Osborne 1995, 142). In activating the past in relation to a specific historical present, the dialectical image has the revolutionary potential to change the future. Osborne links the now-time of the dialectical image with the interruptive time of involuntary memory, writing that: 'Proust's

involuntary memory does become a model for Benjamin of the fullness of the moment in which in the conjunction of a specific present with a specific past, history as a whole becomes "legible"' (Osborne 1995, 228). Arguably, film constitutes a technical structure for Benjamin's vision of 'the dialectical image', given that, as Susan Buck-Morss notes, Benjamin describes the dialectical image in 'modern metaphors' such as montage and camera shots (Buck-Morss 1989, 250). As a technology of time and montage, the moving image has the capacity to be a 'dialectical image' bringing the force of memory to bear on the course of history.

The doubled temporality of past and future momentarily transfixed in the present also appears in another aspect of Benjamin's thought, his fascination with the process through which objects acquire and lose their status as new. An outmoded object is significant for Benjamin as it refers to a double temporality at the time of its passage into obsolescence—this is both its current outmodedness and its original potential, its utopian future (Benjamin 1997a, 254). This is why he praises the Surrealists' interest in the outmoded and the discarded objects of the recent past, identifying a temporality of the avant-garde that is not based on linear progress but on the ability to find 'the revolutionary energies that appear in the "outmoded"' (Benjamin 1997c, 229). In contemporary art criticism, artists' fascination with film stock is often interpreted in relation to Benjamin's theory of the outmoded (Krauss 2000b; Foster 2002). However this study foregrounds the two-way remediatory exchange between film and video technologies rather than film's passage into obsolescence. Accordingly, I suggest that artists' interlacing of film and video on a material level and their invocations of memory should also be understood in relation to Benjamin's concept of the 'dialectical image' as a force of memory.

'Bergsonian Cinema'

As we have seen both Bergson's philosophy of memory and the temporalities of film play a part in Benjamin's theorization of the experience of technological modernity. Bergson's views on time and memory are renewed in the work of Deleuze who extends Bergson's thought to cinema as an apparatus that discloses the non-linearity of time and memory. He finds a 'Bergsonian cinema' by thinking of the cinema as 'movement-image' and 'time-image' (Deleuze 2005a, b). While Bergson saw the film strip's series of static frames as an example of abstract

time which produced a 'false' 'mechanistic illusion' of movement when projected, Deleuze argues that the montage effect of edited moving images produces a metaphysics of movement (Deleuze 2005b, 106; Bergson 1922). Thus, Deleuze finds that certain films are capable of conveying Bergson's understanding of time as *durée*, a constantly flowing multiplicity as opposed to the normative view of time as a measurable abstraction. Deleuze locates his cinema of the 'time-image' primarily in the postwar period with an emphasis on the traumatic breakdown of memory and the experience of incommensurable temporalities. However, the 'time-image' can arguably be found wherever the moving image prioritizes the experience of time and memory. Deleuze defines the 'time-image' as: 'a function of remembering, of temporalization: not exactly recollection but "an invitation to recollect"' (Deleuze 2005b, 105). The cinema of the 'time-image' is not a representation of time, it is an apparatus in which the dynamics of time and memory become evident. Although Deleuze writes primarily about the cinema he knew: postwar classical Hollywood and the French New Wave, his ideas can be extended to the ways in which contemporary artists' moving image mobilizes mnemonic modes.[4] Their explorations of memory and time emerge in the context of rapid digitalization, networks, neoliberal globalization and post-Fordist economies of attention and information.

In his commentaries on Bergson, Deleuze transposes the latter's theories on time and the formation of memory to the cinema. Here he adheres to Bergson's distinction between three different kinds of memory, the practical habitual memory, the deep recollection and virtual pure memory. Bergson's concept of a 'memory-image' describes the way in which memory is actualized in a specific image, however memory-images occur in multiple ways and never recur in exactly the same way. In its strictest sense the 'memory-image' is an actualization of thought in which the mind accesses a virtual memory. Given Bergson's stipulation that remembering does not equate to picturing, (memory cannot be reduced to an image but memory is made tangible through images and in sensory situations), there is an ambivalence in his writing between the idea of memory as virtual and non-representational and its actualization in memory-images (Bergson 1991, 135). The autonomy of virtual memory which exceeds the practical processes of memory in which memory-images are filtered and selected is alluded to throughout his work (Bergson 2014, 186–87). As Deleuze notes, it is often in the 'disturbances' and 'failures' of memory that virtual memory becomes evident (Deleuze 2005b, 52).

In his third commentary on Bergson, Deleuze develops the concepts of the actual and the virtual and the circuits between them which mediate between perception and memory. He quotes Bergson's description of time passing in actual and virtual dimensions:

> our actual existence, then, whilst it is unrolled in time, duplicates itself along with a virtual existence, a mirror-image. Every moment of our life presents the two aspects, it is actual and virtual, perception on the one side and recollection on the other… Whoever becomes conscious of the continual duplicating of his present into perception and recollection… will compare himself to an actor playing his part automatically, listening to himself and beholding himself playing. (quoted by Deleuze 2005b, 77)

He designates a counterpart to Bergson's concept of the memory-image or 'recollection-image' in the cinematographic forms of the flashback and the dream image. In these formats the actual and the virtual are clearly discernible and signposted, as images from the past are summoned in relation to film narratives. For Deleuze, the recollection-image as flashback is a developmental stage of the cinema of the time-image which asserts the experience of non-chronological time over narrative and space. A utilitarian 'summonable' memory, it is not in itself virtual, it simply actualizes virtual memory. Deleuze goes on to identify categories of time-images which operate as virtual images in that they confront us with the virtual dimension of pure memory. Thinking through Bergson's theory of time splitting between the actual and the virtual, Deleuze finds an equivalent 'crystallization' of time in films by Max Ophüls, Luchino Visconti and others which show the coexistence of the actual and the virtual, the present and the past. In the fourth commentary on Bergson, Deleuze identifies 'crystal images' in films by Orson Welles and Alain Resnais where the actual and the virtual become intermeshed and indiscernible, as the past appears to seep into the present or the present opens into the future (Deleuze 2005b, 67). Deleuze also specifies further types of time-images as 'chronosigns' in which the question of what is true or false becomes undecidable or inexplicable. The 'falsifying narrations' in films by Welles, Godard and other directors privilege storytelling that oscillates between the real and the fictional opposing 'pre-established truths' (Deleuze 2005b, 145). As such they can be understood as the precursors of the documentary fiction mode of moving image art presented in this

study, which mobilizes narrative and the heterogeneous temporalities of memory.

The idea of 'the crystallization of time' is taken up by Maurizio Lazzarato in a politicized theory of the perception of time in post-Fordist society (Lazzarato 2019). Building on Deleuze and Bergson, Lazzarato proposes that 'machinic assemblages', specifically technologies of time such as cinema, video and digital processing act as interfaces with time in a similar way to the brain. Here time and perception are understood according to Deleuze and Bergson as durations and flows of images which are external to subjectivity, meaning that: 'it is we who are internal to time, not the other way round' (Deleuze 2005b, 80). For Bergson memory is a mode of consciousness that enables the capacity to act and to feel by accessing the power and force of duration. Following Bergson's description of the work of memory, Lazzarato makes the argument that: 'the power of technologies lies in the fact that they reproduce this activity of the contraction-relaxation of time and therefore reproduce intellectual labour' (Lazzarato 2019, 56). The latter terms are drawn from Bergson's distinction between two kinds of memory: the habitual memory that 'contracts' time according to the needs of the present and the attentive memory that 'relaxes' and 'synthesizes' time as it accesses the multiplicity of memory existing in circuits of the actual and the virtual. For Lazzarato, the processes of 'contraction-relaxation' and 'synthesis' are replicated in video technologies that do not just disclose 'time-images' but the actual conditions of the flows that constitute images such as the electromagnetic waves of analogue video or digital processing. As opposed to theorists like Virilio who regard technologies of time negatively, Lazzarato argues that 'machines that crystallize time' disclose the temporality of 'machinic' capitalism and constitute a means of intervening within it. Here Lazzarato privileges video and digital technologies over cinema on the basis that these technologies of time operate in 'real time' as well as modulating time. Despite Deleuze's identification of the time-image in cinema, in Lazzarato's view cinema is ultimately a delayed synthesis of time. This argument is also supported by the suggestion that the video art of Nam June Paik and Bill Viola is superior to commercial television with its highly orchestrated formats and editing rhythms. However, Lazzarato's hierarchical distinction between video art and television does not hold up given that video art and television have a shared history of mutual involvement while the distinction between cinema and digital technologies becomes less convincing as cinema now encompasses multiple media

formats and streaming platforms. In addition, the question of whether viewers can actually discriminate between the 'illusory' cinematic moving image and the 'real time' of video is debatable. Nonetheless Lazzarato's Bergsonian approach makes a persuasive case for understanding digital technologies of time as aiding the human capacity to feel time and memory. Through Bergson, Lazzarato also brings Benjamin's theorization of technological modernity into a postmodern era by asserting that it is through technologies of time that late capitalist 'metred time' can be challenged with 'power-time' (Lazzarato 2019, 222). The hybrid moving image installations presented in this book demonstrate the ways in which contemporary artists harness diverse technologies of time and the agency of memory. The hybridity of these works should be understood in relation to both the intermedial technological shift in the 1990s and the distinctive genealogies of artists' film and video and their temporalities.

2.2 Intermediality: Remembering Film Through Video

> Thinking about film within the framework of the digital is like watching a kaleidoscope pattern reconfigure very slowly. The same aesthetic attributes are there but the relations between them have shifted. (Mulvey 2006, 30)

Laura Mulvey's evocation of an intermedial kaleidoscopic turn can be extended to consider how the reconfiguration of film, video and the digital and their aesthetic qualities also includes the refraction of time in their associated temporalities. The moving image works addressed in this study refract time by actualizing memory through the intermedial aesthetics of film, video and the digital and by drawing on the ways in which these technologies constitute memory in cinema, television and the internet. Intermediality by definition presupposes an understanding of particular characteristics, the commonalities and the differences of the media in question. The discussion of intermedial aesthetics within artists' moving image rests on propositions and associations concerning film, analogue and digital video which are derived from specific social and historical contexts. These attributes and associations can be thought of as the 'mediality' of media from which art practices emerge (Sterne 2012, 9). Thus intermedial aesthetics are not mergers of media but relationships

between media in which the characteristics of different media at a particular point in time are highlighted. Within the time frame of this study, the 1990s and 2000s, terms like 'new media' and 'digitalization' signal the impact of new technologies on existing media. Digitalization intensifies the already existing intermedial relations between analogue video and film and establishes new intermedial relationships between electronic video, digital video and film. Digitalization refers not just to digitization, the conversion of analogue media to digital but the cultural and social transformations brought about by digital technology. The combinatory powers of computer software have led to anxiety around the issue of convergence, that all media will be subsumed into one digital meta-medium with computers encoding all media formats as files which can be outputted in different ways. As predicted by the computer scientists, Alan Kay and Adele Goldberg in 1977, all media converge on the 'metamedium' of the computer desktop (Kay and Goldberg 2003, 394). Kittler and Manovich have both stated that computerized information technologies can potentially absorb all media within them, eroding notions of medium specificity (Kittler 1999, 1–2; Manovich 2001a). However the ideal of convergence neglects the extent to which media are implicated in each other.

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin describe the effect of digital media on older media as 'remediation', a process that 'operates in both directions' (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 48). The central tenet of their theory of remediation is that no medium is in isolation from other media, echoing Marshall McLuhan's views on the interrelatedness of media (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 15; McLuhan 1973). In relation to digital video and film, Bolter and Grusin point out that the cultural products associated with each media have borrowed from the other. Computer gaming and CGI borrow narrative and cinematographic forms associated with cinema while cinema and television have incorporated digital compositing and CGI effects. While new media may appear to render older media historical or outmoded, in actuality older media persist and live on in aspects of newer media. Digitalization doesn't so much erode older media so much as change their possibilities and attributes. For example, Manovich's first major theorization of 'new media' refers extensively to the presence of inherited formats from cinema within new media formats (Manovich 2001b). In this study I foreground the mnemonic dimension of remediation as older media persist within newer media. The corollary of this is that newer does not necessarily mean better in terms of media; Jonathan Sterne emphasizes that remediation as a form of 'cross-reference' is also

a 'routine' relation between media, not simply a case of the new overriding the old (Sterne 2012, 9). Equally in a modification of his earlier position, Manovich describes the remediation of older and newer media as 'hybridity' and 'deep remixability' stating that: 'the unique properties and techniques of different media have become software elements that can be combined together in previously impossible ways' (Manovich 2013, 176). In the context of contemporary art, the currency of the term 'moving image' implies that the specificity of different formats and their traditions might be erased under one catch-all category, disrupting art historical genealogies which diverge along medium specific lines of structuralist film or video art. Yet within artists' moving image of the 1990s, which combine analogue and digital media, a sensitivity to intermedial aesthetics has emerged, reshuffling the terms of the discourse of artists' film and video, as older media forms are rethought and represented in relation to the present.

Digital technologies develop characteristics already present in electronic video such as audiovisual processing and manipulability while also bringing new characteristics such as reproduction without loss of image quality and algorithmic logic to bear on video. In the early 2000s, digital video still did not have the same level of image resolution as film but by the end of the decade the technical differences between film and video became less and less easy to distinguish. Thus, digital technologies bring film and video into closer relationship as digital video can reproduce film in higher definition than previous video technology while the displacement of analogue video by digital video endows it with a newfound historicity comparable to film. Although the technical differences between film and video images have become more and more imperceptible to the human eye, the different conventions and associations of each medium continue to exist. In particular the perceived threat of digitalization has prompted a reconsideration of film as a medium and the future of cinema (Rodowick 2007; Doane 2007). The different temporalities associated with film and video play a part in the intermedial aesthetics of the 1990s and are worth summarizing here.

Film, Video and the 'Post-medium Condition'

Although film and video are both time-based, recording technologies, they emerge from different technological bases and are linked with

different institutional frameworks. Film's medium specificity is traditionally associated with indexicality, particularly in comparison to the digital. Like analogue photography, it registers the imprint of light on photochemical emulsion and produces photograms on film strips, indexical images that act as a historical record of a particular time and place. Temporally, film is associated with the past in that filmic moving images replay the recording of a profilmic event. For David Rodowick, with reference to the film theories of André Bazin, Siegfried Kracauer, Stanley Cavell and Roland Barthes, filmic ontology is defined in terms of its re-presentation of a past world (Rodowick 2007). Despite the fact that the film image can be manipulated, Rodowick adheres to the belief that in viewing film: 'we are present to a world from which we are absent' provoking a sense of estrangement and ethical relation to the past (Rodowick 2007, 63). Film's affiliation with 'pastness' is also linked to the temporalities of narrative cinema, the dominant institutional context for film. Over the course of its history, narrative cinema has developed historically based films in which the film medium has repeatedly been used to represent the past. Again, regardless of degrees of verisimilitude or historical accuracy, filmic presentations of the past contribute to social collective memory, connecting viewers to history.

Video, on the other hand emerges as an available technology in the mid 1960s, closely associated with the apparatus of television, defined by Samuel Weber as being: 'both here and there at the same time' and yet 'neither fully there nor entirely here' which he links to the undecidability of whether the screen image is live or not (Weber 1996, 120). Thus, the intimacy of television, its apparent endless 'flow', the notion of liveness associated with televisual broadcast and the possibilities of video itself as a signal-based technology are core concerns within video art of the late 1960s and 1970s (Williams 2003, 92). Although analogue video shares an indexical attribute with film in that video cameras capture and register light through a lens, it has other technical attributes that complicate it and distinguish it from film. Analogue video is a signal-based technology that can output images and sounds immediately without registering them on tape and audiovisual outputs can also be generated through synthesisers and other devices as well as from cameras. The temporalities peculiar to video are experimented with in artworks by Joan Jonas, Bruce Nauman, Dan Graham, Peter Campus and Vito Acconci that feature recorded performances to camera, time delay and closed-circuit transmission. The range of temporalities evident in video art of the 1970s can be read

in the context of contemporary concerns about the perceived 'acceleration' of time and the condensing of time in television. Christine Ross suggests that early video art oscillates between an emphasis on instantaneity and extended duration in response to a perceived 'waning of time' (Ross 2006). Despite the evident engagement with temporality in early video art, one of the first theorizations of video associates it with a lack of temporality and memory.

Rosalind Krauss reads video through a regressive psychological model of narcissism, in which video feedback is shown to foreclose a sense of temporality, creating a rift between the viewing subject's sense of self and history (Krauss 2010). Although Krauss finds examples of a critical video practice in work by Richard Serra, Jonas and Campus, in her overall analysis, the potential of video as a medium is curtailed by its involvement in mass media and a culture of narcissism. This view of video is echoed in Fredric Jameson's perception of video as lacking 'critical distance' and 'memory' (Jameson 1991, 70). While he acknowledges that video has 'three dimensions' as an artistic medium, a technology and a social institution, he associates experimental video art with television's 'total flow'. Writing at the outset of the 1990s, Jameson does not register the emergent intermedial category of video as a container medium for film nor the fact that video as a recording technology can be said to constitute a form of memory itself.

The idea that video lacks memory and historicity plays a substantive role in Krauss's later theorization of the 'post-medium condition' at the end of the 1990s. Describing the dismantling of medium specificity in the context of post-conceptual art and post-structuralism, she writes that: 'into this situation there entered the portapak, and its televisual effect was to shatter the modernist dream' (Krauss 2000a, 30). In addition to narcissism and the 'constitutive heterogeneity' of television, Krauss also associates video with the ambiguity of 'intermedia'.[5] 'Intermedia' here refers to the Fluxus artist and writer Dick Higgins' use of the term to mean a 'fusion' of media in artworks that fall between different media both conceptually and formally such as works that operate across music, poetry and sculpture (Higgins 2001). In contrast to intermediality, 'intermedia' suggests the dissolution of medium boundaries and characteristics. Projected video installations thus become for Krauss, the emblematic form of 'post-medium' contemporary art that has lost a mnemonic dimension and distinct material basis. Not wanting to use the word 'medium' tainted by association with Clement Greenberg, Krauss suggests the 'technical

support' as a way of articulating how contemporary art practices might 'reinvent the medium' as:

> a set of conventions derived from (but not identical with) the material conditions of a given technical support, conventions out of which to develop a form of expressiveness that can be both projective and mnemonic. (Krauss 1999, 296)

While Krauss finds a precedent for the technical support in film's 'aggregate condition' which cannot be isolated to any one element of the apparatus, such as celluloid, projector or screen, video is consistently excluded from the 'reinvention of the medium' as it lacks the 'specificity' of film in her eyes (Krauss 2000a, 24–25). Interestingly, in her analysis of Marcel Broodthaers' film *A Voyage on the North Sea* (1973–1974) which frames the theorization of a 'post-medium condition', Krauss relates the 'filmic model' to fiction as Broodthaers' 'master medium' (Krauss 2000a, 46). In the artworks of the 1990s and 2000s addressed in this book, such a 'filmic model' that mobilizes fiction as an aesthetic strategy is constituted in intermedial projected video installations. For Krauss, however, only certain media qualify as 'technical supports', identified in James Coleman's use of slide film and William Kentridge's primitive form of stop motion animation; media that are becoming outmoded (Krauss 1999). The role of projected video and other hybrid combinations of media in installations is critically invisible to Krauss as her vision of 'reinventing the medium' is based on Walter Benjamin's belief in the 'redemptive' power of technologies at the moment they pass into obsolescence.[6] Like Benjamin's ambivalent assessment of the impact of mass media technologies on the work of art and its aura, her view of media technologies hinges on a tension between their functionality as mass media and their potential as art 'mediums'.[7] Thus, Coleman's and Kentridge's work is distinguished from what Krauss dismisses as: 'the international fashion of installation and intermedia work, in which art essentially finds itself complicit with a globalization of the image in the service of capital' (Krauss 2000a, 56).

The media that qualify as 'technical supports' are what Krauss considers to be 'non-art' commercial media such as animation, pulp fiction graphic novels and slide film, used in advertising, Thus, it is apparent that underlying the theory of 'reinventing the medium' is a set of conditions and limits as to what constitutes 'art mediums' and 'non-art' media. In Krauss's view of 'art mediums', video is overlooked as it is neither

outmoded nor can it be considered a non-art material, given its presence in installation and new media art. Mark B. N. Hansen critiques Krauss's argument on the basis that it is limited by her disciplinary position as an art historian which causes her to 'bracket out new media' (M. B. N. Hansen 2006, 24). As subsequent studies have noted, the influential status of both Krauss and Jameson's pronouncements on video obscured the actual complexity of the ecology of video and television, explored in activist video art practices such as the Raindance Corporation collective (Joselit 2007; Blom 2016). In later writing, Krauss appears to acknowledge video as part of a 'technical support' in an analysis of Christian Marclay's four-channel video work *Video Quartet* (2002). Although she identifies Marclay's 'technical support' as synchronized sound, relating the work to 'the earlier history' of a medium—the arrival of synchronized sound in cinema, video is recognized as part of that history, as a moving image technology (Krauss 2006, 2011, 103). In the same article, the 'technical support' is extended to include: 'commercial vehicles such as cars or television' in respect of Ed Ruscha's work and 'the investigative journalist's documentary research' in the case of Sophie Calle (Krauss 2006, 57–59).

Although Krauss's attempt to return to a thinly veiled specificity of a medium as 'self-differing' is ultimately unsustainable, as Sven Lütticken notes, her assertion of a mnemonic dimension to media in the notion of 'layering of conventions' is important (Lütticken 2004, 12). As 'undead media' live on within digital media and 'the use of media remains shaped by cultural expectations', Lütticken finds a criticality in the capacity of art to function as a memory of media and culture through the combinations of media, images and objects brought together in 'white cube' installations (Lütticken 2004, 12). In this respect the hybridity of artists' moving image installations in the 1990s, between video and film, can be said to activate a memory of media for a 'post-medium' digital era. While theoretically, anything can be a media of contemporary art, artists still work in relation to frameworks of mediality. As we will see, in the moving image installations surveyed in this book, investigations into memory and time are constituted in the intermedial aesthetics of film, video and the digital and their associated temporalities.

Media theory provides useful insights into understanding how the affordances of technological media, both digital and analogue play a part in the changing approaches to time and memory in artists' moving image. Kittler and Wolfgang Ernst draw on cybernetics theory to focus on the

temporalities of technological media. From their non-humanist point of view, technological media generate autonomous temporalities which inaugurate a new regime of memory, different and unassimilable to cultural memory but exerting an effect on the human perception of time and memory. Kittler identifies time-axis manipulation as a critical disjuncture in which technological time exceeds the scale of human temporalities while Ernst writes on the techno-mathematical basis of media technologies which operate in microtemporalities (Ernst 2017; Kittler 1999, 35). Microtemporalities are the subliminal electronic and digital events and processes that occur within the 'von Neumann architecture' of computer 'memory', processing units, control units and the input/output interface. The processual organization of computer memory such as RAM and flash memory has implications for we think of memory and time. As Ernst states: 'algorithmic objects come into being anew and processually – they do not exist as fixed data blocks' (Ernst 2013, 82). Thus digitalization and technological media contribute to the human perception of memory as dynamic rather than static and the awareness of temporalities that exceed human perception. The inherent competences and temporalities of digital technologies contend with the inherited temporalities associated with film and analogue video in the intermedial aesthetics of moving image art.

Intermedial Art and Cinema

In addition to the remediation of film and video, moving image installations in the 1990s initiate an intermedial relationship between the 'white cube' and the black box as cinema enters the gallery (O'Doherty 1999). The material conditions for these intermedial exchanges are the affordances of emergent digital technology such as video projectors, non-linear editing software and desktop computers that facilitate the appropriation, extraction and replay of cinema within artists' moving image. From the 1980s, the emergence of VCRs enabled home recording and time-shifting of television programmes and films while VHS video rental allowed consumers to pause, rewind and fast forward films which were previously encountered within the structured times of cinema screenings. These new affordances enabled consumers, including film theorists and artists, to engage with cinema in more directly appropriative ways. Projection enables artists to create their own forms of cinema apparatuses within the gallery, combining references to filmic narrative with more spatialized, embodied modes of spectatorship. Since the 1960s, the absorption of

cinema into television has nurtured a collective memory of cinema which is increasingly referenced in moving image installations of the 1990s.

The traditional authority invested in the 'white cube' as an atemporal framing context means that moving image installations occupy a peculiar temporality between the timelessness of the gallery and the specific temporal durations of cinema. Reflecting on this, Boris Groys draws attention to a reversal in gallery spectatorship in which the viewer who traditionally decided for themselves how long they would spend contemplating an artwork now has their viewing time dictated by video installations (Groys 2001). Gallery viewers are also challenged by artworks that exceed normative durations such as Stan Douglas's recombinant installations and exhibitions like 'Documenta 11' (2002) that provide a volume of screenings that no one visitor could experience in their entirety (Steyerl 2012, 73). Although gallery and museum spaces are as much a part of the spectacular consumption of images and entertainment culture as cinemas, they are also places where interventions into the norms of managed durations of time can be explored and presented. Within the neoliberal globalized capitalist system, they stand at a slight remove from the larger, systemic image worlds of mass media and the internet. The spatialized reflection on cinema within the gallery has been both positively and negatively appraised. In an essay for the Tate Modern exhibition 'Time Zones: Recent Film and Video' (2004) Peter Osborne writes that:

> the marked spatiality of the modes of display of film and video in art spaces, on the other hand, and crucially, the movement of the viewer through gallery space, undercuts the false absolutisation of time to which cinema is prone. Furthermore, it highlights the *constructed* – rather than received – character of temporal continuity. (Osborne 2004, 72)

While moving image installations in the gallery are valorized for asserting a mobile, embodied spectatorship in contrast to the classical cinema audience described by Christian Metz as: 'spectator-fish, taking in everything with their eyes, nothing with their bodies', the assumed criticality of the mobile gallery viewer has also been challenged by critics like Connolly and Trodd (Connolly 2009, 20; Trodd 2011, 11; Metz 1982, 96). Furthermore, Claire Bishop argues that the 'activated spectatorship' elicited by installation art is not in itself a sign of criticality. Rather she states that critical installation art balances between pre-supposing a centred viewer and at the same time, decentring the viewer (Bishop 2005, 132–33).

Bishop also suggests that some artists' moving image installations display an uncritical fascination with both the screen image of cinema and the screening space of cinema and thus do not so much decentre the viewer as seduce them (Bishop 2005, 101). Yet it is also the case that the spatialized narratives of artists' moving image installations can produce a dislocating play between the screen image, the off-screen space implied by the image and the actual space of the gallery, as several critics have noted (Fowler 2008; Mondloch 2010; Butler 2010). By spatializing narrative across different screens or positioning the viewer in a physical relation to the on-screen narrative, artists create complex and disjunctive spatio-temporal experiences for the viewer. Such installations play with the temporality of the moving image, placing the viewer in complicated relationships to different temporalities, from the real time of the gallery space, to the repetitive time of looped projection and the diegetic time of the screen image. In this study which addresses moving image installations that primarily exist within museum and gallery spaces as opposed to practices that engage with exterior public spaces and situations, I suggest that the gallery can act as a site for a reflection on the experience of time and memory through the moving image. In taking 'cinematic time' out of context, moving image installations offer specialized singular reflections on the temporality of the moving image to the viewer.

'Border-Hoppers': Practices Between Art and Cinema

The rise of moving image installations which reference cinema from the 1990s onwards represents a significant shift in emphasis from the immediately preceding generation of artists' film and video which saw cinema as an institution to be critiqued rather than an object of fascination. Fluctuating relationships between art and cinema are evident in the historical avant-gardes of the 1920s and the 1960s–1970s avant-garde, with the latter predominantly focused on the materiality of film. In the 1920s, the historical avant-gardes of Dada, Surrealism and Constructivism featured notable collaborations between artists and film-makers such as Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy, René Clair and Francis Picabia, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali. In this regard, scholarship on the film culture of the 1920s shows that to a large extent artists' films were developed in relationship to the film industry (Zoller 2008; Hagener 2007). In the 1930s with the dissolution and dispersal of the avant-gardes, such collaborations and reciprocity declined with some notable exceptions.[8] Mark Nash

notes a split between the art world and avant-garde film, stating that: 'for a range of cultural and historical reasons, avant-garde cinema ran in a parallel track to other contemporary art forms from the thirties' (Nash 2009, 47). With different economies of exhibition and distribution, art and avant-garde cinema existed in separate, rarely overlapping worlds. In the 1960s and 1970s, significant numbers of artists began to work with film and with video, yet film continued to be viewed as an adjunct area of art practice with a gulf between the museum and gallery-based art world and the world of underground and experimental film. At one end of the spectrum, independent film-makers like Stan Brakhage defined themselves in opposition to both the narrative industrial cinema and the gallery system while at the other end Andy Warhol repurposed cinema for his own studio system. P. Adams Sitney's formulation of what he calls 'structural film' became an influential but also misleading categorization of the work of Michael Snow, Hollis Frampton, Paul Sharits, Tony Conrad and others (Sitney 2002).[9] Although he states that structural film is 'cinema of the mind rather than the eye', his structural film-makers emphasise the apperceptive aspects of film spectatorship and exclude the narrative and illusionistic effects associated with mainstream cinema (Sitney 2002, 370). Thus Sitney's *Visionary Film* occludes those film practices or aspects of artists' film that do not fit with the ideology of structural film. For example, the gallery-based installations of Snow and Paul Sharits are omitted by Sitney in favour of their more 'structural' films.[10] Snow's position in particular has been the subject of revisionist historiographical studies which reinstate a reading of his work as more narrative and illusionistic than previous commentators such as Sitney and Peter Gidal would allow (Mondloch 2011). Snow and Warhol straddled the gulf between the art and film worlds as they were involved with the underground film scene associated with Anthology Film Archives in New York as well as with the gallery world. So polarized were the different factions that artists like Warhol, Snow and Hollis Frampton are classed as 'border-hoppers' by the film historian A. L. Rees (Rees 2009, 58). Rees' terminology is symptomatic of the way in which experimental film-makers and their historians perceived themselves to be autonomous and independent of the concerns of the art world.

Although Warhol's use of a fixed camera lens and durational film time are positioned by Sitney as a precursor to structural film, the range of Warhol's film practice does not fit within the parameters of *Visionary Film*. He notes that: 'Warhol as a pop artist is spiritually at the opposite

pole from the structural film-makers' (Sitney 2002, 373). The label 'pop artist' is not quite adequate either for Warhol's achievements during his intense period of film production between 1963 and 1968. Partly inspired by the films of Jack Smith and Kenneth Anger, Warhol's films established an alternative cinema with its own screen tests and screen stars. The extreme duration of films like *Sleep* (1963) and *Empire* (1964) not only emphasized a material, 'real-time' filmic duration, they also disrupted the norms of cinema spectatorship. Due to the impossible screening lengths of these films, the emphasis shifts to the audience's social experience and the implicit suggestion that they could come and go rather than watch the entire film. In this sense Warhol's films can be understood as an attempt to counter the monolithic industry of commercial cinema by instigating a different sort of cinema experience. However, unlike the structural film-makers, Warhol did not do so in opposition to Hollywood but rather by expanding the concept of what cinema might be.

Outside the dominant accounts of 'structural film' there was a heterogeneous range of film, video and live event-based practices known as 'expanded cinema' (Youngblood 1970; Rees et al. 2011). Within the diversity of expanded cinema Jonathan Walley identifies a neglected branch of avant-garde film practice in the 1960s and 1970s that he calls 'paracinema': 'paracinema identifies an array of phenomena that are considered 'cinematic' but that are not embodied in the materials of film as traditionally defined' (Walley 2003, 18). In Walley's account, the practices of Paul Sharits and Anthony McCall are understood in relation to conceptual art's emphasis on the dematerialized art object and as an approach to film as a set of materials that are not fixed but subject to historical change. Paracinema is an important precursor for practices in the 1990s that also take up approaches to 'the idea of cinema' (Walley 2003, 30). However, in a significant difference to the paracinematic practices of the 1960s and 1970s which were largely non-commodified artworks, moving image installations of the 1990s have been absorbed into the art world economy of limited editions and distribution. Furthermore, the enthusiastic embrace of cinema evident in art of the 1990s contrasts with the previous generation of artists' film and video practices of the 1970s and 1980s that largely positioned themselves in ideological opposition to the cinema and television industries.

The surge of film and video installations in the 1990s proved to be a discombobulating and thorny issue for an earlier generation of

artist/film-makers as they saw artists' moving images invested with new-found visibility, higher production values and different models of finance and distribution. For example, commenting on the numerous artists' films and moving image installations shown at 'Documenta 11', the artist/film-maker Nina Danino states: 'I could not find the bridge between the artists' films at 'Documenta' and the body of work represented here in this Reader, which seems to stem from an altogether different place as art' (Danino 2003, 8). Rees remarks that:

> the rise of current projection art in the gallery – which is far from lacking in glamour – comes by and large from a very different direction that rarely acknowledges and perhaps does not even know about, the films, groups and experiments outlined here. (Rees 2009, 65)

The film-maker Peter Weibel also finds: 'surprising evidence of parallels, sometimes extending to the finest detail, not only in style and technique, but in content and motif as well' between the '1990s video generation' and '1960s Expanded Cinema' (Weibel 2003, 119–20). These tensions between different genealogies of artists' film indicate the extent to which the hybrid and intermedial practices of the 1990s opened up new trajectories of the moving image which were received by the previous generation of artists and historians as either unassimilable in the case of Danino or as unknowing repetitions by Rees and Weibel.

There is another sense in which the wholesale engagement with cinema in art of the 1990s is indicative of a paradoxical disassociation between the art world and the film world. This is the perception that artists saw popular, Hollywood cinema as a 'non-art' material that was in some way not on a par with art and therefore could be cannibalized and recycled. The art critic Barry Schwabsky makes this point: 'in other words, artists may be interested in cinema precisely to the extent that they experience it as not structurally connected or homologous to art. This is what allows it to function as "material" to be worked on' (Schwabsky 2003, 2). The mentality evoked by Schwabsky echoes Krauss's differentiation between 'medium' and 'media' in her theorization of 're-inventing the medium'.

Another strand of the diverse moving image practices in the late 1960s and early 1970s that became known as 'sculptural film' stemmed from the process-based, post-minimalist practices of mainly male American artists like Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, Dan Graham and Dennis Oppenheim. Initially these artists used film as a supplement to their art practices.

Within this curiously displaced approach to film they created a physicalized, documenting and performative film aesthetic. Film and later video cameras were employed as cheap recording devices to document performative actions in the studio. However, in recording their experiments with movement, materials and space, these artists were also introducing a temporal dimension to sculpture and post-minimalist installation art. Thus Serra's *Hand Catching Lead* (1968) is described by Benjamin Buchloh as 'sculptural film' because the durational nature of the work marks a transition from sculpture to film (Buchloh 2000).[11] This short film is a fixed lens shot of Serra's hand repeatedly trying to catch falling pieces of lead. As Buchloh describes it: 'the falling pieces imitate the downward movement of the film print in passing through the projector, the visualization of the gravity of the falling metal corresponds to the materiality of the filmic medium' (Buchloh 2000, 16–17).

Conversely other work could be seen as film becoming sculptural as in Anthony McCall's *Line Describing a Cone* (1973) which deals with the materiality of projection.[12] McCall insisted on the film's resolute anti-illusionism claiming that it existed solely in three dimensions and in the real time of its projection (McCall 1978). Rethinking Buchloh's theory of 'sculptural film', Baker suggests that McCall's 'filmic sculptures' are less a development from one medium to another but a form of transgression:

> McCall's movement from film back into sculpture proposes that the process is less a teleology than a porous limit, a boundary that can be crossed in myriad ways. Methodologically, we seem then to face not a dialectical historical development, as the art historian might have us believe, but a moment in history when "development" was precisely thrown into question, when the expansion of forms rather began to circulate around a limit and its transgression. (Baker 2006, 103)

This interchange or limit point between film and sculpture should be seen in the context of the post-minimalist concern with the phenomenological experience of the viewer in the gallery space. The concern with the physicality of film eventually extended into an exploration of the viewer's experience of the projected image in the gallery, evident in installations by Nauman, Graham, Peter Campus and others. Their installations dealt with the apparatus of film and video technologies, featuring the relationship between the virtual and the actual within the space of projection. Like structural film, these film and video installations largely avoided any references to the larger apparatus of industrial cinema.

In Andrew Uroskie's study of expanded cinema, he argues that the film practices of Warhol and others were sidelined and obscured by the influential journal *October* founded by Krauss and others (Uroskie 2014). Artists' references to narrative cinema such as Warhol's *Lupe* (1965) based on the Hollywood star Lupe Velez and Robert Whitman's *Shower* (1964) which recalls Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) were undertheorized within the contemporary critical frameworks for artists' film and video.[13] Ironically, according to Uroskie it was the book most associated with expanded cinema, Gene Youngblood's *Expanded Cinema* that also served to bury it within the critical discourse of art theory (Youngblood 1970; Uroskie 2014, 9). Youngblood's book is written from the perspective of techno-utopianism in which every form of modern technology is seen as part of a sociopolitical revolution that will overturn the cinema and entertainment industry. As Uroskie comments, such hyperbolic claims for new technologies lack the critical and historical perspective that would be required to make expanded cinema practices legible in relation to the critical discourse associated with *October* (Uroskie 2014, 9–10). His study asserts the radical interstitial position of expanded cinema practices that did not fit the established narratives of structural film, experimental film or European art cinema. By creating new contexts for cinema spectatorship and exhibition, expanded cinema anticipates the ways in which artists' moving image of the 1990s also explores the displacement and reconfiguration of the apparatus of cinema.

As is evident in this overview of the genealogies of artists' film and video, art practices are bound up with ideological, economic and institutional contexts. While the moving image artworks analysed in this study re-engage with cinema as an institution and draw on historical aesthetics of film and video, they also explore the politics of the moving image as it is instrumentalized within contemporary culture. The case studies in several of the following chapters disclose how contemporary experience and memory are mediated in and through the moving image, in popular cinema, documentary practices and the digital archive.

Notes

1. Here I draw on Keith Ansell-Pearson's excellent study of Bergson and memory in (Ansell-Pearson 2018).
2. The quotation is from volume one of *In Search of Lost Time: The Way by Swann's* [1913] (Proust 2003).

3. Miriam Hansen writes that: 'we should bear in mind that the optical unconscious is obviously not a philosophical concept but rather an experimental metaphor and, like all complex tropes, has multiple and shifting meanings' (M. Hansen 2012, 156).
4. See for example (Birnbaum 2005).
5. Krauss draws the term 'constitutive heterogeneity' from (Weber 1996, 110).
6. Benjamin writes on early photography as a medium as opposed to a technology that denies 'aura' and states: 'here too we see in operation the law that new advances are prefigured in older techniques' (Benjamin 1997a, 247).
7. Krauss notes her use of: '*mediums* as the plural of *medium* in order to avoid a confusion with *media*, which I am reserving for the technologies of communication indicated by that latter term' (Krauss 2000a, 57).
8. Joseph Cornell's *Rose Hobart* (1936), references and remakes the Hollywood film, *East of Borneo* (1931) in a quasi 'installation' where Cornell projected his re-edited version of *East of Borneo* through a sheet of thick, blue glass, decades before both 'installations' and artists' 'remakes' of the 1990s. Cornell also made a tinted print of the film.
9. Sitney's 'structural film' is not derived from French structuralist theory but is meant literally to describe how film-makers 'shape' and organize or 'pre-determine' the film apparatus. Ironically, given the subsequent association of structural film with materialist film–making, Sitney distinguishes his term 'structural' from the term 'formal'. In the UK 'structural film' became 'structural materialist film' whose leading proponents were the artists and writers Peter Gidal and Malcolm Le Grice.
10. Film and video works by artists like Richard Serra, Bruce Nauman, Anthony McCall, Jack Goldstein and Fluxus artists are also omitted.
11. Richard Serra, *Hand Catching Lead* (1968), black-and-white 16 mm film, three minutes.
12. *Line Describing a Cone* (1973), 16 mm film projection, thirty minutes duration, 3000 × 4000 mm overall display, dimensions variable, collection, Tate, London. The audience is encouraged to look not at the screen but at the beam of light from the projector and later to physically interact with it, stand in it and touch it. As an animated film-strip literally showing a line becoming a circle is projected, the light from the projector grows from a thin beam into a hollow cone of light. In the earliest installations of this work, the projector light slowly became a substantial mist due to a combination of dust and cigarette smoke formed by the assembled crowd. In more recent iterations the mist is created with artificial fog.
13. The exhibition 'Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art, 1964–1977', Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2001, played an important part in re-presenting these works by Warhol and Whitman. In her catalogue essay the curator Chrissie Iles connects Whitman's *Shower* with the 'cinematic drama of *Psycho*' (Iles 2001, 62).

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CHAPTER 3

Critical Nostalgia

Emerging in the seventeenth century as a medical diagnosis of severe homesickness, nostalgia is now associated with a yearning to return to the past. The etymology of nostalgia is rooted in the Greek words: *nostos* meaning the return home and *algia* meaning pain. In her study of nostalgia, Svetlana Boym emphasises nostalgia's relation to time rather than place, defining it as an impossible and thwarted longing to bring incommensurable temporalities together, often occurring at times of historical upheaval (Boym 2001, xvi). She distinguishes between a 'reflective nostalgia' that acknowledges the different and conflicting memories that constitute the past and a 'restorative nostalgia' that attempts to restore the past 'as it was' (Boym 2001, xviii). Addressing post-communist cities, monuments and the literature of exile, Boym unravels the ways in which nostalgia exposes competing memories of the past and contradictions between personal and collective memory. In this chapter I draw on Boym's 'reflective nostalgia' to find a mode of critical nostalgia in two moving image installations, both made in 1995, that originate in the aftermath of the break-up of the Eastern Bloc states and the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The late Chantal Ackerman's *D'Est: au bord de la fiction (From the East: Bordering on Fiction)* is based on a journey across Eastern Europe while Stan Douglas's *Der Sandmann* engages with a series of uncanny returns in post-reunification Berlin. In both works the desire to return

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to the past triggers overlapping and contending temporalities that are constituted in intermedial aesthetics. According to Boym: 'a cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life' (Boym 2001, xiii–xiv). The image of a double exposure expresses the impossible temporality of nostalgia or two time frames held in one. Boym's image of superimposition can be extended to Ackerman and Douglas's works in which film is looked at through video and digital software, respectively. Through this manoeuvre, the two artworks connect with temporalities associated with film from the perspective of newer media. Yet this nostalgic look works both ways as film brings a different temporal dimension to video previously associated with the temporalities of television and the continuous present.

Both Ackerman's and Douglas's 'critical nostalgia' can also be understood in relation to the curatorial turn towards the 'cinematic' in the 1990s, with 1995 marking the centenary of cinema in many countries. Arguably the pastness associated with film is accentuated by the centenary of cinema which serves to historicize film. The centenary of cinema is the occasion of numerous reflections on the history of cinema and the question of analogue in relation to digital as digital technology overtakes film as the primary technical apparatus of cinema. What is meant by the 'cinematic' in contemporary art and to what extent it constitutes a 'critical nostalgia' is discussed at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Chantal Akerman: Film as an Act of Memory

In early 1990 the American curators Kathy Halbreich and Michael Tarantino were in discussion with Chantal Akerman about the possibility of making a film installation for a gallery context: a work that would respond to recent events in Eastern Europe, specifically the fall of the iconic Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the reunification of Germany in 1990 (Halbreich and Jenkins 1995). According to Akerman she envisaged making a film first, *D'Est (From the East)* (1993) and then an installation from the film which became *D'Est: au bord de la fiction (From the East: Bordering on Fiction)* first exhibited in 1995 at the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (Adams 2010).[1] While Halbreich spoke about her interest in history and the '1989 unification of Europe' [sic], Akerman responded that she would also like to address the: 'concomitant rise of nationalism and anti-Semitism' surfacing in Eastern Europe (Halbreich and Jenkins

1995, 8). Akerman had family links to the region as her parents were originally Polish Jews who were forced to leave Poland in the 1930s for Belgium.[2] While her father went into hiding during the German occupation of Belgium, Akerman's mother, as a child of ten was deported with her family to Auschwitz.[3] Akerman's decision to make a film in Eastern Europe was inevitably linked to her family history and her identity as a child of the Jewish diaspora. From the outset then, *D'Est* deals with two overlapping historical time frames, the upheaval caused by the break-up of the Eastern Bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the history of the 1930s and 1940s: the persecution, the forced migration and the Shoah or annihilation of Jewish people from Europe during the Second World War.

In her planning notes for the film, written in 1991, Akerman states that: 'while there's still time, I would like to make a grand journey across Eastern Europe. To Russia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the former East Germany, and back to Belgium' (Akerman 1995, 17). In these notes, Akerman reminisces on a previous trip to the Soviet Union which she experienced as being 'almost like home' as the food and the conversations reminded her of her mother. She also quotes from a 1990 newspaper article on Soviet bureaucracy and from Anna Akhmatova's poem *Requiem: 1935–1940* on the terror of the Stalinist regime (Akerman 1995, 37–41). From these references it is evident that Akerman's vision of the 'East' is rooted less in the actual geography of Eastern Europe but in an ambivalent nostalgia where the 'East' signifies both a lost cultural heritage and the traumatic memory of the 1930s, of Stalinism and anti-Semitism. The phrase 'while there's still time' expresses the core motivation of *D'Est* which is Akerman's attempt to find evidence of the past in the contemporary transitionary period of the 1990s and to preserve what she feels are disappearing forms of society and culture in the former Eastern Bloc countries. *D'Est* orchestrates these temporal connections by creating a form of filmic memory.

D'Est*: Memory and History*

D'Est refers to the historical events of the 1930s and 1940s through the aesthetics of memory. How exactly *D'Est* 'remembers' the past will be explored here. The memory that Akerman draws on has been described by Alisa Lebow as a form of 'indirect' memory, that is Akerman's lifelong awareness of her parents', particularly her mother's, lived memories of

traumatic experiences about which both of her parents were mostly silent (Lebow 2003, 37). Lebow cites Marianne Hirsch's term 'postmemory' which describes how second generation children of Holocaust survivors inherit and identify with their parents' experiences (Lebow 2003, 47; Hirsch 2006). Although Akerman's mother, with whom she had a close bond, did not speak about her memories, Akerman held a sense of connection to historical events that she herself did not directly experience. As Akerman has commented on, the traumatic events that her mother experienced were felt as a presence, a reticence that was always there (Adams 2010). This connection manifests itself throughout Akerman's work, notably in the presence of her mother in many of her films and in *D'Est* where Akerman travels eastwards towards her parents' birthplace, dredging up images that appear to 'remember' the past.

In addition to the 'indirect memory' of the 1940s, *D'Est* also functions to create another type of memory in relation to the early 1990s, composed as a series of semi-documentary vignettes of people and places in the former GDR, in Poland and in the Ukraine, capturing the clothing, the interior domestic spaces, the landscapes and the city streets across the region. Thus the film brings the viewer into a doubled temporal connection to both the 1940s and the 1990s and an awareness of historical time. *D'Est* is structured as a journey, moving across the former GDR, through Poland, the Ukraine and Russia, finishing in Moscow.[4] These geographic locations can only be inferred from the occasional street signs in German or Cyrillic alphabet and the sound of voices speaking in different languages. As critics have noted, the film moves from scenes shot in summer towards winter and from the West towards the East (Schmid 2010, 103; Carvajal 2008, 11). In the course of the film, this apparently simple structural form of narrative becomes a metaphoric trajectory from light to dark and from the present towards both the past and the unknown future. As it progresses *D'Est* sustains an accumulating weight of experiences and expressive style that is visually and aesthetically rich but conceptually enigmatic. The viewer may recognize clothing and architecture from the former Eastern Bloc countries and must combine these images with the knowledge that these are regions undergoing enormous changes at the time of filming. Despite the liberatory rhetoric in the West around the end of the Cold War and the end of communism, as David Harvey points out for most ordinary citizens of the former Eastern Bloc, political change inaugurated a period of economic turbulence and uncertainty (Harvey 2005, 87). Neoliberal capitalist practices of privatization

and deregulation replaced communist state monopolies on goods, infrastructure and social services. Towards the very end of the film the most overt reference in the film to the economic fall-out of perestroika is a scene showing a line of people in Moscow each holding up a different food item for sale. The transitionary period of aftermath following the break-up of the Eastern Bloc is indicated in Akerman's recurring scenes of people queuing and waiting for public transport. Due to the muffled restriction of sound and the constantly tracking camera, these scenes portray a state of audiovisual limbo in which the depicted travellers are not anchored by any dialogue or purposeful outcome to their waiting.

Throughout the film, an emphasis on the probing restless movement of the camera is maintained by the regular use of extended tracking shots largely moving from right to left. In the absence of any direct dialogue, voice-over or other authorial presence, the tracking shots function as a disembodied, questing consciousness that surveys the depicted scenes dispassionately yet respectfully. These shots alternate with equally lengthy static shots in which the camera rests on people engaged in a variety of everyday activities. By contrast with the queuing scenes, these parts of the film show people serenely occupied and absorbed either in work or leisure. Throughout the film, Akerman manages to show people either unaware of or indifferent to the camera's presence as it studies them intently, lending a significance to seemingly mundane activities like drinking tea, slicing a sausage or simply sitting at a table.

Despite its documentary-like starting point in real people and places, the film deploys an overtly stylized and painterly aesthetic that endows its subject matter with a surreal, expressive quality. The painterly qualities are most evident in the coloured lens filters which lend the film a rich subdued tonality at a remove from naturalistic documentary reportage and in the compositions of individual scenes which often employ a deep pictorial space in static shots like children sledding in the snow or interior domestic scenes. In the tracking shots of pedestrians, walking, standing and queuing, the Steadicam camera operator shoots at waist height, filming people from a low angle giving them a monumental, frieze-like quality, as shown in Fig. 3.1. When the shots are slowed down, such scenes take on the quality of *tableaux vivants*, heightened by the generally unobtrusive soundtrack which serves to focus attention on the images. Although the soundtrack includes recorded ambient sounds, they were remixed to create a sound world of muffled, disassociated voices and off camera sounds only occasionally punctured by louder sound or music.

Fig. 3.1 Chantal Ackerman, *D'Est* (1993), film still, courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris

An equally surreal quality becomes evident in the film's treatment of time which is arguably its primary aesthetic achievement. The geographical movement of the film is also a movement through different durations and modalities of time. A non-linear, malleable temporality emerges as the viewer, in witnessing the extended duration of Akerman's static, held shots, begins to 'feel time' and thus the viewing time of the film overlaps with the actual time of some of the various human activities captured by the camera. In interview Akerman describes the time in *D'Est* and her other films in the following way: 'with me, you see the time pass. And feel it pass. You also sense that this is the time that leads towards death. There's some of that, I think' (Rosen 2004, 125–26). In these moments of 'feeling time' the viewer is brought into a shared empathetic time with the people captured by *D'Est's* slow-moving camera. As Akerman's reference to mortality indicates, *D'Est's* slow time is also indicative of what Laura Mulvey describes as 'delayed cinema' the awareness of film as recorded time, a pastness to film that is different to illusory diegetic

time (Mulvey 2006, 182–85). *D'Est* is aware of itself as a historical artefact, a record of a particular social experience of time that is on the cusp of change. As *D'Est* the film ages, a certain innocence and nostalgia is evoked for the viewer in the scenes of people living in modestly furnished apartments and occupied in timeless tasks of eating, playing music and dancing, apparently untouched by the impending influx of consumer culture. Svetlana Boym observes that a similar nostalgic memory of the past was experienced across Eastern Europe in the first post-communist years of the 1990s (Boym 2001, 57–71). Jonathan Crary also comments on *D'Est's* emphasis on 'the time of waiting', a social, communal world that contrasts with the neoliberal 24/7 'delusion of a world without waiting' (Crary 2014, 121–24). The evident nostalgia in *D'Est* exposes the way the film treats time through the operations of memory which constantly relate the past to the present and the possible future.

The film's continuous tracking movement contrasted with lengthy individual scenes that appear to unfold in real-time parallels the mental activity of remembering; of searching for and finding remembered events or even remembering events that were not consciously registered at the time of their occurrence. As a tempo-spatial medium, film has the inherent ability to create the same temporal overlaps and reveries that memory does. In this sense the cinematography of *D'Est* could be said to perform a Bergsonian 'leap' into the past, triggered by the everyday scenes encountered along Akerman's journey (Deleuze 1988, 56). While it is not always clear what *D'Est* as a filmic consciousness 'remembers', the film foregrounds the act of memory as a bringing together of the present, the past and an eerie future anterior. As the film progresses, inferences to the historical deportations and round-ups of Jewish people in the 1940s can be made from the recurring images of people in transit, queuing, waiting in train stations and marching with bags and baggage, which Akerman makes explicit in her voice-over comments on the film, shown in the exhibition of *D'Est* as an installation. The expansion of *D'Est* into an installation echoes the work of memory as Akerman remembers her own film and breaks it into fragments of recorded time.

D'Est: au bord de la fiction *(1995)*

In the Walker gallery Akerman's installation *D'Est: au bord de la fiction* was structured in three parts, presenting first the film *D'Est*, followed by an installation of twenty-four television monitors arranged in eight groups

of three, each playing four-minute looped sequences from the film, shown in Fig. 3.2.[5] In the final space a single monitor showed a looped scene from the film with an accompanying commentary voiced by Akerman in which she speaks about the film, making explicit the thematics of history and memory which are implicit in the film. How then does the installation, *D'Est: au bord de la fiction* relate to the film *D'Est*? Firstly, the installation relates in a structural way, as Akerman has described how she decided to configure a group of twenty-four segments from the filmed footage that worked as individual four-minute sequences (Akerman and Lebovici 2012, 96). The choice of twenty-four deliberately relates to the definition of film time as twenty-four frames per second. In remediating twenty-four film scenes as looped video sequences shown on televisual monitors, film's durational temporality enters into the simultaneity of video. The experience of *D'Est* the installation contrasts radically with

Fig. 3.2 Chantal Ackerman, *D'Est: au bord de la fiction* (1995), installation shot, Walker Art Centre, courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris

the experience of viewing *D'Est*, the film. The sequential time of the film is spatially spread out and broken up into modular component parts that play simultaneously and can be dipped in and out of by the viewer as s/he moves among the monitors. In the installation, the viewer remembers the durational experience of watching the film with its accumulation of time passing while simultaneously becoming fascinated with the captured repetition of time on the monitors. Each monitor contains a slice of a time-space continuum from *D'Est*, such as the camera tracking along the length of a queue or a woman slicing sausage. Thus the simultaneity of video is qualified by the durational, recorded time of film. In the modest domestic scale of the televisions, each looped clip acts as a 'dolls' house universe', an image used by Steven Jacobs to describe Akerman's propensity for self-contained interior scenes across her oeuvre (Jacobs 2012, 78). As a collective, they contain the film, dismantled into individual worlds.

Just as the film *D'Est*, performs an act of memory in its tracking cinematography that crosses temporal zones of past, present and future, the group of monitors constitutes a visual configuration of filmic memory, acting as a virtual memory bank to the film. The playback of the film fragments on video monitors endows video with the mnemonic quality of replay and preservation of past time that is more usually associated with analogue film. Giuliana Bruno states that: 'the video monitors become a storage space of this mnemonic itinerary' in reference to Ackerman's physical travels (Bruno 2011, 102). However, the installation of video monitors is not simply a storage space but an active invitation to the viewer to participate in the act of memory as they pass among the monitors. As Henri Bergson proposes that memory works as an accrual of virtual memories that are activated through recollection, Akerman's assemblage of scenes are a technological virtual memory, awaiting the viewer's engagement (Bergson 1991). Although Bergson himself distrusted the effects of technology on human memory, Akerman's installation and film show how memory can be constituted in media images and durations of time can be held within the moving image. As the film *D'Est* has become a historical document, the convex televisual monitors with their 4:3 aspect ratio and standard definition video also have a historicity and material aesthetic particular to the mid 1990s. Christopher Townsend reviewing *D'Est: au bord de la fiction* in 2015, notes that: 'one day this work, this way, will be technically impossible, and whichever museum bought the piece will show it on flat screen. Which will be like repainting its Rembrandts in household gloss' (Townsend 2015, 21).

In the context of the mid 1990s, Akerman's retrieval of her own film through a spatialized video installation is indicative of a contemporary intermedial aesthetic: the use of video to reconfigure filmic time in a mnemonic mode.

It is not surprising that Akerman should have become part of this emerging mode of moving image installation in the 1990s, given that a formative part of her career was spent in New York in the 1970s where she collaborated with Babette Mangolte and absorbed the experimental film practices of Michael Snow, Jonas Mekas and others loosely connected with 'structural film'. She herself states: 'one could say that I'm on the border between so called experimental film and narrative film' (Rosen 2004, 124). Like the 'borderhoppers' referred to in Chapter 2 Akerman's film practice is important in straddling the divide between narrative cinema and artists' film of the 1970s and 1980s. While her films generally stretch conventional narrative structure, sharing structural film's emphasis on durational 'real' time and spatial film-making, they never completely abandon narrative. Rather they create physicalized narratives through movement, gesture and space as opposed to plot and literary narrative.

In the final third space of the Walker installation, a single monitor displayed a looped scene from *D'Est*, of a winter street in Moscow. On a voice-over soundtrack Akerman reads the Second Commandment from the Old Testament, Book of Exodus in Hebrew and English: 'Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image…'. This is followed by her account of the physical and psychic journey within *D'Est*:

> I went, then I wrote. Without understanding. Visions in passing. Dazzled by the summer. Travels by East Germany and by Poland. On the way I still passed the town where my mother comes from. Didn't see it, didn't look.[6] (Lebow 2003, 41–42)

Akerman finishes with an evocation of what she describes as 'the primal scene' underlying her work:

> all images of evacuation, of walking in the snow with packages toward an unknown place, of faces and bodies placed one next to the other, of faces flickering between robust life and the possibility of a death which would strike them down without their having asked for anything. And it is always like that. Yesterday, today and tomorrow, there were, there will

> be, there are at this very moment people whom history (which no longer even has a capital H) whom history has struck down. People who were waiting there, packed together, to be killed, beaten or starved or who walk without knowing where they are going, in groups or alone. (Lebow 2003, 41–42)

Here Akerman explicitly reads her images shot in the early 1990s as images that recall the forced migration of Jewish people, the internment and transportation of Jewish prisoners to concentration camps. The images gathered by Akerman in *D'Est* of people walking, carrying bags and waiting in East Germany, Poland and Russia become coexistent with a virtual memory; Akerman's 'indirect memory' via her mother and the collective memory of Holocaustal events which are largely not documented in images and film but remembered in oral and witness testimonies and narrated in historical accounts. As Akerman indicates in speaking of 'yesterday, today and tomorrow', the temporal overlap in *D'Est* brings past, present and future together. The present is both underlaid by a remembered past and ominously suggests a vulnerability in the massed groups of people depicted in *D'Est* who are repeatedly shown either waiting for transit or in transit, exposed to the uncertainty of future events. A sense of vulnerability is also evident in the grouped video monitors which constitute a small crowd or collective of individual entities awaiting the viewer's attention. Although Akerman says 'she didn't see, didn't look', as she realizes after the fact, her filmed travelogue through Eastern Europe serves to open up a memory of her parents' history and the collective memory of the Holocaust.

In retrospect, perhaps Akerman's commentary on *D'Est* supplies a reading that both the film and the installation don't require or can stand independent of. In both of them, the positioning of memory in relation to historical time is already evident. *D'Est* is an aggregate of many different vignettes or passages of time, a collective of individual narratives that in their impassivity and muteness testify to the awareness of historical events that exist in memory although they cannot be directly narrated.

3.2 Stan Douglas: The Return of the Past

Like Akerman's *D'Est*, Stan Douglas's *Der Sandmann* (1995) originates in the aftermath of the break-up of the Eastern Bloc.[7] The work was made while Douglas was on a fellowship to Berlin during 1994–1995. At the

time, Berlin, the iconic divided city of the cold war era was facing the challenges of reunification and reconciling the very different cultures of the former East and West German states, the GDR and the FRG. In Svetlana Boym's account, the reunification process in Berlin meant making decisions about what monuments to keep as ruins, what to remove or to rebuild and how to remember the divided past (2001, 173–218). She evokes a curious temporality of nostalgia that underpins the concept of reunification:

> Berliners are not quite sure how to speak of German "unity". The word reunification struck many as fundamentally nostalgic; it expresses a longing for some kind of *Heimat* that will provide a link between the future and the past. Nostalgia here is particularly acute, because the backward vector of the past is bursting into the future. In this linkage between the future and the past, the present is strangely excluded. (Boym 2001, 177)

The sense of temporal pressure evoked by Boym is comparable with the temporal structure of Douglas's film installation which sets up a series of uncanny relays between past and present in which the past relentlessly returns but is different and 'out of synch' with the present. The rhetoric of reunification valorizes moving forward into the future yet also speaks to a psychic return to the *Heimat* or homeland of a unified Germany. From an emigrant's perspective, Boym finds nostalgia for *Heimat* to be uncanny in the double meaning of the uncanny as both *heimlich* and *unheimlich* or homely and disturbing (Boym 2001:251). The émigré is in the uncomfortable and ambiguous position of remembering home but also knowing that s/he cannot return there because it no longer exists. By contrast the unreflective nostalgic assumes the possibility of restoring the past 'as it was'. *Der Sandmann* activates a mode of critical nostalgia, basing itself in a narrative of a return home where the memory of the past is shown to be subject to perpetual reconstruction and erasure as it interlocks with the present.

Der Sandmann is situated in relation to two sites, both formerly part of the GDR jurisdiction: the *Schrebergärten* allotments in Potsdam and the historic UFA studios in neighbouring Babelsburg. As outlined by Douglas in a project statement, allotment schemes originated in the early nineteenth century, principally as ways of providing food for workers and their families and were known variously as *Armengärten* (gardens for the poor) and *Arbeitergärten* (worker gardens) (Douglas 1998). Such schemes also

had moralizing overtones, reflected in the naming of the *Schrebergärten* after Dr. Moritz Schreber, who prescribed outdoor physical activity for children. By the mid 1990s, many of the *Schrebergärten* were being sold off for real estate redevelopment. The change from public to private ownership of *Schrebergarten* plots marks the socio-economic transition from the paternalistic communist GDR state system in the former East to the West's neoliberal free market. Beginning with a series of fifteen colour photographs, titled *Potsdamer Schrebergärten*, which document a selection of allotments in 1994, Douglas went on to create the black-and-white 16 mm film installation *Der Sandmann* which was shot in a vintage UFA studio. Visually, when exhibited together the film installation stands as a monochrome imaginary to the warm saturated colour of the photographs. Featuring shadowy lighting and supernatural subject matter, the film references the sort of Expressionist films made by UFA during its heyday in the 1920s. The disjunctive nostalgic temporality of German reunification is extended in Douglas's project to a reflection on how media technologies are indexed to both historical conditions and the dynamics of remembering and forgetting.

The film narrative is based on an extract from E. T. A. Hoffmann's gothic horror story, *The Sandman* (1816) transposed to a setting that is part Schreber garden and part film set (Hoffmann 2004). In Douglas's version, a slow tracking camera moves from the shadows of a studio film set to disclose an actor in contemporary clothing reading out a letter from Nathanael, the protagonist of *The Sandman* as if at a rehearsal. The letter describes Nathanael's return to Potsdam, his childhood home and the disturbing effect the sight of an old man working in a Schreber garden has had on him. The narrative continues in a series of letters read by the off-screen voices of two other characters Lothar and Klara while the camera moves from Nathanael into an allotment with cabbages and a 'Sandman' figure working in the background. Thus the 'rehearsal' segues into the fictional universe of *The Sandman* story. Hoffmann's *The Sandman* with its tropes of doubling, repetition and uncertain memory is famously cited by Freud in his 1919 essay which explores the various aspects of the uncanny as both an aesthetic affect and a psychic phenomenon (Freud 1990). In both registers the uncanny often originates in uncertainty between the imaginary and the real. Freud's analysis of the ambivalent polarities of meaning of *heimlich* from homely to disturbing leads him to define the uncanny as: 'that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar' (Freud 1990, 340). The uncanny

is experienced as a mode of displacement in which something is both familiar and not familiar. As noted by Philip Monk, Douglas's casting of a black actor as Nathanael is itself a form of uncanny displacement, the actor is an 'other' to the original Nathanael of the Hoffmann story and a means of updating the story to the present day (Monk 2006, 22). The temporal dimension to the uncanny is ultimately couched in psychoanalytical terms by Freud as: 'something repressed which *recurs*' (Freud 1990, 363). Yet, the uncanny also originates in animistic and unaccountable experiences. In her critique of Freud's narrow focus on the individual psyche, Avery Gordon argues for the uncanny as hauntings in which the disavowed and the forgotten constitute the 'real fictions' of the everyday social world (Gordon 2004, 38). With this in mind, Douglas's transposition of the Sandman story to a Schreber garden and film set, can be understood as activating the ghosts that haunt both locations. Explicitly invoking the gothic motif of the double, *Der Sandmann* explores the 'other' histories of both the *Schrebergärten* and the cinema as an institution.

Within his project information, Douglas outlines the *Schrebergärten* connection to Freud through Paul Schreber, the son of their namesake (Douglas 1998, 124–26). Schreber self-published his own 'Memoirs of an Insane Man' (1903) which Freud draws on in formulating a theory of paranoia (Freud 1958). As a child Schreber had been subjected to his father's eccentric and inhumane apparatuses for physical education. Despite his family's attempts to suppress publication, Schreber's memoirs stand as a traumatic legacy to the prescriptive regimes of self-improvement that the allotment schemes were originally based on. In Friedrich Kittler's view, Freud's utilization of Schreber's memoirs as a 'case history' is also a curious example of psychoanalytical theory being substantiated by the account of a self-acknowledged schizophrenic (Kittler 1990, 291–92).[8] In this instance the line between the objectivity of scientific theory and the subjectivity of hallucinatory states becomes uncannily porous. In addition to the Freudian dimension of the *Schrebergärten*, *Der Sandmann* also activates an uncanny return to film history through its production location in the UFA studios.

The set for *Der Sandmann* combines an allotment mise-en-scène with visible film equipment of lights, tripods, cables and the remains of antiquated wiring in the film studio. The film also reprises an early special effect of split screen pioneered in the silent film *Der Student von Prag* (1913) shot at Babelsburg. Douglas reportedly derived the idea from Henrik Galeen's remake *Der Student von Prag* (1926) in which the

student confronts his döppelganger, an alter-ego mirror image within the same scene through the technique of double exposure (Watson 1998, 34). Thus, *Der Sandmann's* intertextuality conjoins film history with the uncanny and the contemporary socio-economic process of reunification through the charged and doubled site of a Schreber garden/film set. Although the installation returns to historical film technology and aesthetics, it also problematizes the idea of a return by focusing on the disjuncture between the past and the present through its own material structure as an apparatus and the disturbing narrative of *The Sandman*.

Fig. 3.3 Stan Douglas, *Der Sandmann* (1995), film still, © Stan Douglas, courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York

In the installation, the uncanny experience of doubling is constituted in the materiality of the film apparatus. The viewer of *Der Sandmann* encounters what at first appears to be a single screen projection. Eventually, s/he becomes aware of an almost imperceptible seam splitting the image and realizes that the depicted scene is changing as it passes from left to right, as shown in Fig. 3.3. The projection is in fact composed

of two separate films, with half of each film image projected onto the left and right sides of the screen respectively. In order to make the work, Douglas shot two versions of a 360° pan around the Schreber garden set. One version is intended to be the garden in the 1970s while the other is twenty years later in the 1990s with the garden half cleared away. He describes the production method as follows:

> for exhibition, the two takes have been spliced together and duplicated so they may be presented from a pair of projectors focused on the same screen. They are out of phase with each other by one complete rotation of the studio, and only one half of each projector's image is seen on left and right of the screen. (Douglas 1998, 127)

The twin projector system literally doubles the narrative which is permanently split between the older and newer versions of the scene. Douglas also notes that using two identical films lends the composite twin projection the quality of a Möbius strip in which both sides of the projection, although out of synch with each other are in fact part of the same film (Thater 1998, 19). The effect of the staggered rotation and the split screen is that Nathanael's speech is not always in synch and the 'Sandman' figure can momentarily be seen on both sides of the seam at once or disappearing into it. On one rotation Nathanael's speech precedes him on the soundtrack and he appears speaking out of synch, on the next rotation he catches up with himself and goes back in synch.

For the viewer it is less Nathanael's story of the Sandman that is uncanny but the experience of watching the split film as the left side of the screen ripples onto the right side. The visible seam bisecting the screen, the overt presence of film equipment and the manner in which Nathanael's letter is read to camera all signal a permeable border between the fictional and the actual and an unstable temporality. Douglas describes his reconfiguration of the döppelganger effect as a 'temporal wipe' in which the moving image on the left appears to 'wipe' the moving image on the right. Thus the older and newer versions of the allotment alternate in 'erasing' each other. In film editing the 'wipe' is a transitional edit that moves across the screen to denote a temporal or spatial displacement. However Douglas's 'temporal wipe' is not an edit, but the foregrounding of an elaborate effect that problematizes the temporal flow of the film as opposed to directing it. With its twin projector apparatus, *Der Sandmann* undermines classical cinema's construction of a seamless diegetic world

and the traditional single channel projection. As Carol Clover states the visible 'seam' between the split projections foregrounds the 'suture' which classical cinema hides (Clover 1998, 76). The seam acts as a temporal vanishing point that marks the transition between the past and the future within the continuous present of the projection. In *Der Sandmann* time is out of joint as the split scene can't quite reunite itself despite its anchor points within the 360° pan: the figure of Nathanael and the studio socket board. The condition of being out of synch yet continually rolling on is a non-synchronous temporality that runs counter to a stable configuration of past, present and future. As the divided scene repeats with differences, the viewers must check their memory in relation to what they have seen and witness a repeated delayed and disjunctive temporality.

In this doubled film apparatus, Douglas draws on a long-standing tradition of associating film with the uncanny. From its origins film has been associated with the uncanny duplication of reality as it reanimates people and events from the past through the apparatus of cinema. As Walter Benjamin observes with reference to Pirandello's description of a body: 'turned into a mute image', the film actor epitomizes the estranged quality of filmic representation (Benjamin 2002, 112). Cinema as a primarily narrative art form develops the capacity of film not simply to document events but to convey the imaginary and the fantastical. For Kittler film operates primarily in the Lacanian register of the imaginary and it is the figure of the 'Double' that heralds this: 'in *Golem*, in *The Other*, in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, in *The Student of Prague*—everywhere doppelgängers appear as metaphors for the screen and its aesthetic. A film trick demonstrates what happens to people when the new medium takes hold of them' (Kittler 1990, 246). As recounted by the psychoanalyst Otto Rank in his 1914 study, the double has its origins as a talisman against death in German folklore before becoming a harbinger of mortality in the modern era in films such as *Der Student von Prag*. In *Der Student von Prag*, the doppelgänger takes on a life of its own, interfering with and ultimately causing the death of the eponymous student. According to Kittler, while Rank recognized the migration of the doppelgänger motif from literature into cinema and the surfacing of psychological symptoms in film, he didn't perceive that cinema itself was an uncanny double (Kittler 1990, 277). In cinema, the doppelgänger personifies the fear of replacement by a technical 'other' and film is doubly uncanny in its ability not just to reproduce people but to make the imaginary actual.

The uncanny motifs of doppelgängers, vampires and the undead are part of a Gothic tradition that can be understood as a response to technology from the industrial revolution onwards to the modern media of photography, film and communications. The history of technological development necessarily involves the overlapping and displacement of older media and human labour by machines. Peter Weibel extends the significance of the doppelgänger to the intermedial relations between old and new media in stating that: 'all new media not only double reality […] but also, above all, they are the doppelgängers of the old media' (Weibel 1996, 53). New technological mediums 'compete' with other media and threaten to make them obsolete by replacing their functions (Kittler 1990, 259). In this context, *Der Sandmann* must be seen as an intermedial work that configures the relationship between film and digital technology in the 1990s. Its restaging of historical film aesthetics is underpinned by precision synchronization of the automated 360° camera pans made feasible by MAX programming software. Traces of this synchronization are evident in the timing flashes that punctuate the film. An uncanny other to the Weimar cinema it references, *Der Sandmann* is both familiar and unfamiliar as it mimics the cinema of the past but also frames it within a computerized permutational system.

Significantly, *Der Sandmann* was made at an eventful time for cinema as it underwent the impact of digitalization during the 1990s. In this sense it plays out a delayed temporality associated with the uncanny in which a trauma is only remembered as such due to a later event which triggers the memory. Thus in the story of the Sandman, Nathanael's sighting of an old man who reminds him of the Sandman turns out to be screening another memory—the death of his father. Freud names this retroactive temporality *nachträglichkeit*, translated as 'deferred action'. But what is the trauma being remembered in Douglas's *Der Sandmann* and who is remembering it? In the visibly 'out of synch' character of Nathanael, *Der Sandmann* makes a feature of an apparently technical 'flaw' and appears to recall a traumatic juncture in film history: the coming of synchronized sound in the late 1920s. The introduction of the 'talkies' was seen by many at the time as the potential end of cinema as an art form and had a devastating effect on the silent film industry and its stars.[9] Douglas has written on how the transition to sound altered the cinema industry in an essay on *Film* (1965) and its screenplay by Samuel Beckett (Douglas 1988). In *Film* Buster Keaton, the former star of the silent era, attempts to evade the all-powerful suturing gaze of the camera before

finally succumbing to it. For Douglas, *Film* dramatizes the shift from one cinema to another, from the static camera of early cinema and the physical performance of Keaton to the psychological narratives of the studio system: 'and its formalization of how a new cinematic space would be constructed: with sound to specify an actor's persona, and that maximum angle of 45° to spatially position the absent one' (Douglas 1988, 16). The transition to the modern cinema industry brought in a new grammar in which the older techniques of cinematography and acting were effaced. As the dual meaning of the uncanny lies in something which is both familiar and also repressed, *Der Sandmann's* oscillation between the 'in' and the 'out' of synch marks the memory of the silent cinema which underlies modern cinema.

In summary, *Der Sandmann* stages a visual and audible disjunction in the split screen which is linked to both the delayed psychic temporality of the uncanny and the uneasy temporality of nostalgia that underpins the process of German reunification in Germany. One cannot live in the past despite constant reminders of the past in the present. Conversely the present makes demands of the past forcing it to either yield up its ghosts or allow them to remain forgotten. This dynamic is analogous to the tension between memory and forgetting, between the need to forget and the need to remember. *Der Sandmann's* split temporality demonstrates the impossibility of seamless transition from the past to the future. However, the presence of the splitting seam also suggests the potential of disjunctive gaps and the 'out of synch' to disclose alternative narratives and versions of the past. In this sense *Der Sandmann's* critical nostalgia refuses to fix the past and its possible futures.

3.3 The Cinematic

While some film scholars have speculated on the putative 'death of cinema' in the face of digitalization and the imminent obsolescence of film, since the mid 1990s artists' references to cinema have developed exponentially (Bellour 2003; Cherchi Usai 2001; Rodowick 2007). On one level the prevalence of 16 mm film installations and the references to historical cinema in moving image art may be seen as a nostalgic turn towards a disappearing medium and type of cinema. On another, artists' quotations from cinema via video projectors and editing software can be understood as active forms of remembering and repurposing cinema. From this point of view artists' moving image is part of the expansion of

cinema as it reinvents itself under different conditions of technology and distribution. The engagement with cinema as subject matter is visible in a host of exhibitions during the 1990s such as 'Spellbound: Art and Film' (1996), 'Hall of Mirrors: Art and Film Since 1945' (1996) and 'Cinéma, Cinéma: Contemporary Art and the Cinematic Experience' (1999).[10] A key question here is to what extent the exhibition of cinema within the gallery is a critical 'anamnesis' or a cannibalistic appropriation of cinema by the art world. By asking what is meant by the 'cinematic' and what purpose is served by the recurring memories of cinema in moving image practices, it is possible to identify a critical dimension to the apparent nostalgia of the cinematic turn in contemporary art.

Curatorial references to cinema and the cinematic are often vaguely specified. It can refer to a perceived cinephilia in relation to the canon of Hollywood cinema, understood as shared cultural memory.[11] In this respect Catherine Fowler has listed three aspects to artists' retrospective 'looking backward': to replay, to re-enact and to remake (Fowler 2012). The cinematic can equally indicate diverse modes of cinema such as early cinema, documentary cinema and the European art film. In artists' heterogeneous references to cinema, a particular set of attitudes to cinema begin to emerge. As Hal Foster asks: 'what exactly is this common knowledge that we call cinematic? What is its canon?' (Turvey et al. 2003, 74). Foster poses this question in a roundtable discussion on the projected image, in which the curator Chrissie Iles comments that artists' references to Hollywood are usually to silent film or classic films as opposed to more recent cinema from the late 1980s onwards (Turvey et al. 2003, 89). The work of Alfred Hitchcock features prominently in an emergent canon of quoted cinema along with other auteurs. Considering the phenomenon of artists' fascination with Hitchcock, Steven Jacobs suggests that it is largely to do with the fact that the director's output of fifty films from 1925 to 1976 has been closely associated with the history and theory of cinema itself, with Hitchcockian motifs of the gaze, the double and memory forming the basis of multiple film theories and meta-commentaries on cinema (Jacobs 2011, 155).

Above all the cinematic in art denotes the presence of cinema on both the levels of content and aesthetics as artists reference films and film-making techniques. Notably, the 1990s generation of artists investigates the medium of film through industrial cinema techniques in contrast to the previous generation of material and 'structuralist' film-makers who focus on the physical material of film in an artisanal self-reflexive way.

Writing in 2003, the curator Chrissie Iles identifies a 'new cinematic video installation' which she sees as a response to the encroachments of 'new electronic media', television and the internet. She suggests that artists: 'have turned to the familiar, reassuring language of the older moving image technology of Hollywood film to make the rapidly disappearing, obsolescent values it represents more visible again' (Iles 2003, 131). However, as her own analysis shows this argument cannot fully explain artists' turn to cinema, given that: 'the cinema aesthetic in much current video installation is a hybrid of old and new technology' (Iles 2003, 131). Rather than memorializing outmoded technologies, many of the video installations which Iles cites by Douglas Gordon, Diana Thater and Stan Douglas combine both old and new technologies in new configurations. Thus, the cinematic is not confined to the specificity of film as an apparently outmoded medium but exists in an intermedial configuration of film and new media.

The centenary of cinema in the mid 1990s became an occasion to mark the relationship between art and cinema.[12] One of the earliest of these, the French 'Passages de l'image' (Passages of the Image) aimed to show the burgeoning relationships between cinema and other media within a gallery space.[13] The exhibition showed recent video installations and photography by sixteen artists in addition to an extensive screening programme ranging from the historical avant-garde to artists' film and video. In the catalogue introduction the curators define their task as: 'an attempt to delimit and reveal the passages that occur today between the photograph, cinema, video and "new images"' (Bellour et al. 1991, 12). Yet the curators also retain a wary medium specificity in the face of the pervasiveness of electronic media and digitalization in listing three distinct image categories: 'Film', 'Video' and 'synthetic images' or computer images. In the 'Film' and 'Video' lists, only Jean-Luc Godard and Chris Marker appear in both categories. While acknowledging the 'passages' between images, Raymond Bellour's catalogue essay also speaks of 'contaminations' and states that: 'video has expanded cinema even to the point of dissolving it' while 'the computer image […] has not yet produced anything resembling a work, or even a real act of art' (Bellour 1996, 181, 184). Although Bellour concludes with examples of exchanges between analogue and digital in films of the 1980s, such an intermedial aesthetic was not immediately evident in the installations shown in 'Passages de l'image'. The seven video installations were concerned with video

itself, its temporality and the cultural contexts of surveillance and television. Only Dan Graham's model, *Cinema* (1981) directly referenced cinema. Thus 'Passages de l'image' marks the threshold of the emergent intermedial aesthetics of the 1990s. By the end of the 1990s the increasing numbers of artists engaging with cinema through video installation became the focus of proliferating cinema-themed exhibitions. As the remediation of film by video became a feature of artists' practices, the critical discourse around the moving image in art also shifted from medium-specific alignments.

In the UK, the exhibition *Spellbound: Art and Film* (1996) alluded to Alfred Hitchcock's collaboration with Salvador Dalí in *Spellbound* (1945) and gave an overview of the twists and turns of the relationship between art and film from a British perspective.[14] The exhibition featured an eclectic presentation of installations by three film directors and moving image works by seven artists. The diversity of approach highlighted that while both fields inform each other, they occupy distinct disciplinary cultures. In the USA, *Hall of Mirrors: Art and Film Since 1945* (1996) also adopted a cinematic metaphor, referring to a famous scene from Orson Welles' *Lady from Shanghai* (1948) to denote a chain of references between art and cinema in which each reflects the other.[15] It is telling that in their titles both *Spellbound* and *Hall of Mirrors* referenced the peak of Hollywood cinema from almost a half-century before, suggesting that in the art world, cinema was viewed primarily retrospectively as a historic institution. In *Spellbound*, Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) pays homage to the monolithic cultural status of *Psycho* (1960) in its silent and extreme slow motion video projection of the original film on a translucent screen tilted over the gallery viewers. As Amy Taubin notes, Gordon used an almost obsolete industrial Panasonic VCR player to project *Psycho* at an approximate speed of two frames a second (Taubin 1996, 75).[16] At this dilated length *24 Hour Psycho* constitutes an artefact of congealed suspense which elicits the viewer's memory of the original film. Thus Gordon's representation of *Psycho* is an intermedial approach indicative of the ways in which cinema is refracted, encountered and remembered through other media. With the impetus for the work originating in Gordon's memory of seeing *Psycho* on late-night television, *24 Hour Psycho* also marks the reception of cinema through television by generations of viewers and the new modes of spectatorship brought about by watching film through video technology.[17]

The compendious approach of *Hall of Mirrors* took in over 200 films and artworks. However, the exhibition was criticized by Peter Lunenfeld for its lack of an overall curatorial argument and for screening excerpts of feature-length films, negating their narrative qualities and for the inadequate conditions in which many of the artists' installations and films were presented (Lunenfeld 1996). These presentational issues indicate the challenge of curating how exactly art refers to cinema. In neglecting these specificities *Hall of Mirrors* inadvertently drew attention to the differences as well as the connections between art and cinema. Lunenfeld also comments that with its emphasis on film culture, the exhibition became: 'an arid historical experience', given the increasing interest by artists in other technological media like video, websites and CD-ROMs (Lunenfeld 1996, 102). In its retrospective view of the relationship between art and cinema, *Hall of Mirrors* was unable to register the new ways in which cinema was being represented through video in contemporary art of the 1990s. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s as the October round table testifies to, the entry of cinema into the gallery was evidenced in the discussion around the emergence of new types of moving image installations. To a large degree this discussion hinges on how immersive and thus 'cinema like' these spaces are and to what extent they assert the phenomenological, reflexive space of installation. Notably George Baker points out the paradox of installations by artists like Steve McQueen and James Coleman featuring: 'technologically reproducible media that are individualized in such a way that you can only see them in installation' (Turvey et al. 2003, 80). Thus the 'cinematic' in art is very much on the terms of individual artists with bespoke installations that import selected aspects of the cinema apparatus into the gallery.

By the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, the major survey exhibitions of 'Documenta 10' and 'Documenta 11' held in 1997 and 2002, respectively were explicitly engaging with cinema as a framing context for contemporary art. In both 'Documentas', the concept of the cinematic is closely associated with documentary and with political cinema while on a formal level, the featured moving image installations are predominantly intermedial combinations of film and video. Conscious of its timing at the close of the twentieth century, the artistic director of 'Documenta 10', Catherine David, sought to define a historical–political context for art in which the cinema played a key role.[18] The significance of cinema as a curatorial pillar of the exhibition was alluded to obliquely by Peter Friedl's work which intervened in the urbanscape of Kassel by placing

a neon sign *Kino* (cinema) in red letters on the roof of the Documenta Halle building.[19] The incongruity of the sign over a building which is not a cinema is both a provocation to the viewer and indicates the aspiration of 'Documenta 10' for contemporary art to have the political and cultural agency of cinema. The exhibition included commissioned video installations by McQueen, Douglas and William Kentridge among others, a programme of film screenings by directors such as Harun Farocki and Alexsandr Sokurov and also showed Jean-Luc Godard's eight-part *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1989–1998) as an installation.[20] The ambitiously monumental publication which accompanied the exhibition is structured around four key dates, 1945, 1967, 1978 and 1989 as a means of plotting cultural responses to the historical, economic and political events of the twentieth century. The editors describe cinema as: 'the most collectively oriented and widely disseminated art of the twentieth century', one of the 'red threads' that 'reappear as guiding themes through the historical labyrinth of the montage' in addition to architecture, urbanism and the Greek tragedy *Antigone* (David and Chevrier 1997). With texts by André Bazin, Serge Daney, Pier Paulo Pasolini, Jean-Luc Godard, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and articles on Cuban, African and Black American cinema, the book presents cinema as a matrix for the politics of the century. Douglas's *Der Sandmann* (1995), described in the exhibition guide as a 'cinematic installation' exemplifies the idea that cinematic source material from the history of cinema might be reconfigured to address the contemporary socio-political contexts as the gothic aesthetics of German Expressionist cinema are repurposed for post-reunification Germany (Sztulman 1997, 54).

The next 'Documenta 11' (2002) with Okwui Enwezor as artistic director saw an expansion of the exhibition from its Eurocentric base in Kassel towards global and postcolonial contexts. Within this remit cinema and moving image installations played a key role in engaging with the uneven temporalities of globalization. 'Documenta 11's curatorial mission should be seen in relation to the influence of the then recently published *Empire* cited by Enwezor (Hardt and Negri 2000; Enwezor 2002, 45). Hardt and Negri outline the totalizing logic of neoliberal capitalism and suggest resistance to it in the form of the 'multitude'. Enwezor's introductory essay, 'The Black Box' is a double-edged allusion to the art world term for cinema in the gallery and a flight recorder device which has a charged meaning in the wake of 9/11, the terrorist hijacking of four airliners on the 11 September 2001 (Enwezor 2002). In coming to

terms with post 9/11 politics and what he describes as: 'modalities that define the new meaning-and memory-making systems of late modernity', Enwezor and his curatorial team foregrounded moving image works and the traditions of Third Cinema (Enwezor 2002, 44). With seventy percent of exhibited works directly commissioned by 'Documenta 11' geopolitical themes were evident in works such as McQueen's video installation *Western Deep* (2002) based on a South African gold mine, Chantal Akerman's *From the Other Side* (2002) about the border between Mexico and the USA, Zarina Bhimji's film, *Out of Blue* (2002) set in postcolonial Uganda and Ulrike Ottinger's film *Southeast Passage, A Journey to New Blank Spots on the Map of Europe* (2002) which retraces the migrant routes of Eastern Europe.[21]

Notably, many of these works appear to be documentary-like although they also eschew many conventions of the form. McQueen's *Western Deep* is a case in point as it both invokes and denies the documentary mode by withholding an explanatory voice-over or factual information on the mine it is based on.[22] Enwezor's co-curator, Mark Nash places the artists' film and video shown in 'Documenta 11' within a discussion of Third Cinema, New Latin cinema and political documentary, reading artists' film as a continuation of these traditions (Nash 2008, 445). Yet, this genealogy is not as straightforward as Nash implies, given that works like *Western Deep* evade categorization as documentary. In a later postscript to his essay, Nash comments that 'Documenta 11' has been credited with the widespread 'documentary turn' in contemporary art, while also noting that the documentary mode itself is being problematized by the effects of digitalization (Nash 2008, 459). While the correspondence of the recorded image with a transparent truth has always been questionable, the infinitely manipulable digital image irrevocably challenges the documenting status of the image. However, the crisis for documentary identified by Nash can conversely be viewed as the source of a productive aesthetic mode in artists' moving image. As Hito Steyerl and Maria Lind point out, it is the very uncertainty associated with the documentary that has led artists to exploit it as an aesthetic-political form. They state: 'it is precisely the failure of the documentary to fulfil its pretence to certainty which ultimately does justice to an intransparent and dubious contemporary reality' (Lind and Steyerl 2008, 16). *Western Deep* along with other moving image works shown at 'Documenta 11' asserts a subjective and phenomenological approach to the representation of a particular place.

The video projection is shown at set screening times so that viewers begin with an immersive and disorientating sequence following the lengthy descent of a lift into the mine in low visibility and without explanatory commentary. While *Western Deep* follows a loose narrative structure in charting scenes of the miners' activities it also insists on more material aesthetic affect in enigmatic murky scenes that can only be experienced by viewers as a sensorial lack of information. McQueen shot the film on Super 8 mm and later commented: 'I wanted the audience to actually feel the molecules of dust' in the graininess of the image (McQueen and Searle 2013, 201). The low resolution of the image combined with the restriction of the audio track to loud mechanical sounds is a techno-aesthetic equivalent to the primitive conditions endured by the miners underground. Thus the prolonged duration of *Western Deep's* opening scene acts as a bridge between the viewer's viewing time in the gallery and the work time of the miners in the geographically distant location of the mine. However, the visible limitations in the enigmatic shots of unexplained activities and the lack of voice-over also establish that the mine and the miners ultimately resist representation. The viewer is always aware of the discontinuities between the time and space of the installation and that of the mine. Thus *Western Deep* challenges the notion of a sustained diegetic world by both involving the viewer on a sensory level and also distancing them from full immersion in the world of the mine. At the same time, in its suggestion of documentary, its set screening times and completely darkened auditorium, the installation employs aspects of the cinema apparatus in order to invoke what Enwezor describes as: 'the terrible nearness of distant places' (Enwezor 2002, 44).

'Cinéma, Cinéma' (1999)

While 'Documenta 11' emphasized the disjunctive tempo-spatial conditions of globalization in its selection of artists' moving images, other exhibitions focused on the mnemonic force of cinephilia. Here the 'cinematic' was understood in terms of the phenomenon of cinema as both cultural product and industrial film techniques. For instance 'Cinéma, Cinéma: Contemporary Art and the Cinematic Experience' (1999) foregrounded the work of eleven artists engaging with isolated aspects of film production techniques and also with film as material from the archive of cinema.[23] Once again the films of Alfred Hitchcock became emblematic

of 'cinema' with the inclusion of Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) and Pierre Huyghe's *Remake* (1994–1995) based on *Rear Window* (1954).

In his catalogue essay, 'Remaking Cinema', Jean-Christophe Royoux focuses on the idea of the remake as a core characteristic of what he calls artists' '*cinéma d'exposition* (cinema of exhibition)' (Royoux 1999, 21). He states that the remake which by definition comes 'after the event':

> …breaks with a conception of meaning in which each stage implies that the preceding one is surpassed, or disappears. In contrast to this, the phenomenon of the remake implies the development of *processes of anamnesis*, the dredging up of buried events and of 'things forgotten at the beginning': a development likely to keep reviving and renewing future modes of appropriation. (Royoux 1999, 21)

Here Royoux associates the practice of the remake with the force of memory or 'anamnesis' which counters the Hegelian teleological model of history. The Platonic concept of 'anamnesis' suggests that all knowledge originates in memory with its endlessly productive powers of construction. Royoux likens artists' forms of 'remake' to Godard's 'remake' of cinema in *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1988–1998), originally made for television, in which the archive of cinema becomes the basis of a history of the twentieth century (Royoux 1999, 26). In a similar method to artists' deconstructions of cinema narratives, Godard's fragments of cinema reconstitute it as material for his own purposes. *Histoire (s)* is a narrative of the failure of cinema to adequately capture the major traumatic event of the twentieth century, the Holocaust. Yet Godard's use of rhetorical devices associated with video as a means of reflecting on cinema also departs from the ways in which artists have represented cinema through video. As Sven Lütticken comments, Godard uses: 'what in his view is the most uncinematic medium, video' to mourn cinema, in a tone of intermedial estrangement where Godard's editorializing presentation and the televisual format manifestly lack the attributes of classical cinema (Lütticken 2013, 42). For artists, on the other hand, remaking cinema is a means of activating the interplay of memory with history where cinema links the individual subject to a collective memory. Their intermedial aesthetics indicate how cinema lives on through television and digital media, not necessarily on Godard's terms as a defunct and degraded apparatus but as a virtual memory that can be drawn on to alter the relationships between past, present and future.

While the centenary of cinema undoubtedly precipitates a widespread nostalgia for the past of cinema it also crystallizes how memory is mediated through technology as new digital media increasingly become containers and storage formats for film. The concurrent 'cinematic' turn in contemporary art is an intermedial mode in which artists reference both films and the techniques of cinematography and film production through the affordances of digital media, forging a hybrid 'cinematic' aesthetic. Curatorially, while the 'cinematic' covers a diverse spectrum, two strands of critical practice can be identified: firstly, the reinvention of documentary practices as a means of engagement with globalization and the postcolonial condition emphasised in 'Documenta 11' and secondly, in exhibitions like 'Cinéma Cinéma', a 'remaking' of cinema that creates new trajectories through the archive of cinema. This 'cinematic turn' also marks the entry of film into galleries and museums and a new economy in artists' moving image. In the two case studies presented in this chapter, the installations by Ackerman and Douglas operate in a mode of critical nostalgia to interlace the past and the present. Ackerman's representation of her earlier film *D'Est* on video monitors presents us with technological 'memory-images' while Douglas's bespoke 16 mm film apparatus, set on the site of a historic film studio, flags the interstitial moment of the transition to sound, suggesting that there is still potential in this forgotten interlude as opposed to a seamless narrative of technological progress. In very different ways, these artworks activate a Freudian temporality of *nachträglichkeit*, the return of repressed or haunting memory materialized in the moving image.

Notes

1. *From the East: Bordering on Fiction*, Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, 18 June–27 August 1995, curated by Kathy Halbreich, Bruce Jenkins, Michael Tarantino and Catherine David, touring to six other venues. In the collection of the Walker Art Centre.
2. Akerman had unrealised plans to make a film on Anna Akhmatova for which she visited Russia in 1990 and also plans for a film on the languages of Eastern Europe (Schmid 2010, 100; Akerman and Lebovici 2012, 95–96).
3. Akerman's maternal grandparents and great-aunt died in Auschwitz.
4. Akerman travelled to East Germany in the summer of 1992 and to the Ukraine and Russia in the winter of 1993.

5. I saw *From the East: Bordering on Fiction*, exhibited as a two-part installation in 'Chantal Ackerman: Now', Ambika P3, University of Westminster, London, 30 October–6 December 2015, curated by Michael Mazière and *A Nos Amours* (Joanna Hogg and Adam Roberts). This survey exhibition was overshadowed by Ackerman's death by suicide on 5 October 2015.
6. A transcript of Akerman's voice-over is provided by Alicia Lebow (2003, 41–42).
7. *Der Sandmann* (1995), two track black-and-white 16 mm film installation, looped film projection, nine minutes, fifty seconds each rotation, stereo sound, edition of two with one AP, collection Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York. Exhibited in 'Documenta 10', 1997, Kassel.
8. Kittler's term *aufschreibesysteme* (discourse networks) is borrowed from Schreber's text (Kittler 1990).
9. See Eisenstein et al. (2004).
10. Other key exhibitions include 'Scream and Scream Again' (1996), Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, curated by Chrissie Iles, the 48th Venice Biennale (1999), curated by Harald Szeeman, 'Notorious: Alfred Hitchcock and Contemporary Art' (1999), curated by Kerry Brougher, Michael Tarantino and Astrid Bowron, 'Between Cinema and a Hard Place' (2000), Tate Modern, London curated by Frances Morris and 'Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary after Film' (2002), ZKM, Karlsruhe, curated by Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel.
11. Victor Burgin explores the memory of cinema in *The Remembered Film* (Burgin 2010). The 'cinematic' is defined by Siegfried Kracauer as the film camera's representation of physical reality (Kracauer 1997), David Campany finds the cinematic in the distinction between the still and moving image (Campany 2007) and Maeve Connolly addresses the concept of the cinematic (Connolly 2016).
12. Cinema's centenary was marked at different times in different countries. 1995 is often designated as the centenary as one of the first public screening of projected film was held by Auguste and Louis Lumière in December 1895.
13. 'Passages de l'image' (1990), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, curated by Raymond Bellour, Catherine David and Christine van Assche, touring to three other venues in 1991.
14. *Spellbound: Art and Film* (1996), Hayward Gallery, London, curated by Ian Christie and Philip Dodd.
15. *Hall of Mirrors: Art and Film Since 1945* (1996), Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, curated by Kerry Brougher.
16. Douglas's later iteration of the work *24 Hour Psycho Back and Forth and To and Fro* (2008) exhibited in 'theanyspacewhatever' (2008), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, curated by Nancy Spector, used digital slow motion and fast forward projection.

17. Gordon remembers wanting to check his memory of a scene from the VHS copy of Psycho with a recording of a television transmission of the film (Taubin 1996, 70). In a later interview he recalls coming across the film on late-night television (Sylvester 2001).
18. David was the first female director of 'Documenta 10' (1997) since its inception in 1955. The work of 138 artists was exhibited in addition to a '100 Days-100 Guests' lecture and discussion programme.
19. Peter Friedl, *Kino* (1997), aluminium, neon, plexiglass, site specific installation, Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels, Belgium.
20. *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1988–1998) is an eight-part video, 226 minutes long.
21. Steve McQueen, *Western Deep* (2002), 8 mm film transferred to DVD, twenty five minutes, Chantal Akerman, *From the Other Side* (2002), film installation for eighteen monitors and two screens, video and 16 mm transferred to DVD, Zarina Bhimji, *Out of Blue* (2002), 16 mm film transferred to DVD, twenty four minutes, Ulrike Ottinger *Southeast Passage, A Journey to New Blank Spots on the Map of Europe* (2002), Digi-Beta video, 360 minutes.
22. For an exhaustive analysis of *Western Deep* in relation to its political and economic contexts, see Demos (2013, 33–53).
23. 'Cinéma, Cinéma: Contemporary Art and the Cinematic Experience' (1999), Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, curated by Jaap Guldemond. The eleven featured artists included Douglas Gordon, Pierre Huyghe, Fiona Banner, Pierre Bismuth, Eija-Liisa Ahtila and Sharon Lockhart.

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CHAPTER 4

Database Narrative

This chapter considers the development of a database narrative mode predominantly evident in moving image installations which draw on the archive of cinema. It argues that the database narrative mode evident in installations by Stan Douglas, Candice Breitz, Christian Marclay and Harun Farocki marks a transition from film as the dominant cultural metaphor for memory towards an intermedial memory model that 'remembers' cinema and television through the affordances of digital media. It focuses in particular on the work of Stan Douglas and what he calls 'recombinant narratives', installations that combine programmed permutational and looping structures with intertextual narratives drawn from cinema and literature (Lewis 2008, 47).[1] Beginning with a close analysis of Douglas's *Inconsolable Memories* (2005) I explore the mnemonic dimension of this database narrative in comparison with the modernist art films it references. Like its source narratives, Douglas's *Inconsolable Memories* deals with the relationship between memory and history but also emphasizes the mediatization of memory in film and broadcast media and the impact of digitalization on cultural memory.

Database narrative is a term coined by the 'new media' theorist Lev Manovich to describe the meeting of two apparently incompatible media forms: database associated with information management and narrative associated with literature and cinema (Manovich 2001, 238). Writing at the end of the 1990s, Manovich is addressing the impact of new media

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defined as digital and electronic and their relationship with older media. Ironically for a book on new media, film and cinema feature prominently as paradigms for the logic of new media. However, Manovich is also using the rise of new media as a means of retroactively contemplating the possibilities of film, arguing that the database narrative is a form that recuperates an overlooked possibility within cinema. He goes back to Dziga Vertov's 1929 film, *Chelovek s kino-apparatom* (*Man with a Movie-Camera)* as a prototype exemplar of a database narrative in cinema, that only a minority of film-makers such as Peter Greenaway have followed (Manovich 2001, 239–43). Considered as a database narrative, *Man with a Movie-Camera* draws on at least two datasets, firstly, it is a collection of recorded scenes of everyday life organized into different activities and secondly, the film showcases a range of film techniques and effects. Referring to the repeated scenes of the film editor Elizaveta Svilova working on film strips that reflexively point to the film as a data set of shots, Manovich states that Vertov creates a narrative of progress, a 'catalogue of discoveries', and 'a new language for film' from the data (Manovich 2001, 243). By reading the film as data sets, Manovich, like other media theorists, also draws attention to film's function as a recording media that could have been solely used for the storage of data, but over the twentieth century became primarily associated with narrative cinema.[2]

The exponential increase in databases due to digitalization and the internet has altered the way we think about information, accessing it and remembering it. A database can be defined as the storage and organization of data which is accessed by users using various methods of searching and navigating to retrieve data. Manovich suggests that databases are 'a new symbolic form of the computer age' while acknowledging that the proliferation of data also requires methods of navigating and narrating it (Manovich 2001, 219). Despite their differences, databases can support narrative effects and narratives can behave like databases. As he says, in computer gaming what appear to be narrative scenarios are in fact a series of causes and effects orchestrated by algorithms which determine the tasks the player must perform in order to progress through the game. Conversely traditional narratives can also behave like algorithms in that there may be a hidden logic or structural device that governs the narration of events. On the multimedia computer desktop, it is possible to remediate film narratives and novels into modular collections of data sets that can be accessed and ordered by different algorithms. Thus Manovich notes that software programmes can provide different

interfaces to cultural forms that might traditionally have had only one interface, such as reading a book or viewing a film as a linear experience in time (Manovich 2001, 227). Here traditional narrative is treated like information data and re-narrativized by algorithmic procedures.

Douglas's 'recombinant narratives' can be said to be based on the intersection of a database logic with a narrative imagination as proposed in the database narrative model. The intertextual sources such as historical texts, novels and films that Douglas draws on constitute data sets while the permutational looping structure of his installations evidence an algorithmic logic that contends with the narrative content of the source material. Positioned in relation to historical events, which Douglas's work frequently is, such recombinant, database narratives create new forms of narrating and remembering history. His 'recombinant narratives' mark a rupture within North American genealogies and configurations of artists' film and video practices. Vancouver based, Douglas is associated with the photo-conceptual school of Jeff Wall and Rodney Graham and others. His conceptual, analytical approach and hybrid practice based on photography, film and video in conjunction with computer software differentiates him from the dominant traditions of structuralist film, expanded cinema and experimental film that obtained until the 1970s. In the 1970s and 1980s, conceptual approaches to the moving image were largely associated with video artists such as Martha Rosler and Dara Birnbaum and the Radical Software grouping of activist video artists. The 'Pictures' generation of artists such as Cindy Sherman and Richard Prince who did engage with cinema did so primarily through the still photographic image.[3]

4.1 Stan Douglas: *Inconsolable Memories* (2005)

Douglas's *Inconsolable Memories* (2005) reprises a similar strategy to his earlier installation *Der Sandmann* (1995) in that two films are projected onto the same screen by means of a bespoke system of synchronized projectors. The formal structure of the projection apparatus in both works becomes analogous to the processes of time and memory. In *Inconsolable Memories*, an underlying permutational structure means that the two films combine in different combinations on each cycle of the looped projection, producing a series of variations on a core narrative. The narrative in *Inconsolable Memories* is a partial remake of the third cinema classic *Memorias del subdesarrollo (Memories of Underdevelopment)* (1968) directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is based on a novella

by Edmundo Desnoes set in the aftermath of the 1959 Cuban revolution which follows the diaristic reflections of Sergio, a middle-class Cuban who has elected to remain despite the departure of his wife, family and friends. Douglas's version updates the historical context from the early sixties to the Mariel 'boatlift' in 1980 when another wave of Cubans left the island, this time predominantly working class, in contrast to the exodus of the bourgeoisie in 1961.[4] Thus the idea of events repeated, but with variation, is built into both Douglas's narrative content and the material structure of the projection. The character of Sergio is retained but substituted with another type: he becomes a black architect from an ordinary rural background in contrast to the white bourgeois Sergio of the 1960s, a 'rentier' who has inherited his income. The title *Inconsolable Memories* is a quotation from *Hiroshima, mon amour* (1959) which is also referenced by Alea and Desnoes. In these intertextual references, Douglas directly engages with the theme of memory in relation to historical events and the mediatized memory of events in cinema.

Although Douglas reworks many of Alea's aesthetic devices, his Sergio appears to have less agency than the original and is ultimately decentred by the apparatus of the installation itself. As with *Memorias del subdesarrollo's* positioning of the spectator, the viewer of *Inconsolable Memories* must also orientate themselves between historical events and the mediation of those events in memory and the moving image. In its black-and-white cinematic aesthetic, the work initially appears to be a fictional narrative. However as it unfolds, one realises that there are a number of competing or possible mise-en-scènes underlying the narrative which ultimately forks into different combinations of imagined and remembered events. At first encounter, the viewer of *Inconsolable Memories* might wonder why Douglas has chosen a convoluted method of projecting two different films onto one screen involving two synchronized projectors. In creating a permutational looped projection with 16 mm film projectors, Douglas makes visible a technological transition from analogue film montage to a digital method of organizing narrative. The shorter film loop of approximately fifteen minutes, has three narrative sequences while the longer film loop of twenty-eight minutes has five narrative sequences. The viewer experiences this double projection as a continuous looped narrative with the intervals between each cycle fading to black. However, the notional film *Inconsolable Memories* is in a sense virtual because it only exists when the two film loops are projected and come together via the permutation schema controlled by a computer, shown in Fig. 4.1.

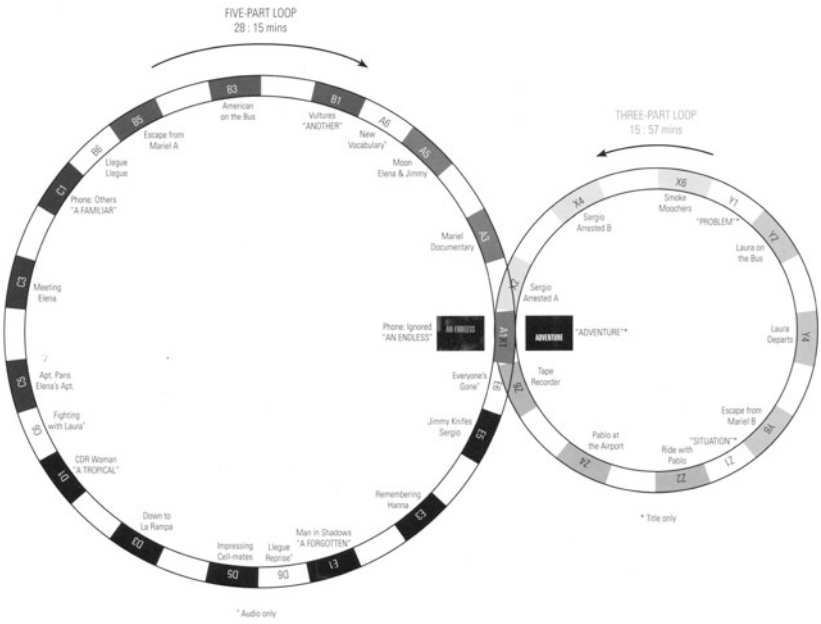

Fig. 4.1 Stan Douglas, *Inconsolable Memories* (2005): permutation schema, © Stan Douglas, courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner, New York

While there are core segments on the shorter film which repeat such as Sergio's wife Laura leaving Havana, Sergio's friend Pablo leaving and the arrest of Sergio, the intertwining of sequences from the longer film loop introduces fifteen possible variations of the narrative. The permutation works by either playing footage from one film over black leader film from the other or playing alternating audio-only segments from the longer film over scenes from the shorter film. Thus audio-only segments identified on the schema as 'B6 *Llegue* Reprise' and 'C6 Fighting with Laura' produce different narrative effects depending on the scenes they accompany. Here Douglas's design amplifies strategies present in Alea's film where a recording of an argument between Sergio and Laura is heard twice in the film: first as audio only and secondly with the matching scene of the couple arguing. The effect of the repetition in *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is to signpost the film's movement from Sergio's subjective memory as it filters events in relation to himself to the suggestion that

events such as the argument could be remembered and interpreted differently to Sergio's viewpoint. In *Inconsolable Memories* the repetition of the argument is severed from a matching scene and is accompanied either by a shot of a tape recorder or a scene where Sergio decides to leave for Mariel. The recording of the argument becomes a narrative element that may or may not be a motivation for Sergio's decision to leave Havana. The narrative emphasis shifts from Alea's distinction between the subjective and the objective to repetition with variation which is also a shift from a psychological centre to a machinic narrative authority.

The permutation schema makes manifest how the contingency of editing decisions changes the narrative emphasis. At certain points, as Douglas states: 'there is the occasional superimposition of images and mixing of sounds, as the cadence of scenes mesh together like the teeth of gears' (Douglas 2005, 93). If the gallery viewer were to watch all fifteen permutations of *Inconsolable Memories*, it would take approximately eighty-five minutes. This in itself is different from other permutational works by Douglas that would be impossible to watch in their entirety.[5] The basic premise of all these works is firstly that each viewer potentially sees a different version of the narrative to other viewers. Secondly the permutation schema itself appears to dominate over the diegesis. In *Inconsolable Memories* the viewer becomes aware that despite the appearance of conventional cinematic film projection and the narrative content of the projected film, the arrangement of the narrative is being orchestrated by the software mixing the two film loops on each projector in and out of synch. Yet the narrative is never completely random due to the parameters of the permutation schema which repeat and return to the core narrative events. The permutational narrative structure of *Inconsolable Memories* plays with the viewer's memory of historical events and their perception of historical time.

The dominant characteristic of Douglas's recombinant works is that they combine fragments of cinema narrative with compositional techniques stemming from media software and music sampling. Writing on Douglas's work, George E. Lewis has pointed out how the recombinant principles of repetition and variation in Douglas's works stem from his knowledge of live algorithmic music composition and DJ experience (Lewis 2008, 43). Douglas himself has compared another of his recombinant works, *Klatsassin* (2006) based on *Rashomon* (1951) to dub music where previously recorded material is modified and remixed into a new recording: 'we have a set of narrative materials that are

repeated and recombined to create new variations, which is what happens in dub music, where multiple versions are derived from a single song' (Douglas 2006, 233). The permutational structure underpinning *Inconsolable Memories* brings an algorithmic approach to the conventions of film narrative, bringing two different cultural forms together. Douglas's 'recombinant narratives' effectively create hybrid media forms that merge a software-based approach to accessing and organizing data with film narrative.

In describing *Inconsolable Memories* as a 'database narrative', we need to consider how the datasets it draws on are reconfigured by the permutation schema. The installation draws on three principle datasets: firstly, the narrative of *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, secondly, the set of actual events in Cuban history referred to and thirdly, the aesthetic form of Alea's film, its black-and-white 16 mm film stock, its use of intertitles, voice-over and collage of actuality footage, fictional narrative, political commentary and news footage. Here the stakes of *Inconsolable Memories* are raised high as *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is an exceptional orchestration itself of three strands of historical events, fictional narrative and film syntax. In his intertextual referencing, Douglas creates a mise en abyme of narratives and of fact and fiction as the viewer looks through *Inconsolable Memories* at the Cuban exodus of 1980, at Alea's *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, and further back to the aftermath of the Cuban revolution in 1962. The viewer is presented with the question of what is the narrative effect of Douglas's permutational schema as it organizes these interlinked data sets.

Inconsolable Memories offers a variation on a theme, the displacement and ambiguous position of Sergio within the narrative. The mechanism controlling the narrative becomes emphasized while Sergio's agency as a character recedes. It is a mechanism of variable circularity, constantly providing a menu of churning narrative combinations, yet never evolving beyond the principal narrative events in the shorter film loop. Therefore, the viewer can discern a pattern of sorts behind the superficially random combinations of narrative scenes as the film continues. An allusion to the concept of an invisible pattern is made in a prison scene in *Inconsolable Memories* where Sergio talks about using a torn dollar bill as a secret code, and another prisoner tells him: 'you keep on repeating the same serial number – isn't that going to create an obvious pattern'. The invisible pattern of *Inconsolable Memories* could be said to be the algorithm controlling the permutations of the narrative.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, in constructing the apparatus of two synchronized projectors controlled by an algorithm, Douglas emphasizes a material embodiment of how film narrative might be reconfigured by new media software. The viewer's experience of watching *Inconsolable Memories* is the experience of the permutations by which the narrative segments are sifted and recombined in variation. The foregrounding of the permutation schema can be compared with the logic of seriality in music and with the structuralist theory of syntagm and paradigm. Derived from Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic semiotics, a syntagm is defined as an utterance or sentence while a paradigm is the implied but unheard sets of the words which compose the sentence. In discussing the syntagmatic and paradigmatic dimensions in new media forms, Manovich states that:

> new media reverse this relationship. Database (the paradigm) is given material existence, while narrative (the syntagm) is dematerialized. Paradigm is privileged, syntagm is downplayed. Paradigm is real; syntagm, virtual. (Manovich 2001, 231)

By this Manovich is referring to the ways in which computer software applications foreground the data elements within a database while the narratives or actions which make sense of these data elements exist as a set of virtual links and commands.

The idea of a film narrative following an invisible set of parameters or a pattern has already been proposed within film theory by Noël Burch and David Bordwell (Burch 1973; Bordwell 1985). Burch uses the terms 'parameters' and 'permutations' to develop a theory based on the range of shot transitions in film editing and the composition of shots. His approach is related to developments in serial music in the 1960s that originate in Arnold Schönberg's 'tone row'.[6] Bordwell builds on Burch's idea of parameters to propose the parametric as a category of film narrative. Like serial theory in music and the *nouveau roman*, in the parametric narrative according to Bordwell: 'the phenomenal form of the text tends to be seen as a permutational distribution of the invisible set' (Bordwell 1985, 277). Bordwell's concept of parametric film is also developed with reference to the structuralist theory of paradigm and syntagm. The 'parametric film' is defined by Bordwell as a deviation from the narrative codes of 'classic' Hollywood films. Therefore, the parametric model implies that there is a normative mode of film narration which 'art films' and 'parametric films'

are lacking. Yet arguably such films not only challenge normative modes but propose new modes themselves.

L'Année dernière à Marienbad (Last Year at Marienbad) (1961) is proposed by Bordwell as an exemplar of parametric narration where the film's structure is prioritized over the conventions of filmic narrative and plot (Bordwell 1985, 278). In the terms used by Bordwell, derived from the Russian formalists, the film denies the conventional illusion of the *fabula* or story which might underpin the *syhzhet* or ostensible plot of the narrative. Thus, in the parametric narrative model, there is the implicit suggestion that there might be a paradigm or pattern that would explain the governing logic of a film like *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*. The alternative option, suggested by Alain Robbe-Grillet who collaborated on the film with Resnais, is that there is no logical explanation of the narrative structure and thus no *fabula*. He says of the characters in the film: 'what do they do when they are elsewhere? We are tempted to answer: nothing! Elsewhere, they don't exist' (Robbe-Grillet 1962, 10). *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* is structured as a series of scenes that cannot be reduced to a single explanatory narrative. In watching the film, it becomes less important to know whether the male and female character really did meet 'last year at Marienbad', instead the viewer is confounded by the co-existence of different memories and modes of time which appear to pivot from past to present to future. The heterochronic modalities of time take precedence over any notion of an underlying paradigmatic structure.

To follow a Deleuzian reading, the contradictory, non-chronological transitions between the scenes in *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* can be related to Bergson's philosophy of time and memory. The film is thus read as a 'time-image', an experience of time through cinema. However, *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* is set in an almost ahistorical time and place, the grounds of an otherworldly chateau, therefore the evocation of time is abstract and tied to the subjectivities of the male and female characters. The 'database narrative' of *Inconsolable Memories*, on the other hand, refers to historical events and actual places in its data sets. Even though *Inconsolable Memories* can be read in structuralist terms of paradigm and syntagm or Bordwell's parametric narrative, these readings do not entirely account for the references to historical events within the film or the viewer's experience of time in watching the film. *Inconsolable Memories* is closer to Gilles Deleuze's reading of film as a 'time-image', but it relates the heterochronic modalities of the 'time-image' to specific historical events.

As an installation, *Inconsolable Memories* is radically different to films made for cinema, breaking the conventional length of a feature film into a repeating loop structure. The five-minute cycle of each looped projection is punctuated by a dissolve to black that reinforces the system of regularly recurring loops. The repeating loop asserts a cyclical return that makes it impossible to establish a fixed, chronological narrative. Within this system of the loop and the permutational narrative, different time periods become contiguous as the narrative moves back and forth between 1962, the 1970s and 1980. The repetition with variation across different time frames continuously shows Sergio to be trapped within a narrative machine. In this narrative machine, different possible histories are imagined yet some facts are inescapable. The viewer becomes an important part of the narrative structure as it is the viewer who 'reads' the film and begins to relate the different narrative components together.

The physicality of the synchronized projectors assert the editing of film over both the narrative fiction and the profilmic events referred to in the narratives. Philip Monk describes *Inconsolable Memories'* permutational system as giving the effect of a 'real-time montage' (Monk 2005, 139). Yet the viewer is not the editor but a witness to the on-screen combining of variable narratives, controlled by a software programme. In *Memorias del subdesarrollo* time is anchored in the subjective memories of Sergio while in *Inconsolable Memories* the experience of time is generated through the system of permutation. The viewer experiences time as a multiplicity of past, present and future within a recurring cycle of repetition. In setting up this permutational structure, Douglas asserts firstly that historical events can give rise to multiple narratives and secondly, he demonstrates to what extent our understanding of history is mediated through the syntax and technology of the moving image. In *Inconsolable Memories*, we return to significant events in Cuban history through

Douglas's reworking of Alea's combination of fictionalized memory and documentary footage in *Memorias del subdesarrollo*. History becomes a quasi-fictional narrative, posing the ominous question of who has 'the final cut' (Bourriaud 2016, 33)?[7] The viewer who remembers and compares the various intermeshing narratives: the story of Sergio, the historical events, Alea's film and the range of film syntax employed by Douglas, has the opportunity to hold these elements in contention and reimagine the historical narrative. The revolutionary moment of a society in transition evoked by Alea is replaced by a look back into the past as a mutating web of connections, figured through cinema and the moving image.

4.2 Memories of Film

Inconsolable Memories is both a 'remaking' of *Memorias del subdesarrollo* and a direct reference to the lines spoken by the lead female character, known as 'she' in *Hiroshima, mon amour*: '*j'ai désiré avoir une inconsolable mémoire'* (I wanted to have an inconsolable memory) (Duras 1961, 23). It is notable that these two modernist art films are Douglas's entry points into the subject of memory and historical narrative. Both Resnais's film and Alea's address the plight of characters who are haunted by their memories of traumatic historical events: the Second World War in *Hiroshima, mon amour* and the Cuban revolution in *Memorias del subdesarrollo*. In the previous section we saw how Douglas remade the narrative of *Memorias del subdesarrollo* into a recombinant database narrative. Here we consider the relationship between memory and history in all three works. In his return to modernist art cinema Douglas is resuming the dual engagement of the historical avant-garde of the 1920s with narrative and with film form, a combination largely absent in avant-garde artists' film of the 1960s. It is as if, in order to deal with narrative in film, Douglas needs to return to the 1960s, when avant-garde artists' film failed to engage with the narrative and temporal developments in modernist art film, represented by the cinema of Michelangelo Antonioni, the French *nouvelle vague* and the 'Left bank' cinema of Chris Marker, Alain Resnais and Agnès Varda.

Hiroshima, mon amour

As the initial premise of *Inconsolable Memories* is to set up a dialogue with the two earlier films of Alea and Resnais, it is worth outlining how each of these films approaches the question of memory in comparison with Douglas's 'remake'. In *Hiroshima, mon amour*, the line '*J'ai désiré avoir une inconsolable mémoire*' refers to the desire not to forget the events of the past. The film presents two different forms of traumatic memory linked to the meeting of a French woman and a Japanese man in Hiroshima after the war. Although the man never speaks directly about it, the bombing of Hiroshima is an inescapable fact that becomes the backdrop to their brief relationship while 'she' finishes making a film set in Hiroshima during the war. In a story within a story, the woman tells the man about her memory of a love affair with a German soldier, his death and her subsequent punishment in the town of Nevers, France. The

conventional use of a flashback to refer to a past time is problematized in the film by the ways in which the characters' memories overlap and intrude into the present-time diegesis of the film. The opening sequence of the film intercuts shots of entwined naked bodies with documentary photographs of the victims of the atomic bomb. The shots of the bodies appear with and without a layer of what might be dust or ashes, suggesting that they are simultaneously entangled in death and embracing in life. The man's voice is heard saying: 'you saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing'. This montage of shots and voices sets the tone of the film in which the characters' relationships to historical events are not stabilized. The man's comment could be directed at the woman or himself, while the photographs of the injuries caused by the bombs are not directly linked with either the man's or the woman's memories.

Deleuze reads the film through a Bergsonian metaphysics of memory where the past is conceptualized as 'sheets of past' and the man's and woman's respective memories of Hiroshima and Nevers are 'incommensurable regions of the past' (Deleuze 2005, 114). Deleuze's term 'sheets of past' corresponds with Bergson's model of the past as an accumulation of planes of virtual memories. In *Hiroshima, mon amour*, each character appears to remember their own 'sheet' of the past. As discussed in Chapter 2, Bergson distinguishes between two polarities of memory: at one extreme, learnt, habitual, practical 'recollection', a memory used for sensory–motor activity in the present and at the other 'spontaneous recollection' which accesses 'pure memory', the vast layers of virtual memories that occur over time. Both forms of memory work together but the first form of memory relates the past to the present in a deliberate recall (Bergson 1991, 88). According to Deleuze, in cinema the narrative device of the flashback corresponds with Bergson's concept of habitual memory; it clearly recalls a past moment in relationship to the present (Deleuze 2005, 46). Thus the flashback normally functions in relation to chronological, linear time. By contrast, in *Hiroshima, mon amour,* the irruption of the past into the present challenges the linear compartmentalization of time, with the depths of 'pure memory', manifested in scenes where the Japanese man appears to be reinhabited by the dead German soldier. Deleuze sees the emergence of a cinema of the 'time-image' in films by Resnais that assert the virtual past over the physical spatio-temporal locations that the characters inhabit: 'as a general rule, the present begins to float, struck with uncertainty, dispersed in the characters' comings and goings or already absorbed by the past' (Deleuze 2005, 112). *Hiroshima,*

mon amour privileges memory as the experience of non-chronological time where multiple and dynamic versions of the past co-exist. As the woman's memories surface in the present, the question arises of how the actual historical events of Hiroshima and wartime France sit in relation to the film's overlapping of the past and the present.

David Rodowick describes the film's presentation of time in relation to history in terms of a tension between linear and contingent time:

> indeed, the central question of the film seems to be: how is a historical world, where the experience of violence is the guarantor of events passed, to be reconciled with a present where history can only be represented as contingent? For if the relation between past and present was continuous and determined, we could not imagine having acted differently in the past, or preventing a repetition of past violence in the future. (Rodowick 2003, 96)

The experience of time as contingent and memory as an active trajectory through the virtual past allows the characters in *Hiroshima, mon amour* to reimagine their relationship to historical events. The woman's desire to have an 'inconsolable memory' represents the desire to remember her love of the dead soldier over her memory of the punishment. Her memory has an agency that continues as an active force into the present and becomes a counter-memory to other narratives of 'collaboration with the enemy' and official histories of the Second World War.

For Deleuze, each 'sheet' of the past is an active continuum or constellation of past events. In considering Resnais' treatment of memory, Deleuze wonders if memory can be: 'transformational' and states: '… a third case can arise, we constitute a continuum with fragments of different ages; we make use of transformations which take place between two sheets to constitute a sheet *of* transformation'(Deleuze 2005, 119). In *Hiroshima, mon amour*, such a transformation would be constituted by a sharing of memory between the two characters. This is implied in the film as the man listens to and becomes involved in the woman's memories of Nevers. In the suggestion that both characters' memories of Hiroshima and Nevers might coexist or even become a new composite memory, the film asserts the power of the past as a Bergsonian active 'duration' that can alter our attitude to historical events.

Memorias del subdesarrollo

In *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, Douglas's primary source for *Inconsolable Memories*, a similar triggering of memory is explored in relation to the events of the Cuban Revolution. In his appropriation of the term 'inconsolable memories', Douglas performs a Bergsonian 'leap into the past' through film (Deleuze 1988, 56). Rather than subjective, individual memory, Douglas's *Inconsolable Memories* works through the idea of past films as mnemotechnic 'sheets' of past that can be reconfigured or repurposed in relation to the present. As indicated in its ironic title, *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is centred on the ambivalent position of Sergio who appears to be haunted by his memories of pre-revolutionary Cuba, unable to either participate in the revolution or leave. While underdevelopment generally refers to the stunted economy of colonized countries, in Sergio's thoughts it extends to a cultural malaise afflicting all aspects of Cuban society. The emphasis on underdevelopment in the film gradually shifts from Sergio's view of Cuban society to the suggestion that it is Sergio who is 'underdeveloped' by remaining with his memories in the past while society is in transition around him.[8] Structured in a series of flashbacks, *Memorias del subdesarrollo* derives its dramatic tension from the increasing dissonance between Sergio's subjective memories and the transformative revolution happening around him.

Alea describes his film as an orchestration of the 'subjective' and the 'objective': '…the most important thing is that the relationship between the subjective world of the protagonist and the objective world he belongs to passes through different levels of approximation to reality' (Alea and Desnoes 1990, 208). In the film, these different levels of reality are manifested in an essayistic combination of the fictional voice-over and narrative of Sergio with documentary-style footage shot on the streets of Havana and the inclusion of political polemics, references to real people such as Fidel Castro and Ernest Hemingway and newsreel footage of political events. In a further self-reflexive twist, Alea himself is shown in one scene discussing a 'collage film' while another scene shows Edmundo Desnoes participating in a round table discussion with other writers and Marxist intellectuals. Different cinematographic effects such as the use of a wide-angle lens, freeze frame and disjunctive image and sound editing build up a series of divergences between Sergio's 'subjectivity' and the 'objectivity' of external events. This reaches a dramatic conclusion when Sergio is shown pottering about inside his flat juxtaposed with documentary

footage of army tanks mobilizing on the streets in response to the 'missile crisis' of October 1962, indicated on the film's soundtrack as a radio news broadcast. However, it is not simply a contrast of two viewpoints, the film's spectators must thread their way through the borderline between the subjective and the objective. As Alea states, his evocation of 'objective reality' through cinematic means is a strategy which the viewers must assess for themselves:

> that is, we must not be misled by the documentary images in the film – obtained through the direct filming of reality (newsreel fragments, magazine photos, newspaper articles, people in the street filmed by a hidden camera…) - imagining them to constitute an objective reflection of the reality in which the fictional plot occurs. These images are selected and arranged by the film-makers and for that reason are marked by their subjectivity. They are just as tendentious as the other images in the film, which have been carefully worked out before shooting begins. (Alea and Desnoes 1990, 208)

By interweaving the documentary with the subjective and with historical circumstances and by drawing attention to the film form itself in reflexive gestures, the film forces the spectator to relate these different elements together. Ultimately, Alea states that the film's: 'structural principle'…. 'becomes an incentive to stand at a distance from the images, and in this way encourages a critical attitude, that is, a "choosing of sides"' (Alea and Desnoes 1990, 207). *Memorias del subdesarrollo* questions the alignment of its lead character's memories with historical events, probing the relationship between history and the subjective processes of memory.

As we have seen, due to its recombinant structure, the question of what is subjective and what is objective is displaced in Douglas's *Inconsolable Memories*. Douglas's Sergio is a pawn in a narrative machine making the historical events referred to less anchored in an individual subjectivity. The narrative is produced by a permutational algorithmic logic and memory is held in the mediatization of historical events as much as in individual memory.

While the two modernist films register the mediatization of historical events primarily through the inclusion of documentary footage, in *Inconsolable Memories* historical events are understood as much through the diegesis as the documentary mode. Thus, *Inconsolable Memories* has a much more removed and stylized relationship to the profilmic than its

predecessors. This distancing is evident in a comparison between the aesthetic valency of black-and-white 16 mm film stock in *Inconsolable Memories* and *Memorias del subdesarrollo*. While Douglas's 16 mm film makes a material connection with Alea's film, the film gauge has a very different associations in the context of a gallery installation in 2005. In the 2000s, using black-and-white 16 mm film represents a return to the past of cinema and history, while in 1968, the same film stock had associations with both the documentary form and the French *nouvelle vague*. Alea's use of 16 mm film reflects what resources were available to him at the time and also relates to a neo-realist aesthetic of 'capturing reality'.[9] The shooting style of *Memorias del subdesarrollo* features many scenes shot in a semi-improvized fashion with the use of a wide-angle lens to denote 'the most "objective" point of view, the most detached and least engaged, that of the wide shot' and a hidden camera for some scenes (Alea and Desnoes 1990, 205). By comparison, *Inconsolable Memories* features a fisheye view through the spyhole in Sergio's door in a predominantly noirish narrative that suppresses the profilmic.

In *Inconsolable Memories* references to historical events are discerned through the recycled narrative of *Memorias del subdesarrollo* updated to 1980. When one of these 1980s narrative segments transitions to television news footage, it is introduced at a skewed angle and through the convex framing of an old television set. This underlines the ways in which the mediatization of both information and narrative is continually reinforced and aesthetically coded by Douglas. Both Douglas's remake of scenes from *Memorias del subdesarrollo* and his additional scenes are shot with a murky, shadowy lighting style in contrast to the original film's many outdoor street scenes. The exterior scenes set in 1980, are composed using a rear projection technique which makes them obviously artificial and at the same time denotative of a classic Hollywood style from the past. The 1980 Sergio is repeatedly framed in claustrophobic, restricted settings such as his apartment, a car, a truck and finally a prison cell. Although the original Sergio in Alea's film is often shown interacting with the world through a filter like a glass partition at the airport or the telescope on his balcony, he is also seen freely strolling through the streets of Havana as a Cuban flâneur. Douglas's screenplay for *Inconsolable Memories* introduces a more heightened sense of paranoia and criminality into the narrative. While the original Sergio escapes a brush with the law, Douglas's Sergio is arrested, imprisoned and finally knifed for obscure reasons. In this stabbing scene, Sergio's assailant appears to

be a gangster linking him with an underworld of criminality associated with both film noir and gangster movies.[10] Thus Douglas's black-and-white cinematography is in the register of Hollywood film noir rather than neo-realism.

In a familiar trope of film noir, the narrative in *Inconsolable Memories* is delivered by means of a combination of flashbacks and voice-over.[11] As the permutations change, the character of Sergio becomes the object of narrative scenarios that are never fully explained. For instance a recurring sequence begins with the doorbell of Sergio's apartment ringing: he opens it revealing either a female neighbour or two policemen depending on the permutation. Over the permutational cycle, the ringing doorbell, a ringing telephone and a reel to reel tape recorder function like Hitchcockian MacGuffins which drive the plot forward in different ways depending on what they are interlaced with. However, two repeating outcomes remain constant; Sergio is arrested and later he is imprisoned. While many of these narrative elements, the voice-over, the flashbacks, and the intertitles originate in Alea's film, in Douglas's remake, these devices become more sinister and ultimately destructive in regard to the Sergio character who lives in a controlling totalitarian state, surrounded by spies. The neighbouring woman at the door is revealed in Douglas's screenplay to be a CDR woman; an informer from the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution while the new occupant of his apartment, Elena, works as a Cuban government censor, monitoring broadcasts from American television. *Inconsolable Memories'* intertitles, which are derived from an intertitle in *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, are reminiscent of the sort of pulp fiction novels on which many film noir were based.[12] Alea's 'A Tropical Adventure' becomes 'An Endless Adventure' and 'An Endless Problem'. The extended use of such fictional titles in *Inconsolable Memories* suggests that both Sergio's plight and the historical events referenced in the film, could be viewed as episodes from pulp fiction novels or noir films.

Douglas's development of *Inconsolable Memories* into a quasi-film noir has its roots in an aspect of Alea's film. This is the resemblance of Sergio to a handsome Marcello Mastroianni like character, familiar to spectators of European cinema.[13] Alea himself describes how in *Memorias del subdesarrollo*:

> …certain other peculiarly cinematic resources are brought into play, namely, those of bourgeois cinema: the protagonist is not only lucid and

> intelligent but also cultured, elegant, handsome, with a certain sense of humour, and with time on his hands, for he has a good income with no need to work. (Alea and Desnoes 1990, 209)

In *Inconsolable Memories* the original identification of audiences with Sergio as a 'Cuban Mastroianni' or 'Antonioni character' is developed into a reading of the entire narrative as a fiction film. Significantly both *Memorias del subdesarrollo* and *Inconsolable Memories* share an emphasis on the use of recording and broadcast media such as the tape recorder, the film camera, radio and television to communicate news and events. What Douglas develops is the idea that events are narrativized by the media of cinema and television—this in turn means that these media make sense of historical events through their own media syntax and conventions. While Alea exhorts his viewer to 'take sides', to make a moral choice, Douglas's film requires the viewer to be alert to reading the significance of the techno-aesthetic qualities of film, to understand how film shapes time and structures memory. Here history is understood through cinema and through the algorithmic montage of the narrative in a postmodern twist on the estranged ennui expressed by Alea's Sergio who states: 'everything's the same—all the same. Suddenly it looks like a set. A cardboard city'.[14]

The fictional virtuality of *Inconsolable Memories* is heightened by other external elements that Douglas positions in relationship to it. These are firstly a series of colour photographs of Havana and other Cuban locations shown adjacent to the film and secondly the accompanying catalogue to the work which includes a comprehensive screenplay and list of the cast and crew involved in the production. In including the latter information Douglas emphasizes the staging of *Inconsolable Memories* as a film production. The photographs, on the other hand, represent profilmic reality, that could be read as location photographs for the film. Taken in 2004 and 2005, they present a series of places familiar to Western tourists visiting Cuba; for example the Havana Libre hotel which was a former command post of the revolution, the Russian embassy in Miramar, grand villas in Vedado and the city of Cienfuegos which have been subdivided into housing units. Up until the easing of the American embargo in 2009, from a tourism perspective, Cuba has been perceived as a fossilized emblem of cold war politics where the traces of 1950s consumerism and

private ownership remain visible beneath the collectivization and reallocation of property. The last photograph shows the stage sets for *Inconsolable Memories*, which was shot, not on location in Cuba, but in Vancouver. [15]

If not location shots then, what do Douglas's photographs of Cuba represent? Largely devoid of people, the empty buildings and streets resemble leftover stage sets where the architectural remnants of the colonial era are repurposed for the post-revolutionary era. The captions for each photograph outline the changing uses of the various sites to explain what we are looking at and this in turn reminds us that representations require the construction of narrative meaning. As the captions reveal, the profilmic actuality of these Cuban locations is not fixed but mutable and subject to change. While traces of the past persist, the architectural locations take on very different meanings depending on their usage. The idea of repurposing is extended into Douglas's partial remake of *Memorias del subdesarrollo* in which a cinematic form is repurposed for a different historical and political context. Both Alea and Douglas reference historical events but the viewer is placed in a different relationship to historical circumstances by each film. As the history of repurposing referenced in the photographs tells us, when places and materials are repurposed some aspects remain while others disappear. In *Inconsolable Memories*, it is the virtuality of cinematic fiction that takes precedence over physical actuality.

4.3 Archiving Cinema

Although often referred to as a film essayist, the work of Harun Farocki can also be seen as a forerunner of the database narrative mode. Known as a Marxist leaning political film-maker, he was one of the first major film-makers along with Chantal Ackerman to extend his practice into the gallery in the mid 1990s. His 2006 installation *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* (2006) functions as an active archiving of cinema, drawing together a database logic with a politicized narrative. *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* is based on a work Farocki made over ten years earlier: *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik (Workers Leaving the Factory)* a video essay broadcast on German television in 1995. It is instructive to compare both iterations of the work to understand the changing ways in which artists have been 'remembering' cinema across different media technologies.

Farocki envisaged *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik* as a contribution to his proposed 'imaginary archive' or 'cinematic thesaurus' (Ernst and Farocki

2004, 273–74).[16] In articulating this idea, Farocki expresses his dissatisfaction with existing methods of referring to cinema which rely on words and language. At the time of making *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik* Farocki was already thinking about developments in technology that allow new methods of organizing the moving image through algorithmic searches which single out specific parameters and image categories such as light, shade, gesture and movement. He writes:

> a new archive system is thus under way, a future library for moving images, in which one can search for and retrieve elements of pictures. Up to now the dynamic and compositional definitions of a sequence of images – those things which are the decisive factor in the editing process of converting a sequence of images into a film – have not been classified nor included. (Farocki 2004, 238)

Farocki defines the issue of how an image archive would be indexed as a choice between 'describing or showing' (Ernst and Farocki 2004, 276). While describing relies on the content of an image and the conventional nomenclature of film shots, Farocki argues that 'showing' would be a more visually oriented way of organizing and thinking of image sequences such as tracking shots, according to how they are composed and remembered by film-makers. As he points out, the availability of VCRs and digital editing facilitates accessing the cinema archive: 'ever since video recorders have been available, film-makers have begun to refer back to film history – it is time for the rise of the lexicon' (Ernst and Farocki 2004, 280). Despite this desire to emancipate images from classification according to content, narrative and other labels that occlude their formal attributes, Farocki's first 'entry' into the proposed 'cinematic thesaurus' focuses on an image motif laden with content as he later admitted (Ernst and Farocki 2004, 276).

Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik originates in an image search based on a famous Lumière film fragment known as *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon (Leaving the Factory)* (1895) which shows men and women pouring out the gates of the Lumières' photographic plate factory.[17] Farocki takes this fifty second piece of 35 mm film as the basis for a counter-memory of the institution of cinema in the year of its centenary. He builds a montage of similar clips from a range of other films that extend the Lumière footage into a meditation on the representation of labour in

cinema. Although this *actualité* was intended primarily as a demonstration of the moving image, it also represents a significantly modern space and time: the factory site and the industrialized time of workers' shifts, clocking in and clocking out of work. It is this latent meaning that Farocki reads into the 1895 film fragment and in so doing repositions the origins and the purpose of cinema, using the content of the cinema archive as the basis for an alternative configuration of the history of cinema. As he suggests in both his voice-over commentary and an article on his film, the Lumières' choice of the factory gates as subject matter aligns the apparatus of film-making with a workplace, a capitalist site of production and the rationalization of time (Reichenbach 2014, 326–30; Farocki 2004, 237–43). Thus for Farocki, cinema is implicated in the socio-political systems that manage time into work and leisure. Describing the Lumière fragment as a 'precursor' of surveillance cameras which protect property, he points out that the camera operator has orchestrated the exodus of the workers for the purposes of filming just as the workers are managed by their employers in the factory (Farocki 2004, 238). He also notes that this scene of the factory exodus was shot by a camera 'without a viewfinder' making a distinction between the viewpoint of a machine and the human operator who uses it. As Sean Cubitt has also argued in relation to *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon*, cinema is not simply an apparatus for representing reality, but is also a part of reality, actively shaping human perception of time, movement and the physical world (Cubitt 2004, 19). Thus the Lumière fragment holds the double-edged dimensions of the technological image—it is both an instrument for cultural representation and evidence of the way a particular technology, in this case 35 mm film, registers the world.

In considering the way film modulates reality, Farocki notes that as a machine which specializes in recording movement, the camera is limited by its inability to record activities or events which are not constituted in movement (Farocki 2004, 238). He questions whether the cinema as an apparatus and industry is capable of addressing other aspects of reality not based in motion, such as the industrial processes and technologies of chemistry and electricity which come after film. Similarly he observes that the forms of communication which occur in factories do not lend themselves to visualization in images of movement, thus: 'films about work or workers have not emerged as one of the main film genres' (Farocki 2004, 238). Although he wants to take the Lumières' image of workers leaving the factory as a theme for his own film and find

similar sequences in cinema history, this proves to be problematic. The voice-over commentary in *Workers Leaving the Factory* states:

> in 100 years of film we can see more prisons and houses of correction than factories and factory gates. Whenever possible, film has moved hastily away from factories. Factories have not attracted film, rather they have rejected it. (Farocki 2014, 330)

Furthermore the fact that the Lumière workers are shown leaving the factory suggests not only that the cinema avoids showing the world of work but more ominously that the concept of material labour and the workplace may be undermined by the cinema and entertainment industries.

Despite these difficulties, *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik* is a compilation of sequences featuring workers and factory settings drawn from the archive of cinema. Working against the grain of his material, given that most of his film extracts are drawn from narrative fiction film, Farocki imposes a narrative of labour history, strike-breakers and workers' struggles onto these extracts. The selected films range across the decades of the twentieth century from the silent film era of *Intolerance* (1916) and *Metropolis* (1927) to the gangster film noir, *The Killers* (1946), the East German melodrama *Frauenschicksale* (*Destinies of Women)* (1952), *Accattone* (*Beggar)* (1961), Marilyn Monroe as a fish cannery worker in *Clash by Night* (1952) and Monica Vitti in *Il Deserto Rosso (The Red Desert)* (1964). Farocki also includes Pathé newsreel footage of strike-breakers at the Austin car factory in Birmingham, 1956 and documentary footage of workers at factories in Germany, Detroit and Lyon. An essayistic authorial voice emerges through a montage combining voice-over commentary, dialogue from the fiction film excerpts, the newsreel clips and the recurring Lumière scene. Farocki describes his editing style as 'soft montage' meaning a method of working through already existing footage to produce new associations and meanings (Farocki 2009, 69–74). Another element within the montage structure of the film is the intercutting of very brief clips, taken from a 1987 security company's advertisement for steel gates and roadblocks.[18] In these images, Farocki, as he does in other works, situates cinema within the realm of capitalist, disciplinary systems of surveillance, power and control. For example, in a subliminally short four-second clip advertising a surveillance camera, Farocki cuts swiftly from a man at the operation console to the Lumières'

fixed shot of the workers. Throughout the video, Farocki repeatedly features images of gates, barriers and railings which contain the movement of workers.

As a contribution to a 'visual archive' or 'dictionary of cinema', Farocki's *Workers Leaving the Factory* extracts a counter-narrative of labour from the archive of cinema. However, this narrative can also be seen as nostalgic and subjective. By the 1990s, the factory buildings and images of massed workers shown in *Workers Leaving the Factory* were already synonymous with labour practices from the past. Neoliberal late capitalism is based on flexibility and services rather than a centralized workforce located in large factories. Post-Fordist practices involve outsourcing production to a range of locations, involving various forms of temporary, precarious and sweat-shop labour. Labour contracts are flexible, weakening the traditional power of trade unions based on organized, massed groups of workers of the kind depicted in Farocki's extract from *The Deserter* (1933). To an extent Farocki's montage system which combines extracts of films from a range of nation states such as East Germany, Russia, the UK and the USA into a globalized matrix of labour is a closer structural analogy to the conditions of global capitalism than the film's actual images of labour. Farocki himself comments on the 'conditions of production' underpinning his film in recounting how his choice of films was partly determined by copyright availability and distribution economy (Ernst and Farocki 2004, 278). This meant that he used East German films because they were inexpensive, silent films that were in the public domain in the USA and German dubbed versions of *Accatone* and *Il Deserto Rosso*. Nonetheless by working across national cinemas and combining fiction film with newsreel, documentary and industrial film footage, Farocki succeeds in producing a counter-narrative to the given history of cinema, dominated by fictional narratives based on individual protagonists.

Therefore it is not so much the content or overt narrative of Farocki's *Workers Leaving the Factory* that is striking but the way in which it is structured as a search through the archive of cinema to suggest a possible history of collective labour. His collation of clips represents the desire to enter into the past of cinema, while at the same time, the overall authorial thrust and logic of the film mobilizes the quoted film narratives in order to rethink the function of cinema. The dramatic narratives of the films are diverted to become part of a political argument for a cinema that might engage with the experience of work and the idea of a collective

of workers. As indicated in its modified title *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades*, the notion of an image search through the archive of cinema becomes more overt in the installation version of Farocki's video essay.[19] Twelve video monitors are placed in a row at ground level in *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades*, as shown in Fig. 4.2. Each monitor shows a different film extract, some already seen in *Workers Leaving the Factory* with a few new additions. Arranged in chronological order, each monitor briefly displays the date of the extract before playing it in a repeated loop. In this situation Farocki exploits the possibilities that the 'simultaneity' of montage through installation offers as opposed to the single screen of cinema or television (Farocki 2009, 70).

Without the didactic voice-over of Farocki's earlier film, the viewer is left to make the connections between the selected films. While a film like *Metropolis* might be recognisable to many gallery viewers, the other extracts demand a comparison of what can be gleaned from their fragmented state and the imagery of workers and factory gates repeated across the monitors in different aesthetic styles. For this viewer, encountering the work as a temporary display in Tate Modern, the most striking impression

Fig. 4.2 Harun Farocki, *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* (2006), installation shot, Raven Row, London, courtesy of the Harun Farocki Estate

is of museum artefacts.[20] Laid out on the gallery floor, the discrete films, each housed in its own monitor have been transposed from the cinema to the gallery, becoming relics from the history of cinema. As excerpted fragments, the films become part of a new meta-narrative and subject to a different kind of spectatorship than the collectivity of cinema experience.

In displaying the selected films as video loops on televisual monitors the installation emphasizes the role of video technology, hardware and software as a mnemonic container and portal to the history of film. However, it is also evident that Farocki's row of monitors is telling a specific narrative through the repeated imagery of workers as each film becomes part of a chain of memory extending from the Lumières' *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon* to Lars von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) shown on an HD screen ratio. Through this chain of 'memory-images' of workers on film, Farocki activates the archive of cinema. Of the twelve films presented, five are *actualités* or documentary films, one is the 1987 advertisement for road blocker security equipment and five are fictional feature films. In their contiguous presentation on monitors, *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* (2006) overrides the individual circumstances of each film in order to compose a visual memory of a cinema based on collectives of workers and the invisible power structures behind images of factory gates.

Farocki's proposed 'archive of filmic expressions' is informed by the media theories of Friedrich Kittler and Wolfgang Ernst. In an article written in response to Farocki, Ernst outlines a media-archaeological perspective on how digital technology demands a 'rethinking' of images and how they are archived, organized and remembered (Ernst and Farocki 2004, 262). For Ernst, the moving image has already contributed to this process as in his view, classical Hollywood cinema already constitutes 'a hybrid form of "archive" of cultural memory', augmenting the traditional visual metaphors for memory with its own conventions and film syntax (Ernst and Farocki 2004, 262). Like Farocki, Ernst also notes the role of video as: 'a kind of intermediary medium between classical cinema and the digital image' offering another method of organizing and indexing cinematographic images through time code as opposed to classical decoupage and montage editing. Asserting the autonomy of media technologies themselves, Ernst writes that: 'excavating the cinematographic archive also means uncovering the hidden virtual machine of the film event, its cuttings and montages hidden behind the apparent narrative' (Ernst

and Farocki 2004, 271). Ernst compares Farocki's idea of a visual dictionary of film with the art historian Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne-Atlas*, one of the first attempts to catalogue gestures in art across time and space (Ernst and Farocki 2004, 266). As Ernst develops the implications of sorting and indexing images through the attributes and logic of media technologies themselves, he also acknowledges a divergence between his media-archaeological approach and Farocki's. While Farocki retains an iconological, content based classification of images, Ernst's focus on automated image processing informed by cybernetics ultimately excludes the social and historical contexts that bring human meaning to images. His suggestion is a 'blending' model that reconciles the automated machine analysis of images with the human capacity for semantic meaning. Thus Ernst's 'digital archive' brings forth new methods of making connections and comparisons across media content.

The development of a database logic in relation to cinema and television material can also be seen in the work of South African born Candice Breitz now based in Berlin. Since the late 1990s, Breitz has become widely known for multi-channel installations which expose the ways in which the media entertainment industry infiltrates the collective cultural memory. Her primary strategy is the reconfiguration and re-editing of video and audio clips from Hollywood cinema and syndicated television series within the virtual space of software editing. Isolated and out of context from the original screenplays, Breitz's installations frequently ventriloquize new scripts from the mouths of Hollywood stars. One of her core works in this vein, *Mother and Father* shown at the fifty-first 'Venice Biennale' in 2005 confronts the viewer with a bipartite twelve screen installation. On one side six screens show six different actors such as Faye Dunaway and Meryl Streep delivering lines in the role of mothers in a concatenation of modified film clips, while on the other side six screens show male actors like Dustin Hoffmann and Jon Voight speechifying as fathers. As each actor is green-screened against virtual black, it is evident that Breitz, extrapolating from the original films, has constructed new performances of the roles of 'mother' and 'father'. Despite their confinement to discrete plasma screen monitors, the actors appear to be in a cacophonous dialogue. The viewer is split between simultaneous recognition of famous faces and apprehension of the new context in which Breitz has placed the appropriated clips. As the authenticity of the actors in their original roles is diminished, the logic of the database is foregrounded. To use Manovich's terms, Breitz's

tactic of treating the audiovisual material like modular data to be reconstituted digitally privileges the paradigm over the syntagm. The illusory continuity of the Hollywood feature film is replaced by the virtuality of postproduction. Breitz makes no secret of the constructed nature of her own editorial manipulations; in addition to the virtual black 'non space', the spliced quality of her media sampling is emphasised in stuttering, 'twitchy' transitions between sound bites.

As the fictional connective narrative falls away it is left to the viewer to apprehend a new narrative. In the composite aggregate of the actors' manipulated performances, the roles of 'mother' and 'father' are played out across a dramaturgical gamut of narcissism, emotion and neurotic manipulation. In order to engage with these 'performances', the viewer must also recognise the extent to which fictive performances and Hollywood stereotypes feed into the construction of these key social roles. In this and subsequent works such as *Him & Her* (2008), Breitz's installations play with the ways in which social mores and gender roles are informed by archetypes of cultural screen media.

The sampling of Hollywood material on a monumental scale is exemplified in Christian Marclay's phenomenal installation *The Clock* (2010), which can be considered as the apotheosis of a database narrative.[21] Marclay built up to *The Clock* in previous works that reconfigure cinema clips in synchronized sound and image compositions, utilizing his experience as a musician and composer.[22] A single channel twenty four hour projection, it is a compilation of over 120,000 video and audio clips collated to match the diegetic time of narrative cinema with clock time. *The Clock* is run by a computer programme which synchs the sound and image tracks to the time of day. Undoubtedly, *The Clock* is premised on the database form—in order to construct it, Marclay and a team of assistants logged and catalogued a collection of clips ripped from DVDs and VHS tapes on a spreadsheet—but is it a narrative in the sense of bringing meaning to the impressive wheel it sets in motion, a transverse section of the history of cinema indexed to linear clock time? Critics are divided on this question, seemingly as much dismayed by the enormous crowds the work draws and its hefty price tag as they are by its Western-centric view of cinema and perceived lack of critique of the capitalist commodification of time (Beugnet 2013).[23] The institutional context of *The Clock*, its financing as a limited edition artwork and its instrumentalization as a spectacular blockbuster exhibition for museums is inevitably part of its critical reception.[24] Yet its popularity is also a measure of the way

it connects to the bedrock of cinema and television media in cultural memory. *The Clock* is a machine that pits chronological time against the dream time of narrative cinema and the collective memory invested in cinema. As such it can be understood as what Maurizio Lazzarato calls a 'machinic assemblage' that discloses both the capitalist segmentation of time in real-time snippets and the potential of cinema to make time dilate and contract (Lazzarato 2019, 100). The tension between clock time and diegetic time is held within Marclay's fluent continuity editing which bridges clips from disparate films into a meta-narrative of narrative arcs and troughs derived from melodrama, thrillers and action films. Sourced from video rental shops across London, the selection of clips reflects what was on offer; largely American and English genre cinema with a sprinkling of other national cinemas, art cinema and television series. A common response to the work is to try to identify the thousands of cited films. Nearly all viewers will recognise blockbusters like *Pulp Fiction* (1994), some will recognise a smattering of art cinema classics and all will struggle to identify a sizeable chunk of mid-range forgotten cinema such as *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957). Similarly a succession of actors trigger the viewer's memory and recognition only to be swallowed up in the vortex of the apparatus. It is the anonymous yet vaguely familiar films sometimes featuring movie stars at earlier stages of their careers that convey the sense of mortality and connection to lived time that endows *The Clock* with part of its meaning.

Shown in a large darkened gallery auditorium with rows of white Ikea couches, *The Clock* is a spectacle of cinema, exhibiting cinephilia, the collective space of cinema and the abiding presence of cinema as a backtrack to our lives. Yet, as an installation, *The Clock* denies some of the basic tenets of cinema spectatorship: the audience may come and go at any time rather than escape into the prescribed length of a feature film and despite being lured into absorbing narrative snippets, viewers are denied total immersion in individual films. Inexorably, *The Clock* moves on and the viewer is jolted into the next narrative fragment. The suspense which drives popular genre cinema is repeatedly built up and dissipated as the clock strikes the hours and continues from day to night across multiple extracts from a range of fiction film. Within the conditions of the work, each viewer has a split experience of watching the screen as part of a collective yet leaving at a time of their own choosing, conscious that they have not seen the entire work.

The Clock applies the logic of a database and algorithmic search as it draws on items according to the set parameters, searching for images of clocks and discussions about time across a collection of audiovisual data. It is the indexing of the material according to rationalized clock time that has drawn the severest criticism, with Martine Beugnet commenting that *The Clock* is a 'closed formal system', and Eli Horwatt finding it ruled by a neoliberal 'administrative' logic (Beugnet 2013, 193; Horwatt 2013, 209). As a view of the cinema archive through a database logic *The Clock* could be understood to embalm and subject cinema to an arbitrary fragmentation. Yet the work allows viewers to become both engrossed in cinematic time and also aware of a multiplicity of possible times: the time of the installation, cinema history, chronological time, and various diegetic times of suspense, boredom and desire. Here the fascination engendered by Marclay's interweaving of individual clips should not be underestimated as on different levels they offer the promise of escaping clock time through the fictional time of cinema. In his novel titled *10:04* after *The Clock*, Ben Lerner describes a sense of expanded time in experiencing the work: 'I felt acutely how many different days could be built out of a day, felt more possibility than determinism, the utopian glimmer of fiction' (Lerner 2014, 54). Each viewer will also respond to the work with their own half-remembered memories of cinema and the past time that these media artefacts are linked to. Reading the work through Walter Benjamin's cultural theory, Catherine Russell finds that *The Clock's* fragments of commodified kitschy films cause: 'unconscious remembrance, souvenirs of memories we didn't know we had', examples of the Proustian *mémoire involuntaire* invoked by Benjamin (Russell 2013, 171). On this level, *The Clock* achieves a machine driven summoning of memory as random films awaken mnemonic energies in the viewer and forgotten memories return. As a work that can only be experienced live in the gallery, *The Clock* also returns us to an earlier era of spectatorship when films were primarily experienced in cinema auditoriums and thereafter as 'remembered films'.

Marclay has also been criticized for his decision to smooth the clips into a uniform aspect ratio and the augmented sound design which manages seamless transitions between clips. Horwatt compares this unfavourably to found footage film-makers who work with the materiality and historicity of different media formats (Horwatt 2013, 217). However, Horwatt's and Beugnet's recourse to the term 'found footage' which references unique rare film seems inadequate in relation to *The Clock* which belongs

to the era of rapid digitalization processes and the gradual demise of video rental shops despite the fact that it was largely sourced from them. By the time *The Clock* was finished, the Web 2.0 promised easy access to multitudes of clips via YouTube (founded in 2005) and other sites. *The Clock's* formal technics allow other intermedial aesthetics to emerge namely the modular database logic and algorithmic like retrieval and recombination of audiovisual clips that thread a path through the archive of cinema. Marclay's digital editing also foregrounds cinema as affect, the embodiment of suspense in sound and image that makes cinema compelling and physically arresting. As a database narrative, churning audiovisual content against clock time, *The Clock* allows us to experience cinema in a way we have not quite seen it before. Although the work is constructed by the artist and his assistants, not an actual algorithm it gives a premonition of what might be possible through 'the database imagination'. Already, within its segments of clock time, *The Clock* throws up the quixotic humdrum scenes and footnotes to the history of cinema that point to the myriad ways in which cinema constitutes a collective cultural memory.

In the artworks discussed by Douglas, Farocki, Breitz and Marclay, the database narrative mode configures new relationships between cinema, history and memory.

Their moving image installations are apparatuses in which narrative film from the archive, both art cinema and genre cinema, meets other formal logics and methods of organization, opening up alternative ways of narrating and remembering the past. In the next chapter I consider artists' moving image practices that also emerge from a cinephilia for the archive of cinema, exploring the unfinished business of the historical avant-gardes and memories of European art cinema.

Notes

1. The term recombinant originates in science where it refers to genetically engineered DNA, an artificial DNA sequence produced by combining DNA from different organisms. In the social sciences and media theory it connotes a method of combining different sources together to produce something new and is particularly associated with live algorithmic music composition.
2. See Kittler (1999) and Cubitt (2004).
3. The 'Pictures' generation are associated with the exhibition 'Pictures' (1977) Artists' Space, New York, curated by Douglas Crimp and his later article (Crimp 1979).

4. Mariel is a port on the Cuban coastline at one of the closest points to Florida. In 1980, 125,000 Cubans left from Mariel for Florida in an exodus known as the 'Mariel boatlift'. In a provocative gesture, Fidel Castro released 10,500 prisoners to join the boatlift.
5. In *Win, Place or Show* (1998), there are 204,023 possible variations of the looped projection which repeats approximately every six minutes. In *Journey into Fear* (2001), a soundtrack with 625 permutations is played over the same image sequences, meaning that it would take 157 hours for all these permutations to play out. *Suspiria* (2003) is a video installation also designed for television broadcast with an infinite running time mixed in real time by a computer system.
6. In the 1920s Arnold Schönberg developed the 'twelve tone row', a method of musical composition that uses all twelve pitches in a musical octave in a certain order or row, often not repeating a note until all twelve have been played.
7. Bourriaud asks: 'one must ask who has been authorized to make the "final cut"', borrowing the name of Apple's editing software Final Cut Pro to provide a metaphor for the narrative of history (Bourriaud 2016, 33).
8. In a further irony, many American film critics received the film as a critique of the plight of the artist in a revolutionary society, see (Alea and Desnoes 1990)
9. Alea trained in Italy in the early 1950s at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, Rome.
10. A reference to the neo-noir gangster film *Scarface* (1983) in which Al Pacino plays a Cuban 'marielito' turned rabid gangster, is suggested by Iván de la Nuez and Maeve Connolly (De La Nuez 2007, 100; Connolly 2009, 154).
11. For example *Out of the Past* (1947).
12. In *Memorias del subdesarrollo* 'A Tropical Adventure' prefaces Sergio and Elena's visit to Ernest Hemingway's house.
13. This was remarked on in contemporary reviews. Sergio is described as having 'the haunted, amused diffidence of the early Marcello Mastroianni' by Vincent Canby in the New York Times and Stanley Kauffmann writes: 'what the film gives us is an Antonioni character in the middle of a political revolution' (Alea and Desnoes 1990, 218–19)
14. A line spoken by Sergio in both *Memorias del subdesarrollo* and *Inconsolable Memories*.
15. In a public lecture given in London, 15 February 2008, Douglas comments that one of the reasons he shot scenes for *Inconsolable Memories* in Vancouver was the fact that he and his camera crew were stopped from filming several times by police in Havana (Douglas 2008).
16. This article consists of two separate texts edited by Thomas Elsaesser: 'A Visual Archive of Cinematographic Topics: Sorting and Storing Images'

by Wolfgang Ernst, pp. 261–273 and 'A Cinematographic Thesaurus' by Harun Farocki, pp. 273–286. 'A Cinematographic Thesaurus', trans. by Robin Curtis was originally presented as 'Bilderschatz', for the Vilém Flusser lecture, 2002, Duisburg.

17. *Workers Leaving the Factory*, directed by Harun Farocki (1995, Harun Farocki Filmproduktion), video (Beta SP), colour and black-and-white, 1:1,37 aspect ratio, thirty six minutes, broadcast on television, 2.04.95, 3sat, 18.12.95, West 3. *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon/Leaving the Factory*, Auguste and Louis Lumière, 1895, black-and-white 35 mm film, silent, seventeen metres of film, fifty seconds.
18. The advertisement is for Road Blockers DSP (*Durchfahrtssperre DSP)* made by the German security company Elkosta, 1987.
19. *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* (2006), video installation, twelve monitors, edition of five and one AP, collection Tate, London. Exhibited in 'Cinema Like Never Before', Generali Foundation, Vienna, curated by Harun Farocki and Antje Ehmann, 2006.
20. *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* was on temporary display in the 'Artist and Society' display, Tate Modern, 2017, curated by Andrea Lissoni.
21. Christian Marclay, *The Clock* (2010), video, projection, colour and sound (stereo), twenty four hours, edition of six and two APs, collection Tate, London.
22. See *Video Quartet* (2002) which incorporates over 700 film clips in Marclay's first work made with Final Cut Pro software and *Screen Play* (2005).
23. See also Catherine Russell's introduction to a dossier of critical articles on *The Clock* (Russell 2013).
24. See Balsom (2013).

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CHAPTER 5

The Echo-Chamber

Artists' moving image installations in the 1990s are notable for the ways in which they appear to 'remember' the cinema of the past in various forms of replay and remake. Their retrospective references to narrative cinema distinguish this generation from their predecessors in the 1970s and the 1980s who took a more critical and antagonistic relation to narrative and the cinema and television industries. This chapter argues that in their engagement with narrative, contemporary artists return to a constitutive tension in the aesthetics of the moving image first grappled with by the historical avant-gardes of the 1920s. As an emergent technology of modernity film was part of the capitalist rationalization of time and was also a nascent collective art form. The historical avant-gardes pioneered the development of film aesthetics in relation to the modern experience of time and space. However, the temporal focus of artists' moving image in the 1990s is very different from that of the 1920s avant-gardes. In the 1920s, artists are concerned with film as a technology of the present associated with the modern temporalities of speed and shock. In the 1990s, film is becoming an outmoded media associated with the past and a collective memory of the cinema archive, while intermedial combinations of film and video offer mnemonic modes of looking back.

Borrowing Runa Islam's description of her work *Tuin* (1998) as an 'echo-chamber' I am interested in showing how the intermedial aesthetics of moving image installations by Islam and Steve McQueen resonate

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with the work of the historical avant-gardes as well as the neo-avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s (Farronato 2007). Both artists' work in the mid to late 1990s combines references to narrative cinema with the embodied phenomenological viewing experience of the gallery. McQueen and Islam can be said to synthesize the diverse traditions in artists' film and video through their hybrid combinations of film and video, narrative and performance. McQueen's installations mobilize and 'replay' historical film aesthetics from the constructivists of the 1920s to the cinema of Buster Keaton, European art cinema and Bruce Nauman's performance films of the late 1960s. In his replays and insinuations of himself as a performer into 'remembered' film aesthetics, McQueen activates overlapping multiple temporalities of the moving image. These temporalities range from rhythmic, pulsating time, to the documented, durational time of performance and to diegetic time. Installations by Islam return to the origins of the moving image in perceptual illusion and also reference narrative modernist cinema.

A 'Return' to the Avant-Gardes

The hybridity of McQueen and Islam's approach to the moving image is paralleled in the European avant-gardes of the 1920s. For avant-garde artists, film was a technological medium, with little or no artistic history, involved in the commercial cinema industry developing in Europe, the USA and the Soviet Union. Thus the avant-gardes are involved in various ideological battles to retain film and cinema as innovative sites of production as opposed to conventional models of cinema. However, research on the film culture of the 1920s, shows that the avant-gardes in France and Germany developed their film practices in relation to commercial cinema, combining narrative syntax with the exploration of abstract film form (Abel 1984, 290–91; Hagener 2007). Yet, by the post-war period, artists' film practices were split into what Peter Wollen describes as 'two avant-gardes', polarized between the exploration of film form on the one hand and more politically orientated narrative film on the other (Wollen 2008). Despite some exceptions, these extremes were matched with a corresponding dichotomy in the economies of art and film in which artists' film and video were often seen as adjuncts to their art practices while experimental film-makers operated on the fringes of the film industry, in co-ops and as lone practitioners. Recent histories of expanded cinema and paracinema have made avant-garde practices from the 1950s, 1960s and

1970s that existed between the art world and the film world more visible (Uroskie 2014; Walley 2003).

The relationship of the historical avant-garde to cinema has its parallels in the intensive engagement with the narrative cinema industry in the moving image art of the 1990s. It is telling that both McQueen and Islam largely position their moving image works of the 1990s in relation to art cinema rather than the more recent context of artists' film and video practices of the 1980s. As elaborated in Chapter 2, over the 1990s artists' references to narrative cinema were facilitated by the increased accessibility of the archive of cinema through the remediation of film with video, digital editing and the use of data projectors. From the mid 1990s, artists begin to work with higher production values and professionals from the film industry in a change from the artisan model of artists' film in the 1960s and 1970s. The changing models of economy and distribution in artists' moving image practices have drawn criticism for adopting the immersiveness of cinema without always evincing a critical position (Elwes 2005, 160–61). In the artworks by McQueen and Islam examined here, their engagement with cinema is read as part of the unfinished business of the historical avant-gardes in activating time and memory through the moving image. In the mnemonic mode of the echo-chamber, connections are made with the diverse temporalities of the moving image.

According to Hal Foster the historical avant-garde's activities are incomplete and are continued in the neo-avant-gardes of the 1950s and 1960s (Foster 1996, 8–15). Foster's view of a recursive relationship between the neo and historical avant-gardes is developed in response to Peter Bürger's theorization of the failure of the historical avant-gardes to alter the praxis of life through art (Bürger 1984). He challenges Bürger's definition of the avant-garde as the desire to establish a new life praxis by suggesting that this is only achievable under the conditions of revolution in which Russian constructivism and Soviet film emerged, where aesthetic experimentation momentarily aligns with social and political ideology. Foster expands Bürger's theory from a rigid Marxist definition of what constitutes avant-garde art into a broader remit. This would include such avant-garde strategies as mimicking aspects of modernization in order to critique it. Thus Foster opens up a more differentiated, contradictory set of avant-garde practices that are unfinished and should be seen in relation to subsequent work by the neo-avant-gardes. Referring to the Freudian temporality of *nachträglichkeit* (deferred action), he suggests that historical avant-garde practices cannot be viewed as a fully achieved project at

the time of their emergence, rather they can be understood in part as 'failures to signify', lacking interpretive and critical models (Foster 1996, 28–29). Yet as Foster notes in a later text, the idea of a neo-avant-garde is not entirely adequate as a means of interpreting contemporary art in the 1990s and 2000s (Foster 2002, 128). Rather than repeating avant-garde strategies, the historical film aesthetics referenced by McQueen and Islam return within the mnemonic frameworks of contemporary art focused on the persistence of the past within the present.

As theorized by Walter Benjamin, film is intrinsic to the temporalities of modernity, experienced as both distraction and shock but also extending human perception in new modalities of slow motion and the close-up (Benjamin 2002). The film practices of the historical avant-gardes explore these modalities in works which range from the abstract rhythmic temporality of Hans Richter's *Rhythmus 21* (1921) to surreal disruptions in tempo-spatial continuums in Luis Buñuel's and Salvador Dali's *Un Chien andalou* (1928). Fernand Léger's and Dudley Murphy's *Ballet mécanique* (1924) maintains an intensive syncopated tempo based on alternating machinic and human rhythms, challenging the viewer to keep up with a perpetual present highlighted in a repetitive loop of a washerwoman climbing steps. In these mechanized rhythms, the films of the avant-garde, exemplified in Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) valorize the 'presentness' of film and the contingent tempo of modern life. Man Ray's reputed statement that 'film is best when seen only once' indicates the attitude of the avant-garde to the temporality of film as a medium of the present (Cubitt 2004, 295). While many avant-garde films such as *Entr'acte* (1924), *Emak Bakia* (1926) and *Vormittagsspuk (Ghosts Before Breakfast)* (1927) challenge rationalized clock time, there is less evidence in their work of how the experience of past time might be disclosed through film. Arguably, the avant-garde films of the 1920s lacked the ability to indicate the 'pastness' of the moving image given that it was only in this period that film became a recognized set of aesthetic conventions and a theoretical object.[1] Thus the comparison between artists' film practices in the 1990s and those of the 1920s hinges on their different emphases on the temporalities of the moving image.

Following Benjamin's paradigmatic exploration of how film and cinema affect human memory and the perception of time, this chapter shows how McQueen's and Islam's installations harness the mnemonic energy of the moving image. In McQueen's work it is the hybrid aesthetics of film remediated by video that enables him to return to

and to insert himself into the past of film. His installations allow for a repositioned reading of avant-garde films through his 'replays' of the multi-temporal possibilities of the moving image. By reinhabiting and extending past modes of film, McQueen brings an added temporal dimension, the 'memory' of film to the presentness of film emphasised by the avant-garde of the 1920s. The layering of different filmic temporalities in these work constitutes Deleuzian 'time-images' which disclose the virtuality of memory.

5.1 Replay: Multiple Temporalities in Steve McQueen's Video Installations

> The only commitment I have as an artist is to not allow the dust of the past to settle. (McQueen 2014)

> He [the historical materialist] regards it as his task to brush history against the grain. (Benjamin 2003, 392)

While Steve McQueen is now best known as an Oscar winning film director, he first emerged as an artist who worked with film and video installation in the early 1990s.[2] These installations not only marked an important transitional moment in the relationship between art and cinema, they also evidenced McQueen's approach to film as a means of engaging with historical material. When he subsequently moved into the commercial world of feature film making, his films *Hunger* (2008) and *12 Years a Slave* (2013) were based on historical events. Both films attempt to reimagine historical experiences that are at the limit point of representation such as the experience of slavery in the nineteenth-century American South and the Northern Ireland hunger strikes of the 1970s and early 1980s. In McQueen's earliest works of the mid 1990s, film practices of the past are reactivated and re-presented within video installations. His work brings together film histories and practices that until then had operated in parallel but separate worlds. Broadly speaking, these are the world of artists' film and video and the world of narrative cinema including Hollywood and European modernist film. McQueen's hybrid approach to the moving image as both an artists' medium and a component of industrial, narrative cinema is read here as a reanimation

of an earlier film praxis that became foreclosed by the dissolution of the historical avant-gardes and the institutionalization of Hollywood cinema.

McQueen draws together diverse genealogies of film and video. Firstly he approaches film and video from an art school perspective that understands it as an element within a primarily sculptural, performative and conceptual tradition. This approach is associated with the work of American artists in the late sixties and seventies like Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Dan Graham, Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer.[3] A second strand of the art school approach to film is the tradition of structuralist, materialist film associated with American artists like Michael Snow and the British artist Peter Gidal among others. McQueen's installations and film aesthetics draw on both these strands of artists' film. At the same time McQueen also brings his knowledge of Hollywood and European art cinema to bear on his work. A number of points may be noted here. Firstly McQueen positions his practice, at this time, not in relation to contemporary film and video but in relation to past practices. This is true of both his relationship to artists' moving images and to the cinema. Therefore, from the outset McQueen sees the moving image from a historical perspective. This view of the moving image as a form of revisiting the past is evident in other artists' moving image practices in the 1990s like Stan Douglas, Tacita Dean and Runa Islam. In McQueen's case video installation is the means by which earlier avant-garde film aesthetics from the 1920s and the 1960s are brought together within one space. 16 mm film is remediated as projected video within a specific architectural installation in the gallery. Thus McQueen stands as a transitional figure who brings cinematic narrative into installation, and who brings a materialist aesthetic to narrative film. Here we will examine what results from McQueen's excavation of past genealogies of film practice.

It is notable that McQueen's installations invite and receive a historiographical approach from art critics in their references and activation of visual codes associated with art history and with film history. The hybrid quality of McQueen's films, between art and cinema is registered in the earliest critical writing on his work, in three essays by Michael Newman, Okwui Enwezor and Robert Storr published on the occasion of an exhibition of his work at the ICA in 1999 (Enwezor et al. 1999). Of these Michael Newman traces the most detailed lineage of McQueen's art historical and cinema references from the constructivist avant-garde of the 1920s through to artists' sculptural and materialist film of the 1960s, Hollywood film and European modernist film. Across all these essays,

McQueen's work is compared with a striking range of temporalities of the moving image from the proto-cinematic stop motion photography of Eadweard Muybridge in the late nineteenth century to Martin Scorcese's *Raging Bull* (1980).

Writing in 1997, Jon Thompson summons up a host of male directors in contextualizing McQueen's approach to film as narrative: Carl Dreyer, John Huston, Volker Schlöndorff, John Ford, David Lean, Alain Resnais, Michelangelo Antonioni, Jean-Luc Godard and Robert Bresson are all mentioned as reference points (Thompson 1997). Newman adds *Raging Bull*, Ken Russell's *Women in Love* (1969), Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1975), Andy Warhol and Buster Keaton to the list while Storr is reminded of Sergei Eisenstein and Orson Welles (Newman 1999; Storr 1999, 8). Such comparisons align McQueen with the major auteurs and in Enwezor's essay with Muybridge, the forefather of modern cinema (Enwezor 1999, 40). While it might seem hyperbolic to compare short looped video installations with classic feature-length films for cinema, the critics' responses indicate connections that the artists' work explicitly invites. We must ask how do these video installations set up such alignments and furthermore why does it seem necessary to McQueen and his critics in the 1990s to invoke the archive of European cinema? What are we to make of the multiple temporal shifts in the wide range of film references signalled by the work and its critics? In both the lists evoked by McQueen's critics and in the works themselves there is a sense of cinema being excavated and replayed in order to forge a historical consciousness for the 1990s. This tendency is paralleled in Godard's contemporaneous project *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1989–1998), a televisual narration of history through cinema.

Five Easy Pieces (1995)

Five Easy Pieces (1995) is a good example of how McQueen invokes and deconstructs cinema within a moving image installation.[4] The title is borrowed from a classic of American 'New Wave' cinema, *Five Easy Pieces* (1970) starring Jack Nicholson. McQueen doesn't reference the content of this film; he simply repurposes the title as a physical, spatialized indication of his own film's structure.[5] In Rafelson's film, *Five Easy Pieces* refers to the protagonist's childhood book of piano pieces. McQueen's quotation suggests a similar return to what he views as the basics of film form, expressed in cinematic techniques like montage, slow motion and

narrative structure. In this as in McQueen's other installations, the use of black-and-white 16 mm film without sound, albeit transferred to video, foregrounds an approach to the moving image as a medium from the past, from an era without colour film and synchronized sound. Yet this impression is also a 'mis-memory' of film given that in the 'silent' era, films were accompanied by live musical scores yet are frequently encountered today as silent moving images. In addition silent films were often colour tinted. The lack of sound in McQueen's film means that the normative mode of cinema spectatorship is bypassed as the viewer doesn't enter into a full illusionary world of sound and image but becomes aware of themselves as a physical presence in the projection space. By transferring film to projected video with an architectural scale, McQueen situates his reference to 'silent cinema' within the phenomenological space of installation, creating his own cinematic apparatus.

Five Easy Pieces shares the same characteristics as other video installations made by McQueen between 1993 and 1997. Firstly, the architecture of the installation space is a specifically constructed three-sided box, which the viewer enters to be faced with a large floor to ceiling, projected film filling the end wall. The measurements of these spaces are typically four metres wide, three metres high and seven metres long, with the walls painted black.[6] Thus the aspect ratio of the projected image is 4:3, echoing the aspect ratio at which 35 mm film from the 1920s is projected. Within these conditions, McQueen creates a space that is partly the darkened space of cinema and partly the embodied space of installation in which the standing viewer is placed in a physical relation to the scale of the screen image. Like other moving image installations of the time, twin modalities of spectatorship, that of the gallery viewer and that of the cinema spectator are intermeshed with each other. In *Five Easy Pieces*, the viewer enters the space to encounter a short, looped, silent black-and-white video projection whose narrative is organized across three different and interlocking spatial axes. This highly physicalized form of narrative is structured like a jigsaw puzzle based on gravity. In one sequence an aerial shot looks down at five figures athletically hula-hooping. In the next a worm's eye viewpoint looks up at a rope which is traversed by a young gymnast. These scenes are intercut by another low angled shot of a standing male figure in boxer shorts. Through a combination of spatialized camera shots marking different positions in space, either high up, low down or in mid-air, the work attempts to establish physical lines of connection between the viewer as a body in space and the depicted bodies

on-screen. The accumulation of montaged shots reach a denouement of sorts when the standing figure appears to urinate directly onto the camera lens from above, shown in Fig. 5.1. In the context of McQueen's installation space, the gallery viewer is directly placed as the object of this action. Thus *Five Easy Pieces* repeatedly attempts to break the 'fourth wall' of cinema.

A further element in the work, the inclusion of a brief sequence of colour video attempts another form of sensual engagement with the viewer. What appears as extremely close-up visceral flesh is endoscopic footage of nostrils, mouth and eyes, bringing the viewer into an impossibly close contact with the performer's body. The confrontational edge to the engagement with the viewer draws on both the traditions of installation art and a materialist approach to film. What distinguishes McQueen's approach is that this materialist approach to film is structured as a form of narrative. This combination of intense formal effects and narrative reactivates a formative tension around the question of realism within avant-garde film-making. Across the historical avant-gardes, innovations in film-making are driven by the urge to show how the film camera brings new forms of representation into existence. This is accompanied by the desire to direct filmic representation in ideological ways. *Five Easy*

Fig. 5.1 Steve McQueen, *Five Easy Pieces* (1995), video still, courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris

Pieces' visual, formal style evokes and extends the historical avant-garde in a number of ways.

Firstly, McQueen's compositional aesthetic of angled shots and challenging method of engaging the viewer confrontationally is reminiscent of the Russian constructivist movement. Both Newman and Enwezor compare the work with Aleksandr Rodchenko's black-and-white photographs featuring extreme angle compositions and cast shadows (Newman 1999, 23; Enwezor 1999, 42). Secondly, McQueen depicts athletic activities which chime with agitprop films of the era that feature athleticism as a desirable attribute of the model Soviet citizen. Yet McQueen is not simply quoting a formal style. In an ambitious sense his ghostly evocation of a constructivist aesthetic revives and tests the conflicting tensions of the avant-garde's attitude to filming the real. Most immediately McQueen literally inhabits the constructivist form by inserting himself as a black male into a scene which is both visually rich and violently confrontational. It is as if he challenges the avant-garde call to show 'life as it is' in both senses of the term, on an ideological and a technological level (Vertov 1984, 45). To show 'life as it is' might mean that reality includes otherness in the form of the largely unrepresented black body within the canon of avant-garde film and narrative cinema in the 1920s.[7] It also means that the film camera expands the ways in which we perceive the real. McQueen's installation ambitiously attempts to expand the parameters of the moving image by inscribing himself into a historical mode of film, activating an imagined past.

McQueen's video installations in the 1990s may be read as a series of colonizations and insertions of himself into allusive cinematic situations. Thus *Bear* (1993) seems to restage a double cinematic cliché of the boxing match and the athletic 'bear-like' black body (Thompson 1997, 6; Enwezor 2013, 25–27). The cliché is foiled by McQueen's use of slowed down and reversed footage turning the encounter into something more balletic and ambiguous. In *Just Above My Head* (1996), a single shot frames a largely empty portion of white sky with McQueen's head precariously bobbing into the bottom of the shot. The formal quality of the almost empty screen image revives a trope of European modernist cinema, seen in films by Resnais, Antonioni and Bresson which McQueen remakes in his own fashion.[8] Clearly these works may be read as contesting what might be in and out of the frame of cinema in terms of identity politics while they also establish on an aesthetic level a mode of moving image installation inflected by a political and historical consciousness.

As McQueen disinters and reinhabits his chosen forms, he establishes a doubled temporality that draws attention to what is and is not visible within historical film aesthetics. This doubled temporality refers to both the recorded time of McQueen's performances and the past history of cinema. Thus *Five Easy Pieces, Bear* and *Just Above My Head* can be viewed simultaneously as documents of performances and as references to an intertwined history of European art cinema and avant-garde artists' practices.

Film Time

A key reference point for McQueen's performative video installations can be found in Bruce Nauman's performances to camera of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Beginning with an analysis of Nauman's films we can trace lines of connection between Nauman, Marcel Duchamp and McQueen in McQueen's installation *Deadpan* (1997). Like comparable works by Richard Serra and Vito Acconci, Nauman's conceptual approach treats film and video as practical recording technologies divorced from any narrative dimension, cinematic or otherwise. The idea that film and video are primarily recording technologies is a somewhat wilful disregard of the mass media industries of cinema and television yet it is also a liberating strategy. In the late sixties, Nauman began to make films that ostensibly documented his activities in the studio. A number of pragmatic factors have been put forward as contributing to these transitional works. Firstly Nauman's preoccupation with the role and purpose of the artist led him to focus on the studio and himself as the site of his work. Secondly the work was made with public performance in mind but without the necessary opportunities, Nauman simply decided to record his performances. Yet this apparently functional rationale is also related to Nauman's analytical approach which would ultimately develop into the question of how an artwork might manage and direct the viewer's experience of time.

In setting out to film himself, two ideas seem to have guided Nauman's methods. The first was that the film image would be accepted as a record and not as an art form per se. The second was his interest in the conceptual possibilities of film as opposed to cinema. He had been impressed by Man Ray throwing the camera in the air while still running in *Emak Bakia* (1926) and he had also seen Andy Warhol's durational slow films which avoid conventional narrative (van Bruggen 1988, 225).[9] For example

Warhol's *Sleep* (1963) aspires to the condition of being a pure document of real time as it simply shows a man sleeping for almost six hours. It could also be seen as a 'performative film' in showing a continuous physical state. However as Coosje van Bruggen points out, *Sleep* is a manufactured 'real-time' film (van Bruggen 1988, 116). The six hours are not actually six hours straight but cut, spliced and repeated footage. Such tensions between the ostensibly documentary and the inevitable slippage in claims to be a straightforward document would inevitably surface in Nauman's film works. Nauman's filmed performances were based on task-based physical movements and activities, informed by the work of Meredith Monk, Yvonne Rainer and Simone Forti. Between 1967 and 1968, he made four short films titled *Playing a Note on the Violin While I Walk around the Studio*, *Bouncing Two Balls between the Floor and Ceiling*, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* and *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square (Square Dance)*.[10]

All the films are approximately ten minutes in duration, the length of a standard reel of black-and-white 16 mm film. They are low-fi without editing or proper lighting and are shot from a stationary fixed camera angle. Nonetheless, over these and subsequent films the mise-en-scène of Nauman's studio and the repetitive durational nature of his actions make it difficult to view the films as simple documents. As shown in Fig. 5.2, the artist is presented claustrophobically framed within the studio itself and by the static camera lens. The issues of restriction and voyeurism arise for the viewer while Nauman's physical movements explore the boundaries of how practice becomes a performance and private space becomes public space. Later, in his 'corridor works' of the early 1970s, Nauman shifts the emphasis from the artist/performer to the viewer as the object of the work. Again the seemingly everyday is probed and made unsettling, this time within the gallery space. Here the viewer enters into situations where s/he is tested phenomenologically and psychologically.

In *Live/Taped Video Corridor* (1970) a restrictive corridor is combined with a closed-circuit video system placing the viewer under surveillance. The viewer walks down a narrow 'rat run' corridor. As they near the end of the corridor, they see two monitors: the top monitor shows them from behind shot on closed-circuit video camera while the bottom monitor plays a pre-recorded video of the empty corridor. The video feed in the top monitor places the viewer as the object of surveillance while the footage on the bottom monitor effectively erases the viewer's presence from the corridor. With a wide-angle lens on the video camera, the

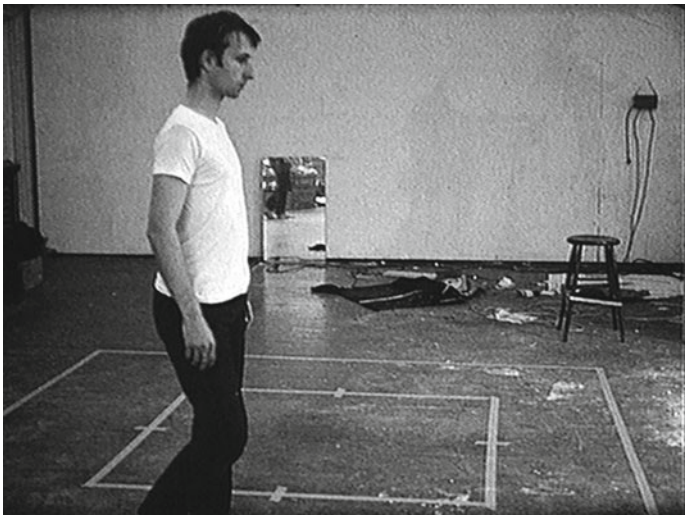

Fig. 5.2 Bruce Nauman, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–1968), film still, courtesy of the artist and DACS

perspective is exaggerated so the viewer experiences a perceptual reversal. As they walk towards the top monitor they are simultaneously moving away from the camera so that their on-screen image becomes smaller, the closer they get to the monitor. The viewer's 'performative' action of walking down a corridor becomes an unsettling experience of being both the object of surveillance and potentially not there, not present because absent from the recorded image in the bottom monitor.

McQueen's video installations continue a Nauman-like play on the idea of a documenting a performance to camera. Again black-and-white film serves as a visual code that endows the screen image with the 'truth-telling' aura of a document. McQueen's starting points are scenes of simple, physical actions that could be documents of performances or rehearsals towards a performance. Through repetition and camera effects, the possible meanings of these performances become uncertain. While Nauman's physical actions refer to the context of choreography and dance, McQueen locates his actions in relation to cinema; to a fight scene in *Bear* (1993) and to slapstick in *Deadpan* (1997).[11] Unlike Nauman,

Fig. 5.3 Steve McQueen, *Deadpan* (1997), video still, courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris

McQueen allows a narrative dimension within his films. This is particularly evident in the installation *Deadpan* where he extends Nauman's 'performance to camera mode' into a hybrid reconstitution of the past of cinema through the form of a recorded performance. Here Nauman's fixed camera is aligned with the static camera of early cinema, that Stan Douglas describes as being: 'only capable of a deadpan stare at a staged event', as depicted in Fig. 5.3 (Douglas 1988, 15).

Deadpan (1997)

In *Deadpan*, McQueen takes a fragment of cinema, a moment of slapstick from Buster Keaton's film *Steamboat Bill Jr* (1928) and uses it as the basis for a film that seems to inhabit multiple temporal modalities of the moving image. These modalities are the physical cinema of Buster Keaton, the early cinema of *actualités*, narrative cinema and the pure optical, rhythmic *Anémic cinéma* (1925) of Duchamp and Man Ray. Taking a cue from the title, this chapter argues that McQueen is putting forward an 'emptied out' document not just of his own performance but of the

original Keaton sketch. In this emptying out, McQueen reinhabits or colonizes past modes of cinema. *Deadpan* is based on McQueen's performance of a staged stunt, standing motionless as a timber-frame façade of a house falls upon him but he remains upright thanks to the empty window frame falling neatly around him. Over the course of the four-minute loop we see the façade fall from a number of different angles—about twelve times in all. The repetition of alternate shots builds towards a narrative event in a frontal scene where the house frame crashes directly on top of the low-lying camera. The impact causes leaves and dust to fly up before the lens, followed by darkness extinguishing the image and by implication the gallery viewer standing in the enclosed and darkened projection space.[12] The work has a physical impact on the standing viewer as one is placed in a face to face relationship with McQueen's larger than life screen image. Within the narrow confines of the projection space both the composition of the shots and the tempo of the editing are experienced on a physical scale that exceeds the conventional retinal relationship of a spectator to a screen image.[13]

As in *Five Easy Pieces*, in *Deadpan*, McQueen tries to physically interpellate the viewer in a series of confrontational shots. The repetition of the falling house frame is forcefully asserted through the formal contrasts of black apertures and white clapperboard which reach an intensity in a sequence of stop motion close-ups of McQueen's face, filmed before and after the façade falls. In this sequence the viewer experiences a sensation of contrasting transitions from dark to light, just as in the film McQueen experiences equivalent visual eclipses of light as the façade repeatedly falls over him. Here again the viewer's bodily experience is aligned with the events on-screen. In a similar manner to Nauman's filmed performances, McQueen exhausts the action of the stunt through repetition. Dressed in white T-shirt and jeans, echoing Nauman's 'everyday' studio clothing, McQueen's face remains impassive throughout. As the humour drains from the situation over the duration of the formalized repetitions, McQueen's figure becomes more monumental in aspect.[14] Faced with this repeating and enigmatic narrative, the viewer experiences a succession of possible interpretive models for what they are seeing, described by Michael Newman as follows:

> first, are we watching a continuum – the marked beginning and ending implies this – or the same action from different perspectives? And second, are we watching a documentary or documentation of a performance, or

> a series of retakes towards a fictional construction, like the source-movie? The question of truth intersects with that of time: does the repetition-with-difference verify the truth of the event or heighten its conventionality, and does it intensify or subvent presence? (Newman 1999, 28)

In this analysis, Newman draws attention to the way *Deadpan* evokes different and overlapping temporalities associated with film. Referring to the stop motion sequence of rapid close-ups, Newman compares it to a structural 'flicker' film, identifying a rhythmic temporality which is opposed to the narrative shots of the stunt itself and constitutes a possible 'genealogy for McQueen's work' (Newman 1999, 28).[15] Here Newman cites Rosalind Krauss's genealogy of a 'pulsatile' temporality in her study of Duchamp's and Man Ray's *Anémic cinéma* (1925) which she connects to films by Nauman, Serra and structuralist film of the late 1960s (Newman 1999, 28; Krauss 1997a, 136).[16] Describing the effect of *Anémic cinéma* on the viewer as 'the invasion of a dense, corporeal pressure', Krauss links its pulsing tempo with the rhythmic repetition found in Nauman's videos *Bouncing in the Corner II* (1969) and *Lip Synch* (1969), with Richard Serra's film *Hand Catching Lead* (1968) and with the 'structuralist' film-makers' emphasis on a phenomenological experience of film grounded in the body (Krauss 1997a, 136). Krauss also finds a pulsatile temporality in James Coleman's *Box(ahhareturnabout)* (1977) (Krauss 1997b).[17] The latter work has similarities with McQueen's installations in its rhythmic repetition of black-and-white found footage of a 1927 boxing match shown in a restricted narrow projection space.

The inclusion by McQueen of the 'flicker' sequence brings a materialist quality to the *Deadpan* installation as the flickering image is experienced by the viewer as a real-time duration. The flicker sequence's anti-illusionist rhythmic time complicates a straightforward narrative reading of *Deadpan*. But McQueen also goes beyond materialist film in opening up the perception of time in the film image to multiple temporalities beyond the immediate real time of the installation. These temporalities include the ghostly references to Nauman's task-based performances, to Buster Keaton, to McQueen's own performance of the stunt and the 1960s flicker films themselves as traced in Krauss's lineage of 'pulsatile' temporality. In a further historical reference, the flicker sequence could be related to the stuttering effect of early silent film projected at fifteen frames per second. The way in which *Deadpan* summons up these

multiple temporalities can be further developed by thinking of it in terms of a Deleuzian 'crystal image' (Deleuze 2005, 67).

In Deleuze's classification of different time-images, based on Bergson, the 'crystal image' denotes the co-existence of multiple images of different pasts and presents within the same film. 'Crystal images' are composed of specific circuits between an actual image and its virtual image and also extend to the swathes of virtual circuits which constitute the past:

> the more or less broad, always relative, circuits, between the present and the past, refer back, on the one hand, to a small internal circuit between a present and *its own* past, between an actual image and *its* virtual image; on the other hand, they refer to deeper and deeper circuits which are themselves virtual, which each time mobilize the whole of the past, but in which the relative circuits bathe or plunge to trace an actual shape and bring in their provisional harvest. (Deleuze 2005, 78)

In his example of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad (Last Year at Marienbad)* (1961), individual scenes within the film appear to splinter into other scenes from the memory of the two protagonists. Deleuze's description of deeper and deeper circuits indicates the scope of Bergson's philosophy of memory as a means of accessing a vast extent of the past which is continually accruing in tandem with the present. As the viewer of McQueen's films makes associations with other films they too experience a circuit of virtual images activated by actual images. For example in *Deadpan*, the actual image of McQueen performing a stunt is also a reprise of a virtual image from the past of Keaton's first filmed performance of the stunt in 1928. On a larger scale, McQueen's performance of actions recorded on black-and-white film traces a trajectory through films of the past, from Nauman's observational recordings in the sixties through to Keaton's slapstick and back to the avant-gardes' use of film to record physical activities and modern life in the 1920s. Thus McQueen's choice of black-and-white film remediated as video projection triggers a mnemonic trajectory in time.

5.2 Runa Islam's Echo-Chambers

In *Stare Out (Blink)* (1998), a 16 mm film installation by Runa Islam, the viewer encounters a spectral negative image of a woman's face staring back at them as shown in Fig. 5.4.[18] After three minutes, the screen image

Fig. 5.4 Runa Islam, *Stare Out/(Blink)* (1998), film still, © Runa Islam, photo © Stephen White, courtesy White Cube

is replaced with a flashing white screen. If the viewer has been looking intently s/he will experience the optical effect of an afterimage in a positive image of the woman's face. Here, Runa Islam restages the origins of the moving image in perceptual illusion. Although the phenomenon of afterimage is not the actual physiological process through which the brain perceives moving images, it played an important role in modern theories of how film technology works and its relationship to time. The physiological threshold at which the human eye–brain neural pathway can no longer differentiate the separate frames on a projected film strip and begins to perceive moving images is now known as the phi effect.[19] In cinema, this relates to the speed of projection, conventionally set at twenty-four frames per second. As Islam states the phi effect is: 'the phenomenal essence of why we are susceptible to moving images' (Fortnum 2007, 133). *Stare Out (Blink)* is one of three installations made by Islam in 1998 which are all concerned with how the moving image conditions and modulates human perception as well as its narrative function in cinema.

Like Steve McQueen, Islam synthesizes both a phenomenological and a narrative approach to the moving image. She too has positioned her work in relation to European modernist auteurs such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Robert Bresson and Rainer Werner Fassbinder.[20] Both Islam and McQueen's need to assert a cinematic tradition rather than an art historical one, can be related to an aporia in the theory and practice of

artists' film and video practices which failed to continue the historical avant-gardes' dual exploration of narrative in conjunction with film form. In returning to historic filmic special effects of afterimage, negative image and slow motion, Islam's work explores a formative tension between the indexical recording capacity of film and the ways in which film technology acts on human perception and psychology. Her installations engage with a phenomenological experience of the moving image where the ostensible indexicality of film is problematized by the suggestion of illusionistic fiction. Thus Islam's 'echo-chambers' create a reverberation of different modes of spectatorship which are themselves associated with different temporalities of real time and diegetic time. Islam's evocation of the afterimage effect returns us to the ways in which the temporality of the moving image was theorized in modernity.

The Temporality of the Afterimage

In Jonathan Crary's account of the construction of modern vision, from the early nineteenth century onwards the Cartesian model of a detached observer viewing the world through the perspectival vision of the camera obscura is displaced by theories of vision as mobile not static (Crary 1990). The study of afterimage or persistence of vision is part of the cross-disciplinary scientific and philosophical investigations of perception, time and memory in modernity. Although, as we have noted, the physiology of how moving images are perceived would later be correctly attributed to the phi effect, the afterimage contributed to the increasing evidence of the inherent subjectivity of perception. By the late nineteenth-century experimental physiology and psychology showed that perception was subjective, mobile and durational. Moving image technology was understood to act on human perception, 'tricking' the eye into perceiving movement and inaugurating new temporal rhythms and modalities. At the same time photography and film were instrumentalized as part of scientific efforts to quantify and standardize the physiology of vision and emergent psychopathologies such as hysteria. Therefore the moving image is at the centre of modern awareness of how technology modulates perception and the desire to regulate and discipline norms of perception (Crary 1990; Väliaho 2010).

For Mary Anne Doane the longevity of the theory of afterimage is key to the modern understanding of temporality. If an image persists on the eye's retina until it is displaced by another image then the present is

constantly linked to the past as successive images replace each other on the retina of the eye. The modern recognition that perception is durational and the present overlaps with the past, means that it becomes impossible to capture the present moment. In contrast to the dominant rationalization, Taylorization and the abstraction of time in modernity, Doane argues that the temporality of the afterimage shows that: '…modernity is also strongly associated with epistemologies that valorize the contingent, the ephemeral, chance – that which is beyond or resistant to meaning' (Doane 2002, 10).[21] She links the afterimage effect, as a form of imprint with a second nineteenth-century theory of 'temporal trace', C. S. Peirce's concept of the indexical sign (Doane 2002, 69; Peirce 2008, 226). Peirce defines the indexical sign as an imprint such as a footprint, shadow, weathervane or photograph which has a material connection between the object of the sign and the sign itself. Yet as Doane notes, the idea of a photograph as an indexical sign that might capture a moment in time betrays an inherent contradiction in Peirce's thinking (Doane 2002, 89–91). As a logician, Peirce did not believe in the concept of an instant because thought requires a continuum of time, therefore he did not believe in an instantaneous photograph. According to Doane, both the theory of the afterimage and the theory of the indexical sign problematize the possibility of capturing the present moment which film in its indexicality as photograms on a film strip, appears to offer (Doane 2002, 70).

The work of Peirce, Barthes, Bergson and Benjamin are all cited by Doane as ways of theorizing the 'inaccessibility of the present' in modernity. Bergson's concept of the durée or duration, in which he proposes that the experience of the present is continuously underpinned by the memory of the past is thus analogous to the theory of the afterimage. The present is an instant of time that for Bergson cannot be experienced without relating it to the past. Linking Benjamin's theorization of film as shock to the experience of contingency, Doane writes:

> despite Benjamin's explicit equation of filmic shock and montage, it is clear from his theoretical activation of Freud and Proust and his delineation of shock as a surface phenomenon unassimilable to meaning, that the cinema's shock effect is ineluctably associated with its indexicality, its ability to register or represent contingency. (Doane 2002,15)

For Doane, Benjamin's identification of 'the cinema's shock effect' primarily stems from film's indexicality, the idea that it can record

passing time, thus the anxiety concerning the management of contingency in modernity coalesces around film as a technology of archiving. By recording the present time, film offers the promise of managing contingency. Furthermore, with reference to Barthes' distinction between a photograph and a film, Doane notes that the temporality of watching a projected film complicates the record of the indexical by making time present again for the spectator (Doane 2002, 103; Barthes 1977, 45). Film replays or makes present the 'having-been-there', making it temporarily present again for the spectator. Thus film is both in the present and also a replay of past time. However, the presentness of film is a fleeting experience.

To return to the staging of the afterimage effect in Islam's *Stare Out (Blink)*, it is evident that film and its associated temporalities play a different role in relation to the postmodernity of the late twentieth century. Rather than a concern with the contingency of the present, postmodernity features a concern with the evanescence of the past and with the need to construct connections to history. Where the film image in negative was presented as a technical novelty by the artist Hans Richter in *Vormittagsspuk* (1926), the negative image in *Stare Out (Blink)* is a revenant, a spectral temporality from the past of the moving image. The pastness associated with the moving image lies in its indexicality, the film image as a material trace registration of past time on celluloid. This spectral dimension of the moving image is foregrounded in Laura Mulvey's re-evaluation of film in relation to digitalization (Mulvey 2006). She argues that film's indexical status is only revealed by pausing the image to show 'the inanimate frames of its origin' disclosing a temporality of 'delayed cinema' or 'death 24 times a second' (Mulvey 2006, 8, 15). In *Stare Out (Blink)* the spectrality of the filmic moving image is underscored by the optical apparition of the afterimage effect.

Turn (Gaze of Orpheus) (1998)

In *Turn (Gaze of Orpheus)* (1998), a companion work to *Stare Out (Blink),* Islam stages the psychological as opposed to the physiological basis for how the moving image acts on human subjectivity.[22] A large-scale video projection shows a woman's head from behind. The head very slowly begins to turn and just as the woman's gaze is about to meet the viewer's, the image disappears. Reversing the Greek legend in which Orpheus's fatal look backwards at Eurydice as he leads her out

of the underworld causes her to disappear, Islam has the viewer await the promise of a look which vanishes as soon as it appears. The woman's pose, ending in a momentary three-quarter profile headshot, is reminiscent of Hollywood publicity stills of screen sirens, while the action of the turning over the shoulder gaze suggests a promise of narrative that is denied just as it begins. The turning head elicits the viewer's curiosity and expectant gaze that the shot will be followed by another. However, a narrative 'reveal' is constantly deferred as the projection loops. The suggestion of presence followed by absence can be related here to Christian Metz's psychoanalytically based study of the narrative fiction film as a powerful apparatus in which the viewer willingly suspends disbelief, accepting the 'impression of reality' (Metz 1982). *Turn (Gaze of Orpheus)* makes its reference to film narrative through the media of video. The work has been shown at billboard height outside and high up, placing it within the contemporary advertising regime and distribution of images.[23] In this context, the illusory promise of film narrative is framed as an ephemeral and fugitive fragment that nonetheless persists in the contemporary media world. Both *Stare Out (Blink)* and *Turn (Gaze of Orpheus)* perform the promise of a gaze returned through a technological image, invoking Benjamin's definition of aura as investing something: 'with the ability to look back at us in return' and suggesting that as film becomes outmoded it begins to command an auratic charge (Benjamin 1997, 148).

When they are shown together, *Stare Out (Blink)* and *Turn (Gaze of Orpheus)* offer a double proposition of how the moving image structures and acts on the perception of time. *Stare Out (Blink)* establishes a physiological basis for the film apparatus, the durational time of afterimage in which an image appears through the memory of an earlier image while *Turn (Gaze of Orpheus* enacts the psychoanalytical basis of cinema in the lure of a diegetic temporality. Each work demands modes of attention associated with cinema yet these modes are placed within the expanded context of the gallery and the spectacular economy of billboard advertising respectively. Islam is looking back at the film apparatus through modes of understanding film that have themselves become historical; the theory of afterimage in the early twentieth century and the psychoanalytical school of film theory in the 1970s. However, Islam's retrospective look happens within the intermedial context of the late 1990s. Thus, Islam appears to test what constitutes 'cinematic time' for the contemporary world of the late 1990s. It is presented as both illusionary, subjective, of the past yet continuing to exist in the present under new conditions of

exhibition and distribution for the moving image. In her *Tuin*, her third installation of 1998, Islam extends her exploration of the moving image as both narrative cinema and recording media through the intermedial qualities of film and video.

Tuin (1998) and Martha (1973)

Tuin is a three-channel film and video installation that re-enacts an iconic scene from a Rainer Werner Fassbinder film, *Martha* (1973) from three points of view, shown in Fig. 5.5.[24] In her return to a fragment of European art cinema from the 1970s, there is the implicit suggestion that Islam, like Steve McQueen, sees film as a historical image mode that nonetheless persists within the contemporary world. In constructing a reading of *Tuin* as a mnemonic 'echo-chamber', I compare the installation with *Martha* and Dan Graham's *Body Press* (1970–1972). *Tuin* can be seen as a work that straddles the formerly disjunctive divide between artists' moving image and cinema as an institution and cultural archive,

Fig. 5.5 Runa Islam, *Tuin* (1998), installation shot, © Runa Islam, photo © Gerry Johansson, courtesy White Cube, London

evident in the 1960s and 1970s. In asserting an engagement with film as a narrative signifier, Islam also re-activates the historical avant-garde's encounter with film and with cinema. By referencing *Martha* within the context of a gallery installation, Islam places the viewer within a deconstructed cinema apparatus, diverging from normative cinema spectatorship. The gallery viewer is positioned to experience the moving image as both a fictional narrative and also as a documentary recording. In its structure *Tuin* moves outwards from subjectivity considered within the apparatus of narrative cinema to a wider exploration of how the moving image acts on subjectivity in a social space. Entering the installation, the viewer meets a suspended screen on which a silent colour 16 mm film is back-projected. At right angles to this screen, two black-and-white videos are projected at a much larger scale, side by side on the gallery wall. The looped film depicts a three-minute re-enactment of the scene from *Martha*: a young woman walks forward, a man arrives, they momentarily confront each other and turn away while the camera tracks around them. Each video shows contrasting footage of the man and the woman arriving in the garden and approaching the other character, they also include shots of the three-person camera crew, the circular tracks for the camera and naturalistic sounds of birdsong and gravel crunching underfoot. As the two characters meet and turn away, each video records a close-up, worm's eye view of the other body turning. Islam's response to the source scene from *Martha* was to imagine the profilmic situation before the camera and add supplementary, subjective point of view shots:

> in *Tuin*, I gave the characters video cameras while staging the scenes. They were hand held devices that created a documentary-style perspective whereas the 16 mm film version illustrates the actual 360° turn in its most theatrical illusory way. The film and the two subjective points of view created a type of echo chamber, into which the spectator has to find their own orientation. (Farronato 2007)

By projecting the point of view shots side by side rather than edited into a one-channel video, the conventional cinematic syntax of point of view; the shot-reverse shot structure or reverse angle cutting is absent. The gallery viewer becomes acutely aware of the presence of the camera lens as it trains its focus on the male and female characters. Rather than establishing a relationship with each other, each protagonist appears to relate to the camera and the camera crew. Within the space of the installation,

the viewers move between the different imaging modes, the cinematographic and the more prosaic recording video. The large video projections dominate the space and as both characters approach the camera, there is a sense in which they and us, the spectators, experience each other through the camera lens. This 'echo chamber' is a world where intersubjective relations are mediated through the camera. The suspended screen is at the fulcrum of the gazes exchanged between the woman, the man and the camera apparatus and the gallery viewer's mobile spectatorship. Islam's recreation of her source—a well-known extended tracking shot in *Martha*—does not quite have the élan of the original film's cinematography by Michael Ballhaus, however it serves the purpose of reframing cinema within the expanded space of the gallery.[25] The fiction of the re-enacted scene from *Martha* is literally suspended in mid-air and made transparent by rear projection while the large video projections physically loom over the viewer.

Fassbinder's Martha

In the original film *Martha*, a fleeting encounter between a man and a woman is a strangely ominous version of a stereotypical 'love at first sight' romantic scene. In *Tuin* the re-enactment of the scene in a public park and its deconstruction in the gallery forensically shows the role of the camera in the construction of such a scene. Early on in Fassbinder's film, the two principal characters happen to pass each other by in a Roman piazza. At this moment the camera makes a startling 360° tracking shot around them, terminating with the man walking off in an unsettlingly speeded-up fashion. Disrupting conventional continuity filmmaking which masks the presence of the camera, the circling shot visually configures a connection between the two characters although at this point in the narrative they have not formally met. The film goes on to unfold a tale of two people locked in a grotesque marriage where the young woman, Martha finds herself at the mercy of her sadistic husband. As Thomas Elsaesser comments, the film teeters between melodrama and a horror film with ambiguity around Martha's collusion in her predicament (Elsaesser 1996, 279). In the piazza scene, the forcefully spinning camera movement expresses the relationship between Martha and her future husband as a function of the camera apparatus itself. Analogous with the film's political critique of the subservient social and economic status of women within the modern postwar German state, the character

of Martha is shown as an object held within the gravitational orbit of the camera lens. Just as the film's narrative tells a story of Martha's subordinate position, the characters in the film are subject to the apparatus of cinema.

The idea of identity and subjectivity being an affect of cinema is a concept that is present in Fassbinder's films which were consistently based on Hollywood genres, especially melodrama.[26] Within the constrained interior dramas of his films, Fassbinder's characters exist to be looked at, to see and be seen. In *Martha* the two characters can be said to be acting out distorted social roles. Elsaesser states that:

> Fassbinder's films do not so much create autonomous worlds as they represent media-worlds, which is to say, they live by the quotations, references, borrowings from newspapers, press photography, popular music, and above all, from other films. One of the characteristics of his work, which furnishes proof of his political acuity and testifies to his sense of history, is precisely this subtle but pervasive awareness of representation always generating a space of media-reality. […] Fassbinder never pretends to be giving us people as they 'are', but as they represent themselves… (Elsaesser 1996, 22)

While Fassbinder's films create 'media worlds' and 'media-reality' then Islam's installation examines how the moving image is involved in both the construction of narrative illusion and the seemingly objective recording of physical reality. In restaging the scene from *Martha*, it is significant that Islam foregrounds a visceral moment of film technology where it is the cinematography as opposed to narrative codes that reveals an important meaning in the film. Elsaesser comments that Fassbinder complicates both the classical and the modernist cinema apparatus through excessive framing, repeated mirror shots and shots that assert the presence of the camera (Elsaesser 1996, 59). In these excesses of film form, Fassbinder disrupts the spectator's relationship to the characters and the fictive world of the film. In asserting the presence of the camera, Fassbinder's cinema cannot be fully theorized within the framework of psychoanalytically inflected apparatus theory (Baudry 2004).[27] At times the spectator of a Fassbinder film is not entirely sure what position to take up in relation to the filmed diegesis. A film like *Martha* may be said to be phenomenological in that it shows an imaginative view of the world to the spectator yet it also goes beyond phenomenology in that it shows points

of view that are neither subject nor object and cannot be totally assimilated by the spectator. The 360° tracking shot and other unexplained reflexive moments, assert an ontology of film as an autonomous reality.

Islam's remake of the Fassbinder scene suggests that the exchange of looks, this potentially romantic relationship is simply staged for the camera and only exists because of the camera:

> the direct act of looking is housed within a framework of 'illusion/reality', 'male/female' and 'viewer/viewed', subject positions. This was displayed on three separate screens to purposely disturb the binary associations, with each of the screens playing a key role in the orchestration of the 'visual' idea. (Fortnum 2007, 133)

Through the spatial configuration of the three screens, Islam manages to avoid a simplistic dichotomy between the artifice of cinematography with the supposed documentary recording of the video camera—rather *Tuin* demonstrates how we apprehend reality through moving image technologies and narrative codes. The installation presents the world as a scene from a film in that the 16 mm film projection plays homage to a fragment of cinema narrative re-enacted in a city park. The video projections can be seen as both the profilmic reality to the tracking shot of the 16 mm film loop, and as narratives in their own right. In experiencing *Tuin*, the viewer holds simultaneously different interpretations of the images in mind—is s/he watching an excerpt from a fictional film, the documentation of a film set or the actual process of acting, as the performer transforms from actor to character. Whichever interpretation we choose; two people in a park, two actors in a park or two characters in a film, our encounter is mediated through the technology of the moving image. Reality is understood as an effect of this technology.

Film in the Gallery: Body Press *(1970–1972)*

Tuin's configuration of a relationship between a man, a woman and a circling camera invites comparisons with Dan Graham's *Body Press* (1970–1972) which features the same elements with a very different emphasis.[28] While *Tuin* references cinema, in *Body Press* the camera is used phenomenologically without any reference to cinema spectatorship. Although Graham would go on to make work like *Cinema* (1981) that engages with cinema as a social institution, in *Body Press* he proceeds as if

in complete disavowal of seventy years of cinema spectatorship. The film camera is treated as a recording device disconnected from any narrative or illusory function. Gregor Stemmrich interprets Graham's attitude to film in the early 1970s as follows:

> in the early films, Graham could expose the way film functions only through a certain negation and/or an intentionally contrary experience: in the cinema, filming is not itself shown as action, nor is a bodily perspective introduced; what the film image in the cinema shows is not relativized and exponentially intensified by the view of a second camera and has nothing explicitly to do with architecture. (Stemmrich 2009, 96)

Rather than a negation of cinema, *Body Press* can also be considered as an alternative cinema apparatus that asserts a different treatment of space and time to conventional cinema and values the relationship between the physical space of screening and the viewer as well as the screen image. In *Body Press* and related works Graham is attempting to line up connections between the performer, the camera and the spectator by creating a physical, embodied spectatorship in which the viewer is placed between screen images of close-up, spatially constricted bodies. The temporality of these moving images is a spiralling tracking of the body.

In *Body Press* the viewer enters an installation where two colour 16 mm films are projected large scale on opposing sides of a narrow space.[29] Each film is based on a complex performance for which Graham created his own filming apparatus. A man and a woman stand naked and back to back inside a cylinder with mirrored internal walls, each holding a 16 mm film camera close to their chest, as shown in Fig. 5.6. The performers proceed to move the cameras in a rotating direction spiralling around their bodies with the camera lens facing away from them. The rotated movements go upwards and downwards until the performers swop cameras and continue to film. The resulting two films capture both the reflection of each performer/film-maker's body in the cylindrical mirror and views of the other performer. In the projected films, the gallery viewer sees the kinaesthetic movement of the cameras, the distorted reflections of the performers on the mirrored walls as well as gaining a visceral sense of the performers' bodies as the camera movements spiral outwards. Thus, the viewer's spectatorship is reflected back to them in a relay effect from the performance. In an ironic reversal of agency, the intimate surface of the body is recorded by the mechanical gaze of the camera while the film

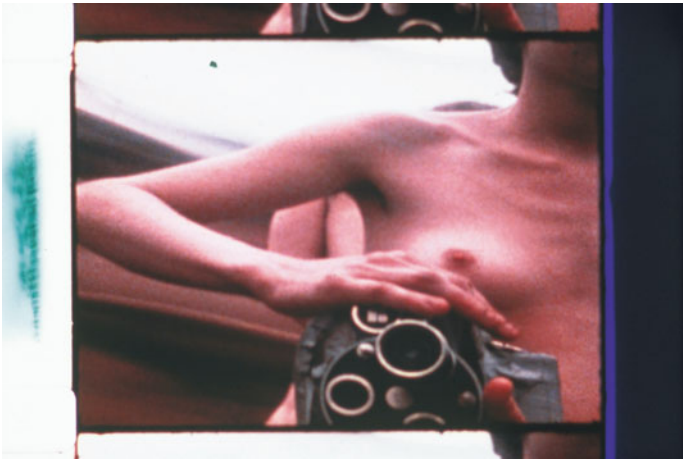

Fig. 5.6 Dan Graham, *Body Press* (1970–1972), film still, courtesy of the artist and Lisson Gallery, London

camera is endowed with a physicalized human point of view as it moves around the contours of the operator's body. *Body Press* expresses a certain alienation as the two cameras' recording gazes literally come between the two bodies of the performers. On a physiological level, the work tries to communicate a feeling of being inside the performer's skin, as Graham states:

> to the spectator the camera's optical vantage is the skin. (An exception is when the performer's eyes are also seen reflected or when the cameras are seen filming the other.) The performer's musculature is also 'seen' pressing into the surface of the body (pulling inside out). At the same time, kinaesthetically, the handling of the camera can be "felt" by the spectator as surface tension – as the hidden side of the camera presses and slides against the skin it covers at a particular moment. (Graham 1999, 90)

As the cameras are swopped during the performance the work experiments with the intermingling of identities and subjectivities. The performers are also acting as film-makers and the subject of the film is their perception of their own and the other's body. The viewer identifies both with the camera's viewpoint which is closely held next to the

performer's skin and with the interwoven views of the male and female bodies albeit gendered in a heterosexual paradigm.

In one respect, Graham's performers could be seen as a highly abstracted model of Fassbinder's heterosexual couple that are caught up in an ideological apparatus. As the mirrored walls create varying degrees of anamorphic distortion, the film dramatizes the imperfection of the apparatus. The viewer both identifies with and is distanced from the screen image. In this anamorphic imaging Graham manages a more reflexive position that complicates the otherwise straightforward position of transparent documenting in his recorded footage. Yet, because Graham doesn't deal with narrative or the 'suspension of disbelief' engendered by cinematic illusion, his film apparatus remains disconnected from the referential aspect of film as it relates to the social and historical world. In this sense *Body Press* creates an experience of space and time that is ahistorical.

In *Tuin*, Islam radically updates Graham's investigation of spectatorship by drawing on narrative cinema although retaining the functionality of the camera as a recording device in her video footage of the two performers. While the performers in *Body Press* are treated as objects in space in *Tuin*, the camera suggests a more social, potentially narrative relation between a man and a woman under enigmatic circumstances. If in this early work, Islam does not go much further than staging an analytical deconstruction of Fassbinder's scene, *Tuin* nonetheless initiates her method of deploying cinematographic quotations in order to advance an inquiry into the nature of reality both apprehended and constructed through the camera.

Be the First to See What You See as You See It (2004)

In *Be The First to See What You See As You See It* (2004), Islam returns to one of the first special effects of the moving image which fascinated the historical avant-garde.[30] Slow motion is a technological temporality that discloses how the moving image modulates reality as it records it. It is part of what Benjamin calls the 'optical unconscious' (Benjamin 2002, 117). Although it originated as a 16 mm film installation *Be the First* was shown as projected video on a large suspended screen at the fifty-first Venice Biennale (2005). In allowing the work to be exhibited this way Islam demonstrates an intermedial aesthetic in which film remediated by video enters into new contexts of audience and exhibition. The title is

a quotation from Bresson's collection of aphorisms and 'notes on cinematography', which reflect his philosophy of a realist cinema (Bresson 1977, 46). In *Be the First* Bresson's injunction becomes a means of considering what it means to view the world through the moving image. Islam transposes Bresson's advice to film-makers to the viewers, asking them to decide what exactly they are seeing. *Be the First* begins with an elegant young woman moving among a display of china presented on a series of plinths, shown in Fig. 5.7. Over the course of the film the woman progresses from looking at the china to touching and eventually tipping some of it over. A montage of slow motion shots and repeated shots of the falling china is built up. The audio track introduces nonsynchronous sounds of tea-drinking and the sound of crashing china. Thus, the film educates its viewers in a series of cinematic repetitions, edits and disjunctive image–sound combinations, ultimately ironizing its own title. Our attention is drawn to the constitutive ambiguity of the moving image as it oscillates between documenting and fictive registers.

The visual source for *Be The First* is a historical scientific film from 1924 which tests slow motion by showing a man smashing a jug of water.[31] In restaging this action Islam creates a layered temporality where the meaning of the film hovers between a demonstration of slow motion and a possible diegetic world. Originating as it does from a demonstration film, *Be The First* retains a sense of events being both orchestrated for the camera and produced by the camera. As theories of objectivity show, to record something is also to act on it. Through the repetition of shots and the nonsynchronous sound there is an ambiguity in Islam's film as to whether the objects actually fall or whether we are looking at an image of what might happen in another space-time continuum. The viewer is positioned in a space between the apperception of objective reality—the objects in space represented by the china on plinths and the subjective imaginative illusion elicited by the moving image's editing effects. These discrepancies produce an unreliable temporality. While Bresson's advice to: 'be the first to see what you see as you see it' is reminiscent of the modernist valorization of the present and the contingent moment, Islam's interpretation of the instruction shows that rather than recording the moment, the moving image presents a multiplicity of possible moments. It is in this plural temporality that film's inherent virtuality and fictionalizing capacities become evident.

It is significant that Islam sets her scenario within a quasi-museum space of display and value. Considering this setting the curator Marc

Fig. 5.7 Runa Islam, *Be The First to See What You See As You See It* (2004), installation shot, © Runa Islam, photo © Gerry Johansson, courtesy White Cube, London

Lanctôt refers to Raymond Bellour's theory that: 'the showing of a museum is always an important moment of truth in all films' (Lanctôt 2010, 36; Bellour 1991, 16). In *Be The First*, the museum becomes the site of reckoning with the ways in which the moving image modulates human perception. The valued artefact in this museum space is less the pictured display of china than the featured technique, the film camera's ability to produce extremely slowed time. Islam makes it clear that the scene is constructed by camera shots and montage—it is not possible for the viewer to 'be the first to see', rather they see the construction of seeing via a cinematographic vocabulary. In this process the display and breaking of china stands as an analogy to the filmic construction and deconstruction of reality. The mise-en-scène of the museum space underlines the fact that *Be The First* is an appraisal of the multiple temporalities of the moving image from slow motion to elliptical diegetic time to the phenomenological time and space of the viewer and the screen image.

In considering the work of Steve McQueen and Runa Islam as a mnemonic mode of 'echo-chamber' I argue that both artists take up the 'unfinished business' of the historical avant-gardes in their dual engagement with narrative cinema and the embodied spectatorship of artists' film. Although the historical avant-garde engaged with the aesthetic and narrative properties of film, they did not have a history of film and thus the capacity to fully reference a 'past tense' of film. The emphasis on the present and future in historical avant-garde film contrasts with the focus on 'pastness' and memory in artists' moving image of the late 1990s. In their mnemonic trajectories, McQueen and Islam's installations connect the past of film with the time and space of the viewer. By inscribing himself as a black 'other' into historical film genres such the fight scene, the circus and slapstick, McQueen makes the films that were never made. Extending and pressurizing avant-garde aesthetics from constructivism to 'structuralist' flicker films, he asserts the moving image as a material of memory with the 'weight of an experience' (Benjamin 1997, 154). Runa Islam also returns to historical film aesthetics but with a different emphasis on the origins of the moving image in both illusory effects and indexicality. Like McQueen, she positions the viewer in a doubled form of spectatorship, embodied in the phenomenological space of the gallery and engaged with the illusionary fictions of the screen image. Both McQueen and Islam work with an intermedial aesthetics of film and video that enables them to engage with the moving image as narrative cinema, experimental art and recording technology.

Notes

1. *Paris qui dort* (*Paris Is Sleeping)*, directed by René Clair (1923–1924: Criterion Collection, 2002), DVD, suggests time travel through a fantastical ray device as opposed to film form.
2. Steve McQueen won the Turner Prize in 1999 among other awards and continues to maintain an art practice.
3. McQueen cites the importance of Nauman and Rainer's work to him in an interview with Adrian Searle (Searle 2012, 193).
4. *Five Easy Pieces* (1995), black-and-white 16 mm film transferred to video, seven minutes, four seconds, continuous projection, edition of three and one AP, collection Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands.
5. McQueen apparently had not seen Rafelson's film when he borrowed the title (Storr 1999, 9). See also Yvonne Rainer's *Five Easy Pieces* (1966–1969), five black-and-white 8 mm and 16 mm films transferred to video, silent, 4:3, 52 minutes, 20 seconds, collection Museum of Modern Art, New York.
6. However for the survey exhibition 'Steve McQueen', Schaulager, Basel, 1 March–1 September 2013, McQueen changed the way he had presented certain installations in the 1990s. Three key early works: *Bear*, (1993), *Five Easy Piece (*1995) and *Just Above my Head* (1996) were projected onto the three sides of a large freestanding triangular support in the centre of the gallery floor, described as 'leaning against each other' by the artist (Nelson 2013, 320). This made for an entirely new viewing experience of these works, which had previously been shown in enclosed spaces.
7. McQueen also challenges the standardized industry norms of film lighting and composition which were historically calibrated for white skin by lighting his films for black skin, see (Newman 1999, 24).
8. Thompson compares this shot with a scene from *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951) and with the work of Michelangelo Antonioni and Jean-Luc Godard (Thompson 1997, 9).
9. Steve McQueen also repeats this avant-garde gesture in *Catch* (1997), colour video, no sound, one minute, fifty four seconds.
10. *Playing a Note on the Violin While I Walk around the Studio* (1967–1968), black-and-white 16 mm film, sound, nine minutes, *Bouncing Two Balls between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms* (1968), black-and- white 16 mm film, sound, nine minutes, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–1968), black-and-white 16 mm film, silent, ten minutes, *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square (Square Dance)* (1967–1968), black-and-white 16 mm film, silent, ten minutes. All films, transferred to video, collection Museum of Modern Art, New York.
11. *Bear* (1993), black-and-white 16 mm film transferred to video, no sound, ten minutes, thirty five seconds, continuous projection, edition of three

and one AP, collection Tate, London. *Deadpan* (1997), black-and-white 16 mm film transferred to video, no sound, four minutes, thirty five seconds, continuous projection, edition of four and one AP, collection Museum of Modern Art, New York.

12. Describing the descent of the house, Michael Archer writes: 'being able to see this movement of air, but unable to hear it, produces a strange sense of suffocation' (Archer 1998, 20).
13. I viewed *Deadpan* in 'Steve McQueen', Schaulager, Basel, 1 March–1 September 2013 where the work was shown in an enclosed space as it had been originally exhibited in the 1990s.
14. Ursula Frohne discusses how McQueen shifts the focus from humour to anxiety (Frohne 2008).
15. The flicker film is associated with the work of 'structuralist' film-makers in the 1960s: Tony Conrad, Paul Sharits and Peter Kubelka.
16. Marcel Duchamp's and Man Ray's *Anémic cinéma* (1925) is a seven minute film based on Duchamp's experiments with glass discs later developed into his *Rotoreliefs*, six cardboard disks printed with optical patterns that appear three dimensional when spun on a turntable, first exhibited in 1935.
17. *Box(ahhareturnabout)* (1977), black-and-white 16 mm film, continuous projection, five minutes each rotation, optical soundtrack.
18. *Stare Out (Blink)* (1998), black-and-white 16 mm film installation, three minutes looped projection, no sound, edition of three, collection, Arts Council England. Exhibited in *The British Art Show 5* (2001), touring to Edinburgh, Southampton, Cardiff and Birmingham, curated by Pippa Coles, Matthew Higgs and Jacqui Poncelet and organized by the Hayward Gallery.
19. The theory of afterimage shows that in response to a stimulus, the eye-brain neural pathway produces the optical illusion of an afterimage. The theory of the phi effect explains that when presented with the rapid sequential projection of film frames, the brain perceives movement, it 'fills in' the illusion of movement.
20. Islam's engagement with cinema is evidenced by her M. Phil thesis 'Open Narrative in Contemporary Art and Film' (Islam 2004).
21. In the late nineteenth century, the railroad companies standardized time and Frederick W. Taylor developed techniques for the most efficient production based on timing workers' performance.
22. *Turn (Gaze of Orpheus)* (1998), colour video, DVD, looped projection, dimensions variable.Exhibited in 'The Whitechapel Centenary', Whitechapel Gallery (2001), curated by Catherine Lampert, Anish Kapoor and Rosemarie Trockel.

23. *Turn (Gaze of Orpheus* was shown like this at the Tschumi Pavilion, Groningen, the Netherlands, 22 December 1999–23 January 2000. *Stare Out (Blink)* was exhibited inside.
24. *Tuin* (1998), colour 16 mm film on single screen, two black-and-white digital video projections, six minutes, continuous projection, sound on CD, collection Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Exhibited in 'Tele-Journeys', (2002), MIT List Visual Arts Centre, Cambridge, MA, curated by Jane Farver and Joan Jonas, 'The Cinema Effect: Part II: Realisms', Washington, DC (2008), curated by Anne Ellegood and Kristen Hileman and in 'Fassbinder Now', Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin (2015) curated by Anna Fricke. *Tuin* (garden), was shot in a public park in Amsterdam while Islam was on a residency programme at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, 1997–1998.
25. This was underlined in 'Fassbinder Now' where the curator screened Michael Ballhaus's 360° shot from *Martha* as part of a looped sequence of tracking shots from Fassbinder films in the ante room to the *Tuin* installation.
26. The title character in *Martha* takes her name from Martha Hyer, a Hollywood actress of the 1950s and 1960s. The screenplay of *Martha* is based on Cornell Woolrich's novel *For the Rest of Her Life* (1968).
27. In this essay Baudry shifts terminology from *appareil* meaning all stages of a film production to *dispositif* emphasising the spectator's encounter with the projected film. Both *appareil* and *dispositif* are translated in English as 'apparatus'.
28. *Body Press* (1970–1972), two-channel colour 16 mm film installation, eight minutes, synchronous looped projection on opposite walls, silent, edition of three and one AP, collection Pamela and Richard Kramlich.
29. Confusingly, the work is largely known by a black-and-white production still of the performance rather than the actual projected films which the gallery viewer sees.
30. *Be The First to See What You See As You See It* (2004), colour 16 mm film, seven minutes, thirty seconds, looped projection, optical sound, edition of three and two APs, collection Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris. Exhibited at the fifty first Venice Biennale, curated by Maria de Corral and Rosa Martínez, Venice (2005), it was shown in the 'Always a Little Further' section, curated by Rosa Martínez at the Arsenale.
31. *Test of Jenkins Camera (B)* (1924), black-and-white 35 mm film, 200 feet, no sound shows a man smashing a water-filled glass jug in extreme slow motion. It was filmed with a high-speed camera (3000 fps). Collection Imperial War Museum collection.

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CHAPTER 6

Documentary Fiction

The real must be fictionalized in order to be thought. (Rancière 2013, 34)

The documentary fiction is a mode of artists' moving image practice that has developed in tandem with the cultural privileging of memory in relation to history since the 1990s. Documentary fiction is defined by Jacques Rancière in terms of: 'memory as the work of fiction' where fiction is understood as a creative 'forging' of the real (Rancière 2006, 158). In artists' moving image, the documentary fiction mode develops in artists' engagement with historical events through formats associated with cinema. These include the film set, mise-en-scène, the figure of the extra and documentary formats such as the re-enactment and the witness testimony. In the documentary fiction mode temporalities associated with fictional narrative such as time travel are brought to bear on historical experience.

Rancière's formulation of documentary fiction is based on his analysis of Marker's essay film *Le Tombeau d'Alexandre (The Last Bolshevik)* (1993), a homage to the neglected Soviet director Alexander Medvedkin (1900–1989), originally commissioned as a two-part television programme. In constructing a narrative of Medvedkin's life, Marker creates a montage of images in conjunction with an acerbic voiceover that points out the discrepancies and ambiguities of media representations of historical events. Rancière describes *Le Tombeau d'Alexandre* as a 'documentary fiction' that works not so much 'to preserve Medvedkin's

S. Durcan, *Memory and Intermediality in Artists' Moving Image*,
Experimental Film and Artists' Moving Image,
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memory but to create it' (Rancière 2006, 157). Resisting a dichotomy between documentary and fiction film, Rancière suggests that they each engage with the real in different ways:

> the real difference between them isn't that the documentary sides with the real against the inventions of fiction, it's just that the documentary instead of treating the real as an effect to be produced, treats it as a fact to be understood. (Rancière 2006, 158)

Thus the documentary fiction mode draws on the same aesthetic properties as the fiction film but with a different intention in regard to the real. It sits within Rancière's view of cinema as a 'thwarted fable', meaning that cinema works productively against the grain of its own genres and conventions of film syntax (Rancière 2006, 11). Citing theories of cinema by Jean Epstein, Godard and Deleuze, he argues that they have constructed their ontologies of cinema out of genre cinema and film narratives (Rancière 2006, 5). The interpretation of cinema as 'thwarted fables' is related to cinema's unique position within discourses of modernism. Many of its earliest theorists believed that cinema should aspire to being the seventh art.[1] However the predominance of conventional literary and theatrical forms in commercial cinema of the 1920s and 1930s placed it at odds with the modernist avant-garde, such as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Pablo Picasso who were exploring the limits of signification. According to Rancière, film possesses the ability to disclose the unconscious aesthetics of the everyday that modernist art aspires to, but in mainstream cinema, film aesthetics became subordinate to narrative codes and signs derived from conservative forms of literature (Rancière 2006, 10–11). The exception to the normative aesthetics of the emergent commercial cinema was the minority group of avant-garde artists and film-makers who worked between the narrative forms of cinema and a more autonomous experimental film form.

For his part Rancière rejects the idea of a pure aesthetics of cinema derived from the technological specificity of either analogue or digital media, insisting that all cinema functions on a 'thwarting logic' where film-makers like Roberto Rossellini and Robert Bresson achieve moments of pure cinema by shifting registers within the same scene from narrative to affect (Rancière 2006, 13). In consequence of this constitutive 'thwarting logic' of cinema, Rancière privileges the 'documentary fiction' over the fiction film form because the 'documentary fiction' has a greater

leverage over the selection of what might and might not be of significance, being free from the requirement to create a verisimilar 'reality effect'. Thus a work like Marker's *Le Tombeau d'Alexandre* has more aesthetic freedom than a pure fiction film because it does not have to maintain the illusion of a consistent mise-en-scène and instead it can create a constellation of different elements. However, this does not mean that history collapses into fiction. Rather, it signifies that the construction of historical narrative or documentary narrative requires fictional modes. For Rancière fiction is a means of arranging and articulating possible significations of meaning:

> politics and art, like forms of knowledge, construct 'fictions', that is to say *material* rearrangements of signs and images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, between what is done and what can be done. (Rancière 2013, 35)

Yet in constructing such 'fictions' in terms of the moving image, the status of the erstwhile 'documentary' image and the association of both film and video with recording and documenting reality becomes more problematic.

Documentary Fiction and Documentary

The term documentary fiction is useful in acknowledging that the documentary mode frequently uses the same narrative strategies as fiction film such as voice-over and montage editing. The documentary film form emerges in the 1920s and 1930s out of a mixed combination of factors and intentions regarding the possibilities of film technology. In his revisionist account of the origins of documentary, Bill Nichols cites the key formative factors as the necessity to record, the development of narrative film syntax, the desire to promote an instructive point of view extending to full blown propaganda and lastly avant-garde experimentation with film form (Nichols 2001, 595). He emphasizes how avant-garde innovation was necessary to documentary, while the idea of the document was also necessary to the avant-garde who wanted to engage with the real and the modern world: 'it was precisely the power of the combination of the indexical representations of the documentary image and the radical juxtapositions of time and space allowed by montage that drew the attention of many avant-garde artists to film' (Nichols 2001, 595). Although artifice has been an inherent part of the documentary form going back to Robert Flaherty's 'documents' of activities performed for the camera,

documentary is usually distinguished from fiction by virtue of its truth claims on reality. While Jane Gaines comments that: 'the defining edge that documentary has over the fiction film is the edge of indexicality', it may be more accurate to suggest that the status of documentary depends on the ways in which it authenticates its truth claims (Gaines 1999, 6). The North American 'direct cinema' movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s made attempts at making transparent documentary records although vulnerable to the critique of the naïve assumption that the presence of a recording camera does not affect what is filmed. In Europe, the term *cinéma vérité* associated with the work of Jean Rouch became a misnomer as Rouch's methods included many subjective techno-aesthetic decisions, not least adding the film's voiceover soundtracks long after the recorded film. In fact Rouch's films can be seen as ethnographic forms of documentary fiction.[2] Thus the authority of the indexical film image has been subject to sustained erosion over the twentieth century.

In his parsing of the complexities of documentary, Michael Renov concludes that any documentary must be assessed by its intentions towards and its positioning of its subject-matter (Renov 1993, 21). Documentary is constituted by an intermingling of subjective and authorial decisions combined with film footage. It is important to emphasize this definition of documentary as the term is often used as a 'straw man' denoting a simplistic transparency that denies the nuances and subtlety found in documentary film. Ultimately, the documentary film can only be distinguished from the fiction film by its intention to make a truth claim in relation to reality. The assessment of the truth claims of documentary rest on the spectator's willingness to believe in the totality of elements within the form. Both modes of documentary and fiction film draw on the same aesthetic resources of film technology and are driven by the film-maker's vision. Thus the documentary fiction and the essay film form must be seen as modes of film-making that emerge from within documentary not in opposition to it.

The antecedents of a concern with history and the archive can be found in the essay film form associated with selected films by Chris Marker, Jean-Luc Godard and Harun Farocki. In the UK, the Black Audio Film Collective's *Handsworth Songs* (1986), commissioned by Channel Four, is an important precedent in using remix principles to probe the intersection of personal experience with political events. However, the documentary fiction mode in artists' moving image installations should be distinguished from the essay film with which 'documentary fiction' is often associated.[3]

Although Nora Alter extends the essay film into artists' installation, I would argue that installations by definition are different to the essay film with its origins in the literary essay form (Alter 2007). Artists' moving image installations operate within conditions derived from post-minimalist strategies of involving gallery viewers in situated experiences. As Boris Groys defines it, the contemporary installation is: 'designed according to the sovereign will of an individual artist' and 'it invites the visitor to experience this space as the holistic, totalizing space of an artwork' (Groys 2009). In this context the spatiality and embodied spectatorship demanded by moving image installations exceeds the parameters of the essay film's typically single screen spectatorship.[4] While essay films range over a heterogeneous amount of subject matter, the documentary fiction mode in artists' moving image is a predominantly mnemonic mode concerned with historical experience.

'The Artist as Historian'

Writing in 2007, in an article titled 'The Artist as Historian', the curator Mark Godfrey notes the significant numbers of artists who engage with history through what he calls 'photographic mediums' (Godfrey 2007). He provides a short taxonomy of artists' representations of history, that involve historical locations, archives, biography, performance, fiction and the critique of Hollywood versions of history. While Godfrey's article is useful in identifying artists' engagement with history, his explanation for the resurgence of history as a thematic in contemporary artists' moving image can be expanded further. Firstly, Godfrey suggests that the concern with history is a response to encroaching digitalization where artists become sensitive to the indexicality of lens-based media as these media are superseded by digital media. Yet, artists' engagement with history is to a large degree embedded in and enabled by 'new media' technologies. While Godfrey uses the term 'photographic mediums' meaning film, video and photography, such distinctions have been superseded by digitalization which remediates and assimilates all media into the meta-media of software. However, digitalization does not necessarily mean the erasure of media, rather, as we have seen artists' references to history are characterized by an aesthetics of intermediality. Secondly, Godfrey's list of the ways in which contemporary art features history through the archive, the location shot and re-enactment can all be related to the apparatus of cinema (Godfrey 2007, 146). This indicates how cinema as a set of representational modes and practices has become a dominant conduit to

history in artists' moving image. Fragments from the archive of cinema are accessed, replayed and reconstituted through the affordances of the internet and software applications while elements of cinema production are incorporated into hybrid and differentiated moving image installations in the gallery. Godfrey also states that historical subject–matter becomes more important in the context of the culture of global capitalism and its tendency to create spectacular, inaccurate representations of the past (Godfrey 2007, 146). We might then ask why in a globalized world of neoliberal capitalism, the engagement with history in contemporary art is figured through cinema? The following case studies of artworks by Pierre Huyghe, Omer Fast and Clemens von Wedemeyer prompt some possible answers.

6.1 From Site to Scenario: Pierre Huyghe

As we have noted, in the documentary fiction mode, artists engage with historical events and the fallibility of memory through cinematic formats. A leading example of this mode is found in the work of Pierre Huyghe from the mid 1990s to the early 2000s. At the time, Huyghe's art practice was based on propositions like 'scenario', 'event' and 'work-site'. His 'scenarios' take material form in fictional narratives borrowed from cinema which are played out in actual locations. In this deployment of cinema, its role in the mediatization of historical events and cultural memory is foregrounded. Like other artists in the 1990s, Huyghe's appropriations of cinema begin with the work of canonical auteurs like Alfred Hitchcock and Pier Paolo Pasolini but also reference contemporary directors like Steven Spielberg and Wim Wenders.

The notion of the open-ended construction site appears in Huyghe's earliest work and is the key to his attitude to cinema as a tool that can be repurposed. In a series of photographs titled *Chantier permanent* (*permanent building site)* (1993) and works on billboard advertising sites, Huyghe made interventions into public space with images that suggested alternative temporalities to the neoliberal capitalist regime. In 1995 he founded *L'Association des temps libérés (the association of freed time)* in a gesture of resistance to post-Fordist labour practices where leisure time is as regimented and controlled as work time.[5] Jean-Christophe Royoux describes Huyghe's interventions as forms of activization, stating that: 'one of the principal effects of these gestures is to suggest an activation or activity of representation. In other words, they present representation not

as a "finished product," but as a work in progress. It is putting the representation to work, or in work, that interests the artist' (Royoux 2003, 182). The cinema as a collective social experience functions for Huyghe as a 'work-site' of transformation and imaginative possibility.

Remake *(1994–1995)*

Through its relationship to cinema, Huyghe's work tends to inhabit or colonize representational forms in order to generate new meanings or simply disturb conventional systems of meaning. Such colonizations are not just of the films themselves but also of the procedures and cultures specific to industrial film and television production. These artworks have taken material form in casting auditions, the dubbing of films into different languages, voice-over production, script-writing and setting up a public television station.[6] *Remake* (1994–1995), a low-tech 'home-movie' that recreates Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) on a rudimentary shot by shot basis is an example of how Huyghe repurposes cinema (Huyghe 2004, 196).[7] According to the artist, *Remake* was made over two weekends with non-professional actors in their own apartment using a basic video camcorder and microphone (Huyghe 2004, 196). Thus Huyghe's video is less a cinematic homage to Hitchcock than an exploration of how a narrative like *Rear Window* might be reactivated in a 'real' setting. As he puts it: 'one thing I find fascinating about cinema is that it's a direct proposition, a script, a way of life' (Huyghe 2004, 196). In *Remake*, Huyghe established a method whereby a well known film might be diverted from its original signification and become a skeletal armature to be reactivated in new contexts. In itself the principle of the remake is a core practice of the film industry, with many screenplays originating in remakes of literary texts or other films. For instance *Blow-Up* (1966), *The Conversation* (1974) and *Blow Out* (1981) are all considered as 'remakes' of *Rear Window* which is itself based on a short story by Cornell Woolrich (White 2000). However, Huyghe's 'remake' extends the concept to remake *Rear Window* within a real setting. His production follows the script, the scene compositions and the editing structure of the original film but makes no effort to create a suspenseful fictional world. The performances of James Stewart and Grace Kelly are treated as empty-vessels, whose gestures can be co-opted for multiple purposes.

Huyghe's repurposing of *Rear Window* as a 'work-site' is underlined by setting *Remake* in a Parisian housing estate under construction with

visible scaffolding in the exterior shots. Furthermore, Huyghe plays on the idea of originals and translation. Just as *Rear Window* becomes *Fenêtre sur cour* for French audiences, Huyghe transposes a Hollywood fiction to suburban Paris. The actors were shown a video and the script of *Rear Window* but were simply asked to repeat what they saw and not expected to assume the characters of Jeff and Lisa played by Stewart and Kelly. By choosing actors who could have been 'anyone', Huyghe strips the remembered film of both its star personae in Grace Kelly and James Stewart and also of its psychological depth. Instead Huyghe likens his method to a 'pornographic' lack of artifice and also compares his actors with Robert Bresson's concept of the 'model', where real people play themselves (Huyghe 2004, 196). As the French actors struggle to remember their lines and to adhere to Kelly and Stewart's performances, a textual split opens between the original characters and the reality of the actors as people. The spectator of *Remake* is drawn into this process as they too remember the original and compare this memory with the actors' performances. In Huyghe's words, the spectator: 'becomes a performer, an interpreter, himself' (Huyghe 2004, 196). Royoux echoes Huyghe in stating that his work creates a 'spectator-interpreter' who is enabled to enter the narrative (Royoux 2003, 187). In this relay between actor–spectator–interpreter, *Remake* could be described as a mise en abyme of role-play in which Stewart and Kelly's performances are interpreted by the actors in *Remake* and in turn the spectator of *Remake* interprets the performances in *Remake* by comparing them with their memories of *Rear Window*. Huyghe's scenarios in *Remake* and other works often create the effect of mise en abyme in the sense that they function as both images within images and narratives within narratives.

Clearly *Rear Window* lends itself to Huyghe's extended play on spectatorship given that it is both well-known and is itself a self-reflexive allegory of film spectatorship. The restricted view of the wheelchair-bound Jeff mirrors that of the classically immobile film spectator who infers meaning from the sequence of shots presented within a film narrative. Huyghe himself views his strategy in *Remake* as a response to Hitchcock's scenario for *Rear Window*:

> a character, motionless in front of his window, is watching the behaviour of those around him: he has been reduced to the position of a spectator interpreting events. Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) is a film about the notion of *mise-en-scène*, taking as its subject representation

> and the spectator's perception. […] The spectator can compare the difficulties encountered by the performers of *Remake* with his own memory lapses, and his own mental reconstruction of the Hitchcock film. Action and reception are interpretation. (Huyghe 2000, 12)

In *Rear Window*, the only nod to an extra-diegetic world is the shot of the bamboo curtains which open and close the film's narrative and a singular shot which presents a viewpoint which is not 'sutured' into the perspective of any of the protagonists; a night-time view of the apartment under suspicion. Therefore the self-reflexivity of *Rear Window* is not overt but underlies the double plotlines of love affair and murder mystery. By contrast, *Remake* turns the idea of a self-contained diegetic world inside out as a suburban apartment and its inhabitants appear to conform with the mise-en-scène of a Hollywood film. Because *Rear Window* is a systematically constructed film in which the narrative is locked into precisely composed and sequenced arrangements of sound and imagery, Huyghe is able to match his 'remake' scene by scene with Hitchcock. In a set of juxtaposed stills from *Rear Window* and *Remake* Huyghe indirectly endows his version with some of the drama of the original film, selecting scenes from *Rear Window* which feature moments of truth and plot development.[8] Fig. 6.1 shows Lisa standing transfixed by Jeff's wheelchair as she finally sees evidence of his suspicion with her own eyes alongside Huyghe's *Remake* actors carefully following the composition of *Rear Window*.

In remaking these key moments, Huyghe potentially stages the themes of voyeurism, social isolation and authority which Hitchcock articulated through a suspenseful romantic thriller. However, in contrast to the isolation of suspense within Huyghe's photomontages of stills, the gallery viewers' experience of viewing *Remake* lacks both the suspense and the visual spectacle of Hitchcock's production. The paced and controlled diegetic time of *Rear Window* is collapsed into the quasi 'real time' duration of a home-movie as Huyghe's camcorder records the hesitations and imperfections of his 'everyday' remake which runs thirty minutes longer than *Rear Window's* 112 minutes. Ultimately *Remake* simply proposes that film narratives could anticipate or produce actual events in a real-world setting outside the cinema. Further works by Huyghe in the mid to late 1990s develop this strategy in more complex ways.

Fig. 6.1 Pierre Huyghe, video stills *Rear Window* (1954) and *Remake* (1994–1995), courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris

Les Incivils (the Uncivilised) *(1995)*

If *Remake* empties out the drama and aesthetic qualities of Hitchcock's original, becoming a strange instance of a suburban milieu haunted by a Hollywood film, Huyghe's next project *Les incivils (The uncivilised)* (1995) returns to the shooting locations of Pier Paulo Pasolini's *Uccellacci e uccellini (The Hawks and the Sparrows)* (1966) in Lazio.[9] *Uccellacci e uccellini* is a black comedy in which a father and son duo embark on a time travelling journey through the Roman countryside. With the inclusion of a Marxist speaking crow and newsreel footage of the funeral of Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the PCI, the Italian Communist party in 1964, the film can be read as an allegory of the defunct legacy of Marxism. *Les incivils* is a partial remake of *Uccellacci e uccellini* with extra-textual interviews with the original actor Ninetto Davoli, local residents who remember the original film shoot, excerpts from Huyghe's casting session for *Les incivils* staged as a gallery event and shots of the beach at Ostia where Pasolini was murdered in 1975.[10] Unlike *Remake*, *Les incivils* does not follow the original film on a shot by shot basis, making the temporal contrast between Pasolini's 1966 settings and Lazio in the mid 1990s more evident and in a sense operating as a sequel to *Uccellacci e uccellini*. Huyghe's return to the original locations eerily resonates with the predictive time-travelling of *Uccellacci e uccellini* where Toto and Ninetto jump from the year 1200 in the middle ages to the future and Ninetto states: 'we are in the year 2000 and they still do these things'. In *Les incivils*, Huyghe's replacements and substitutions for original scenes in *Uccellacci e uccellini* continue the political critique of the earlier film. Thus Huyghe replaces Pasolini's footage of Togliatti's funeral with scenes of a derelict community centre and abandoned housing construction (Chaloin 1999, 88). Huyghe explicitly links his method of 'remaking' cinema to Pasolini stating:

> in *The Heretic Experience*, Pasolini defines cinema as the written language of reality. In consequence, we could consider a film being in suspension until someone decides to use it, it could become a program to be replayed, a temporary form of existence, a reality generator. (Huyghe 2000, 45)

We must then ask what happens when Huyghe uses Pasolini's film and associated elements such as the presence of Ninetto Davoli, the outlying conurbations of Lazio and Pasolini himself, as 'a reality generator'?

For Pasolini the cinema is a reality that combines the reproduction of physical reality with a metaphysical vision. Huyghe takes Pasolini's theory of cinema as the 'written language of reality' one step further by proposing a 'way of experiencing a story by shifting it into reality' (Huyghe 2000, 45). However, in actualizing this shift Huyghe substitutes cinema aesthetics with the conceptual transposition of a film narrative into a real setting. Thus *Les incivils* is not a cinematic equal to *Uccellacci e uccellini* but part of an attempt to re-activate Pasolini's narrative within its original location. Huyghe's casting session and 'remake' of scenes from the original film are strategies to re-activate a memory of Pasolini's film in Lazio of the mid 1990s, essentially proposing that *Uccellacci e uccellini* is as much a part of that urban reality as the unfinished motorways visible in both the 1966 and the 1995 films. Fig. 6.2 shows Huyghe's juxtaposition of matching scenes of the motorway from the original Pasolini film and *Les incivils*, used as part of the documentation of his project. Through cinema Huyghe finds a way of creating a double temporality which is that of the present underlaid by the past. In *Les incivils*, a cinematic representation becomes a means of re-articulating the issues raised in 1966 about private property and political ideology. The difference is that these issues are presented not as a fable but as roles, scripts and scenes that are imaginatively placed into real locations. Huyghe's work suggests that cinematic narratives not only play a part in reflecting on historical experience but can reverberate in the present as active virtual memories within public spaces, in this case thirty years after Pasolini's film.

Filming the Real as Cinema

In an interview with George Baker, Huyghe makes it clear that he views cinema as a shared social and public space that, following Pasolini, can be used as a tool to respond to and intervene in reality:

> a film is a public space, a common place. It is not a monument but a space of discussion and action. It's an ecology. Yes, that *Les incivils* was the first is significant. Pasolini had this famous sentence: "Cinema is the written language of reality." If this is true, then it becomes possible to imagine taking up this language to effect reality. (Baker and Huyghe 2004, 96)

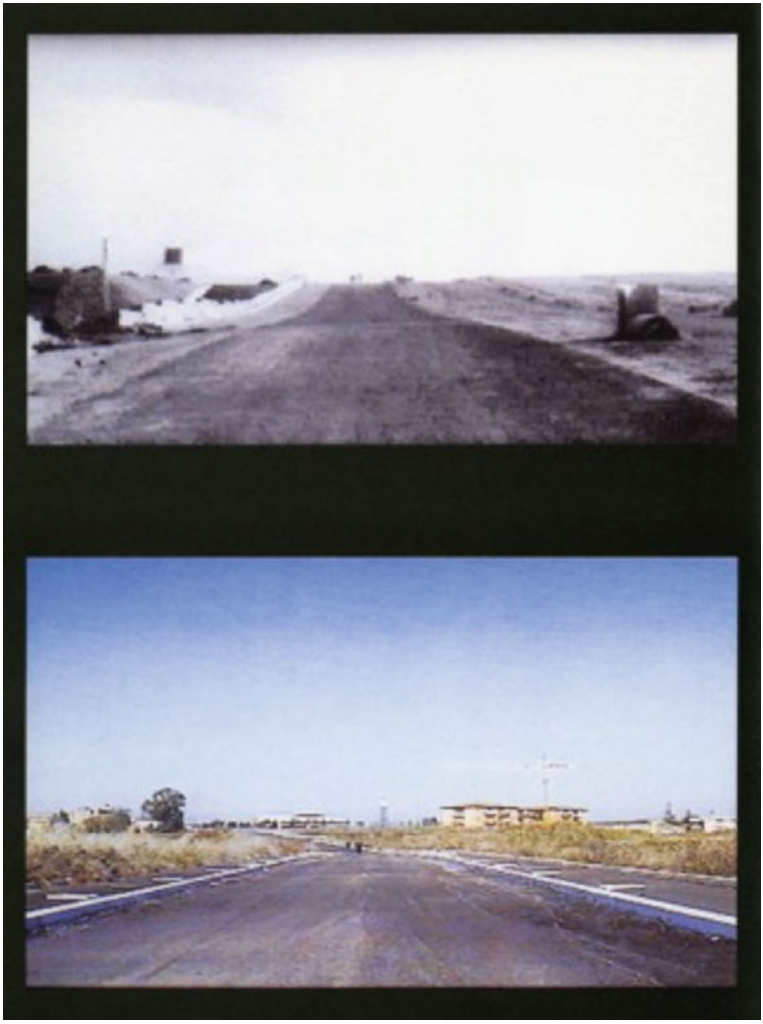

Fig. 6.2 Pierre Huyghe, video stills *Uccellacci e uccellini* (1966) and *Les incivils* (1995), courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris

Huyghe goes on to discuss the significance of Pasolini's 1967 essay 'Observations on the Sequence Shot' to his method of treating representations and fictional scenarios as realities (Baker and Huyghe 2004, 96). In this text Pasolini speculates on a film that would show the death of President John F. Kennedy from all possible points of view (Pasolini 1988, 235). On the final page of his exhibition catalogue *The Trial*, Huyghe includes the following paraphrased lines, in French, from Pasolini's essay under the heading 'Prévision':

> in the possible film on the death of Kennedy all the other visual angles are missing.... Supposing that we had some short films shot from all those visual angles, what would we have? A series of sequence shots which would reproduce the real things and actions of that hour, seen contemporaneously from various visual angles: seen, that is, through a series of "subjectives"... And this present would be the time of the various "subjectives". Now suppose that someone was able to coordinate these shots. After this work of choice and coordination, the various visual angles would be dissolved, in their place would be a narrator, a reproduction of the present. (quoted by Huyghe 2000, 193)

As imagined by Pasolini, the film of this historical event involves a montage of multiple shots, a 'multiplication of presents' that he goes on to compare with the experience of death as 'an instantaneous montage of our lives' (Pasolini 1988, 234, 237). As a 'multiplication of presents', such a film would replace the now of the present with a Bergsonian multiplicity of time. Through montage and the collapsing of multiple segments of time, film has the capacity to disclose the real from a constructed representation. In Huyghe's work, the idea of film as a 'reproduction of the present' is further developed to explore how representations can overtake events as 'real fictions'. As it happens, Pasolini's scenario for a possible film on the death of Kennedy is actually partially realized in Bruce Conner's short film *Report* (1964) based on a compilation of contemporaneous footage of the event.[11] However, the assassination of Kennedy has now passed into myth known chiefly through the iconic Zapruder footage.[12] As Pasolini imagines a cinema master narrative making sense of the multiple, contingent camcorder recordings of Kennedy's death, his words anticipate both the problem and the possible solution facing both artists and historians. How should such an event be given coherence or dealt with as historical narrative?

For the historian Hayden White it is not a matter of choosing between the objective or the subjective narration of history but acknowledging that all discourse draws on figurative tropes (White 1978). The challenge for the historian or artist is how to find the means to represent and narrate historical events. As White writes: '…the meaning, form, or coherence of events, whether real or imaginary ones, is a function of their narrativization' (White 1996, 26). In the twentieth century, the Holocaust and other unprecedented events such as the dropping of atomic bombs, described by White as 'Holocaustal events' resist narrativization—and representation (White 1996). The increased mediatization of events has also contributed towards a scepticism and uncertainty in relation to historical events as the public have become more aware of how audiovisual media can be manipulated. For example, the conspiracy theories over the Zapruder footage hinge on whether the film was edited and on the missing time when the camera stopped and started filming. In 2000, the death of a young Palestinian boy, caught on camera by a French television news crew, became the subject of a propaganda war, with culpability and the interpretation of the event disputed by the Israeli Defence Forces.[13] Under these conditions, historical representation becomes more mutable, more amorphous yet simultaneously more available. Vivian Sobchack writes that: 'this loss of a "fix" on History' (*sic*) can be seen positively in the sense that history becomes something that must be actively constituted (Sobchack 1996, 6). A further 'derealization' of history is the extent to which some events appear to have been anticipated in fictional narratives. This is most notoriously the case in the '9/11' terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 where the spectacle of planes crashing into skyscrapers and airborne terrorism had already been 'premediated' in Hollywood blockbusters like *Flight to Holocaust* (1977), *True Lies* (1994), *Independence Day* (1996) and in Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise* (1985) (Grusin 2010). Furthermore as Paul Virilio notes, the live broadcasting of the event added to television viewers' perception that they might possibly be watching a disaster movie rather than reality (Virilio 2002, 38).

In White's view the constant replays of the explosion of the NASA Challenger space shuttle in 1986 or the footage of the Los Angeles police beating Rodney King in 1991 do not in themselves suffice to interpret or explain these events. He comments on the contingency of the Rodney King footage: the happenstance that the person with the camera happened to be there in antithesis to the idea that the event might follow

a pre-ordained scenario script (White 1996, 23). Another response might be to imagine what if the clip did follow a narrative script and a cinematic syntax. The latter response can be associated with the documentary fiction mode which acknowledges the imbrication of the real with the fictional. Huyghe's artworks follow Pasolini's suggestion of how to treat the death of Kennedy, by bringing cinematic narratives to bear on reality. His mobilization of cinema extends Pasolini's idea by conjoining different temporalities through cinema. In a reference to the war in Iraq Huyghe states his fascination with the idea of multiple views of the same event to the extent that the multitude of representations would occlude the event itself (Baker and Huyghe 2004, 97). Both the Gulf Wars beginning in 1991 and 2003 were experienced by Western television audiences and the military through the mediatized view of surveillance cameras and drone operators.[14] As White's summation of the peculiar status of twentieth century historical events implies, conventional and traditional forms of representation are not adequate for the virtual dimension of this war. Huyghe approaches reality through fictional constructs, often cinematic in form, which assert the necessity of such modalities to our ability to understand contemporary events. In this respect Huyghe's use of cinematic narratives and imagery can be related to Virilio's theories that cinematic technology dominates perception in the twentieth century to the extent that 'the world becomes a cinema' (Virilio and Lotringer 1997, 85). By drawing on cinema as material and method Huyghe finds an aesthetic form commensurate with late twentieth century historical experience. His work reinstates the importance of narrative and visual spectacle as aesthetic modes that can access a social and historical imaginary. Yet one can also ask to what extent Huyghe's representations are complicit with the neoliberal capitalist spectacle and whether they instigate fresh possibilities in relation to the social and the political? These questions surface in regard to Huyghe's multi-faceted artwork, *Streamside Day Follies* (2003) which maps a cinematic imaginary onto a real location and social environment.

Streamside Day Follies *(2003)*

In *Streamside Day Follies* (2003) Huyghe created an event for the sole purpose of filming it and documenting it.[15] The event in question was billed as a 'Celebration Day' with a parade and festivities for the residents

of a newly built housing development in upstate New York. In his own words, Huyghe describes this strategy as follows:

> on the one side, I created a scenario and set it into motion. Then, letting it go, I could approach on the other side with my camera and film the entire thing objectively like a documentary filmmaker happening onto this pagan event surrounded by postmodern houses. I occupy both sides of a divide: I build up a fiction and then I make a documentary of this fiction. The point is: we should invent reality before filming it. We need to "re-scenarize" the real'. (Baker and Huyghe 2004, 106)

In this project the terms 'scenario', 'screenplay' and 'score' are used by Huyghe to describe his method of using narrative speculatively to potentially effect change in the public sphere. Despite the disingenuousness of stating that he could create an event and then document it objectively, it illuminates his view of an event as a scenario which exists in order to be represented. The concept of the scenario is enlarged upon in a text written by Huyghe's occasional collaborator, Liam Gillick who defines the scenario as 'a constantly mutating sequence of possibilities' (Gillick 1999, 106). Gillick sees 'scenario thinking' as a mode of ideological thought evident in Western culture's approach to politics, economics and commercial film and television production. As a strategy adopted by artists, the scenario is a conceptual structure for positing change, play and alternatives within given situations. As we have seen, in Huyghe's work the scenario is closely linked to cinema and television, generating aesthetic forms that he repositions ideologically and critically.

Gillick associates the idea of a scenario with temporal game playing which he names 'prevision', the same term Huyghe uses to preface Pasolini's vision of how film might narrate an event (Huyghe 2000, 193):

> I want to create an idea of 'before vision' meaning both the awareness of something before you see it and the ability to see something from the past in full technicolour glory. It is arguable that 'prevision' is uniquely enabled by cinema and television. (Gillick 1999, 106)

Suggesting that 'prevision' develops out of the experience of film and television spectatorship, which thrives on feeding audience anticipation through narrative, Gillick finds examples of prevision in time travel films and how they position themselves in relation to history. Thus the concepts

of scenario and prevision are linked to the ways in which history is ideologically structured in Western culture. In thinking about Huyghe's work we can go further and suggest that Huyghe uses the notion of a film scenario as an ontological mode. His work is predicated on the idea that reality is now understood through fictional forms such as cinematic narratives, representations and formats such as the screenplay or the casting. In this respect Huyghe defies the Debordian warning against the spectacle by actively engaging with the representations generated within the late capitalist spectacle or entertainment industry (Debord 1994). This has left his work open to criticism that it simply mimics the affects of spectacle (Godfrey 2008; McDonough 2004). However, I would argue that on the contrary Huyghe's works insinuate themselves within the frameworks of spectacle such as the film industry in order to activate social and historical reflection. This is evident in his film *Streamside Day* which re-animates Hollywood clichés in order to test them in a real context. In so doing Huyghe brings a historical memory of utopian visions to bear on a contemporary setting, activating the notion of community in an apparently ahistorical suburban site.

Streamside Day

Commissioned by the Dia Foundation, *Streamside Day Follies* references the notion of the site-specific artwork associated with the Dia generation of artists, Robert Smithson, Dan Graham and Walter de Maria and extends it into the temporal dimension of a site. Huyghe's strategy can be seen in the light of Smithson's fascination with cinema as a means to connect different temporalities and spaces, exemplified in his *Spiral Jetty* (1970) art work which exists as a physical site, a film and a text. In the film component of the work, *Streamside Day*, Huyghe orchestrates an event in which participants appear to act out imagery from popular Hollywood cinema.[16] The film merges fictional codes of representation with a real place to the point where the real and the imaginary are confused. As Huyghe states: 'what interested me was to investigate how a fiction, how a story, could in fact produce a certain kind of reality. An *additif* of reality' (Baker and Huyghe 2004, 84). Huyghe's starting point was not so much a particular place as the cinematic representations of that place. He brought his memories of American suburbia depicted in films by Steven Spielberg and Todd Haynes to the cloyingly named Streamside Knolls development. He also considered the contrast between Charles

Fourier's theories of utopian co-operative communities and this private housing development akin to the model town of Celebration, Florida, created by the Disney corporation (Baker and Huyghe 2004, 80). The central conceit of the project was the idea that Streamside Knolls could be considered as a community. Thus, Huyghe proposed an annual 'Celebration Day' to the residents, an event which is documented in the film *Streamside Day*.

The film is constructed in two parts, hinging on the contrasting associations of film with a cinematic imaginary and lower resolution video with documentary recording. *A Score* the first half, shot on 35 mm film, establishes a suburban idyll featuring Disney tropes of a white rabbit, an owl and a fawn as a family moves into a new house on the edge of a forest. The second half, titled *A Celebration* is shot on video and purports to be a documentary of the 'Celebration Day' event and parade held on Saturday October 11, 2003. However, the seemingly neutral camera positioning drifts towards a strangely disassociated view of the events taking place. This is most overt in the dissonant soundtrack, which features muted conversations, an off key ballad and altered Mr. Softee ice-cream jingle. A blank foil banner hangs over a stage where we hear part of a public dignitary's speech to a sparse crowd. At the same time, the flashing lights of a parked-up patrol car recall a similar scene from Spielberg's *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), shown in Fig. 6.3. The air of a faux documentary and the sense of people going through the motions of a community event is explained by the knowledge that it is Huyghe who has orchestrated this event, suggested the parade and supplied the costumes, food, music and lighting.

In the gallery installation, which Huyghe describes as a 'mise-en-scène for *Streamside Day'*, the space alternated between being an empty space and hosting a temporary screening of the film (Baker and Huyghe 2004, 83). At periodic intervals, the apparently empty gallery was transformed by five partition walls moving away from their resting position against the original gallery walls, eventually coming together to form a pavilion. Inside this temporary viewing space the twenty-six minute film was shown to the assembled viewers who allowed themselves to be shepherded together by the converging walls. By moving away the partition walls revealed a series of drawings on the gallery walls which, in another civic gesture, included one of a proposed community centre for Streamside Knolls. In this series of staged situations Huyghe assumes the role of the artist as a 'silent manager/director' described by Miwon Kwon in

Fig. 6.3 Pierre Huyghe, *Streamside Day, A Celebration* (2003), video still, courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris

her assessment of post site-specific art practices (Kwon 2002, 47). In the *Streamside Day Follies* project his presence is implicitly felt as a sort of absent pied piper orchestrating the parade of children and adults in the film and in the manipulation of the gallery visitors into a collective of spectators.

Both in the film and in the wall drawings Huyghe proposes the idea of a community for the Streamside Knolls development. However, the imagery in the film and the temporary, provisional nature of the pavilion inside the Dia gallery suggest that this idea of a community is fragile and as much a representation as it is a reality. This precariousness and contingency is extended to the gallery viewers themselves who become a temporary community of spectators for the duration of the film screening. In a Russian doll effect the strained enactment of a community is echoed

by the gathering of gallery visitors in a pavilion, inside the gallery. At the end of the film the walls retract and the audience disperses, leaving one with the feeling that this temporary cinema community is as fleeting and illusory as the fictitious images of Spielberg and Disney. So the work begs the question of whether this putative community literally and theoretically projected by Huyghe in his film screening actually exists?

Neither the proposed community centre nor an annual festive day materialized in Streamside Knolls after Huyghe's project. Instead the idea of community and pagan celebration remain embedded as possibilities within the film *Streamside Day*. Ultimately in *Streamside Day Follies*, Huyghe challenges the gallery viewer to believe that a private housing development might constitute itself as a community. The ambivalence of the project lies in the fact that this idea of a community is created not through civic, political structures but through a cinematic scenario. Huyghe's 'cinema' in the gallery becomes the place where an 'elsewhere' space of community can be imagined temporarily. In an analysis of the model of community proposed by *Streamside Day*, Vered Maimon refers to Rancière's *The Emancipated Spectator* (Maimon 2009, 112; Rancière 2009). Challenging the idea of a passive spectator Rancière proposes that spectatorship is an active condition. Emancipated spectatorship is based on the idea of translation as: 'it requires spectators who play the role of active interpreters, who develop their own translation in order to appropriate the "story" and make it their own story' (Rancière 2009, 22). The concept of the emancipated spectator like Royoux's 'spectator-interpreter' allows for a form of cinema spectatorship that thrives on recirculating and reclaiming the imagery of Hollywood cinema (Royoux 2003, 187). Thus by activating Hollywood imagery of suburbia and Disney's wilderness idyll, the very stereotypes he began the project with, Huyghe demands that the viewer imagine a fictional narrative becoming possible or real. Debord's polemical image of a spectator bombarded by the spectacle is overturned by a more generative model of imaginative spectatorship. In filming the 'Celebration Day' parade, Huyghe uses cinema as a tool to activate historical and cultural images of community that reach all the way back from Spielberg's patrol cars to Fourier's utopian communities. As evident in Huyghe's work, the documentary fiction mode is closely related to the increasing mediatization and 'premediation' of historical events in cinema, television and the internet. Here the indexicality associated with film and video as recording technologies comes into play with

the persuasiveness of the cinematic imaginary. In another kind of documentary fiction explored in the next case-study, the putative reliability of documentary testimony is tested with the malleability of digital video editing.

6.2 Edited Memories: Omer Fast

The Berlin-based Israeli-American artist Omer Fast deals with the relationship of memory to history and the way media images become the currency of memory. In most of his work Fast does not draw from archival sources, but focuses on the construction of meaning in conventions of digital video production and postproduction editing. For *CNN Concatenated* (2002) Fast began by recording and then ordering VHS tapes of hours of broadcast footage of CNN news presenters, eventually compiling his own database of 10,000 words derived from the presenters' speech.[17] The eighteen minute video, *CNN Concatenated* is a compilation of clips where a range of presenters are made to 'speak' a script of Fast's own devising. Made in the aftermath of 9/11, the virtual synthesized voice that emerges from *CNN Concatenated* expresses an anxious subjectivity uttering questions like 'where do we go from here?'[18] While *CNN Concatenated* clearly displays the artifice of its own making in the jerky transitions between the edited words, in later work Fast presents footage of interviews and live action where the seamlessness of the editing produces disconcerting shifts of meaning from one possible narrative scenario to another.[19] *CNN Concatenated* is important in showing how the non-linear structures of media editing software underpin Fast's approach to the moving image. Speaking about the process of making *CNN Concatenated* Fast states:

> I don't think I would have chosen this medium were it not for non-linear editing programmes. […] I think the possibilities offered by non-linear editing – above all the endless and painless levels of undo, as well as jumping around time, copying, pasting, cutting and scrolling, etc. – are much closer to the way memory and language work. So although the medium is not the message, I wouldn't have made this work in the analogue world that I knew fifteen years ago. (Fiduccia 2008, 161)

In subsequent works such as *Spielberg's List* (2003) Fast has continued to employ editorial sleight of hand in order to demonstrate how human

memory can conflate different historical time periods. Arguably Fast's video installations collectively suggest that media software, which can generate countless versions and modifications of original footage, has affected the ways in which we understand time and historical experience.

Spielberg's List (2003) is a two-channel video installation, sixty five minutes long, exhibited either as two side by side suspended screens or television monitors, which in itself echoes the 'double up' screen structure used in video editing.[20] As the title indicates, the work directly references the blockbuster film *Schindler's List* (1993) and thus may be understood as a contribution to the issues of historical representation and truth raised by Spielberg's film and its critical reception. However, Fast's starting point is Spielberg's dramatic narrative not the historical events of the Holocaust on which *Schindler's List* is based. Like Pierre Huyghe's approach to *Streamside Day Follies* (2003), Fast went to a real place with a fictionalized narrative in mind, travelling to Kraków, Poland to visit the locations where *Schindler's List* had been filmed ten years earlier in 1993. The Kraków-Paszów concentration camp which was destroyed by the Germans at the end of the war, now exists as a memorial site. When Fast visited in 2003, the nearby remains of the camp created for the *Schindler's List* film set had become a visitor attraction.[21] Fast's video is composed from tourist like footage taken on a tour bus, shots of the Paszów suburb, the Kraków train station and street intersections, the remains of the film set, the former Jewish ghetto in Kraków and fragmented excerpts from the film *Schindler's List*. At the outset *Spielberg's List* appears to parody *Schindler's List* by tracking a pedestrian in a red jacket reminiscent of the way Spielberg's film features the motif of a young girl in red against the predominantly black-and-white cinematography.[22]

The substantive element in Fast's video is his recorded interviews with the Polish extras who had taken part in the filming of *Schindler's List*. As he recounts, Fast: 'asked them to describe their experience and the scenes they were in, often without elaborating on the fact that they're describing a movie' (Fast 2003). Thus while initially presenting itself as a semi-documentary visit to the site of Spielberg's film shoot, *Spielberg's List* quickly transitions into a series of slippages between historical events and the fictional re-enactment of those events. Not least of these slippages is the premise implied in Fast's title that one could somehow visit the location of Spielberg's set without also considering the historical site of the Paszów concentration camp. In a reversal of Marker's project in *Le Tombeau d'Alexandre* which uses the fictionalizing power of memory

to assemble a historical narrative, in *Spielberg's List*, Fast explores how memory can merge with or even erode historical experience. *Spielberg's List* is nonetheless anchored in Fast's documentary gesture of visiting the doubled site of Paszów—both film set and historical site. This doubling is echoed in the two-channel installation structure of *Spielberg's List*. The dual screens reinforce a constant principle of shifting points of view as the images of the interviewees migrate from one screen to another or different shots of the same scene are shown on each screen.

Fast's deployment of a second documentary stalwart, the recording of witness testimonies, is overtly undermined by taking testimonies from the extras' memories of the film shoot as opposed to the more significant historical events of the German Occupation and by the editorial manipulation of the subtitle captioning. Over the duration of the videos, the viewer notices some discrepancies in captions in that the insertion of certain words begins to change the meaning of the testimonies. In one sequence the tour bus passes a house and the tour guide explains in English that this is the house where Amon Goeth lived.[23] This is followed by double shots of the house, shown in Fig. 6.4. In one shot the caption

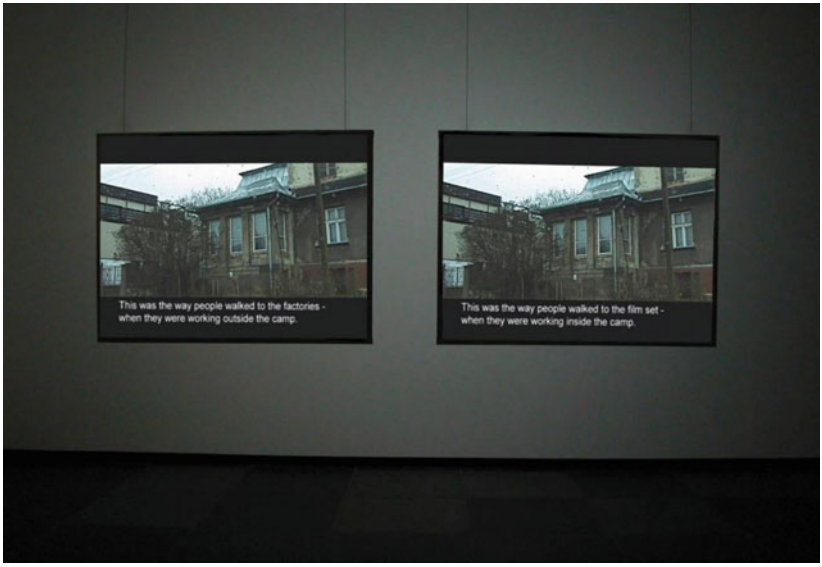

Fig. 6.4 Omer Fast, *Spielberg's List* (2003), installation shot, courtesy of the artist and gb agency, Paris

reads: 'this was the way people walked to the factories - when they were working outside the camp' while in the other shot the caption reads: 'this was the way people walked to the film-set - when they were working inside the camp'.[24]

In other slippages of meaning across the double sets of captions the word 'audition' alternates with the word 'selections' and 'takes' in one caption is substituted by 'gates' in another. As the male and female extras recall participating in crowd scenes re-enacting the treatment of Jewish prisoners, they describe having their hair cut and being rounded up in an uncomfortable parallel with aspects of historical events that took place in the camps. A further blurring of the lines between re-enactment and actual events emerges in the fact that some of the extras are old enough to have their own memories of Kraków in the 1940s. Thus some of the interviewees segue into describing their memories of the German occupation in the 1940s which begin to merge with their accounts of making Spielberg's film. As one male interviewee says: 'one remembers more from fifty years ago than from the last, let's say, ten years'. In another instance a woman describes how: 'during the occupation my parents weren't around… I was always hungry' while at other points in the video, interviewees appear to recall ludicrous and impossible memories such as: 'when I was inside the gas chamber' in reference to the film shoot. Adding to the ambiguity, a man in his sixties describes walking his dog past the camp leaving the viewer uncertain as to whether he is referring to the film set or to the concentration camp in the 1940s.

As the viewer registers the slippages and ambiguities of the extras' accounts, they simultaneously experience a shifting of weight in the events alluded to in *Spielberg's List*. This is a temporal shift from the making of Spielberg's film in the early 1990s to the historical past of the 1940s as the memories of actual events intrude into the more casual recollections of the fictional staging of such events in the film shoot for *Schindler's List*. Fast is not the first artist to play with the conflation of different temporalities through the apparatus of a Hollywood film. Huyghe's *The Third Memory* (1999) shows how John Wojtowicz appears to confuse his own memories of actual events on the day he robbed a bank in New York in 1972 with *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), the film based on his story. Like Huyghe, Fast's work delineates a situation in which memory has become mediatized. The accrual of virtual memories enabled by media technology parallels Bergson's model of memory as an ongoing labyrinthine accumulation of virtual memories in tandem with lived experience.

In setting up a displacement from anecdotes about Spielberg's film to memories of the German occupation of Kraków in the 1940s, Fast positions the viewer in the grey area between historical events and their narration or representation. The work requires a viewer who has sufficient media literacy to register the nuances of different levels of fiction. There is an implicit criticism of the legacy of *Schindler's List* in Fast's focus on a confusion between the extras' memories of the film set and what happened in Kraków in the 1940s. *Spielberg's List* suggests that Spielberg's film, as a Hollywood version of events, may come to occlude or even replace the historical record or collective memory of the Holocaust. As is well known, although a popular success, *Schindler's List* attracted significant controversy and critique from the liberal intelligentsia.[25] The principal criticism of *Schindler's List* is that it attempts to represent events which in their enormity exceed the ethics of representation. A second criticism is that it narrates a story of survival when the principal fact of the Holocaust is that it wiped out over six million Jewish people in addition to other minorities, ethnic groups and opponents of the Nazi regime. It is on these grounds that Claude Lanzmann, the director of *Shoah* (1985), the monumental nine and half hour film on the Holocaust, objects to *Schindler's List* (Lanzmann 1994).[26] *Shoah* is built around the documentary format of witness testimonies although Lanzmann believes that the film exceeds the category (Lanzmann 1994). He eschewed the use of any archival footage in *Shoah* which consists of lengthy and painful interviews with survivors, perpetrators and bystanders in addition to footage of sites related to the Holocaust. Yet Lanzmann also brought an element of artifice to his interviews by staging activities that helped his witnesses to recall their memories (Brody 2012). For example, a former barber was filmed cutting hair, a train conductor was filmed driving a vintage steam locomotive and a concentration camp survivor was filmed retracing a transportation by rowing boat that he had made as a prisoner. By interviewing film extras as witness testimonies, Fast provocatively suggests that this format is no less susceptible to ambiguity and inadequacy as historical narrative than the classic fiction drama style of *Schindler's List* for which Spielberg was castigated.

With testimonies, Fast touches on a fundamental tenet of documentary film: 'the urge to record and to preserve' as Renov puts it (Renov 1993, 21). Witness testimony to camera is a core method of documentary filmmaking. However, Fast does not frame the testimonials collected for his *Spielberg's List* either by a voice-over or other means. As a documentary

form, the witness interview undergoes a syntactical displacement in the context of Fast's film which is designed for installation in the gallery space. In the absence of overt authorial sign-posting, the viewer must judge the interviews by their re-framing as side by side projections and their qualities as media representations. The many different voices in *Spielberg's List*, of the extras, the tour guide, an American tourist heard off camera and a cameraman seen in one interview are repeatedly intercut with silent shots of the streets of Paszów, the snow laden camp fences of the film set and the site of the actual camp. These exterior scenes recall the tracking shots of Alain Resnais' *Nuit et Brouillard (Night and Fog)* (1956) which show the razed sites of concentration camps. However, *Spielberg's List* lacks the mediating voiceover narration of *Nuit et Brouillard*. Instead the viewer of *Spielberg's List* infers meaning principally from the visible discrepancies in the subtitles and the relationship between the double channel screens.

When Fast suggests that the extras' memories of acting in *Schindler's List* are the equivalent of witness testimonies of significant events, he pushes the conceit of the film set as reality into unsustainable territory. In his words: 'the idea was to exploit an ambiguity central to these persons' experiences: as narrators they can recall an impossible past in precise lived through detail; as witnesses they've lived through real events that are nevertheless replicas' (Fast and Lütticken 2007). It is questionable whether the memory of performing as a film extra is comparable with the memory of a traumatic experience. Yet it also must be acknowledged that Spielberg and everyone involved in the making of *Schindler's List* found the re-enactment of difficult historical scenes disturbing. In the uncomfortable oscillation between the historical events of the 1940s and the ways in which *Schindler's List* re-enacts some of these events as dramatic narrative, Fast captures a truth about the construction of history at the turn of the twenty-first century.

In an analysis of Fast's work, Maria Muhle refers to Rancière's belief that fiction must not be seen in opposition to history but as part of the process of writing history (Muhle 2009, 37). She also asserts that Fast's work establishes a 'materiality' of images: 'at stake in these videos is the circulation of stories and images in their materiality and the effects this has' (Muhle 2009, 38). In establishing such a 'materiality' of media images, Fast enters into a 'post-truth' regime where images and the relations between images become autonomous entities. In *Spielberg's List*, he turns the process of video editing, the ability to replay and substitute different sounds and captions in relation to images into an analogy for

the uncertainty surrounding the navigation of memory and the difficulty of narrating the meta-historical event of the Holocaust. As we have seen with regard to White's theories, the Holocaust is a limit case of historiography and representation. In suggesting ways to deal with the challenge of narrating such an event, White turns to modernist literature such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce in which the concept of the event, along with subject and plot is radically undermined (White 1996). He sees the emergence of the postmodernist genres of 'docu-drama' and 'faction' in the aftermath of the modernist blurring of the subjective imaginary and the external event. White's examples are films dealing with the rise of Nazism and Nazi crimes such as: *La caduta degli dei (The Damned)* (1969), *Il portiere di note (The Night Porter)* (1974) and *Hitler, ein Film aus Deutschland* (*Our Hitler)* (1976–1977). However, it is questionable whether these films may truly be considered postmodernist in technique or in attitude. While their attempts to address traumatic historical experience through genres such as the family drama or erotic melodrama can be awkward they nonetheless indicate the role of fiction in attempting to understand or narrate the significance of historical events. The delay between the production of these films in the late 1960s and 1970s and the events of the Second World War also attests to a certain cultural inability to articulate these sorts of historical experience.

Unlike Lanzmann, Spielberg or Marker, each of whom adheres to a recognizable authorial style through the witness testimony, the fictional drama and the personal essay film respectively, Fast's principal achievement is to create doubt in the mind of the viewer as to what exactly they are watching in *Spielberg's List*. This is the crux of Fast's work: the process that the viewer goes through in apprehending, evaluating and deciding on the meaning of the video installation. The erstwhile authority of archival images, of voice-over commentary or the mise-en-scène of fictional narrative has been abandoned. The viewer of Fast's installation must negotiate the relationship of screens, images, captions and voices on their own terms as polyvalent, edited media elements. In contrast to other artists' work where the return to the past is primarily brokered by the aesthetics of the film image, Fast's work deals with the manipulability and uncertainty of the digital video image and the penetration of media aesthetics into the collective memory of the past. Effectively the experience of historical time becomes filtered through media editing systems. In the conflation of two distinct time periods, the 1940s and the 1990s, Fast's documentary fiction replaces chronological time with the shifting

sands of memory which draws on both actual and imagined events. Here we might think of Paul Ricoeur's warning of 'the pitfall of the imaginary' for memory which Ricoeur overcomes by insisting on the ethical role of memory as a search for truth in the past (Ricoeur 2004, 54–55). Neither the fictional feature film not the documentary reportage form can fully communicate the historical events of the occupation and the Holocaust. Instead Fast's work shows the aporias within the idea of 'representing' the past. Like Fast, the artist Clemens von Wedemeyer also utilizes the figure of the extra whom he describes as existing in 'an in-between zone'; almost an actor but usually without speaking lines (von Wedemeyer and Gordon 2013, 96). In their indeterminate status, extras become a means for both Fast and von Wedemeyer to activate a documentary fiction mode, between fact and fiction.

6.3 Mise-en-Scène: Clemens von Wedemeyer

Von Wedemeyer's *Otjesd (Leaving)* (2005) plays on the merging of historical experience with a film narrative. It is a looped video installation with two additional supporting elements placed nearby—a short video on a monitor titled *The Making of Otjesd* and posters with the script of the film.[27] Back projected onto a suspended screen, *Otjesd* shows a group of people dressed for winter in fur hats and boots who are congregated in a scruffy area of grass and woodland off a motorway. Although the dialogue is in Russian without subtitles, the narrative action in the film is a recognizable scenario of people being managed in a bureaucratic process that involves the checking of papers and interminable queuing.[28] Loosely following the progress of a young woman in a pink jacket, the film shows her jostling for position in the queue, passing through a security check and then trying to find somewhere to put her bag. Security guards, soldiers with Alsatian dogs, lights, barriers, periodic announcements over a megaphone and ancillary ticket touts with placards and stalls form the background to the woman's attempts to advance through the queuing system. In placing this scene historically or geographically, the viewer might infer the limited consumerism associated with the former Eastern Bloc states from the drab clothing of the crowd. The low tonality of the lighting and the colour grading of the film cast a murky pall over the scene, suggesting both a nether world and the economic impoverishment of civic life in the socialist Bloc. The site itself, an urban hinterland

is a nowhere land that could be either East or West.[29] Von Wedemeyer's mise-en-scène plays on the similarities between the management of a queue and the structure of a film set. As shown in Fig. 6.5, the temporary lights, umbrellas and the general standing around waiting for 'action' are all formats common to queuing and film sets. *Otjesd* is an ambivalent film sequence that teeters between a verisimilar construction of a visa queue and what might equally be a scene from a working film set. In an inversion of the classic definition of cinema as an 'impression of reality', von Wedemeyer emphasizes the construction of the scene for the camera. Thus the 'reality' of the film set production begins to overtake the 'fiction' of the scene.

Exploiting the ambiguity between a filmic mise-en-scène and actual reality is a strategy evident from the beginning in von Wedemeyer's work. For example *Occupation* (2001–2002) is based on a scenario involving 200 extras assembled for a night-time film shoot whose purpose is unknown.[30] The film builds in tension as the mood of the scene shifts from docile extras to a more agonistic scene of an unpredictable crowd. As in Fast's work, the viewer of both *Occupation* and *Otjesd* is not always entirely certain about the nature of the scene they are watching. In film

Fig. 6.5 Clemens von Wedemeyer, *Otjesd* (2005), film still, courtesy of the artist and KOW, Berlin

theory mise-en-scène is derived from the French theatrical term meaning literally to 'put into the scene'. In cinema it has come to mean the sum of all the elements that go into creating the illusion of a fictional world that is captured on film. Thus mise-en-scène can involve everything from the profilmic space, its lighting and props to the temporal ellipses involved in choosing one shot over another at the editing stage. In von Wedemeyer's work the mise-en-scène is calibrated to play between the possible 'suspension of disbelief' in the final film and the actuality of the film location and actors/participants. Therefore his installations often include additional elements involved in the film-making process such as 'the making of' videos, film posters and background research to the film.

By referring to the transcript of the script, viewers of *Otjesd* can see that the dialogue in the film is a mixture of bossy instructions by the consular staff, grumbling among the crowd and more surreal declamations of excerpts from the poetry of Vladimir Mayakovsky such as:

> I withdraw from my wide pants,
> A facsimile of priceless freight…
> Read it and envy me;
> I am a citizen of the Soviet State…[31]

These lines are spoken by Victor Choulman, a theatre director and actor who like the other participants in the film is a Russian émigré now living in Berlin. The lines of dialogue in the crowd are improvised from their own experiences and von Wedemeyer's research into obtaining travel visas between Moscow and Berlin. Therefore *Otjesd* is not solely a play on the artifice of a film and the reality of a film set, it makes an analogy between the film production process and the experience of migration, the status of being in transit between citizenship. The Russian title *Otjesd (Leaving)* is associated with emigration from the Soviet Union in the 1970s and is updated by von Wedemeyer to emigration in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The adjacent video *The Making of Otjesd* provides the extra-diegetic information lacking in the film. It is a compilation of interviews with Russian speakers recounting their experience of queuing for exit visas outside the German consulate in Moscow in 2004. Although it contains a brief shot of the film set for *Otjesd*, the title of the video, *The Making of Otjesd* is not entirely accurate as it is not actually about the making of the film. In fact it is another reversal in which the profilmic reality,

the experiences of people migrating from Moscow to Germany, functions as a DVD extra, becoming the 'add-on' background to the fictional world of the film. In this displacement the testimonies of the interviewees recede behind von Wedemeyer's foregrounding of a fictionalized account of their experience in *Otjesd*. In experiencing the installation as whole, taking into account the implied relationship between the projected video *Otjesd* and the video monitor *The Making of Otjesd*, the projection is significantly more compelling. Theatrically suspended with yellowy twilight tones, it occupies centre stage in comparison to the sidelined video monitor which is encountered as an adjunct to the film. Von Wedemeyer's juxtaposition of two aesthetics, the 'documenting' colour video and the fictionalizing artifice and presence of a projected image, in this case 16 mm film transferred to DVD, asserts the power of the cinematic over video reportage.

On viewing *Otjesd* one might ask what it means to present social experience as a scene from a fiction film. For example, at one point in *Otjesd*, an announcement in Russian over a megaphone causes consternation in the queue. This dramatic moment is based on one of von Wedemeyer's collected testimonies which describes how consulate staff moved a queuing system from one side of the building to the other purely for their own amusement at the effect this would have. In the face of the contingency of such Kafkaesque, bureaucratic management, von Wedemeyer constructs another order, a cinematic mise-en scène anchored by the rotating camera lens. The most striking aspect of *Otjesd* is that it is filmed as a continuous circling shot. Thus the action which at first seems to be tracked by the slowly moving camera eventually seems to be choreographed for the camera. For instance a car pulls into view just in time to be recorded by the camera while the young woman in pink reappears at several points in the orbit of the camera. For the viewer, the dissonance between a believable, diegetic world and the increasing sense that events are being staged for the camera is maintained throughout the duration of the shot. The doubled nature of von Wedemeyer's mise-en-scène, poised between a fictional re-enactment and the actuality of a film set makes it a form of heterotopia, a real space or site which exists as a type of counter-site to other cultural spaces.[32] As defined by Michel Foucault: 'the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real space, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault 1998, 241). The cinema like the theatre is one of the modern spaces named by Foucault as having heterotopic qualities in that the cinema apparatus refers to many different

sites through the screen image. As a heterotopia, *Otjesd* conflates the experience of migration and border crossing with the world of the film set.

Foucault also identifies a temporal dimension to heterotopias, which he names heterochrony. Heterochronies break with traditional notions of linear time producing socio-political constructions of time such as 'the accumulating time' of museums and libraries or 'the flowing, transitory and precarious' time of the festival (Foucault 1998, 242). In *Otjesd*, the viewer's experience of time as repetitive and endless is inscribed into the duration of the circling shot, accentuated by the continuous looped projection of the film's installation. Due to this framing temporal structure, the woman in pink fails to progress over and over again while in the filmed diegesis she is sent back to the beginning of the queue because of her bag. Between the cinematographic structure of the continuous shot and the looped projection the scene becomes an endless loop.

Trained as a film-maker, von Wedemeyer's deployment of a continuous shot is a self-conscious reference to Russian auteurs like Andrej Tarkovsky and Aleksandr Sokurov who are both associated with long tracking shots in contradistinction to the other Soviet film tradition of montage associated with Vertov and Eisenstein among others (Ostrowska 2003). In Sokurov's *Russian Ark* (2002), released just a few years before von Wedemeyer made *Otjesd*, the ground breaking single shot which constitutes the film enables Sokurov to create a continuous trajectory through Russian history. However, this trajectory conspicuously leaves out the era of the Communist Soviet state and Stalinism, focusing on Russia's pre-revolutionary past (Szaniawski 2012). Thus in relation to Russian cinema, von Wedemeyer's use of a continuous shot is an implicitly political gesture in the sense that Sokurov's long shot opposes the montage editing associated with the revolutionary Soviet state. Yet unlike the extended long take of Sokurov which opens up a reflection on a living past, von Wedemeyer's continuous shot presents a dystopian view of history as a closed loop.

Ekaterina Degot draws out the socio-political significance of von Wedemeyer's continuous circular shot by comparing it to the circlorama. The circlorama or circular film panorama, is a mode of film projection in the round which was particularly popular in the Soviet Union during the late 1950s (Degot 2006). The circlorama implies the ideology of a collective utopian space where as Degot says: 'the viewers were not supposed to be annoyed by the fact that they might have missed something since

they were considered a multiple body with a collective desire' (Degot 2006, 47). In *Otjesd*, the notion of a circlorama's collective screening space is inverted into a dystopian panoptical cinematographic shot. The camera lens turns in a perfect circle while the citizens attempt to make their escape via the sought after transit visas. As a metaphor for migration or transit between East and West, von Wedemeyer's cinema apparatus appears to make freedom of movement an illusory promise. Here the citizen is devalued to the uncertain status of a film extra who is at the mercy of the cinema apparatus, distilled into a controlling and endlessly repeating circular shot. Working within a documentary fiction mode, von Wedemeyer constructs historical time as the limbo of a perpetual present, where the future is foreclosed and events are stage-managed.

The documentary fictions of Fast and von Wedemeyer establish not only how much of the history of the twentieth century is known through cinema and television but also how moving image technologies have conditioned the experience of historical time. In Fast's *Spielberg's List* historical events slip between authentic and fictional memories just as a film editor toggles between alternate scenes and editing decisions while in von Wedemeyer's *Otjesd* historical experience is narrated as a nightmarish scenario.

As theorized by Jacques Rancière, the documentary fiction ignores the divisions between fact and fiction by drawing on fiction in order to rearrange our relationships to reality but not to conflate reality with fiction. Exploring artworks by Huyghe, Fast and von Wedemeyer, I have focused on how they have drawn on cinema and the intersection of personal and collective memory in the construction of their documentary fictions. Other artists working in this mode such as Hito Steyerl, Amar Kanwar, Walid Raad, Eric Baudelaire and The Otolith Group have emphasized the reinvention of documentary practices with fiction as a means of negotiating the uncertain politics of memory in relation to historical legacies and current political struggles. In regard to this vein of documentary fiction, T. J. Demos argues that: 'fiction doesn't obscure reality; rather, as a hybrid formation of documents and imaginary scenarios, it elicits its deepest truths' (Demos 2013b, 191). However, as we enter into a regime of 'post-truth' politics where aesthetic strategies of challenging the empirical with the fictional have been co-opted by the alt-right, the relations between truth and story-telling have become increasingly fraught. Thus Hal Foster questions whether artists' 'real fictions' are a match for 'alternative facts' (Foster 2017, 174). In these circumstances the documentary

fiction is a site of contemporary art practice where nothing less than a battle for the truth of fiction and individual memory against monolithic official history is at stake.

Notes

1. The phrase 'seventh art' originates in the writings of the critic Ricciotto Canudo who founded the film society, *Club des Amis du Septième Art* (CASA) in 1921 (Hagener 2007, 80).
2. See Gilles Deleuze who states that Rouch's *cinéma vérité*: 'will not be a cinema of truth but the truth of cinema' and Ian Christie, 'Disbelieving Documentary: Rouch Viewed through the Binoculars of Marker and Ruiz (Deleuze 2005, 146; Christie 2007).
3. For example T. J. Demos writes of: 'what might be variously termed documentary fiction, the film fable, the cinema of affect, the film essay, and the performative documentary' (Demos 2013a, 18).
4. This not to say that artists have not produced other film works that could be described as essay films.
5. The ATRL was Huyghe's contribution to the group exhibition 'Moral Maze', Consortium, Dijon (1995) curated by Liam Gillick and Philippe Parreno.
6. See Mobil TV (1995–1998), Atlantic (versions multiples GB/F/D) (1997) and Blanche-Neige Lucie (1997).
7. *Remake* (1994–1995), colour video projection, Hi 8/Master Betacam, 140 minutes, sound, edition of three and one AP, collection FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon, Montpellier. Exhibited in 'Notorious: Alfred Hitchcock and Contemporary Art', Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (1999), curated by Kerry Brougher, Michael Tarantino and Astrid Bowron.
8. These photomontages were exhibited as framed prints, each 34.9 × 28.5 × 2.5 cm in 'Notorious', Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 1999 and sold as unique works, they are reproduced in (Huyghe 2000, 13–17; Christov-Bakargiev 2004, 193–97).
9. *Les incivils* (1995), video projection, Beta SP, forty minutes, edition of three and one AP, collection Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris. Exhibited at the third Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art (1995–1996), curated by Georges Rey.
10. *Casting* was a three day event held at the Galerie Fac-Simile, Milan, February 1995. By attending the event, gallery visitors became part of a casting session and possible extras in scenes from *Les incivils*.
11. The parallel between Conner and Pasolini is noted in an editorial comment in the *October* translation of Pasolini's text (Pasolini 1980).

12. The death of John F. Kennedy, on 22 November 1963 in Dallas, Texas was captured on a home-movie 8 mm film camera by Abraham Zapruder.
13. The death of twelve year old Mohammed al-Durrah in Gaza on 30 September 2000 has been the subject of numerous books, articles and internet posts see (Sherwood 2013).
14. The second Gulf War began in March 2003 with the invasion of Iraq by the USA. For Virilio, the live broadcasting of the first Gulf War marks the convergence of war, virtuality and instantaneity (Virilio 2005).
15. *Streamside Day Follies* was commissioned by the Dia Foundation and involved an event, a film and an architectural proposal for a community centre all brought together in the exhibition *Streamside Day Follies*, Dia: Chelsea, New York, 31 October 2003—11 January 2004. The exhibition featured screenings of the film *Streamside Day,* shown inside a temporary pavilion created by five moving walls and a display of five colour wall drawings.
16. *Streamside Day* (2003), colour 35 mm film and video transferred to Digi-Beta, twenty six minutes, sound, edition of six and two APs, collection Caixa Forum, Madrid, Spain.
17. *CNN Concatenated* (2002), SD video, colour, sound, shown on a monitor, eighteen minutes, seventeen seconds, edition of five and one AP, collection Tate, London
18. Fast describes the voice of *CNN Concatenated* as: 'a pretty urgent, demanding, aggressive, scared voice' in an interview (Art21 n.d.)
19. See *The Casting* (2007), four channel video installation, 35 mm film transferred to SD video, fourteen minutes, and *Take a Deep Breath* (2008), two-channel video installation, 4 K video transferred to HD video, twenty seven minutes.
20. *Spielberg's List* (2003), two-channel colour video installation, sixty five minutes, first shown at Postmasters gallery, New York, 2003, collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Exhibited in 'Closed Circuit: Video and New Media at the Metropolitan', The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2007) and 'The Greenroom: Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art' (2008), CCS Galleries, Bard College, NY, curated by Maria Lind.
21. Towards the end of *Spielberg's List*, Fast includes an excerpt from an interview with a local Polish man who describes how they developed tours of the film set in response to demand from American tourists and who stresses how they insist on separating fact from fiction in the tours.
22. *Schindler's List* is based on Thomas Keneally's novel, *Schindler's Ark* (1982). Spielberg subsequently founded what is now the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation in 1994 which archives witnesses' and survivors' testimonies.

23. Amon Goeth (1908–1946) was the commandant of the Kraków-Paszów concentration camp, played by Ralph Fiennes in *Schindler's List*.
24. Fast conceived the idea of altering the captions by working with two Polish translators and noticing that each translator occasionally used different words in their translations.
25. For a useful discussion of the critical reaction to *Schindler's List* see Hansen (1996).
26. In an article published in the Dutch newspaper, NRC Handelsblad, 26 March 1994, Lanzmann describes *Schindler's List* as a 'kitschy melodrama' and asks of Spielberg's re-enactment of events: 'even when he shows the moment of the deportation to the Kraków ghetto, or the camp officer shooting at the deported, how can he do justice, even then, to the normalcy of the procedure of murder, the machinery of the extermination?' (Lanzmann 1994).
27. *Otjesd (Weggang/Leaving)* (2005), 16 mm transferred to DVD, fifteen minutes, looped projection, stereo sound, aspect ratio 2:3, *The Making of Otjesd*, video DVD, ten minutes, looped, stereo sound, aspect ratio 4:3 and poster with the script in German and English, collection Museum of Modern Art, New York. Commissioned for the first Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2005), curated by a committee including Nicholas Bourriaud, Daniel Birnbaum, Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Rosa Martínez. Exhibited in 'Clemens von Wedemeyer', Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Centre, New York, 2006, 'Cinema Remake: Art and Film', Eye Film Museum, Amsterdam (2014), curated by Jaap Guldemond and Marente Bloemheuvel.
28. The image of a queue as emblematic of social experience following the break-up of the Eastern Bloc is also a feature of Chantal Akerman's film *D'Est (From the East)* (1993). *Otjesd* features many elements reminiscent of *D'Est*, suggesting that von Wedemeyer was aware of Akerman's film when he made *Otjesd*.
29. *Otjesd* was filmed in the Pankow suburb of Berlin.
30. *Occupation* (2001–2002), 35 mm film transferred to DVD, eight minutes, stereo sound, aspect ratio 1:1,85.
31. 'My Soviet Passport' (1929) by Vladimir Mayakovsky, quoted in the script of *Otjesd*, reproduced on the exhibition poster (Rhomberg 2006).
32. Heterotopic qualities are also identified in von Wedemeyer's work by Beatrice von on Bismarck (von Bismarck 2006, 23).

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CHAPTER 7

Mediatized Memories

In *Toute la mémoire du monde (All the World's Memory)* (1956), Alain Resnais depicts the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris as both a sanctuary of memory and a prison in which books are incarcerated. As well as giving substance to the affinity between film and memory in its prowling tracking shots, *Toute la mémoire du monde* anticipates a certain anxiety about the archive, its rationalized administration and how the automated collection of data also involves the tracking and the control of knowledge. In the twenty-first century, digital technologies and the internet have transformed both the archive and film's status as a privileged medium of memory. To a large extent 'memory is media' as any study of memory is also a history of media and the ways in which memory is mediated (Erll 2011, 113). As technological media from photography to cinema and broadcast media dominate the mediation of memory, rapid digitalization and the expansion of the internet have impacted on the cultural and social frameworks of memory. This chapter considers how contemporary artists' moving image installations evoke mediatized memories in a digital age. The concept of 'mediatized memories' in the context of artists' moving image has two aspects: firstly, the ways in which media are involved in the construction of memory and secondly the memory of media formats themselves.

Within media studies the term 'mediatization' refers to the presence of media within everyday life and how 'media logic' is implicated in social

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change. While the idea of mediatized memory emerges in the broadcast age of television Andrew Hoskins has identified a paradigm shift to a new phase of 'digital network memory' (Hoskins 2009). Undoubtedly the Web 2.0 and the rise of file-sharing sites and social media have contributed to categories of memory becoming more fluid and dynamic. Contemporary digital culture is characterized by a novel blurring of the borders between private and public memory as social media facilitate the instant dissemination of personal audiovisual material and news feeds. The temporality of 'digital memory' is located in the dynamic between the unprecedented availability of data and the immediacy of cultural connectivity, loosening the distinction between storage and retrieval. Here what Chris Anderson styles as the 'long tail' points to the contingency and heterogeneity of what surfaces and becomes available and navigable on the internet (Anderson 2006). Hoskins connects the dynamics of 'digital network memory' to the inherently constructive nature of human memory (Hoskins 2009, 94). Building on Frederic Bartlett's early twentieth century theory of 'schemata', contemporary neuropsychological memory research recognizes that memory is reconstructive, forged anew as it is called upon in the present. The structure of memory as 'always already new' is matched by the 'on the fly' dynamic nature of memory in the digital age (Hoskins 2009, 94). However, the fluidity of network memory is also precarious and subject to erasure in as much as it is immediate and contingent. Notably, the questionable permanency of media like email, file-sharing sites and social media inaugurates a memory culture that is unfixed and transitory. In the context of commercial remix and prosumer culture, the simultaneous production and consumption of media, the challenge for artists is how to make media matter amidst the proliferation of media and the commodification of visual and social culture.

The changing models of cultural memory have brought about enormous change for a key site of memory—the archive. Traditionally the archive is thought of as an official repository, usually associated with a physical place and accessible under certain conditions to historians and researchers with specific purposes. As Michel Foucault defines it, the archive originates in legal, juridical files not intended for public consumption (Foucault 1989). Thus, historically archives only became available when they were no longer active. The internet overturns the rigid, guarded model of the archive as in principle it provides access to vast amounts of material, most of which is made accessible not through

human gate-keepers and custodians but the technological superhighway of linked servers. Despite the fact that total access to everything is a myth and although it is dominated by a handful of multinational conglomerates such as Google, Facebook and Amazon, the internet has made it more and more easy to navigate, access and share unparalleled amounts of data. As we saw in Chapter 4, database logic changes the way users and archivists store and search for material. Algorithms can throw up unusual searches and combinations of data that would have been previously impossible. However, memory is not storage nor does the internet simply equate to a giant archive. In considering the impact of 'digital memory' on the archive, Wolfgang Ernst distinguishes between the internet as an aggregative collection of data and the function of archiving which involves selection and classification, suggesting that the real digital archive dynamic is located in the 'technical protocols' or HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) that govern the navigation and the retrieval of material on the internet (Ernst 2013, 84). Thus the digital archive shifts from a static to a dynamic entity operated by the processual operations of algorithms and networks. The technomathematical temporalities referred to by Ernst are radically different to the historical temporalities associated with traditional archives as computer processing takes place in real time and is distinct from the retrieval of physically stored items in that it produces digital objects according to search criteria and parameters. Moreover, computers are not infallible storage devices, dependent as they are on constantly migrating data to different storage drives and updating software.

As the archive changes, so too does the role of the archivist. Hal Foster identifies the emergence of an 'archival impulse' in art of the early 2000s, the 'age of digital information' as: 'archival artists seek to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present' (Foster 2004, 4). Although he distances 'archival art' from internet art, he notes the language of information processing in artists' usage of 'inventory', 'sample' and 'share', also citing Nicholas Bourriaud's description of contemporary art as 'postproduction' (Foster 2004, 4; Bourriaud 2002). Bourriaud's term 'postproduction' refers to the activities of artists who modify, alter and customize material found on the internet. The artists considered in this chapter have largely developed their projects by accumulating personal archives of material and by investigating material that is overlooked by official archives. For instance Mark Leckey and James Richards rework mixtures of found and new sounds and images gleaned

from a diverse range of sources from YouTube to charity shop VHS tapes. Elizabeth Price's videos are constructed from her own collections of material in addition to archival sources with a principal of making visible what is on the peripheries of the archive. In an age of proliferating material and cultural product, these artists increasingly take on the roles of navigator and archivist in the sense of archiving being an activity that gives value to something. They approach the sprawling data of digital culture with questions and threads of inquiry to pursue.

In using audiovisual material to construct archival inquiries, artists emphasize the materiality and temporality of media formats. In the 'continual continuous present' and timelessness of the internet, the specificity of media formats registers a historical dimension to images (Gitelman 2006, 141). As mentioned in the introduction to this book, the principal mnemonic dimension in intermedial moving image is the memory of analogue media remediated in digital media and the collective memory of television and cinema accessed through digital platforms. The impact of digitalization in shaping the way we remember and think of memory is evident in artists' media sampling and recombinant approaches to film and video. Such remix approaches to the moving image are related to the rise of non-linear editing systems like Avid, Adobe Premiere, Adobe After Effects and the QuickTime multimedia framework released from the early 1990s onwards, culminating with consumer versions of Final Cut Pro in the early 2000s. The technical ability to carry out certain operations in software facilitates new approaches to media. Here we can draw on Lev Manovich's term 'softwarization' which emphasizes how the logic of software dictates the ways in which we understand and interact with media.

> …all the new qualities of "digital media" are not situated "inside" the media objects. Rather, they all exist "outside"—as commands and techniques of media viewers, authoring software, animation, compositing, and editing software, game engine software, wiki software, and all other software "species". (Manovich 2013, 149)

As the fundamental elements of computer science are data structures and algorithms, the character of new media is determined by how the data is organized as much as the data itself. Generic algorithmic commands such as 'cut', 'search' and 'paste' can be applied across different media forms and applications. As all media content becomes modular, searchable and

retrievable, traditional distinctions between cultural media (publishing, cinema, television and radio) and data information become less rigid. In considering the impact of software on artists' moving images, the first consequence is a more hybrid approach to medium specificity. While previous genealogies of the moving image diverged along the lines of structuralist film or scratch video, current practices that merge analogue with digital media cannot be grouped along medium specific lines. Yet as ongoing debates about the new hybridity of media have noted: '… the medium of any one digital expression is a one-off assemblage of specific tools and practices. It is not some abstract digitality' (Cubitt et al. 2012, 42). Rather than erasing the differences between different moving image media, such practices have tended to emphasize the nuances of different media aesthetics. For example Richards's work emphasizes the almost tactile differences between analogue 'noise', used VHS footage, HD video and the rougher qualities of music sampling technology in the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly Price's work has featured the specificity of PowerPoint presentations, computer automated speech, the infinite space of CGI and the 'poor image' quality of YouTube clips recorded off the computer screen (Steyerl 2012).

In this chapter I look at two overlapping phenomena among the mediatized memories of artists' moving image; one is a 'montage' approach informed by the increased ease of 'surfing' the internet and the ways in which the internet encourages a browsing behaviour which is digressive and omnivorous and potentially never ending. Contrasting approaches to the memory of media formats and infrastructure are presented in works by Leckey and Lucy Raven. Secondly, I address the currency of black-and-white and monochromatic moving image in installations by Jaki Irvine, Richards and Price. Often associated with historical subject matter and analogue media, black-and-white images are indicative of a desire to retain material and temporal co-ordinates within the virtuality and diversity of digital culture.

7.1 Memories of Media: Mark Leckey and Lucy Raven

Mark Leckey's work has always been attentive to the intersection of technology and culture from his adoption of Felix the Cat, the first broadcast image, who appears in the lecture and video *Cinema-in-the-round* (2006–2008) through to *GreenScreenRefridgeratorAction* (2010),

a performance and installation based on an internet-connected 'smart' fridge. In interviews he has described himself variously as: 'a fully mediated being', 'conditioned by television, cinema and magazines' and 'a kind of prosumer where you produce and consume at the same time' (Thatcher 2015, 3; Leckey 2008, 2014). In recognizing his own condition of prosumption as a kind of feedback loop, Leckey has explored the extent to which technological media systems modulate desire, affect and memory, in effect constructing subjectivity. He has had a prescient instinct for how memory might be constructed through mediatized images and sounds, manifest in his breakthrough work which recovers the ephemera of generational working-class dance culture. *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore* (1999), an elegy to the Northern England club and rave scene from the 1970s to the 1990s is one of the first remix videos, painstakingly assembled from tracked down VHS tapes and found footage.[1] The amateur and anonymous video fragments are stitched together in combination with a nuanced soundtrack which is now a vinyl release in its own right. Over the fifteen minute running length a soundscape of forgotten lyrics and beats is evoked while the momentum is alternately ratcheted up and dissipated, as fleeting as the dancers' energy. The sounds and images encompass elements like a dance hall version of the 'Ovaltineys' advertising jingle and the compulsive signature rhythms of hardcore electronic dance music threaded through with acoustic markers of communal spaces: PA systems, singing crowds and comperes. These markers underline how individual memory gains traction in as much as it is related to social and collective experience. In its reconfiguration of media clips *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore* anticipates the emergence of the Web 2.0 and video file-sharing sites in the mid 2000s. Prominently featuring the video play symbol and time codes, the work explicitly links the low resolution aesthetic quality of the clips with a sense of impending mortality. With *Dream English Kid 1964–1999 AD* (2015) Leckey mines the same territory, going deeper into the different modalities of moving image technologies and their ability to embody specific cultural and socio-political moments. This time around, the journey into the past is made with the affordances of updated digital technology but still foregrounding the qualities of analogue media.

Dream English Kid 1964–1999 AD *(2015)*

Shown as a looped video projection, *Dream English Kid 1964–1999 AD* is a twenty-three minute montage of sounds, images, found footage

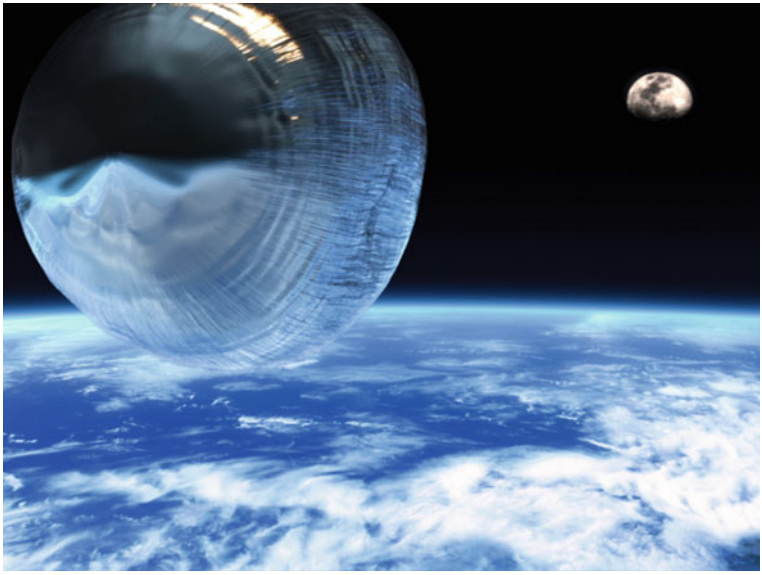

Fig. 7.1 Mark Leckey *Dream English Kid 1964–1999 AD* (2015), 4:3 video projection, colour, 5.1 surround sound, twenty-three minutes, courtesy of the artist and Cabinet London

and CGI sequences spanning the decades from the 1960s to the 1990s (Fig. 7.1).[2] This chronology begins with the launch of a communications satellite and the lunar eclipse of June 1964, the year Leckey was born and finishes on the cusp of the millennium in 1999. The passage of time is marked by references to the Beatles, Marianne Faithful, post-punk and acid house, interlaced with techno-scientific events such as nuclear test footage and the tracking of the Hale Bopp comet in the mid 1990s.

From a technological point of view, *Dream English Kid* draws on the unlimited amount of material available online in comparison to conditions in the late 1990s when *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore* was made. The numerous snippets of television broadcasts, found and amateur footage which Leckey weaves into the video are taken from the searchable data sets of the internet hosted by YouTube and other platforms. This potential sea of data is navigated through a narrative structure imposed by Leckey. While this narrative is anchored in an autobiographical register, the repeated references to significant dates also narrate a journey through

technological change. The recurring CGI sequence of a motorway bridge underpass constitutes a dominant Bergsonian 'memory-image' or actualization of virtual memory from which the other memory-images fork out of. In describing the reach of personal memory Bergson writes that: 'there are always some dominant memories, shining points round which the others form a vague nebulosity' (Bergson 1991, 171). Thus Leckey uses his own personal and fetishized memories of the past to thread a path through the vast amount of data from these decades. In an idiosyncratic *tableau vivant* lit by candlelight—which includes a tin of Lyle's Golden Syrup, an old Kellogg's Frosties breakfast cereal packet and a cassette recorder—the work presents concrete revenants from the past. On the soundtrack we hear the artist's first name 'Mark', while his misspelt surname 'Lekke' appears chalked on a blackboard. A child's drawing of electricity pylons underscores Leckey's visceral affinity with a wired up technological world, his own name doubling as slang for the 'lecky'—electricity utility. These devices plot an indirect autobiographical trajectory through the material, while navigating collective memories of events now stored on the internet and digital archives.

At the Cabinet installation of *Dream English Kid*, the gallery was plunged into darkness in what seemed at first like a primordial cinema scene.[3] The 4:3 projection ratio and 5.1 surround sound made it clear that this was a screening from the age of video, but with the promise of a cinematic escape. Amid the blackness one could just about make out a large CRT projector and amplifiers. With the heavy bass on the sound system physically affecting the viewer it could also have been the scene of a murky music venue. By emphasising the darkness, the installation returns to the founding myth of the cinema, an escape into the illusory world of Plato's cave, as theorized by Jean-Louis Baudry (Baudry 2004). Both Baudry and Christian Metz construct a cinema dispositif which works through 'an impression of reality' to seduce and manipulate the spectator with Metz comparing the classical film spectator's experience in the cinema to a dream: 'the filmic situation brings with it certain elements of motor inhibition, and it is in this respect a kind of sleep in miniature, a waking sleep' (Metz 1982, 116). While Baudry and Metz anatomize the means by which the cinema creates 'the impression of reality', Leckey is of a generation for whom cinema, video and television are reality. The techno-aesthetics of analogue sound and the imagery of the cathode ray tube raster grid displayed in the video are resurrected memories of media worlds for the viewer to re-inhabit.

Dream English Kid, part cartoon, part archaeological dig, is an attempt to return to the past via a compendium of image and sound clips. The film marks the passage of time through the aesthetic qualities of different media technologies. One of the work's recurring motifs is that of the moon. Leckey states:

> … I wanted the shots of the moon to be from the periods that they depict in the video. So the first moon you see is from 1966, shot on film, and at the end there is a VHS moon, and then at the very end there is an ASCI moon. They all have a different texture because of what they were recorded on. So it is not just the moon, it is the recorded moon. (Thatcher 2015, 1)

In looking back at past technology, the video also asks us to think about the current technology that has enabled Leckey to create this composite work. His mediatized memories are made possible through a complex interchange of the analogue and digital, recoding and reconstituting hundreds of fragments of video and audio from different sources. On the soundtrack, specific analogue sounds, such as the turn of a page, the click of a slide projector or the flick of a light switch, are carefully digitally foregrounded and intermingled with snatches of music, sonic idents and broadcast commentary. In a surreal sequence, a clip of a sixties starlet at her dressing table is reanimated into live action and transitions into a hyper-real close-up of the mesh of her fishnet tights. The image of a mesh or technical matrix recurs throughout the film extending from a giant raster grid of RGB pixels associated with cathode ray tube technology through to the urban infrastructure of electricity pylons, flyovers and motorways.[4] If the cathode ray tube partly dictated the look of the world in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, algorithms, digital code and networks constitute today's infrastructure. The clunky syntax of the phrase *Dream English Kid* is a double-edged nod to both the homogenization of culture as it passes through the World Wide Web and the acknowledgement that the past is always slightly out of registration, not entirely accessible.

As a testament to the past, *Dream English Kid* articulates how our knowledge of events and the texture of memory itself are constituted through technology. Like a character from Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, the grandmother who prefers to buy photographs of paintings of famous places in order to be aesthetically once-removed from a direct photograph, Leckey prefers his memories to be ersatz stand-ins,

either analogue 'found' images enhanced by digital editing effects or CGI fabrications (Proust 2003, 1:43). The very inauthenticity of these 'stand-ins', their reconstituted, 'ripped' quality attests to the new image world brought about by computer software and the internet. What does it mean to have one's memories mediated by technology—to trawl, as Leckey apparently did, through the internet to find other people's footage of his own memories? As media clips on the computer desktop, past events become curiously contiguous with the present circulation of images. Just as the young Leckey experienced the news of the shooting down of a Korean plane in 1983 as an animated radar visualization, the same sequence replayed in *Dream English Kid* retains a televisual virtuality. Like many other events in the twentieth century it is only knowable as a media-image. In these circumstances it is Leckey's selective decisions that curate the material and the events represented into a narrative of the past. But we might ask, what sort of historical narrative is at stake here.

While history is concerned with the establishment of verifiable facts in relation to historical events it also depends on the subjective and contested forces of memory in bringing the facts and events that constitute the object of history into view. Writing that 'the data always resist', Hayden White insists that every historical account involves an imaginative and narrative shaping of the data or the events in question (White 1978, 1). What is at stake here is how different historiographical modes produce narratives of history given that events in themselves are without coherent meaning other than the fact that they occurred. In the twentieth century, the Holocaust and the unprecedented scale of events involving technology like nuclear weapons and space exploration have in White's view, changed the status of what constitutes an historical event in that these events exceed historiographical conventions and modes of representation (White 1996). To define what constitutes an historical event depends ultimately on a historiographical method commensurate with the event. However, by their very newness, twentieth and twenty-first century historical events challenge both historians and artists who seek to engage with them. White considers the question of what constitutes an historical event in relation to Alain Badiou's mathematically based philosophy of being and event, where an event is defined as a new truth and a 'supplement to being' (Badiou 2006; White 2008). Badiou's definition of an event depends on the concept of new knowledge being introduced to existing knowledge. He suggests that new events are in a metaphysical sense 'undecidable'. It is the subject who decides that an event has taken

place: 'to begin with, a subject is what fixes an undecidable event because he or she takes the chance of deciding upon it' (Badiou 2004, 62). White develops Badiou's concept of the event as a new truth into the idea of a new historical event, which is recognized as such in relation to pre-existing forms of historical knowledge. That historical knowledge is, for White, grounded in narrative, does not necessarily mean that it is teleological but rather that it forms itself through narrative elements. Therefore, the perception of new historical events of the sort produced in the twentieth century requires new forms of historical narrative. In Badiou's terms, Leckey is the subject who 'fixes' and 'decides' the 'undecidable event' of technological change narrated in *Dream English Kid*.

Throughout the video, events of a global magnitude including nuclear test bomb footage and diagrams of cold war hostilities are interspersed with more personal memories of a childhood in Northern England, class identity, record shops and a landmark Joy Division gig in 1979. The narrative advances by means of a series of countdowns beginning with the phrase 'time to totality', the NASA astronomical term to describe a lunar eclipse when one celestial body completely obscures another and concludes with the countdown to the year 2000. The countdowns are both ominous in relation to the fear of a nuclear bomb, anxiety over the Y2K bug (the fear that software systems would not recognize the leap year 2000 as a valid date), yet optimistic in the context of space travel, the tracking of lunar eclipses and the passage of the Hale Bopp comet in 1997. In the latter events technology and the sublime appear to coincide. An excerpt from Harold Wilson's 1963 speech about the 'white heat' of technology adds to the sense of technological destiny as the film surveys the decades from Leckey's birth in June 1964 through to the eve of the millennium. *Dream English Kid* plays out the giddy promise of techno-optimism indicated in Wilson's speech, but ends on the vanishing point of 1999, re-enacting the hysteria over Y2K.

In *Dream English Kid,* Leckey not only connects his memories with the collective memory of historical events; he also demonstrates the extent to which memory is mediated through media technologies. By configuring a narrative of technological change, *Dream English Kid* establishes a memory of events that are given meaning through the aesthetics of technology. The moments cited in the work literally live through technology. Without technology there would be no visual or aural trace of man's first steps on the moon or Joy Division's brief existence as a band. By assiduously retaining the texture of these mediatized memories and

shaping them into a narrative, Leckey gives them a historical authority. In effect, it is through Leckey's narrative that the development of technological change in the fin-de-siècle of the twentieth century becomes an historical event. White suggests that the historical event can be defined as a traumatic event in the Freudian sense of *nachträglichkeit*: when an event in the present causes a delayed reaction to an event from the past (White 2008, 26). Following this model of a traumatic memory, *Dream English Kid 1964–1999 AD* represents a response to the trauma of softwarization, the rumbling excitement, hysteria and fear that accrues around the experience of living through technological change.

The Deccan Trap *(2015)*

A different approach to the mnemonic dimension of moving image media is evident in Lucy Raven's *The Deccan Trap* (2015). This short four minute work moves backwards in time from contemporary 3D digital compositing studios to ancient carvings in the Ellora Caves, Western India. The Ellora cave temples were cut out of the basalt rock formations geologically known as the Deccan Traps caused by volcanic eruptions over sixty five million years ago. *The Deccan Trap* creates a memory of moving image production that collapses geological time into a digital animation. Raven describes her slowed method of animation which resists normative playback speeds as 'photographic animation' (Brooks and Raven 2017). In a transversal image composition consecutive layers are removed from a cut-out collage of stacked photographs beginning with images of technicians in Chennai working on turning 2D Hollywood films into 3D. These types of effects are typically outsourced across the world within the globalized economy of the film industry. The work is highly labour intensive requiring frame by frame modifications, detailed in Raven's cut-out images which draw our attention to the composite nature of image production. As each image is removed, the illusion of depth is disturbed and the viewers' eyes adjust to the way the images are structured as well as what they represent. Peeling back layers of images the animation eventually reaches photographs of the bas relief rock carvings at the Ellora temples. Raven has said that the idea of connecting the rock reliefs with 3D digital imaging came from the shadows and shallow depth involved in both modes of image production (Joselit 2017, 27). In the 3D compositing process a stereoscopic image is made from duplicating a monocular perspective image as opposed to combining two different

perspectives in a stereo camera. The second synthetic perspective leaves black space around objects which are then laboriously filled in with software effects. It is this digital black outline that Raven connects with the black shadows of low relief friezes at Ellora.

Formally *The Deccan Trap* enacts the retrospective movement of memory as it drills into the past of image production. Through the removal of layers, a connection is made between different forms of image production, from digital imaging, to cel animation, collage and bas relief rock carving. Raven describes the movement as 'erosion' and 'decomposition' which foregoes seamlessness in favour of archaeological excavation (Joselit 2017, 28). In the process unexpected connections between digital and analogue are established not least in the manual labour involved in digital postproduction which currently outflanks live action production in the cinema industry. As the animation reaches its end in the prehistoric basalt rock reliefs, the possibility of obsolescence shifts from analogue to digital which occupies an untested lifespan in comparison with rock as a form of inscription. The soundtrack to *The Deccan Trap* by the composer Paul Corley alludes to extinction in sampling parts of the theme music to the dinosaur movie *Jurassic Park* (1993) which was one of the first motion pictures to deploy special effects rendered entirely in the then newly emergent media of CGI. In its short length *The Deccan Trap* achieves the feat of bringing the viewer into an encounter with the dilation and expansion of time activated through a memory of media.

Raven emphasizes the importance of 'denaturalization' in her approach to the moving image, often achieved by slowing the frame rate of images and sounds where digital technology exceeds film in terms of extending playback rates (Joselit 2017, 25). In this process viewers become aware of looking and begin to consider how technological media work, how they modulate time and the specificity of how images and sounds are made. Another method of denaturalization can be found in the prevalence of black-and-white, desaturated images in moving image installations which engage with archival material.

7.2 Black-and-White Images: Jaki Irvine, James Richards and Elizabeth Price

In his book, *The Exform*, Nicholas Bourriaud asks 'can art *make history*?' (Bourriaud 2016, 29). While the representation of historical events is a traditional function of art, Bourriaud opens up the question of how art

modulates historical time as it orientates the relationships between past, present and future. He identifies a 'heterochrony' in contemporary art's 'drive to produce history', in its multiple temporalities and references to diverse historical periods, writing that: 'the aesthetic hallmark of this push towards intemporality is the widespread use of *black and white*' (Bourriaud 2016, 61). If the intemporal transcends normal temporal relations then the black-and-white mode signals access to the heterochrony of time through the technological media that produce black-and-white images. Heterochrony in Michel Foucault's use of the term challenges linear time and the hegemony of official historical narratives (Foucault 1998, 242). In the moving image installations by Irvine, Richards and Price discussed here, a black-and-white or monochrome modality is employed to reconfigure time and historical experience. Their installations can also be considered as anachronic artworks in that they create plural temporalities, reaching beyond their immediate historical context to intervene in history. Anachronic refers to the capacity of art to transcend historical boundaries in contrast to the anachronistic which implies that there is a singular and restricted historical context for objects and events (Nagel and Wood 2010, 9). The black-and-white modalities in these artworks are neither nostalgic nor anachronistic but constitute an intermedial aesthetics in which the affordances of digital media incorporate temporalities associated with analogue media and disclose the radical discontinuity of time.

Black-and-white images are primarily associated with analogue media such as film and photography. They have an implicit realism and authenticity despite the fact that they can be subject to dark room manipulation. David Rodowick argues that they are a form of transcription as they create an analogical relationship between the original scene and the image: 'defined as a direct and continuous transformation of substance isomorphic with the originating image regardless of scale' (Rodowick 2007, 48). Rodowick restricts his definition of analogue to photography and film in terms of how they are recorded and projected, excluding analogue video. Culturally, black-and-white film and video images are part of a documentary tradition of reportage, testimony, evidence, associated with the intention of truth telling and a presumption of credibility notwithstanding that documentary claims are subject to dissension and critique. Although the camera is a tool for recording and documenting, it is important to qualify this with the fact that it produces a particular type of image. According to Vilém Flusser, cameras produce 'technical images' and as

products of technical 'apparatuses' the 'objectivity of technical images is an illusion' (Flusser 2000, 15). He defines black-and-white images as theoretical optical concepts in contrast to what we actually encounter in the world. Nonetheless black-and-white media images continue to be associated with documentary authenticity and the supposed neutrality of machine images.

In the intermedial relations between film and video, black-and-white is linked with the earliest forms of analogue film and video. While early silent films were often tinted, commercial colour film production only became widespread in the early 1950s and colour television transmission did not reach the UK home market until the early 1970s. The monochrome image of early video denotes the simplicity of a signal technology originally intended to record broadcast television programmes. As Sean Cubitt points out, there was no video black in early video but a low resolution 'palette of soft and softer grays' (Cubitt 2006, 45). Indeed there is no absolute black particularly in terms of the projected image or screen displays which are always a perception of virtual black relative to the contingency of screening technologies and situations.[5] Cubitt argues that video art in the seventies should be read less in terms of a film discourse centred on questions of representation and illusion but in relation to systems and information theory. Lacking the illusionistic powers of narrative cinema, grayscale video can be understood as a graphic 'rendering' of data which in Cubitt's view is far removed from any 'nostalgia for the old black-and-white movies' but instead asserts the material qualities of a 'restricted and inhuman technology'. However, monochrome video still retains 'something of black-and-white photography's realism' for Cubitt, despite its 'inhuman' qualities, suggesting that the cultural associations of black-and-white images are anchored in indexical film media and documentary practice. The following analysis of black-and-white imagery in works by Irvine, Price and Richards, begins with a commemorative commission by Irvine that puts historical evidence to the test. Working in and around the monochrome visuality of documentary photography and typed documents, Irvine's work incorporates an improvised score to occupy the gaps and omissions of the public record.

If the Ground Should Open *(2016)*

Jaki Irvine's *If the Ground Should Open* (2016) was commissioned by the Irish Museum of Modern Art as part of the centenary commemorations of Ireland's 1916 Easter Rising.[6] Although it initially failed as an attempt to overthrow the ruling regime of the British government, the Easter Rising

is a foundational event which led to the eventual formation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Beginning on Easter Monday, the Rising took place over six days from the 24 to the 29 April 1916. Over 2500 Volunteers including a women's auxiliary unit, *Cumann na mBan* and members of the Irish Citizen Army were involved in an armed insurrection centred in Dublin. *If the Ground Should Open* is developed from an earlier work by Irvine, her novella, *Days of Surrender*, a fictionalized account of the experiences of two women involved in the Rising, Elizabeth O'Farrell and Julia Grenan (Irvine 2013). O'Farrell, a nurse, was notoriously 'airbrushed' from a historical photograph that documents Pádraig Pearse, one of the leaders of the Rising, formally surrendering to Brigadier General Lowe on 29 April, 1916. Her long-term relationship with Grenan also exists in the shadows as part of an underwritten queer history of modern Ireland. For the 2016 commission, Irvine extrapolates the names of O'Farrell, Grenan and the many women involved in the Rising who were marginalized in the official histories of the event.

Using a notational method unique to the Scottish Highland pipes, the *canntaireachtd* system, Irvine created a score that translates several of the women's names into music. As a musical composition, the names become the *piobaireachd* or 'ground' melodies of the piece which is augmented with additional notes and melodies. *If the Ground Should Open* features close-up excerpts of nine female musicians and vocalists performing the score shown in high contrast black-and-white HD video. The ensemble collaboration features the bagpipes, piano, violin, cello, doublebass and drums in addition to vocals. In a further striking supplement to the score, Irvine includes extracts from a very different recording; leaked audio tapes of senior bank executives involved in a more recent traumatic event that rocked the Irish State: the Anglo-Irish Bank scandal and financial crisis of 2008. Caught by way of routine recordings of their telephone conversations, the male bankers are heard joking and contemptuously mocking the state bail out and guarantee of the bank. The tapes became part of criminal proceedings against them and an official inquiry into the bank. Excerpted transcripts of their speech are visible on screen and taken up in scat like chants of the singers (Fig. 7.2).

The gravity of the content, both historical and socio-political is immediately signalled in the installation of *If the Ground Should Open* as the viewer encounters a blunt dispersed arrangement of eight heavy duty monitors mounted on black flight cases synchronized with sixteen audio channels playing different parts of the score. The clunky weight of the

Fig. 7.2 Jaki Irvine, *If the Ground Should Open* (2016) eight channel HD video and sound installation, courtesy of the artist, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin and Frith Street Gallery, London

Sony CRT monitors, designed to stack in a cuboid grid, combined with the monochrome documentary tone of the video footage and the sonorous stately tones of the bagpipes, establishes a juridical atmosphere; the worn but serviceable equipment of officialdom and due process. At the same time the impersonal mechanism of a quasi-courtroom is subverted by the paradoxically anarchic passionate energy of the performers and the way in which the score riffs off the blasé, cynical remarks of the bankers. *If the Ground Should Open* is a weighing up of evidence, a testing of the judicial and democratic principles that underpin the modern Irish state. Remarks such as 'we need the moolah', 'don't fuck it up' and 'picked it out of my arse' delivered in the plummy white collar accents of the male executives are woven into the pulsing rhythm of the score which is simultaneously reinscribing the women's identities, their names as notes, into an improvised public space. Within the immersive space of the installation the viewers become witnesses to the contrapuntal movement of forces that constitute the contested ground of historical

consciousness. As the women, part of over a hundred that participated in the Rising emerge from obscurity, the bankers' nefarious conduct is also exposed and put in play against the commemoration of 1916. Here the artwork takes on the role of the historian, not to judge but to hold up for consideration the competing voices of historical material.

The work of historiography in Paul Ricoeur's account of the procedures and operations of memory and history originates in the individual testimonies where one person tells another about a significant event (Ricoeur 2004, 161–66). When oral testimonies are written down, they become the documents that form the basis of archives consulted by historians and researchers. For Ricoeur such testimonies constitute part of the social bond in that the willingness to believe in testimony is a pre-requisite for a shared social world. The visual modality of black-and-white in *If the Ground Should Open* asserts the authority of evidence and also the ethical intention of bearing witness to evidence in the sense of being open to it; what Bourriaud refers to as the 'aesthetics of evidence' (Bourriaud 2016, 61). Yet evidence and testimony are by nature partial and fragmented. The precursor of the installation, Irvine's *Days of Surrender* draws on testimonies from the Bureau of Military History 1913–1921 collection held in the Irish Military Archives. Between 1947 and 1957, numerous survivors and participants were interviewed by officials to produce 1773 witness statements preserved in typescripts. Collated together they form a multiplicity of fragmented views of the tense and violent days of the Rising. As Irvine states, *If the Ground Should Open* is informed by the body of witness statements where: 'no-one had a complete picture of what was happening and witnesses referred to the part they individually played and also to what they heard, continually moving to make sense of what was happening' (Irvine 2016). Formally, the scattered configuration of the monitors and the all-encompassing and disjunctive soundscape place the viewers amidst a similar state of contingency. The installation performs the work of history in creating a further form of evidence, an audiovisual testament from which historical narrative can be made.

In contrasting the historical testimonies with the leaked excerpts from the bankers' phone calls *If the Ground Should Open* sets up a polarity within Irish society. The idealistic spirit of 1916 where women and men were prepared to die if necessary is contrasted with the venality of the bank's senior management in 2008. In the aural matrix of the installation the women's names which are their primary historical trace are transposed into a public performance that honours them while the

bankers' voices emerge from a secretive space of corporate internal surveillance never intended to become public. The juxtaposition of the 1916 participants with the bankers poses challenges to Ireland's state commemoration of the Rising. In its stark black-and-white, *If the Ground Should Open* brings the moral probity of the Rising face to face with the murky lack of social responsibility expressed in the actions and words of one of Ireland's leading financial institutions. Ricoeur warns that the social bond is: 'what is strongly affected when corrupt political institutions lead to a climate of mutual surveillance, of mistrust, where deceitful practices undercut the basis of confidence in language' (Ricoeur 2004, 166). It is this precarious social bond that is at stake in *If the Ground Should Open* which allows an interplay between different voices across time. An additional counterpoint exists in the levels of visibility associated with the protagonists of *If the Ground Should Open*: O'Farrell and Grehan's discreet kinship, the anonymity of most of the women involved in Cumann na mBan, not recorded due to class and gender and the public outing of internal banter within the bank organization. Here the tonality of black-and-white is analogical to the politics of visibility and obscurity as the monochrome register emphasizes the tone and light value of images on both a material and psychological level.

Radio at Night *(2015)*

In digital editing monochrome images are produced by desaturating colour images to isolate the levels of luminance, the percentages of black-and-white within the image. Desaturated imagery features prominently in the work of James Richards and Elizabeth Price who both deploy it as a means of inflecting the meaning of archival and found material. Richards makes video and sound installations predominantly based on collections of found, borrowed, ripped and appropriated video, film and sound but also supplemented with his own recordings and commissioned musical collaborations. The omnivorousness of post-internet culture is evident in the sprawling variety of his sources and in his desire to create a personal archive. If the impulse to archive is indicative of a need to bring something forth by giving it a material existence then Richards' work attests to his own trajectory through a media saturated world. He has stated that:

> we all have this stream of information that we have to edit ourselves in our everyday lives but just to isolate one element on a hunch and to think that

> this just might be the right image or the right moment to stick with and get into and freeze it somehow feels incredibly pleasurable or satisfying. (Richards and Stevens 2011)

As the archivist bestows value on the acquired material, Richards' poetic montages bring a sensual and intimate tone to fragments of images and sounds gleaned from a range of cultural media from printed books to cinema, television, radio and the internet. The subject-matter ranges from a soft-core queer erotic to more allusive reflections on time and memory. Richards' editing style is informed by the ways in which the internet imposes a browsing, flitting mode of perception on users surfing from one thing to another. His video and sound sequences operate in the same modality but also establish a slowed reflexiveness in their attentive processing of image and sound. This is achieved by Richards's ability to bring an affective tactility and texture to his audiovisual content. Drawing on an eclectic range of sources and reworking them in editing, the artist's awareness of the nuances of different media formats is relayed to the viewer who in turn becomes more sensitized to the qualities of image and sound as they experience the work. The viewer is drawn into a slower modality of looking that snags on the textures of images as they pass by, resisting the digital flow of the internet. Thus Richards' editing endows the digital with an auratic physicality, as Ed Atkins perceptively notes: 'his inversion of the colour field of an image to show its negative (as if everything were still sourced from celluloid, still fundamentally tactile and chemical) literalises the figured internality of an image' (Atkins 2016, 122). In the same vein Ed Halter observes that in Richards' videos the history and 'textures' of electronic media become more visible 'in a higher definition age' (Halter 2015, 48). On a practical level as Richards notes, the introduction of black-and-white in post-production works to unify divergent material (Rittenbach 2013). Aesthetically, the effects of solarization, inverted and desaturated imagery, associated with image manipulation and the indexicality of analogue media serve to defamiliarize the material and assert an analytic and temporal dimension. Richards also states that inverting colour images to black-and-white can: 'distance the images, sometimes, making them feel like citations or recalls'.[7] He frequently revisits and reworks earlier material, a methodology that he describes as wanting to: 'play with déjà vu as well as a certain form of chiming, whereby works echo and reflect each other' (Richards 2016,

4). This recursive aesthetic is played out in Richards's *Radio At Night* (2015), a hypnagogic traversal of half-remembered memories and dreams.

Originally commissioned by the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis as an online video, *Radio At Night* was exhibited as a looped video projection in Richards's 2016 exhibition *Requests and Antisongs* at the ICA, London.[8] Composed of a series of apparently random sequences of imagery, the work is held together with a gently rhythmic soundtrack featuring a female vocal trio, organ, piano and percussion. The opening image features a blurred shot of trees as if glimpsed from a train window with a black grid superimposed over it. Presented in a 4:3 ratio, the small compressed VHS image gives way to a more cinematic full screen night scene of party people in Venetian masks and Pierrot costumes. This sequence features silvery bleached colour and handheld camera movement, suggesting a home-movie like distance in time. As the work continues, the viewer encounters a series of images that oscillate between private moments of daydreaming and intimacy and more analytic images of impersonal scrutiny. All these shifts in tone and emotion seem to stem as much from the editing as they do from the images themselves making the predominant tone one of reflective navigation through a flotsam of contingent images, bookended with the half-seen woods and the masked revellers that mark the beginning and end of the work as it loops (Fig. 7.3).

The subtlety of the work is achieved through Richards' attentiveness to the combinatory power of image and sound and the interpolation of desaturated sequences with colour throughout the short piece. The opening colour images give way to an almost monochrome image featuring a medical film of a man's eye movements collaged over a cloudy sky. A blue streak appears in the clouds and the video cuts to a colour image of an eye reflected in an eyeglass held over another blinking eye. The emphasis on eyes introduces a double-edged vulnerability combined with self-conscious and voyeuristic looking. The video then moves into more cosmic solarized shots of skies, water and birds in flight, accompanied by a series of electronic beeps and sounds of howling wind. This is followed by a shift of tone into a colder motion sequence panning left across vertical slices of different images, moving and still as shown in Fig. 7.3. Here shots of swinging pig carcasses with exposed entrails, fish, human skin, hair and a medical operating team are juxtaposed in grayscale and negative images to a throbbing electronic beat.[9] This

Fig. 7.3 James Richards, *Radio at Night* (2015), video still, video, eight minutes, courtesy of the artist and Cabinet, London, Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin and Rodeo, London/Piraeus

virtual dissection of images and flesh is followed by a gridded low resolution image of a couple embracing under a sheet, inviting a comparison between the obscured 'poor image' of intimacy and the high definition images of flesh. The impression of trafficked, commodified images echoes the ecology of the internet in which Tim Berners-Lee's vision of shared information across the World Wide Web has evolved into a capitalized network of commercial search engines, spam and porn sites. The cultural hierarchy and politics of high and low resolution is theorized by Hito Steyerl in terms of the ambivalent status of the digital 'poor image' that can be ripped, copied multiple times, reformatted to the point of illegibility, circulated in popular bootleg and torrents economies yet also lends itself to the fluid logic of dematerialized capitalism:

> on the one hand, it operates against the fetish value of high resolution. On the other hand, this is precisely why it also ends up being perfectly integrated into an information capitalism thriving on compressed attention spans, on impression rather than immersion, on intensity rather than contemplation, on previews rather than screenings. (Steyerl 2012, 42)

Rather than adjudicating on the hierarchies of high and low resolution, *Radio at Night* is constructed from within the contemporary image economy of circulating images, both 'low' and 'high', 'poor' and 'rich', and the rhythms of attention that accompany our viewing behaviours. Its dreamy montage suggests that it is through the process of reverie that the flow of images becomes personalized and momentarily actualized in affective memory-images. The soft repeated chanting of 'bear down breathe' at the beginning of the video signals that we are entering into a reflective experience, while the following close-up of a man's eyes brings a psychological dimension to the work, intimating a subject that may be remembering experiences. Yet the material is a series of impersonal, autonomous and found, image fragments, accentuated in the analytical sliced image sequence. The viewer's bearings are partly determined by the temporalities associated with the different image formats: the dated VHS of the gridded trees and the tented couple, the perpetual present of the internet in the passage of cross sectioned images, the elegiac carnival film and the black-and-white documentary footage of plumes of smoke issuing from a stately building.

As suggested in its title *Radio At Night* summons up the sense of a world being apprehended and filtered through a consciousness while at the same time asserting the autonomy of a world that will continue on regardless of human subjectivity. Just as the temporal markers are inferred from media formats, the allusions to intimacy and memory are mediated through an anonymous collective imaginary of old movies and found footage while the digital montage exposing skin and hair in high definition moves impersonally from pig flesh to human as if it were part of a training set for an AI neural network. This enmeshing of digital technology with memory and desire is also explored in the work of Elizabeth Price.

USER GROUP DISCO *(2009)*

Price's projected video installations emerge out of her fascination with archives, classification systems and the powers they exert. Her earlier art practice can be described as post-conceptual sculpture in which she brought a slapstick ironic humour to the high conceptualist mode of producing artworks via written instructions. The questioning of the shibboleths of authority and language is evident in her video projects which often originate in actual archives but also construct fictional, anarchic

archival spaces. Price has expressed a desire to 'corrupt the archive', an approach which uses the archive as a departure point for idiosyncratic histories and a politicized focus on what is excluded from the archive (O'Neill 2009, 3). Like Leckey and Richards, Price is a collector of material, a browser of charity shops and researcher in archives, maintaining folders of audiovisual material on hard drives. This source material, often digitally re-photographed analogue photographs and book pages is reworked and reconfigured in videos that ape an instructional infomercial mode of address modelled on PowerPoint and associated 'lower third' conventions for overlaying text on video. Throughout her work, the language of authority is repeatedly held up for examination and found wanting as the insidious blandishments of capitalist communications are rerouted and exploited. In the works discussed here, I focus on how Price's digital reconstructions feature the ghostly presence of black-and-white analogue images that are connected to the past and the virtuality of memory.

USER GROUP DISCO (2009) is the second in a proposed trilogy of video installations conceived as a fictional 'New Ruined Institute'.[10] It opens within a virtual black space populated with discarded objects, presided over by a mysterious 'We' who silently narrate their intention to 'institute a Hall of Sculptures' in terse motion titles.[11] Identifying themselves as 'human resources' and 'the operating core' they assume the role of curators and administrators. The objects appear in the homogenizing auratic black-and-white tonality of historical museum documentation that chronicles and reproduces world heritage, reminiscent of André Malraux's '*musée imaginaire*' (museum without walls) (Malraux 1967). Another point of comparison is *Les statues meurent aussi* (*Statues also Die)* (1952) Chris Marker's and Alain Resnais's polemical critique of the colonial collecting and display of objects from other cultures.[12] Both works take the display of objects in a quasi-museum space as their point of departure, lit and mobilized for the camera. Like *Les statues meurent aussi*, *USER GROUP DISCO* begins with a disquisition on the relationships between objects, collecting and classification. But in contrast to the patrician voiceover of *Les statues meurent aussi's* male narrator, *USER GROUP DISCO*'s 'We' are a silent collective of unreliable and ambivalent narrators akin to an internalized paranoia or psychological compulsion. While the Marker and Resnais film speaks to the cultural value of the appropriated artefacts, *USER GROUP DISCO* questions the status of the art object itself by lovingly displaying a series of consumer goods in conjunction

with the narrators' increasingly fervid views on taxonomy and classification. Marker's script for *Les statues meurent aussi* famously invests the depicted African masks and carved figures with an animistic, auratic ability to return the gaze, a quality that is jeopardized by their museumification and filmic representation. Unlike these artefacts, the objects in *USER GROUP DISCO* are banal commodities from kitchen utensils to dated electronic goods from the 1950s and 1960s, reverently lit and shot spinning on turntables in a nod to the convergence of museum display with the seduction of advertising. *USER GROUP DISCO* targets the viewers/consumers who find themselves skewered by their susceptibility to the fetishization of the featured objects.

Rapidly appearing and deleting itself to the rhythm of the soundtrack the unfolding narrative shepherds the viewer along an increasingly convoluted path, digressing from obtuse management speak into citations from other theoretical and literary male authority figures. Taking a swipe at Theodor Adorno, the text reverses his distinction between the art object and kitsch, misquoting it to state: 'we know well / that works of art can shock the unwary / by their relation to accumulated domestic monstrosities'.[13] Adorno's essay on the phonograph record is also referenced later in the lines: 'a black pane of composite mass……delicately scribbled with illegible writing' (Adorno 1990). As Adorno perceived the implications of a technology whose inner workings are unreadable to the human eye, so *USER GROUP DISCO* develops the inscrutability of the administrators/narrators who exist as immaterial speech synthesis. The citational chopped up logic of the text has the impersonal feel of algorithmic automatic text generation outputting the vocabulary of cultural administration, upcycling human-authored texts into an anonymous techspeak. In conjunction with the narration and percussive soundtrack, the displayed objects are whipped into a frenzy of gleaming surfaces, spinning and whirling at subliminal speeds culminating in a series of lustrously glazed erotic china featuring naked nymphs draped over mugs and splayed prostrate to the sounds of A-Ha's 1984 pop hit *Take on Me* as shown in Fig. 7.4.

The underlying message is that it is the material qualities of the video itself, and the subtle entrapments of language, sound and images that are constantly directing and shaping our responses, our belief in authority and value. The narrators' elliptical statements are delivered in a PowerPoint style using fonts associated with office management, digital display and dramatic red capitalization of Futura Bold, familiar from Barbara Kruger's

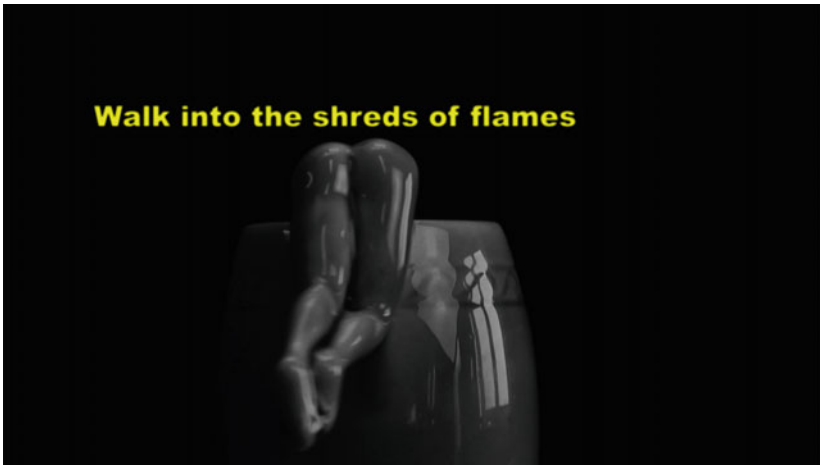

Fig. 7.4 Elizabeth Price, *USER GROUP DISCO* (2009), video still, single channel video, fifteen minutes, courtesy of the artist

injunctive slogans of the 1980s. The use of Powerpoint templates of bullet points and transitions all point to the ways in which software applications actively produce content as much as they mediate and organize it. Price describes the objects in *USER GROUP DISCO* as 'spectral', and the imagined Hall of Sculptures as an 'institutional structure' in which the 'viewers are both consumers and consumed', stating that:

> one of the things I thought about in making this video was the history of recording technologies, from analogue to digital. This video is emphatically digital, it uses motion graphics and the soundtrack is digital so there is a sense of the featured materials and objects being converted into data. A part of the video draws on the ideas that accompanied the emergence of the phonograph record, of it being a medium for access to a ghost world. (O'Neill 2009, 5)

Here Price refers to the uncanniness of analogue technologies such as film and phonography that inscribe physical traces as they record, endowing the recorded with an uncanny afterlife, echoed in the persistence of older technologies within the digital realm. The nineteenth century belief that media technologies could detect paranormal entities in their indiscriminate recording of visual and aural data invests technology with an

animistic capacity that continues into the digital age as technology permeates multiple dimensions of social culture, anticipating, nudging and modulating human behaviour. Price's reference to the conversion of data suggests a Kittlerian universe where everything exists as digitized code contingent on software to be outputted as image, sound or other material form. Kittler's hyperbolic prediction of a total 'data flow' anticipates a world that runs on immaterial digitized numbers, indifferently transmitting data (Kittler 1999, 1–2). Such a displacement of the relations between people and technology is conjured at the end of *USER GROUP DISCO* with the literary evocation of a 'birdless dawn' and the closing lines:

> 'you will understand that You too/are a mere appearance/dreamt by another'. Lifted from Jorge Luis Borges' short story 'The Circular Ruins', they leave the viewer with the feeling that they too belong to the chimerical world of the spectral objects, a world that is as virtual as it is actual. (Borges 2011)

THE WOOLWORTHS CHOIR OF 1979 *(2012)*

THE WOOLWORTHS CHOIR OF 1979 (2012) is more explicitly based on archival material than *USER GROUP DISCO*.[14] Its tripartite structure begins in the guise of an illustrated lecture on the nomenclature and layout of Gothic churches. Digital copies of rich black-and-white photographic plates of church furniture and mouldings are interwoven with 3D animated models of the architecture and motion graphics identifying the key features. However, from the first imperious loud click on the soundtrack, the 'lecture' advances at such a pace that the viewer can't quite keep up with all the information and the rapid succession of images. Following the exposition of the word choir as part of the church architecture, as a chorus and quire as a book binding fold, this sequence is gradually infiltrated by hazy images of women dancing and the sound of singing. The middle section of the video is dominated by the emotive sounds of the Shangri-Las' 1965 pop hit 'Out In the Streets' and repeated on-screen exclamations of 'we know'. The final section narrates the story of a fatal fire at the Manchester Woolworths department store in 1979 where ten people died. In an essayistic montage, subtitled interviews with eyewitnesses appear alongside archival television news footage of the burning building and fire crew. These three strands of subject matter are linked

through the repeated gesture of a twisting wrist which Price singles out in the church reliefs, the swinging pop bands of the 1960s and finally in a disturbing ambiguous image of trapped hands waving for help through the barred upper windows of Woolworths. This latter image draws on Price's childhood memory of seeing the trapped female shop assistants in a newspaper photograph and on the television news (Price and Vincentelli 2012). For Price this was a 'politicizing moment', describing the image of the gesturing hands as: 'the recovery of this interred memory through the process of making the work - the sense of something being understood' (Price 2019).

THE WOOLWORTHS CHOIR OF 1979 activates memory on a number of different levels. Firstly, Price's personal memory is reconnected to a collective memory of the fire and situated within a broader socio-cultural history of church architecture and pop music, seemingly disparate subjects but ultimately connected through the idea of a female choir. In the manner of Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1924–1929), *THE WOOLWORTHS CHOIR OF 1979* identifies an iconic gesture which speaks to the mnemonic power of images to operate across history. The unfinished *Mnemosyne Atlas* was a collection of hundreds of black-and-white reproductions and diverse images arranged on boards covered in black cloth. The images were organized in clusters of what Warburg called *Pathosformeln* (pathos formulas): expressive gestures that cross historical eras and the disciplinary fields of art history and anthropology. Warburg's method of displaying images against black for the purposes of rephotographing them marks the *Nachleben* or afterlife of images in reproductive technologies, much as his Atlas is known through the surviving black-and-white photographs of the boards. Philippe-Alain Michaud finds a cinematic temporality in the principles of movement, interval and montage that underpin Warburg's constellations of images, a movement of images that continues in Price's work (Michaud 2007). Within the virtual space of digital video, Price's twisting wrist gesture links Gothic iconography with pop singers and with the young female shop assistants. The transverse vector of the gesture across time brings attention to an anonymous collective, identified as female, a 'choir' who occupy the wings and side spaces of the main events but equally subsist through the ages. In this way the twisted wrist gesture has a mnemonic agency that challenges the hierarchies of church, state and social class through which people, particularly women are funnelled.

The twisting wrist gesture appears through a range of media formats from the digital images of photographs of church furniture, marked as analogue in their occasional over-exposed flaring to smooth 3D motion graphics of the church architecture, the low resolution YouTube clips of footage from the 1960s recorded from the computer screen, a reflection of which appears at one point and television news footage from the archives. All are absorbed onto the computer desktop in an intermedial montage. Within the terms of the video, differences are set up between the repetitious overload of specialized and arcane knowledge in the opening 'illustrated lecture', the enigmatic and emotive slogans and lyrics of the middle section's 'dramatic chorus' and finally the collation of raw statements from the witnesses and facts from the fire safety report which constitute a form of silent visual tribunal at the close of the video. While the 'lecture' outlines how hierarchy is inscribed into the very architecture of the church, the notion of hierarchy is subtly challenged throughout the video on the material level of the images and sounds themselves. In the middle section the dictatorial style of the 'lecture' is replaced by a different text and image relationship as word and image combine to produce the full screen rousing declamations: 'we are the trefoil', 'we are choir', 'we are chorus' and 'we know'. Here Price generates her distinctive narrative 'voice' which is partly human, part machine existing in the interstices and rhythms of PowerPoint, YouTube and other affordances of digital software.

In discussions of her work, Price emphasizes the particular way she uses the 'timeline' (Price 2016). Within editing software, the timeline is the on-screen visualization of the sequential order of the video and the many audio and video tracks involved in the construction of the final edit. Unusually, Price keeps all layers contiguous throughout the project, making it more complex but meaning that she can easily resurrect sounds and images that might otherwise remain dormant or single use. The relationship of the timeline to the material is emblematic of how computers work in that the actual files are stored elsewhere on the hard drive or on external drives until summoned for the final rendering and outputting of the video. The disjunctive relationship between the immateriality of the timeline and the absent media files suggests a comparison with the workings of memory, that Price develops throughout her work. Computer metaphors for memory go back to the early days of computerization in the 1940s, when John von Neumann used the terms 'memory' and 'retrieval' for computer storage and processing functions. By the 1960s, cognitive

psychologists were importing terminology such as 'central executive' from administrative and information technology and proposing a new kind of task-based 'short term memory' modelled on computer processing (Danziger 2008, 178–79). While direct analogies between computers and the operations of memory do not hold up against the personal and social frameworks in which memory is constituted and the subjective experience of time, digitalization does change the experience of cultural memory as memories are mediatized in digital technologies.

In Price's 2019 trilogy *SLOW DANS* comprising *KOHL* (2018), *FELT TIP* (2018) and *THE TEACHERS* (2019) the imbrication of the human with technology is explored on the level of memory as

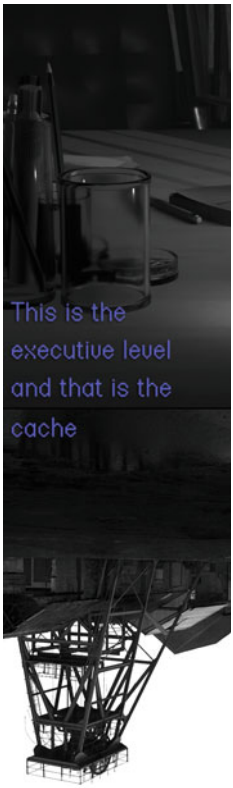

Fig. 7.5 Elizabeth Price, *FELT TIP* (2018), video still, two-channel video, nine minutes, courtesy of the artist

digital modes of processing, storage and retrieval intersect with cultural memory.[15] *KOHL* features upside down inverted imagery of archival photographs of defunct mine shaft towers which are the departure point for silent narrators to recite the story of a subterranean mining infrastructure which continues to bubble up and percolate in the collective memory ensuring the legacy of the mines into the future. The narrative of *Kohl* is syncopated across four channels of vertical projections which in turn relate to the multi-channel projections of the two other works in the exhibition space.[16] In *FELT TIP*, Price creates a feminist riff on men's ties, in a speculative fiction narrated aloud by a female 'administrative core' who have taken to wearing ties nicknamed 'felt tips', mockingly referencing the phallic symbolism of the executive tie and fountain pen.[17] In an extended innuendo, 'felt tip' also becomes slang for the women's tongues, fingertips and clitorises. The story is a parable of how the 'administrative core' have allowed their fingertips to be used as 'soft' storage drives by corporate management in a form of biotech inscription. Presented in a column of two vertically stacked projections, *FELT TIP* shows a split relation between the image of a cerebral 'executive level' office space on top and the murkier depth of the 'cache' or short term computer memory beneath Fig. 7.5. The 'administrative core' define themselves as the link between the two. Visually the work focuses on the geometric textile patterns of ties from the 1970s and 1980s that mimic old school insignia, a type of social encoding that Price connects to the origins of computer programming in the binary coding used in the Jacquard loom and to the circuits of memory chips. By desaturating the source images of ties, which are then lit up in electric circuits of blue, green and magenta, *FELT TIP* presents the executive milieu as a dematerialized world of code haunted by the absent bodies of the 'administrative core'. The politics of memory and history are foregrounded as the lines between memory, storage and the writing of history are blurred. The narrators sardonically reference the *'longue durée'* and the 'long memory' only to say that: 'things haven't gone our way'. If Fernand Braudel's historiography of *la longue durée* speaks to the long duration of historical epochs that exceed the human lifespan, the 'administrative core' assert a subaltern unorthodox history. Their mischievous interventions are a reminder of the perils of outsourcing memory or underestimating the minions, human or technological who perform the lowly tasks of administration and archiving.

A darker tale of neoliberal management is presented in the third work *TEACHERS*, in which the pedagogical class have opted to remain silent.[18] Here again Price draws on monochrome archival images, this time flat dress patterns which are choreographed into rhythmic, sexualized 'slow dances' and non-verbal clicks and hisses, the last means of expression of academia. As the careful orchestration of multiple projectors and sound in the entire *SLOW DANS* installation underscores, Price's work is an apparatus within which a struggle for identity and the recovery of memory is waged.

In the works discussed by Price, Richards and Irvine, black-and-white imagery signifies a material link to the past in terms of analogue media, an association that continues within the digital. At the same time black-and-white underlines the homogenizing effects of technologies of reproduction and dissemination and their standardized temporalities. The prevalence of black-and-white or desaturated imagery in moving image art speaks to the mediatization of memory in technology and the ways in which machinic tones and textures inform our experience of time and memory.

Notes

1. Mark Leckey, *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore* (1999), VHS transferred to QuickTime video, fifteen minutes, soundtrack released on vinyl record 2012 (Boomkat records).
2. Mark Leckey, *Dream English Kid 1964–1999 AD* (2015), video projection, colour and sound (surround), twenty three minutes. Co-funded by Film London Artists' Moving Image Network and Arts Council England, the video premiered at the BFI London Film Festival in 2015.
3. Mark Leckey, *Dream English Kid 1964–1999 AD*, Cabinet, London, 16 October–28 November 2015.
4. In cathode ray tube technology, a flow of electrons is mapped onto phosphorescent materials which produce lit up dots called pixels, which are red, green or blue and organized on a Cartesian x-y grid called a raster display (Cubitt 2014, 95–100).
5. See Sean Cubitt's discussion of virtual black in (Cubitt 2014, 42–44).
6. Jaki Irvine, *If the Ground Should Open* (2016) eight channel HD video and sound installation curated by Sarah Glennie, Irish Museum of Modern Art, 23 September 2016–15 January 2017, the exhibition included six framed etchings based on pages from Irvine's book, *Days of Surrender* (Irvine 2013).
7. James Richards, Email correspondence (April 24, 2020).

8. James Richards, *Radio at Night* (2015), video, eight minutes. This touring exhibition originated at Bergen Kunsthall, 26 February – 3 April, 2016, followed by the ICA, London 21 September–13 November, 2016 where I saw the work.
9. The imagery in this sequence is: 'made up of material gathered from the BBC Six O'Clock news (surgery, hospitals, city life, crime scenes), mixed with 35 mm documentary footage about food production in Germany, mixed with pages from a 1970s Dutch photo art book' Richards, Email.
10. The first is *WELCOME (The Atrium)* (2008), HD video, colour, sound, three minutes, forty seconds. Edition of three plus two APs.
11. Elizabeth Price, *USER GROUP DISCO* (2009), HD video, colour, sound, fifteen minutes. The soundtrack is composed by Jem Noble. Edition of three plus two APs.
12. Price has referenced this film and Alain Resnais's *Le chant de Styrène* (*The Styrene's Song*) (1958) in relation to her work, see https://lux.org.uk/work/user-group-disco.
13. The original lines are: 'accumulated domestic monstrosities can shock the unwary by their relation to works of art' (Adorno 2005, 395).
14. Elizabeth Price, *THE WOOLWORTHS CHOIR OF 1979* (2012), single channel video projection, colour and sound, eighteen minutes. Edition of three plus two APs. Collection Tate, London.
15. Elizabeth Price, *SLOW DANS* (2019) ten channel video projection, twenty five minutes, in 'Elizabeth Price: A Long Memory', The Whitworth, University of Manchester, 25 October 2019–1 March 2020.
16. Elizabeth Price, *KOHL* (2018), four channel video projection, six minutes. Edition of three plus two APs.
17. Elizabeth Price, *FELT TIP* (2018), two channel video projection, nine minutes. Edition of three plus two APs.
18. Elizabeth Price, *TEACHERS* (2019), four channel video projection, ten minutes. Edition of three plus two APs.

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CHAPTER 8

Conclusion: 'Inconsolable Memory'

> So a nebulous mass, seen through more and more powerful telescopes reveals itself into an ever greater number of stars. (Bergson 1991, 166)

> *J'ai désiré avoir une inconsolable mémoire* (I wanted to have an inconsolable memory). (Duras 1961, 23)

The hem of a white apron and a pair of black boots are all that is visible of Elizabeth O'Farrell in a black-and-white photograph showing Pádraig Pearse surrendering to Brigadier General Lowe in April 1916. O'Farrell's feet were subsequently completely removed from the picture and with them her role in the Rising was effectively erased from the historical record. O'Farrell's absence from the photograph constitutes an 'inconsolable memory', a memory that persists within a well of forgetting and disavowal. Such negated figures are described by Avery Gordon as 'real hauntings' or the presence of 'ghostly matters' within society and historical memory that need to be reckoned with (Gordon 2004). In Jaki Irvine's *If the Ground Should Open* (2016) O'Farrell and other missing women are not only remembered, they are invoked to voice a collective outrage at financial corruption in Ireland of the 2000s. Along with other artworks presented in this book, Irvine's installation intervenes in the politics of memory considered as both personal and collective and existing in relation to contested histories that continue to impact on the present.

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Over the course of the last five chapters, I have explored how these artworks orchestrate memory through the moving image and sound. The interconnected modes of 'critical nostalgia', 'database narrative', 'echo-chamber', 'documentary fiction' and 'mediatized memories' highlight the diversity of individual artists' approaches to the mnemonic dimensions of moving image media. I have argued that the transformations of digitalization occurring simultaneously with the centenary commemorations of cinema in the mid 1990s have been the crucible in which the intermedial aesthetics of artists' moving image have emerged. But technical developments in themselves do not entirely account for the foregrounding of memory in the works presented. The pronounced mnemonic dimension to these works begs the question of why the modalities of memory which involve haunting, uncertainty and forgetting have become central to contemporary art at the turn of the twenty-first century. As indicated at the outset of this book, memory in artists' moving image is related to a wider cultural turn to memory in the wake of historical ruptures. The modes of contemporary moving image art surveyed in this book contribute to re-establishing a historical consciousness for a post-communist, post-Marxist era. As we have seen this renewed historical consciousness takes its co-ordinates from the multiplicity of memory and the experience of asynchronous temporalities within globalized neoliberal capitalism. In their interlacing of memory, history and time, the featured artworks participate in what Jacques Rancière calls 'the distribution of the sensible' or the politics of aesthetics:

> artistic practices are 'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility. (Rancière 2013, 8)

As 'ways of doing and making', these artworks are constituted in intermedial aesthetics that disclose the workings of memory in relation to moving image technologies. Rancière's aesthetic theory makes an optimistic case for the potential of art as a form of sensuous knowledge to have efficacy in the 'real' social and political public sphere. With this in mind, artists' activations of memory raise pertinent questions like: whose history and who has the right to remember and be remembered. Considering these questions through the diverse artworks featured in this book brings us to the following set of conclusions.

Firstly, as acts of memory, the selected artworks give material substance to the virtuality of memory. Their arrangements of images and sounds are experienced by viewers as affects or direct physical sensations charged with the emotive and subjective force of memory. Such affective qualities are found in Steve McQueen's physicalized positioning of the viewer in relation to the screen image and in Mark Leckey's and Elizabeth Price's use of immersive sound that plunges viewers into remembered collective spaces of clubs and music venues. The specific textures of diverse media sounds and images in these artists' works, often digitally foregrounded, activate corresponding registers of Proustian involuntary memories for viewers.

Secondly, in these practices the work of memory is shown to operate in relation to forgetting and the blockages of memory such as disavowal, amnesiac erasure and selective memory. Here artists' interventions contest official histories and omissions in the interstices of institutions and archives by activating a deep 'pure memory'. The Bergsonian concept of 'pure memory' has a revolutionary edge in that it encompasses the totality of the past on an individual and universal basis. 'Pure memory' accrues in tandem with lived experience but it is 'powerless' unless actively sought; it exists but we are not necessarily conscious of it. Thus memory hinges on forgetfulness; as we do not remember everything the production of memory requires either the will to remember or a spontaneous trigger. In Bergson's metaphors of telescopes and the focusing of a camera to convey the act of memory, the emphasis is on the mental effort involved in searching, adjusting and eventually recognizing memory-images. While Bergson refers to forgetting primarily in terms of amnesia and faulty memory, Paul Ricoeur builds on Bergson to propose two kinds of forgetting: a 'destructive forgetting' which erases and forbids memory and the notion of a reserve of deep forgetting from which memories may be retrieved (Ricoeur 2004, 412–56). In the dynamic between memory and forgetting, remembering requires a willingness to enter into the past and an understanding of how the past weighs upon the present. In this way Chantal Ackerman's *D'Est*, made in the context of post-reunification Germany, pursues a memory of the past that she fears may be obliterated or completely forgotten. The fact that Ackerman's memory of the forced migration of Eastern European Jews in the 1940s is an intergenerational one, inherited from her parents, brings us to a third conclusion involving the truth of memory and its ethico-political dimension.

The question of memory in relation to truth has become ever more pressing in a so-called post-truth era.[1] As facts are downplayed in favour of emotive and spurious claims it becomes all the more urgent to discriminate between 'the truth of fiction' and artful dissembling. The documentary fictions of Pierre Huyghe, Omer Fast and Clemens von Wedemeyer explore how 'real fictions' attest to the reality of contemporary and historical experience. As in Rancière's example of Chris Marker's constructed memory of Alexander Medvedkin, fiction can support the effort of memory to enter into the past. Although memory as an inherently subjective practice may draw on fiction, it is not indistinguishable from fiction. Ricoeur defines memory ethically as a search for truth, insisting that memory should not be confused with the imagination; although both overlap and share in the production of images, to imagine is not to remember (Ricoeur 2004, 53–55). Yet the ability to access deep memory requires being open to the virtual presence of ghosts and phantasms. In the mode of critical nostalgia, both Ackerman's and Stan Douglas's artworks confront memory as a haunting, the persistence of past events that are not fully acknowledged or denied. The shadow of the Holocaust as a meta-event which challenges memory and historiography hangs over Ackerman's work and extends into Omer Fast's dissection of the mediatization of the Holocaust in popular cinema. Similarly the depiction of an endless queue in von Wedemeyer's *Otjesd* echoes Ackerman's focus on the interminable time of queuing and lines of people in *D'Est*, underscoring a recurring temporal limbo of displaced people that continues into the present. This repeating image and temporality of waiting testifies to a truth of historical experience that is part of collective memory, retained and returned to through the moving image.

The issues of forgetting, reliability and truth constitute the productive difficulties of memory. In this sense the artists in this study harness the disruptive energy of memories that insinuate themselves into the interstices of history and institutions. In the database narrative mode Douglas's *Inconsolable Memories* is the story of a man trapped in a historical cycle, struggling to assert his own memories of events while Harun Farocki's counter memory of cinema reinstates images of the workers and labour struggles missing from the dominant cinema industry. Douglas's and McQueen's insertions of black bodies into historical cinema aesthetics indicate the potential to re-generate historical consciousness through the memories of other identities, other experiences, possible pasts and

possible futures. Equally the contrast between Douglas's analytical intertextual dialogue with history and Ackerman's ambition to 'feel time' in affective durations indicate different gendered approaches to history and memory.

Finally, this study marks a transition from older cultural models of memory to newer paradigms of memory. We began with the moment cinema entered the gallery and with film's status as the pre-eminent medium of memory. Artists' moving image of the 1990s decisively instigates a renewed engagement with cinema that was largely absent from the preceding generation. However, as well as drawing on the collective memory of cinema and broadcasting media, the artists featured in this book also engage with newer digital media of memory that bring forth the historicity and texture of older analogue media. In their construction of mediatized memories Leckey, Price and James Richards navigate the intersection of the personal with the collective across the gamut of audiovisual media. Although the term moving image privileges the visual, the mnemonic intermedial aesthetics of these contemporary moving image artists are as much about the audible as the visual. While optical metaphors for memory persist from Proust's kaleidoscope to Bergson's camera and telescope, digitalization enables ever more nuanced means of entering the past through sound, exemplified in the re-presentation of analogue sounds on the soundtracks of Leckey's, Richards's and Price's works. As artists increasingly collaborate with and credit composers on their soundtracks and sonic art practices expand, sound rather than image leads the way to the new frontiers of art and memory. The mediatization of memory in digital culture and social media, producing a 'digital network memory' also suggests that algorithmic metaphors of memory are overtaking the optical. Likewise, the heterogeneity of contemporary intermedial aesthetics make it evident that cinema is but one modality of the moving image, a media that permeates all aspects of everyday life from social media to satellite systems.

The unique moving image apparatuses presented in this book condition viewers to diverse temporalities from narrative cinema to rhythmic, bodily time and machinic time. Such temporalities contribute to new modes of exploring and disclosing memory through the moving image. The agency of memory lies not solely in the remembrance of particular memories but in their capacity to instigate action in the present and for the future. The multiple intermedial configurations in these artworks

disclose the potential of memory to interrupt and recalibrate our normative experience of abstract linear time. Here memory becomes a generative force that remakes the past and suggests alternative futures.

Note

1. Oxford Dictionaries declared 'post-truth' to be its international word of the year in 2016.

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