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Download date: 15 Dec 2018
This study makes a case for analyzing the chronotopes of the cinematic as affective encounters in space-time. It argues that, while the site of cinema is on the move, the extent to which technologically mediated sounds and images continue to be experienced as cinematic today is largely dependent on the intensified sense of a “here,” a “now,” and a “me” that they convey. This intensification, this thesis suggests, is fundamentally rooted in the cinematic’s potential to intensify our experience of time, to convey time’s thickening, of which the sense of space or place, and a sense of self or self-presence are the correlatives. This study traces this thickening of time across four different spatio-temporal configurations of the cinematic that have traditionally been conceived as different from, or even antagonistic to, each other: a multi-media exhibition featuring the early avant-garde films of Andy Warhol in chapter one; the handheld aesthetics of European art-house films in chapter two; a large-scale interactive media installation set-up in public space in chapter three; and the usage of the trope of the flash-forward in mainstream Hollywood cinema in the Coda. Only by juxtaposing these cases by looking at what they have in common, i.e. intensified thickening of time that they share, can we grasp the complexity of the changes that the cinematic is currently undergoing.

Pepita Hesselberth teaches cultural theory and film at Leiden University. For this study she received a fellowship in the area of “Philosophy, Cinema, and Cultural Theory” co-hosted by the Copenhagen Doctoral School (CDS, University of Copenhagen), and the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA, University of Amsterdam). With Thomas Elsaesser, she edited the textbook Hollywood op Straat: Film en Televisie Binnen de Hedendaagse (Audiovisuele) Cultuur, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press/ Vosius, 2000.
Cinematic Chronotopes: Affective Encounters in Space-Time
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Cover Image: *Whirl*, David Rokeby, 2011. Skaters, late in the day, late in the year, circling the rink at Toronto City Hall. © Rokeby

Design: Margreet Vermeulen

This thesis is made possible with the financial support of The Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation and University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

This publication is made possible with support of the *J.E. Jurriaanse Stichting*. 
Cinematic Chronotopes: Affective Encounters in Space-Time
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Acknowledgments

It is hard to imagine this project without the encouragement of colleagues, friends, and family. Their support was essential before, during, and in the aftermath of its materialization. First of all, I wish to thank my supervisor, Thomas Elsaesser, for his patience and enduring support through the years that we have worked together, and for being the provocative, at times challenging, but never less than visionary thinker that he is. My project is greatly indebted to his thinking and scholarly work, and to the research projects it inspired. Also, and especially, I wish to thank my co-supervisor Ulrik Ekman, who challenged me to confront socio-cultural and technological phenomena that lay beyond the scope of cinema studies proper, while being nonetheless so crucial to it. My project has benefited greatly from his persistent questioning, and his systematic counter-approach to my at times eclectic slant. Moreover, I am indebted to him for introducing me to the work of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer and David Rokeby, which I address in chapter three.

Together with Wanda Strauven, Thomas initiated the ASCA Research Group *Imagined Futures* (iFut), which ran from 2007 until 2011. I thank them, as well as Michael Wedel and Alexandra Schneider, members of the coordinating team in, respectively, 2007-2009 and 2010-2011, for their inspired guidance of the seminar. Wanda, in particular, I thank for offering a listening ear and commenting on some of my ideas in the form of a dialogue, which helped me greatly. I also wish to thank the participants in the seminar, especially my fellow-members of “iFut Nano”: Maria Poulaki, Laura Schuster, Jennifer Steetskamp, Tina Bastajian, and Zeynep Gunduz, as well as Edwin Carels, Martine Huvenne and Lilia Perez. My project is greatly indebted to our collaborative efforts investigating the dynamics of media transformation and to their feedback on earlier drafts of my thesis. More generally, I would like to acknowledge the pleasure of working with people of such marvelous intelligence and great senses of humor, coming from such diverse backgrounds and often having practice-based (pre)occupations complementing their scholarly interests.
In 2009, Ulrik founded the Nordic Network on the Culture of Ubiquitous Computing, and (co-)organized a series of seminars with participants coming from all over the Nordic countries, as well as a very generous line-up of keynotes including scholars such as Jay Bolter, Michael Bull, Arild Fetveit, Mark Hansen, Katherine Hayles, Mathew Fueller, David Lyon, Lev Manovich, David Pinder, and Bernadette Wegenstein; and media artists and collectives such as Blast Theory, Electroland, Hasan Elahi, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, and David Rokeby. I realize often how privileged I have been to be able to participate in such a network. Its stimulating environment was crucial in shaping my ideas.

At ASCA, I had the distinct pleasure of participating in the last of Mieke Bal's ASCA Theory Seminars in 2007-2008, which she organized together with Murat Aydemir, Hanneke Grootenboer, and Mireille Rosello. It gives me great pleasure to see that under the spirited guidance of Mireille and Sudeep Dasgupta, the Theory Seminar continues to offer an intellectual harbor for so many of us young academics drawn to the unconventional, the interdisciplinary, and to the splendor of art, theory, and politics. I wish to thank organizers and participants alike of the seminars of 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, as well as the participants and organizers of the Annual ASCA Workshops from 2008 to 2012, in which I participated on occasion throughout the period of writing my dissertation. An especially warm thank you goes out to Alex Brown, Lucy Cotter, Erin La Cour, Anik Fournier, Ariane Noël de Tilly, Vesna Madzoski, Niall Martin, Noa Roei, Margaret Tali, and Astrid Van Weyenberg, to Hanneke Stuit, and to Jules Sturm, with whom I had the pleasure of sharing offices, thoughts, and/or the occasional well-deserved drink. I am grateful for their inspired and inspiring presences, and for always reminding me that, despite the solitude that writing a dissertation necessarily brings with it, we do not stand alone.

In Copenhagen I participated in a number of international network-based workshops, intensive courses and seminars for interdisciplinary research initiated and/or organized by Frederik Tygstrup: the annual European Summer School of Cultural Studies (ESSCS), the biannual European Doctoral Seminar in Culture, Criticism & Creativity in Berlin, and the triennial Joint PhD Seminar of the Copenhagen Doctoral School, CRÉART Paris Nanterre, organized with Catherine Perret, and Goldsmith London. I wish to express my gratitude to Frederik, Catherine, and the other organizers and the many people I encountered during these seminars. These seminars, like the ASCA seminar, not only provided a fruitful ground for discussion, but also
helped me to push my academic skills, thinking, and writing to new levels and, especially, in new directions.

In 2010 and 2011 I organized the first graduate workshops of the Network of European Cinema Studies (NECS) in Istanbul and London. I wish to thank my fellow organizers, Mariana Liz in both Istanbul and London, and Greg DeCuir, Donatella Valente, Blandine Joret, and Lavinia Brydon in London, as well as the participants, for turning these workshops into memorable events. I have learned a great deal from our collective efforts and collaboration, because that is all it takes, really.

For this project I was granted a fellowship in the area of “Philosophy, Cinema, and Cultural Theory” from the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation and University of Copenhagen, which was then co-hosted by the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) at the University of Amsterdam. I thank Kirsten Zeuthen in Copenhagen, and Eloe Kingma, Wouter de Kruijff and Gea Lindeboom in Amsterdam for their persistent and unstinting efforts, and success, in turning this increasingly complicated European construction into an actual and workable situation for me. Thank you also to Jantine van Gogh and Ania Dalecki at the ASCA and ALV offices; Ania, your carmine cello-tape shoe is still sitting on my desk.

To write my initial proposal for this research project, I was granted a small allowance from the Research Institute for History and Culture (OGC) and the Department of Media and Culture Studies at Utrecht University. I wish to express my gratitude to Frank Kessler for making this possible. Thank you also to my colleagues in Utrecht, especially Ansje van Beusekom, Marianne van den Boomen, Jim Hurley, Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Eggo Mueller, Joost Raessens, Mirko Tobias Schaefer, Imar de Vries, and Nanna Verhoeff. The genesis of this project, to me, is unthinkable without the friendly and above all stimulating environment they provided for me to work in.

To finish this project I received a small, but significant, allowance from the Department of Media Studies, Amsterdam. I am grateful to Patricia Pisters, the “Final Countdown Group,” and my other colleagues at the Department of Media Studies in Amsterdam for their encouragement during the home stretch.

I thank Jim Gibbons for editing my manuscript, and Margreet Vermeulen for designing it. Thank you also to Thijs Witty, for helping me with the translation of my Summary to Dutch (and for being the bright young man that you are). For granting me permission to use their images, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to David Rokeby, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Arie Kieviet, Frans Huisman, Machteld Aardse &
Anne Verhoijsen, Robert Jan Westdijk, Christine Plenus, Zentropa, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam & Gert Jan van Rooij, Yoko Ono (Studio One New York), Dan Graham (Marian Goodman Gallery), Bijzonder Collecties Amsterdam, Phillips, and Entertainment One Benelux. Moreover, the publication of this dissertation would not have been possible without the financial support of the J.E. Jurriaanse Stichting, which provided me with a stipend for the color prints.

Thank you to my students: past, present and future. A special thanks to my students of the very first hour who stuck around: Sigrid Burg, Karin van Es, Debbie Marbus, and Anneriken Wehrens. You are each a great inspiration to me. Thank you also Lene Denhart in Copenhagen, for many shared thoughts and extended lunches. To Eef Masson, Kiki Jeanson, and Xander Stroo for being around.

Last but certainly not least, I want to thank Mieke Bal, for her support and devoted guidance throughout this enterprise. It is to her legacy at ASCA and her professionalism that I wish to dedicate this book. To my parents, John Hesselberth and Rita Hennen, who taught me the first and most valuable lesson in life, and that is how to love. It will always keep me going. I am very grateful for their support, their patience, and for being the great parents that they are. To Lena, for being such a good friend. To Mireille. To Margreet, for brightening up the home stretch; I am humbled by her enthusiasm and generosity in designing this book, and all that comes with it. To Elsbeth Brouwer for her wisdom and her wit, and for her warm embraces when they were most needed. To Sybille Lammes, for reminding me, through her own persistence, that academic research and writing can actually be fun; but above all for being there, in good times and in bad. Without their support, it would have been much harder to find the courage to start this project, let alone the strength to finish it.
Introduction

In 2009 Philips released an online advertisement for their 21:9 “cinema proportioned” LCD television entitled *Carousel*, directed by Adam Berg in collaboration with Stink Digital. A single continuous tracking shot, the advertisement takes the viewer on a three-dimensional journey through frozen time. The scene contains generic images of cops and robbers, the latter playfully dressed in yellow clown suits, an overt reference to the opening sequence of the just-released Batman sequel *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008), featuring the Joker as its villain. The soundtrack, which unlike the image seems to unfold in time, offers a suggestion of what we are about to see: sounds of chaos, sirens, and voices. Music is used to build up suspense, even though, as in a video game, it never reaches a real climax. Rather, it is repetitive, it reiterates. This commercial proposes in a nutshell what I will argue in this study. It demonstrates what it means to deploy the cinematic outside of the cinema, specifically in terms of the experience of time.

The image fades in on an officer on his knees, yelling and pointing to the left in what appears to be a freeze frame, except that the frame is not frozen. Instead, the camera follows the direction of the officer’s gaze and index finger. Circumventing people and police vehicles, as well as floating paper money, bullets, and various damaged goods suspended in midair, it enters a building where police and criminals are embroiled in a shootout. It then circles around an officer who is being pushed through a glass window by one of the villains. The shattering glass is stock-still around him. Another officer is holding up his rifle in full swing. The camera then ascends a stairwell where, on the second floor, it moves through an arrested explosion until, via a corridor with more cops and robbers battling it out, it eventually enters a small room on the right, moving more slowly now.

Here, a wounded man in nothing but his underwear lies on the floor in an awkward position. A yellow clown suit is placed beside him; an officer kneels by his side. It is a prototypical image, but the scene nonetheless needs more images to become fully intelligible. Following a trail of blood and money, the camera floats up and out of the window and then moves down towards a police vehicle, circling
around a hand holding a big sack of money and a clown’s mask. Only when the camera zooms out do we realize that the hand belongs to the officer of the opening sequence, pointing left, his posture unchanged. (see fig. 0.1-0.6)¹

![Fig. 0.1-0.6: Phillips’ Carousel Commercial (Adam Berg, Stink Digital, 2009)](image_url)

It is significant for my view as laid out in this study that a web-based ad for a television technology claiming to be cinematic should foreground its potential to “thicken” time as the key feature of the cinematic experience it is trying to sell. During its two minutes and nineteen seconds, Carousel forms a continuous loop in which story time is empty, even as the instant is stretched out, expanded and folded back onto itself on the level of discourse, in part due to a logic of retroactive causality and the many intertextual references contained in the clip. Apart from the obvious references to movie blockbusters and television shows about cops and robbers, the clip playfully touches upon a number of recent interventions in moving image technologies, from complex real-time tracking shots to bullet-time, and from the wonders of digital post-production to the seemingly free-floating camera and the spatial storytelling familiar from computer games.² My study is devoted to such new deployments of the cinematic.

In Carousel, images constantly play off each other, and everything we see has already been seen, fragments of a collective memory on which and out of which the ad’s imagery is knowingly built. Yet Carousel does more than symbolize time’s
thickening; it makes such thickening tangible to our bodies, primarily through its affective appeal. Time, in other words, is made thick in the event of the encounter, and such thickness endows *Carousel* with “something cinematic,” as creative director Chris Baylis has characterized it. When it comes to cinema, the ad seems to suggest, we are always in multiple temporalities at once.

This study is about the thickness of time that is inherent in our contemporary encounter with the cinematic. This thickness can perhaps best be described as a temporal density, an excess of temporality in the face of the increased timelessness of our mediated encounters, at once event-like and ubiquitous.

### The Site of Cinema

My starting point is the observation that the site of cinema is on the move. In addition to the movie theatre, we may now encounter cinematic images in galleries, on urban screens and architectural facades; in our home cinemas or places of transit, from subways to airports, or on the numerous portable playback and recording devices that accompany us every day in a media-saturated world. We may also encounter cinematic images on YouTube, as machinima, or as cut-scenes in video games. Applications like Google Maps and Layar, but also the possibility to easily record, edit, and distribute our own moving images, using affordable and often technologically integrated video devices, add another cinematic layer to our lived experience. At the same time the likelihood of being captured by the relentless mechanical eyes of surveillance cameras, webcams and all sorts of portable camera devices has arguably turned our whole world cinematic, a condition that now exists prior to and regardless of any actual intervention of recording and display.

While these developments have led some scholars to declare cinema dead (e.g., Usai, 2001), or, alternatively, to stake a claim for its specificity (e.g., Andrew, 2010; Bordwell, 2006), a more productive approach in my view can be found in the writings of those scholars who have tried to frame the changing spatio-temporal configuration of the cinematic against the backdrop of a more wide-ranging set of cultural and technological transformations. In *The Language of New Media*, Lev Manovich, for example, has referred to the cinematic as a cultural interface that informs a plethora of contemporary media practices. (2001) Comparably, David Rodowick, in *The Virtual Life of Film*, suggests that “new” media practices are unrelentingly fashioned upon a cinematic metaphor. (2007) Sean Cubitt, in his turn,
speaks of cinema as an effect that arises from a complex intertwining of different kinds of mediated times, spaces, and movements. (2005) And Vivian Sobchack speaks of the cinematic as a body that is constitutive of the life-world we inhabit and that interferes with our lived bodies in complex and dynamic ways. (2005a)

What these writings have in common is that they all, in one way or another, confront the question of how to analyze the cinematic within a world that is increasingly made up of technologically mediated sounds and images, even as they acknowledge that there no longer is (and perhaps never was) a place outside of it from which it can be analyzed. This question seems to have haunted cinema studies over the last two decades, as most theories of cinema that served to legitimize it as an academic discipline are premised on a strict separation between spectatorial and representational space, thus placing the observer at a (theoretically maintained) safe distance from the world observed.

Much can be gained from placing the plethora of phenomena described above against the backdrop of theories premised on a more limited notion of cinema, I argue, especially if we want to grasp the commonality on the grounds of which they are experienced as belonging to the same category, while others are not necessarily so. For, more than an institutional or technological category and well before becoming a theoretical one, the cinematic is a category of experience, a performative that comes into being in the encounter between the human body and its environment, whether the latter be digital or analogue, projected or displayed on small or large screens, and experienced with or without the apparent intervention of the participating viewer.6

Conversely, it seems equally important to critically reassess theories premised on a more limited notion of cinema in light of contemporary phenomena that, according to any strict definition, would not qualify as “cinematic” at all, even if they are often recognized and perceived as such. The cinematic, I propose, is a category that is larger than cinema, an observation to which the many essays in David Campany’s edited volume entitled The Cinematic attest. (2007) Not only have photographic, cinematic, and electronic imaging technologies borrowed from and transformed each other, they have often relied on each other for self-definition.7 With the movie theatre being only one among the many platforms on which we can encounter moving images today, today’s media-infused environment arguably constitutes what media artist and scholar Victor Burgin, in the same volume, has called a cinematic heterotopia, summarized by Campany as a “network of overlapping interfaces and viewing habits,” an environment where technologically mediated sounds and images intersect with our lived bodies in forceful ways. (2007, 16)
More relevant in tracking the logic behind the complex and dynamic changes described above for our understanding of the cinematic today, therefore, seems to be the question of how certain sound and imaging technologies engage the participating viewer so as to challenge his or her perception of self-existence by constituting a lived environment that is recognized and experienced as being cinematic, as distinct from other environments that are not necessarily experienced that way. This question is more relevant than notions of medium specificity or media convergence. Key to the answer to this question, in my view, is the potential of the cinematic to intensify our experience of time’s thickening.

In this study I will trace this thickening of time across four cinematic configurations that often have traditionally been conceived as different from, or even antagonistic to, each other. The first two configurations, though sited outside of the realm of the movie theater, are nonetheless polemically engaged with cinema: a multi-media exhibition featuring avant-garde films and a large-scale interactive media installation operated by computational systems. In addition, I will examine several feature films made for theatrical release stemming from two rather discrete corpuses – i.e., the handheld aesthetics of European art-house films, and the recurring trope of the flash-forward in mainstream (Hollywood) productions – to suggest the affinity between them and the extra-theatrical configurations. Juxtaposing these examples highlights the intensified thickness of time that they share. Only by looking at these cases in tandem, I argue, can we grasp the complexity of the changes that the cinematic is currently undergoing.

Cinematic Time

The objective of this study is to uncover the ways that the cinematic reworks our sense of time, space, and agency in an era of pervasive media presence, so as to resituate the embodied subject. In relating cinema’s potential to thicken the present to the participating viewer’s experience of being, I take my cue from the writings of scholars like Gilles Deleuze (1986, 1989), Vivian Sobchack (2005a; orig. 1994), and Mary Ann Doane (2002), who have each, notwithstanding their differences in perspective and approach, called attention to this linkage. In Cinema 1: The Movement-Image (1986) and Cinema 2: The Time-Image (1989), Deleuze does so by looking at cinema’s radically new ways of rendering time and space perceptible through the body. The books are part of Deleuze’s more complex and wider philosophical mediations on time and art, developed over the course of some thirty
years of writings. The cinema books, writes David Rodowick, in particular reveal Deleuze’s sensitivity to a “century-long transformation wherein we have come to represent and understand ourselves socially through spatial and temporal articulations founded in cinema.” (1997: xii)

Deleuze argues that cinema in its most radical mode, in his view the modernist cinema of the 1960s and 70s, allows us to perceive time in its pure form, that is, in its multiplicity, and as pure duration liberated from movement. Important for our purposes here is Deleuze’s suggestion that it is through this multiplicity, this ambiguous temporality, that the cinematic challenges the ontological foundations of human existence traditionally organized around the subject, and thereby allows new modes of existence to emerge. Although I do not share Deleuze’s assessment of film history and the teleological taxonomies it inspired, I am unmistakably indebted to Deleuze’s mediations on time, cinema, art, and philosophy, as well as their more general bearings on the practice of cultural theory and the developing field of what is now commonly labeled film-philosophy. My project differs from Deleuze’s, however, in that it is not concerned with a more general philosophy of time, but rather seeks to address the cultural and theoretical implications of the changing spatio-temporal configuration of the cinematic today for the kinds of analysis it affords and necessitates.

Writing from a very different perspective that can at times be difficult to reconcile with Deleuze’s, Vivian Sobchack, in “The Scene of the Screen,” also suggests that the cinematic impinges on our experience of being, or presence to the world, through its particular renderings of time. Drawing on the existential phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty in particular, Sobchack ardently argues that as an objective phenomenon, the cinematic affirms both embodied being and the world, and as such “constitutes its ‘presence’ as always presently engaged in the experiential process of signifying and coming-into-being.” (2005a: 135) Hinting at the temporal simultaneity of the “objective” time of the film’s unfolding (here) and the “subjective” temporality of captured and experienced world (there), Sobchack insists that the cinematic is characterized by a thickening of time and, consequently, an expansion of space. “[T]he cinematic makes time visibly heterogeneous,” she writes; it thickens the present in the event of its unfolding. Conversely, the photographic arguably objectifies the moment and preserves a singular point of view as a being-that-has-been, whereas in her view the electronic flattens time and turns it back onto itself, establishing a being-in-itself in which time and space are disembodied and randomly dispersed across a network, intentional agency is distributed, and referentiality is turned into intertextuality.
Sobchack’s insistence on the disembodied nature of the electronic is remarkable, given her own efforts to restore the cinematic to the conditions of embodiment. Nonetheless, I share her interest in the materialities of communications and their enabling of new perceptual modes of embodied presence. I am also sensitive to her suggestion that the cinematic is distinguished by its potential to make the thickness of time perceptible to our bodies. I part ways with her argument, however, in my view that this thickening is not unique to the particular material condition of classical cinema, as Sobchack seems to suggest. For, as Anna Munster has noted in *Materializing New Media*, the reported “loss” of experiential time in our encounter with the electronic must be understood precisely at the “juncture of the processes of negotiation between technologically produced and corporeal habitual space and time.” (2006: 96) We can only begin to account for our sense of presence within electronic environments if we accept that the temporality negotiated here does not unfold horizontally, i.e., according to a logic of past-present-future, but “is instead compressed into vertical strata of nonlinear, simultaneously existing layers,” allowing for temporality to be experienced in a qualitatively different – i.e., nonsequential, multidirectional, and multi-accessible – way. (2006: 98) Time here is thus not so much lost or flattened as it is laterally rearranged, “compacted into stacked and varying rhythms.” (2006: 101)

A third scholar who has extensively dealt with the relation between the thick time of the cinematic and the sense of self-presence it produces is Mary Ann Doane. Addressing the preoccupation with time and its representability around the turn of the 20th century, Doane in *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* equally considers cinema “a crucial participant in an ongoing rethinking of temporality [...] and the situatedness of the subject” rather than merely an effect or symptom of the development of modernity. (2002: 20) She convincingly argues that the emergence of cinematic time took place in an era marked by two seemingly contradictory tendencies: i.e., first, the progressive abstraction and rationalization of time, and second, an increased emphasis on the contingent, on chance and the ephemeral. Rather than placing these tendencies in opposition, Doane maintains that the production of the contingent was in fact a structural necessity to counter the ideologies of capitalist modernity, a form of resistance, freedom, and indeterminacy, which paradoxically became the “basis for social stability in modernity.” (2002: 230)

Touching on fields as wide-ranging as philosophy, psychoanalysis, physiology, statistics, and thermodynamics, Doane stipulates the historicity and discursive importance of the cinematic as preeminently a technology of representation.
characterized by a curious merger of structure and contingency, which becomes most pertinent in the tension between cinema’s archival and performative dimensions. That is, cinema offers a record of time and takes up time in the event of its unfolding. Although Doane maintains that it is in particular the photographic index’s privileged yet ambivalent relationship to the contingent that demarcates cinematic time as explicitly heterogeneous, and makes the cinematic emblematic of the pressure to rethink time, she also suggests that the demise of photochemical indexicality does not cause this renegotiation to end. In fact, she states that indexically ensured contingency is available to a wide range of media, including television and other real-time media, that continue to participate in structuring the access to the contingent and the indeterminable.

I will take up Doane’s suggestion, expressed towards the end of *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* as well as in her more recent writings on cinematic scale (2003, 2009a, 2009b) and the concept of medium-specificity (2007a, 2007b), that we need to rethink cinematic indexicality as deixis rather than trace in order to account for contemporary cinematic renegotiations of time and being. The difference is temporal: trace connects to the past; deixis to the present. Where the index as trace promises the archivability of the experience of presence, albeit a presence relived, “haunted by historicity” (2002: 23), the index as deixis is contingent on the spatio-temporal frame of its articulation in the moment. This study further builds on Doane’s writing in that I will address the tension between structure and contingency that is emblematic of cinematic time by looking into several contemporary cinematic practices, especially when touching upon the absent, unattainable, or volatile presence of the observer. In the following chapters, I examine this tension in four different manifestations of cinematic time as sited outside classical cinema in relation to the three corners of the deictic triangle: here, now, me.

**Deixis**

As my title indicates, I focus here on cinematic chronotopes, which etymologically means time-space. I borrow the term chronotope from the Russian literary critic and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, who uses it to name “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed,” in his case in literature. In the chronotope, Bakhtin writes, “Time as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movement of time, plot and history.” (1981: 84) In cinema studies
the concept has been used primarily to historicize the debate on filmic genre. In this study, however, I follow literary and media critic Esther Peeren, who, in her *Intersubjectivities and Popular Culture*, rejects the opposition between actual and textual chronotopes, and eloquently expands “Bakthin’s chronotope from a literary concept into a social one that designates the intersubjectively established and maintained practice of constructing the spatio-temporal worlds in which we live and through which we define ourselves.” (2007: 28) The cinematic, I argue, produces such chronotopes.

Significantly, Peeren deploys the concept first and foremost to shed light on the spatio-temporal specificity and situatedness of identity, while insisting on the constructed quality of the physical environment with which and through which we interact, and from which our perception of self-presence emerges, here and now. Taken “beyond Bakhtin,” as Peeren does, the term chronotope thus expresses the inseparability of time, space and identity constructions. Subjects, she writes, “are within a chronotope – indeed, of it [...]” (2007: 23; emphasis in text) In this study I look at the contested and contingent time/space/subjectivity configurations that the cinematic gives rise to, as well as at the mobile, fleeting, embedded, and embodied selves that the cinematic, para-cinematic and post-cinematic leaves us with, selves that are necessarily entrapped in (mediated) space-times, indeed can be said to exist of it.

My analysis of cinematic chronotopes will help clarify how, within our contemporary media-saturated world, technologically mediated times and spaces are transformed into constitutive categories of subjectivity via their intensification of the participating viewer’s sense of being “here,” “now” and “me.” In so doing, my study builds on the writings of Thomas Elsaesser, who on various occasions has addressed the paradox of cinema’s death and its new ubiquity in terms of the distinction between the “space/time/agency/subject [here/now/me] articulation” afforded by cinema. The key to understanding such an articulation is the bond, established and confirmed in an ongoing process, between cinematic time-spaces and the viewer who engages with them. This bond is built up and kept, I argue, through a form of indexicality, specifically through a structure that linguistic theory calls “deixis.”

Deixis is a linguistic term that refers to the study of indexical references, or deictics, that require the presence of the participants and the specific spatio-temporal context of their expression in order to make sense: the “this” of a pointing finger, or words such as “here,” “now,” “I,” or “you.” What is striking about deictics is that they involve what American pragmatist philosopher Charles Sand-
ers Peirce called a “dynamical coexistence” of sign and referent in order to become meaningful. (1955; here quoted in Levinson, 2004: 103) That is to say, in deixis the referent, rather than being made available by an expression’s semantic conditions, is achieved by means of contextual support. “This contextual support,” writes Stephen C. Levinson, “is provided by the mutual attention of the interlocutors and their ability to reconstruct the speaker’s referential intentions given clues in the environment.” (2004: 103) Deixis thus has intentional as well as attentional features that both depend on what Karl Bühler has called the deictic origo, i.e., the spatio-temporal frame of the articulation, centered on the interlocutor at the time and place of the utterance.\(^{11}\)

In cinema studies, the concept of deixis was picked up in the 1980s by Francesco Casetti, who used it in Inside the Gaze to develop his rigorous theory of filmic enunciation based on personal pronouns. (1999; orig. 1986) In the book, Casetti departs from the psychoanalytical and ideological approaches to cinema of his contemporaries, including Christian Metz (to whom I will turn below), who conceived the spectator as a pre-given entity within a self-enclosed system, a divided subject unified through cinematic suture.\(^{12}\) To account for the ways that a film orients itself towards the actual viewer in the auditorium, Casetti proposes a semiotic framework of analysis, based on a face-to-face model of communication. For Casetti, film viewing always involves three deictic categories: an “I” (i.e., the enunciator, or filmmaker), a “you” (i.e., the addressee, or spectator) and a “he” (a character or a thing, i.e., the film itself). From this, he derives a typology of shots, each indicating a different way that a film can say “you,” thus demarcating a place to be filled in by the spectator. Yet, as Warren Buckland has pointed out, despite his interest in the actual spectator, Casetti pursues his research primarily on the formal level of the film. That is to say, he is mostly concerned with the ways a film pre-scribes the spectator’s position through its particular mode of address. (2001: 215)

Casetti’s use of personal pronouns and deictic terms was fiercely criticized by Metz, who wrote his final work “The Impersonal Enunciation, or the Site of Film” (1991; orig. 1987) largely in response to Casetti. For Metz, deixis is not adequate to describe the reality of film, because in the cinema situation, no “I” (filmmaker, character) speaks directly to a “you” (viewer). Filmic enunciation is impersonal, he states; therefore, there can be no analogy between film and natural languages. Rather, film displaces the enunciation from the actual place and time of the enunciator: its reality is recorded and produced before the actual viewer engages with
the film. As a result, the relation between enunciator and addressee is always asymmetrical and mediate rather than immediate, as in dialogue.13

Important for our purpose here is that Metz rejects the use of deictic terms to describe the reality of film, because he conceives film as histoire rather than discourse, in Emile Benveniste’s sense of the terms, where histoire is “defined by the absence of deictic markers.” As Buckland puts it: “In rejecting the presence of deixis in film, Metz limits his discussion of filmic enunciation to the articulation of space and time within narrative films […]” (2000: 69; emphasis added) In the famous essay “Story/Discourse (A Note on Two Kinds of Voyeurism),” (1986) Metz had already used Benveniste’s distinction discourse and histoire to argue that the cinematic situation is inherently voyeuristic (and thus histoire), because it lacks the deictic markers that acknowledge the viewer's presence. The viewer can look into a filmic world, but the film does not look back, because it cannot; it is impersonal.

Metz’s rejection of deixis is thus founded on specific material grounds. One of the material conditions of cinema, he argues in “Story/Discourse,” is its positing of a radical “segregation of spaces” (1986: 64) between the viewer and the screen. Rather than referring to an external reality, cinema in his view thus constructs a reality of its own. A film is a world opened up through projection, separated from the real world by means of the frame. Hence his subtitle “the site of film.” This leads Metz to conclude that reference in film is necessarily meta-linguistic and anaphoric rather than deictic. More importantly, Metz suggests that a cinematic work acknowledges the spectator only to the extent that it constructs an absent centre on the other side of the screen, i.e., a subject position that offers the viewer a point of entry into the filmic space by means of identification and mirroring.

I share Metz’s view that the filmic enunciation is impersonal, but I am critical of his rejection of deixis, and the radical segregation of spaces he proposes. The impact of Metz’s theory of filmic enunciation cannot easily be overestimated. Film theory has most commonly dealt with the duplicitous relationship between seeing and being seen in terms of variations of the mirror, with an emphasis on the classic voyeuristic position of the observer.14 We tend to understand our own involvement in these terms. More recently, however, we can observe a shift of attention in film theory, away from the centrality of vision and voyeurism towards an attentiveness to the body and embodiment. Scholars such as Gilles Deleuze (1986), Vivian Sobchack (1992), Laura Marks (2000), and Giuliana Bruno (2002), for example, have each theorized the cinematic in terms of its affective, embodied, tactile, or haptic appeal, thus foregrounding embodiment and engagement as one of the axes alongside which the registers of the cinematic need to be, can be,
and to some extent already have been revised and redefined. This paradigm shift has not only encroached on developments within contemporary cinematic practices but is also influencing how we evaluate and understand earlier theories and practices of cinema. In *Film Theory: An Introduction*... Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, therefore, have convincingly argued for a retrospective rewriting of film theory *...through the Senses*.15

In line with these writings, I will here foreground the relationality between cinematic environments and the participating viewer in terms of the specific experience of being here, now, and me that it affords. The cinematic now confronts us in all kinds of places no longer dependent on the screen/frame paradigm of projection. Therefore the old paradigm of the mirror, of reflexivity, and the dominance of the eye seems no longer to hold. Within the ever-expanding field of contemporary cinematics the old registers of perception, organized around the image as framed view, experienced at a distance by a seated viewer, and channeled exclusively through the eye and ear, no longer necessarily apply. They need to be replaced with a different register that, for the purposes of this study, I will call the affective encounter.

Focusing on the body and embodiment enables a different understanding of deixis, one that cannot be reduced to linguistic forms of discourse. For as psychologist and linguist Karl Bühler writes, who used the term deixis in the 1930s to theorize how (human) beings orient themselves in relation to their environment, an individual “senses his body, too, in relation to his optical orientation, and employs it to point. His (conscious, experienced) tactile body image has a position in relation to visual space.” (here quoted in Buckland, 2000: 70; emphasis in text) Kaja Silverman, in *The Threshold of the Visual World*, has referred to this tactile body-image as the individual’s “proprioceptive frame of reference,” thus stipulating the importance of the constant wavering, back and forth, between body and space entailed by vision. (1996: 24) Cultural theorist Mieke Bal uses the term wavering, in turn, to refer to our dialogic relation to visual space, expanding on Silverman and calling attention to the proprioceptive base of deixis. (2001)

Thus, even though I will be speaking, to a certain degree, about the different kinds of mirroring afforded by contemporary cinematic environments, as well as about the position of the viewer within them, I am no longer placing these terms in a classical cinema setting. From the viewpoint of visuality, looking both emanates from and points back to a body. Deictics, in this sense, do not contribute to the propositional content derived from a given context, but rather serve to slot in an element of that context, i.e., the referent, in the proposition expressed, so as to
validate its being. The act of looking, in other words, is part of the object, or that which is looked at, so that any movement in or of the observer necessarily triggers movement in or of the world observed, and vice versa, here and now. This principle of co-variance radically differs from the principle of co-dependence fundamental to Renaissance perspective and the ocular-centric models of cinema it inspired. It is different because it does not place the viewer at a distance from the world observed, and by the same token does not consider the object as given or fixed. For “what can subject-centredness be,” asks Bal, “when the subject is by definition a wavering double I/you subject that is impossible to pin down at any moment in any one spatial position.” (2001: 152-153; emphasis in text)

In this study I adhere to this bodily-spatial form of deixis, but this entails two provisos. First, it is imperative to grant that in the bodily-spatial studies of deixis proposed above, the environment is recognized as actant in the construction of meaning and in processes of self-validation. Second, and significantly, the wavering just described is a temporal process. “Where space meets the body,” writes Bal, “time is involved.”(2001: 164) The wavering between our body and the world imbues visuality with a temporal thickness. Key to this thickening is actuality, and actuality is the time of discourse. What sets apart the cinematic, I argue, is its potential to intensify this temporal thickening, and so to intensify our sense not only of “now” but also of “here” and “me.”

Embodiment is the condition of visuality. My reflections on the thick time of the cinematic are thus intimately tied up with necessary reflections on the spatializing practices that condition this temporal thickening, as well as on the perceptions of self-existence that it affords. For, as Elsaesser has noted, embodiment is but one of the semantic fields of cinematic experience, alongside of which he identifies two others: time and agency (2009c). The first two of these three fields, according to Bal, are already linked. So, if I focus primarily on time, it is time with and through the body that can be thickened. In foregrounding the specific experience of time that is mediated through our encounter with the cinematic, I will unavoidably address all three of these domains throughout the chapters, with a slight focus on each of them during the three chapters. Deixis will allow me to demonstrate coherently that the cinematic exceeds cinema and yet is still sufficiently central to our experience of time and being within our contemporary media-saturated world. My thesis, in this sense, can be understood to offer a different reading of the apparent paradox of the death of cinema and its proclaimed ubiquity.
Flashing Forward

In 2006-2007 the Centre Pompidou in Paris held an exhibition entitled *Le Mouvement des Images: Art & Cinema*, which took as its point of departure the observation that we now encounter moving images in different formations and across a variety of platforms. The exhibition’s aim, as stated by curator Philippe-Alain Michaud, was to “redefine cinema and the way in which it has been accepted in terms of experience over the last century.” The exhibition offered a thematic presentation of works from the museum’s film and video collection alongside photographs, paintings, and sculptures, along with works related to architecture and design. “At the dawn of the digital revolution,” states the press release, “this new presentation, based on the fundamental components of film-making – scrolling, projection, narrative and editing – is offering a completely new cinematographic experience encompassing the visual arts.”

The exhibition indeed called for a dialogic rethinking of art from the viewpoint of cinema. Yet, mounted in spacious surroundings with darkened walls and floors that accentuated light contrasts, it also did something else: it constituted a cinematic environment of its own. The experience it offered, however, radically differs from the one commonly known from theatrical cinema, with its fixed spectators and single back projection, its divided spaces and linear unfolding. For here, instead, the visitor was free to wander through various spaces filled with multiple light projections, displays, and other artifacts that, in their conjunction and potential for interaction, allowed the visitor to tell cinema’s history differently.

In chapter one, I will address the theoretical implications of the tension between the mobility and situatedness of the participating viewer within our media-infused world, in part by embarking on the specific, that is, situated mediations of time afforded by such environments. Using the 2007 multi-media exhibition *Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms* as a case study, I will argue for a rethinking of the cinematic in terms of an intensified sense of “here-ness,” of being physically present within a given cinematic environment.

The Warhol exhibition is interesting for a number of reasons. First, the exhibition consisted both of Warhol’s films, generally conceived as both “avant-garde films” and part of the “expanded cinema” of the 1960s, and many of Warhol’s television programs from the 1980s. That these works were presented in and as part of a contemporary “media scape” allows me to discuss the current relocation of the cinematic against the backdrop of its earlier expansions. Second, and significantly, Warhol’s cinematic endeavors are most widely known for and discussed in terms
of their treatment and manipulation of cinematic time. In recent discussions, the early films in particular are often affiliated with reality television and (the aesthetics of) real-time surveillance. Their reliance on a suggested liveness will help me to tackle how the cinematic establishes a sense of “here” that pertains first and foremost to the viewer’s body within the physical space of the encounter, “now.”

Third, Warhol’s cinematic work is often conceived to be prototypical of our contemporary desire for self-monitoring and mediated self-presence; thus it foregrounds how the cinematic increasingly impinges on the way we perceive our presence in the world. The commonality and differences among Warhol’s films, the discussions they trigger, and the cinematic practices under scrutiny in this chapter (i.e., a multi-media exhibition of his work) stipulate the significance of the collapse of the spaces of representation and reception, in a discussion that largely revolves around the renegotiation of scale. In the first chapter, then, I will look into the multiple ways the body relates to and interacts with the augmented and often mixed reality of its environment, here. It is in this “hereness” that the cinematic’s paradoxical reliance on notions like mobility and situatedness come together and can properly be addressed and unraveled.

In chapter two I will turn to the increased mobility of the camera itself by exploring the use of handheld camera devices in European art-house films of the 1990s and their establishment of what I have dubbed a handheld aesthetics. As in the first chapter, I take an extreme case to elucidate what is essential to the cinematic in general – namely, its potential to intensify, thicken, our sense of being there in the present, in a performative “now” that is not identical to the time of the present tense. A particularly early example of this aesthetics can be found in John Lennon and Yoko Ono’s mini-feature Rape from 1968 (see fig. 0.7). The premise of the film is simple. A young girl (Eva Majlath) is brutally harassed by a relentless (all male) camera crew for the entire film. The handheld camera follows her everywhere and tracks her every move: first on the streets, then at her workplace, and eventually in her home. The camera is too close for comfort, the frame is tight, the imagery shaky and there is

Fig. 0.7: The actress yelling at the camera in Rape (Film No. 5) (Yoko Ono, 1969)
no closure; the film just ends. Shot in what appears to be real-time, the film is interrupted only when the camera runs out of film and needs to be recharged, until, finally, it is not. The turning point for the audience comes approximately halfway through the film, when, due to the handheld camera’s uncompromising behavior, i.e., its extreme proximity to the main character, its lack of spatial overview, and its refusal to look away, the film steadily turns its gaze back upon the audience, making us uncomfortably aware of own complicity in the act of looking. The film is extremely violent to watch.

Shot in the late 1960s, Rape preceded the publication of Laura Mulvey’s famous essay on “The Visual Pleasure of Narrative Cinema” (1975) by a few years, and it is easy to read the film as a hyperbolic proclamation of her argument concerning the power structures involved in the regimes of looking.18 The film’s relevance within the context of this study, however, lies in something not easily explained in these terms, namely the way in which the film weighs on the body. It does so, I suggest in chapter two, because of the particular mediations of time and space afforded by the handheld camera.

Aesthetically, the use of the handheld camera is compelling because of the ways it draws attention to a bodily presence, i.e., to a hand holding the camera, which is sustained in the image. In addition, throughout film history and its discourses handheld camera devices have come to connote both authenticity and reflexivity: handheld imagery is commonly perceived either as more “true” or more “self-conscious.” In chapter two I will demonstrate how these issues of authenticity, reflexivity, and corporeality are reworked in the handheld aesthetics of the 1990s. The popularity of handheld-camera devices in the 90s, around the time of the advent of the digital, is crucial because it marks a shift away from cinema’s dependence on spatial forms of indexicality, towards an increased prevalence of the temporal index. Handheld aesthetics is characterized by a strong reorientation in a “now” that makes up for the camera’s spatially disorienting point of view. The “now” it affords, however, I maintain, is ultimately untenable, as it is beset with the time of affect and trauma. It is this mediation of time through the body, I argue, that endows the “now” of our encounter with the cinematic with its thickness.

In the third chapter, I will turn to the sense of “me” that the cinematic affords. Again I have chosen an extreme case, a large-scale urban media installation – i.e., Rafael Lozano-Hemmer’s Body Movies (2001) – in which the participating viewer’s projected body image is a constitutive part of the cinematic experience the installation conveys. Again, the case is not unique but is rather exemplary of a more gen-
eral trend that marks the relocation of the cinematic today. Other examples that come to mind, besides *Body Movies*’ virtual inversions *Under Scan* (2005) and *Sand Box* (2010), can be found in the oeuvres of, for example, Christian Moeller and David Rokeby. In his installation *Nosy* (2006) set up in Osaka City (Tokyo), Moeller uses a robotically controlled surveillance camera to monitor, track, and then display its immediate surroundings, including the participating viewer, onto three towered LED-screens in bitmap graphics. As city-dwellers pass by, images of their bodies are fed back onto the façade of a building, resulting in a playful engagement between the city dweller and his or her image on the building’s surface.\(^{19}\) Also worthy of note are David Rokeby’s “artificial perception systems,” from his renowned sound interface *Very Nervous System* (1986–90) to his “distorted surveillance” systems like *Sorting Daemon* (2003), *Watch* (1995), *Seen* (2002, see fig. 0.8) and *San Marco Flow* (2004-5).\(^{20}\) In each of these installations, the body-image of the (unknowing) city dweller is monitored, tracked, processed, and fed back to the participating viewer in significantly different ways: as sounds (in *Very Nervous System*), as visual patterns (in *Seen* and *San Marco Flow*) and visual data bits (as in *Sorting Daemon*). In *Body Movies*, the case at hand, feedback occurs largely via the shadow-projections of the viewer’s body, and via visual interruptions and midi-signals.

![Image](image.png)

*Fig. 0.8: David Rokeby’s Seen (2002). Venice Biennale of Architecture, Italy.*

The installations’ participation in the media-infused city at large will allow me to address our encounter with the cinematic in terms of spatial augmentation,
embodied interaction, and the sense of event-ness they impart. I will place the installations against the backdrop of earlier practices and fantasies of cinema’s expansion beyond the cinematic screen, most notably in discussions on cinematic three-dimensionality. These fantasies are symptomatic of a fear of and desire for the collapse of the difference between spectatorial and representational space, and mark the gradual demise of the Euclidian subject within theories of the cinematic. I will argue that the cases under scrutiny challenge us to rethink the cinematic in terms of the tangibility- or presence-effect it produces, rather then the subject-effect it is said to fabricate. This presence-effect, I maintain, revolves around three important pillars: first, projection as emanating from the body; second, presence as relationality; and third, agency as limit. In chapter three, I will unpack these notions of projection, presence, and agency, and suggest that the cinematic intensifies our perception of our self-existence by postulating a sense of presence, of “me,” that does not exist in isolation, but rather emerges from our encounter with other entities, both sentient and non-sentient.

In the Coda, I will consider some mainstream Hollywood examples and assess the relevance of the proposed approach for the analysis of contemporary Hollywood films characterized by their complex narrative unfolding, their often affective appeal, and their reliance on the logics of retroactive causality. In particular I will look into the use of the trope of the flash-forward, as used in films like The Source Code (Jones, 2011), Sherlock Holmes (Ritchie, 2009), Next (Tamahori, 2007), Donnie Darko (2001), and the HBO/ABC television series Flash Forward (Braga & Goyer, 2009-2010), and many others, and explore the theoretical ramifications of the paradigm shift I seek to capture in this study for their analysis.

The cases I have chosen are, as I have said, extreme cases. As theoretical objects they actively contribute to the film-philosophical debates on the changing spatio-temporal configuration of the cinematic; they revisit some of the basic premises undergirding most classical film theories, such as perspectival vision, linearity, and subjectivity, and the related categorical oppositions of motion and stillness, real and virtual, cause and effect, body and mind. They are theoretical objects in that they are “brought into existence in the encounter between object and analyst, mediated by the theoretical baggage each brings to that encounter.” (Bal, 2003: 24). Yet, they also function as media-archeological objects, because they offer us a place to see from, a searchlight that allows for a critical and retroactive re-examination of cinema’s (pre)history in such a way as to “overcome the opposition between ‘old’ and ‘new’ media.” (Elsaesser, 2004a: 75). Each chapter, therefore, contains a brief media-archeological section so that I can address cru-
cial consistencies and divergences: the historically recurrent fantasy of cinematic three-dimensionality in chapter three, the pre-1990s usages of the handheld camera in chapter two, and the avant-gardes and expanded cinema of the 1960s in chapter one, to which I will now turn.
here
Locating the Cinematic

Walking into a modern museum exhibition, if there is a show where many sounds and images are projected, can now be an overwhelming experience. This is particularly the case when these sounds and images are not separated but overlap, so that they comment on, contrast with, and contaminate each other. We might experience a similar set of sensations in a contemporary multi-media cityscape, especially in the event of an unusual media intervention such as an outdoor film festival (see fig. 1.1), a series of projections on the interior or exterior walls of a public building (see fig. 1.2 & 1.3), or an interactive media installation occupying an otherwise empty square (see fig. 3.1, chapter 3). Upon entering such an environment, the visitor – or rather, temporary dweller – is likely to pause for a moment, affectively charged, and scan the space in search of a protocol to navigate it. All we know is that we are in a certain space, an intensified “here.” The question is not so much how we might, literally, navigate these multi-media environments, but rather how our navigation will affect our encounter with their particular orchestration, of which the visitor becomes, upon entering, a constitutive part. For even if we suspect, or even if we recognize how to move through these spaces, we are unlikely to know in advance how we will be moved by doing so. We are caught in what I will call a “hereness,” a strong sense of being somewhere that we don’t necessarily feel in more ordinary spaces.

Fig. 1.1 (left): Doek! Schiedam, The Netherlands, 2001; Fig. 1.2 (middle): Machteld Aardse & Anne Verhoijsen’s Iran en Route (2006). Video projections at Club 11 Post CS Amsterdam; Fig. 1.3 (right): Doug Aitken’s Sleepwalkers (2007). MoMA, New York. View from 54th Street.
In this chapter, I will explore the sense of “hereness” that such encounters foster in the participating viewer, the “me” of the encounter. In particular, I will focus on the multi-media exhibition *Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms*, which took place in a temporary location of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Post CS, in 2007. I treat the Warhol retrospective as an exemplary case of the multi-media exhibition. Yet the arguments I put forward in this chapter, I contend in its concluding section, also bear on the more general expansion of the cinematic within our everyday life and urban environments, in which exhibitions like this one often take place.

In what follows, I will first situate the 2007 Warhol exhibition against the backdrop of discussions of Warhol’s early films. Although such discussions largely focus on the films’ peculiar relation to time and temporality, they also testify to a developing notion of the “here” of our encounter with the cinematic that pertains first and foremost to the viewer’s body within the physical space of the encounter. In the chapter’s second part I will turn to the 2007 Warhol exhibition and argue that in the multi-media exhibition this notion of “hereness” is at once augmented, punctuated, and rescaled through mediation. I argue that the sense of “here” invoked in the participating viewer pertains at once to his or her body within the space of the encounter and to the way that body relates to and intersects with the mixed reality of the multi-media environment. In the chapter’s final part, I will once more turn to the “subject,” or rather “subjects,” of and in the exhibition, i.e., to Warhol and his “sitters” as well as to the “me” within the encounter – the viewer, visitor, city-dweller – and make a case for a seemingly opposed development. That is, I will make a case for the extension of the cinematic into our everyday physical environment by suggesting that what was once considered to be “there,” on screen, in the image, is increasingly already giving shape to the “here” of the encounter prior to mediation while being nonetheless shaped by its potential.

These three discussions – first, on time and temporality in Warhol; second, on the augmentation and punctuation of place in the multi-media exhibition; and third, on the extension of the cinematic within our everyday environments – converge in their bringing to light a conception of the space and place of the encounter that I see in terms of a thickness, or a thickening of the “here” (as well as of the “now”) through mediation. In this thickened “here,” I will demonstrate, neither viewer nor representation is held in place. Nor is it necessarily possible, at least within our everyday media-infused urban environments, to occupy a place outside of this thick “here” that is the cinematic. Although I will point to some significant differences between our encounter with the films as discrete cinematic
chronotopes as compared to the chronotope of their simultaneous projection in the exhibition space in the second part of the chapter, I maintain that Warhol’s own early cinematic endeavors and the critical reflections prompted by them are to some extent already suggestive of this thickening.22

Expanded Cinema: Proliferating Screens

The simultaneous use of numerous projections and various media in one exhibition space is hardly a new phenomenon; nor, for that matter, was the 2007 Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms the first occasion on which Warhol’s films were presented in such a way. In the 2004 exhibition Andy Warhol: Motion Pictures in Berlin, for example, a selection of Warhol’s films consisting mainly of the Screen Tests (1964–66) and several early black-and-white films, were also “shown simultaneously, all presented side by side in a generous installation space.”23 In fact, Warhol often presented his films next to or even overlapping each other; he experimented quite vigorously with proliferating media-use and display. This becomes particularly clear from Branden J. Joseph’s descriptions of Warhol’s Exploding Plastic Inevitable (EPI), a series of multi-media events promoting the Velvet Underground in 1966 and 1967. Joseph writes:

At the height of its development, the Exploding Plastic Inevitable included three to five film projectors, often showing different reels of the same film simultaneously; a similar number of slide projectors, movable by hand so that their images swept the auditorium; four variable-speed strobe lights; three moving spots with an assortment of colored gels; several pistol lights, a mirror ball hung from the ceiling and another on the floor; as many as three loudspeakers blaring different pop-records at once; one or two sets by the Velvet Underground and Nico; and the dancing of Gerard Malaga and Mary Woronov or Sigrid Superstar, complete with props and lights that projected their shadows high onto the wall. (2002a: 71)

In his 1967 book American Underground Cinema, Sheldon Renan was already speculating on the emergence of a “film as environment” conception based on the “expanded cinema” of his contemporaries, including Warhol’s EPI.24 To a certain extent, then, the origins of the contemporary multi-media exhibition can be traced
here. There are, however, also some significant differences between today’s multi-media exhibitions and the expanded cinema of the 60s. For, as the title of EPI’s forerunner – *Up-Tight* – already suggests, the experiments with participatory media environments in the 60s were efforts in a more general trend aimed at disrupting the contemplative viewing position of the bourgeois art audience. Excessive media-use and participatory challenges had a clear de-disciplining intent, geared towards provoking new modes of viewing and participating that were often experienced as disruptive or offensive, and addressing topics often considered taboo. By mobilizing observer, recording camera, and projective surface (which in the *EPI* was no longer necessarily a screen), moreover, the expanded cinema of the 60s took a rather antagonistic stance towards mainstream (Hollywood), which required a darkened auditorium and immobilized observers who remained at a safe distance from the world observed.\(^{25}\)

By now, however, the multi-media environment has lost some, if not all, of its initial disruptive potential, especially in terms of the modes of viewing it affords. The simultaneous presentation of multiple audiovisual works from different periods of time and on different platforms in the 2007 Warhol exhibition intersects with another development: a more general proliferation of urban screens, personal communication devices, and image-capturing technologies within our everyday (urban) environment. If the multi-media environment is no longer necessarily perceived as shocking or offensive, it can still affect the visitor-viewer in significant ways. In this chapter I will discuss the multi-media exhibition *Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms* as a case in point for analyzing how the dynamic site of the cinematic affects our sense of “here.” The exhibition is typical of a present-day multi-media environment in that it offers a condensed version of the multi-media environment of the city at large, with the various audiovisual works of Warhol presented simultaneously in two spacious, formerly industrial lofts aptly labeled “Filmscape” and “TV-Scape.” The case is also exemplary because it revisits some of the concerns of the 1960s avant-garde that are relevant for our purpose here. In the next section I will briefly address these concerns, in part by placing them against the backdrop of some recent discussions of the technological mediation of time.
It’s About Time (Or Is It?): Situating

From the outset, Warhol’s films received much critical attention, and interest was reinvigorated after their restoration and re-distribution by the Whitney Museum following Warhol’s death in 1987, allowing scholars to finally have full access to works that most of them had only been able to read about (the films were pulled out of circulation in 1972). Although the topics within the debate vary greatly – ranging from reflections on the films’ significance within Warhol’s oeuvre and the 1960s avant-garde in general, to ruminations on their conceptions of stardom, or their negotiation of taboo topics like homosexuality and deviant sexual behavior – there is one topic in particular that resurfaces in the debate, and that is their peculiar relation to time, which is of particular relevance for our purposes here.

In what follows I will first briefly look at this artistic and critical preoccupation with time and temporality. While acknowledging the importance of the debate on time and the “now” of the encounter to my overall argument in this study, my main aim here is to demonstrate how these reflections on time and temporality rest on particular assumptions about our encounter with the cinematic in terms of a “hereness.” This occurs especially when the reflections touch on the films’ materiality, their tension between motion and stillness, and the physical discomfort of their viewers when watching the films in the auditorium.

Warhol’s films give off an air of technical illiteracy and feign the withdrawal of the artist’s hand, as on the occasions when Warhol simply switched on the camera and walked out of the room (the most radical example in this vein is Henry Geldzahler’s film portrait from 1964, which lasts for more than 90 minutes). As the late Callie Angell, curator of the Warhol Film Project at the Whitney Museum, wrote, Warhol’s early film production reduced the medium to its basic elements; a single shot, a stationary camera mounted on a tripod, and a single, preconceived action. In more recent discussions this has led several scholars, in a kind of *mise-en-abyme* of remediations, to ruminate on Warhol’s audio-visual productions in terms of the real-time logic of video and surveillance. Graig Uhlin, for example, has recently argued that Warhol’s films abide by the logic of what he refers to as a televusual temporality. The films’ extraordinarily long duration, Uhlin maintains, especially when seen in combination with their resistance to narrative and their lack of a clear beginning, middle, and end, is suggestive of the flow of television as theorized by Raymond Williams. Even though the films are not live, as television can be (and paradigmatically is), they are built around a set of aesthetic strategies that evoke such liveness: their open-ended nature, amateur cast,
dependence on improvisation, and openness to risk and unforeseen events. (2010: 14) Moreover, as with television, the films instigate the temporality of waiting, an arguably low-affect state that Anna McCarthy in Ambient Television associates with the containment of the anxiety of wasting time at home or in places of transit.30

Yet we know the suggestion of real-time, as well as Warhol's seeming technical illiteracy, was in fact deceptive. He did control his images, and to a large extent did so precisely through a manipulation of cinematic time. In Sleep (1963, 5’21” at 16fps), for example, the “real-time” recording of his (ex-)lover John Giorno’s sleeping body, lasting for over five hours, is actually faked, as “only half a dozen shots are seen for over six hours.” (Sitney, 2002: 350) Each new cartridge was shot from a different static position and then used twice in a serial composition “that consolidates its quiet, implosive strength by numbing itself in the paradoxes of movement and stillness.”31 Furthermore, even though the film seems to frame “time as it passes,” Amy Taubin stresses that real time is actually cancelled out on the level of projection. Not only was it customary to project several sequential reels simultaneously or even to superimpose them on each other, but the speed of projection was also significantly slowed down, by approximately one-third, as the films, though shot at 24 frames per second, were shown at 16 frames per second. (1994, 1997) The result is a barely perceptible slow motion, as the film “unwinds at a pace that’s out of sync with the rhythms of the viewer,” a disjunction also manifest in the film’s topic, sleep.32

Empire (1964, 8’05” at 16 fps), described by Angell as “an investigation into the perception of duration,” conceals a similar manipulation of “real time” by both the film track and projection speed. (2004: 30) In running a static image of a building for more than eight hours, the film displays an odd tension between mobility and immobility, as the subject of Empire, the Empire State Building, contrary to the film itself, does not move. Time in Empire, critic Gregory Battcock observes, “is distorted, perhaps, simply by its not being distorted when one would reasonably expect it to be.” (quoted in Lee, 2004: 263) We are left not so much watching ourselves watch, but rather sensing ourselves “watching” while enduring the film’s capture of tedium.33 This sensation ultimately alternates or intertwines with another, as we are confronted, not so much with what the image represents, but rather, with the filmic materiality that presents us the image. As Roy Grundman puts it:

the viewer’s observation of the profilmic object is gradually supplemented, perhaps even largely replaced, by an exploration of the material property of the filmstrip itself with its chemi-
cal irregularities, blemishes, and varying degrees of graininess. (2003: 6)

Pamala Lee comes to a similar conclusion in her 2004 book *Chronophobia*, whose title refers to the more general agitated obsession with time and its measures among artists and critics in the sixties. According to Lee, Warhol’s ambiguous relationship to time, ranging from his fifteen-minutes-of-fame conviction to his cinematic endurance (con)tests suggests a kind of irresolvable grappling with finitude and the infinite, the push pull tension between the utterly mundane gestures of daily life set against the blank expanse of something yet to come. (2004: 279)

To rethink the art-and-technology nexus of the sixties, Lee takes up Hegel’s warnings, expressed in *The Encyclopedia Logic* (1991), against a “bad infinity,” the endless repetition within critical reasoning, which he regarded as negative, “since it is nothing but the negation of the finite.” (Lee, 2004: 277) This notion of a “bad infinity,” Lee writes, also surfaces in concerns about the question of history among critics, historians, philosophers, and artists since the 1960s. In *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984) for example, challenged the determinism that underwrote the grand narratives of the time. His notion of history facilitated a relationship to time that presaged a notion of infinite potentiality typical of postmodernism. (Lee, 2004: 261–262) Similarly, in *Futures Past*, philosopher of history Reinhardt Koselleck (1985) foresaw the rise of what he called a “futureless future” with the secularization of time: a conception of the future as no more than an endless variation on the present. In terms of history, Lee contends, the notion of a bad infinity first and foremost “represents a failure to transcend the immanence of one’s own historical moment” (2004: 277). Traces of this can also be found in Paul Virilio’s dystopian reflections on liveness as a substitute horizon and real-time as the compulsion to repeat (Virilio, 2006; also see: Cook, 2003).

Yet what happens in the films of Andy Warhol, Lee suggests, is that this “bad infinity” is reworked into a critical comment on coeval questions concerning time and technology. It epitomizes what Manuel Castells has referred to as the “timeless time” of capital and labour within network societies. (1996) The uneventfulness of the films, with their endless repetitions and “too much presentness,” Lee argues, comments on what it is like to work with and within the conditions of a perpetual “now,” while at the same time thrusting the viewer forward, challenging him or
her to anticipate on what is yet to come. (2004: 277–278) This anticipation is physically anchored in the materiality of the filmstrip, which deteriorates with each successive screening, as well as in the affective engagement of the viewer’s body, uncomfortably awaiting the film’s end. For that time, Annette Michelson writes, “punctuated only by the flares of successive reel endings, [there] is also time to wonder: ‘What’s going to happen? Do I have time to go and buy some popcorn? [...] how long, oh Lord, how long?’” (2001: 105) The films, Lee states, stand as an “allegory for time located elsewhere: not only the time of its audience, engaged in business other than that of watching, but the future, anticipated in making one’s escape from the theatre.” (2004: 287)

In this recurring notion of anticipation, grounded in the celebrated excess of presentness in Warhol’s films, we see delineated the first allusions towards a critical conception of our encounter with the cinematic in terms of a “here.” For what the accounts cited above all point out is that, rather than suturing the viewer through narrative, as classical narrative cinema and the majority of film theory would have it, Warhol’s films, with their exaggerated duration, suggested liveness, and uneventful nature, redirect the viewers’ attention towards the sheer passage of time that “weighs on the body.” (Uhlin, 2010: 21) Any understanding of the “here” of the encounter therefore starts with the acknowledgement of the viewer’s body within the space of the encounter, rather than the ignoring or negation of it, as is the tendency of traditional film theory.

This becomes even more pertinent within the 2007 multi-media exhibition, which differs from the films’ theatrical presentation (the basis for most of the accounts cited above) in a number of significant ways. Not only were the films shown simultaneously in one space of reception, but the visitor did not have to occupy a fixed position in an auditorium. As a result, the inevitable boredom with what was being shown was partially overcome within the exhibition space, as it was now possible to move around, to redirect one’s attention from one image to another, or to see multiple images at the same time. The visitor, free to wander the exhibition space, was unlikely to endure the physical discomfort that would accompany the films’ overarching tedium if viewed in the manner of a traditional movie. Moreover, the films, as well as Warhol’s television programs (to which I will return briefly below), had been digitised and transferred to DVD for the exhibition, at once arresting and interrupting the films’ gradual deterioration. Due to the conversion to DVD the particularity attributed to the viewers’ confrontation with the physical movement of the projected film was more or less neutralized within the exhibition. Instead, the visitor was confronted with the films’ digitized compres-
sion algorithm, which every now and then manifested itself in block-like glitches, generating an experience reminiscent of watching Nam June Paik’s empty white “film” screen Zen for Film (1962–64) rendered digitally on YouTube.\textsuperscript{34}

In terms of the cinematic venture of the Warhol exhibition, then, the difference between the time of the screen and that of the audience collapses in the iteration and prolongation of almost-identical images in time, as well as their simultaneous presentation within the exhibition’s scripted space.\textsuperscript{35} Pulled together by their likeness and pushed apart by their differences, the space “between” the images is opened up. In the exhibition this was further accentuated by the fact that, in addition to the temporal structure of the traditional archive, it had adopted one of the most basic mechanisms of cinematic narrative time, known as the deadline structure.

Below each screen a digital clock – reminiscent of a digital alarm clock – displayed the time remaining before the projection was completed. Some promised a quick resolution, a liberation from the tedium that characterizes so many of the films. Others proclaimed a duration that extended far beyond closing hours, circumventing the institutional limits of the exhibition itself.\textsuperscript{36} The clocks announce both the film’s anticipated ending, as well as the installation’s restarting of the film. And yet it heralded neither beginning nor end at all, but instead stipulated a situatedness in time – a temporal demarcation that does not need a beginning nor an end, but equally refuses to collapse past and future into an eternal present. The clocks provide the participating viewer with yet another map of temporalities, a multiple timetable that accords with a rationalized, standardized time. Yet the countdown clocks also give the visitor the opportunity to look away, even to walk away, and to return, linger, and anticipate. Here, precisely, we can teleport through time, remembering earlier points in time and speculating about the possibility of change over time when watching, for example, \textit{Sleep} or \textit{Empire}.

The resulting confusion of the traditional temporal frame of reference pulls the visitor/dweller into what Deleuze and Guatarri have called a “non-pulsed time” (or \textit{aion}), a sense of time that oscillates between \textit{chronos} (consecutive time) and \textit{kairos} (sense of closure, resolution), a pulse without beginning or end. For in the endless repetition, circulation, and duration of the moment, the ephemeral is re-worked into timelessness, in the sense of both \textit{chronos} and \textit{kairos}, that is also a thickening, in view of \textit{aion}. Conversely, it brings to the fore a conception of the “here” of our encounter with the cinematic that, as I argue in the following section, pertains not only to the “now” of the ambulant body of the visitor whose physical situatedness turns space into a place, but also to that place as being aug-
mented, punctuated, and rescaled through mediation. Both the temporal and the spatial aspects are important, as human beings need time (in the sense of both chronos and kairos) and place to constitute a sense of coherence and identity.

Other Rooms: Re-scaling

As exhibited in Amsterdam in 2007, Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms contained three sections, “Filmscape,” “Cosmos,” and “TV-Scape,” which were disposed around the adjacent main entry hall, “About Andy.” The latter comprised a red carpet, stroboscopic flashlight, a recording of The Velvet Underground & Nico’s song “I’ll Be Your Mirror,” many photographs and clips arranged chronologically and thematically, four documentaries on Warhol, and two gigantic mirrors, behind which I expected to see anything – another room, another space, another film, or even another time – but certainly not myself standing right there, right then, at odds with my surroundings. (I’ll be your mirror indeed…).37 The gallery called “Cosmos,” described as “the heart of the exhibition” on the museum’s website, consisted of Warhol’s famous icons, Factory Diaries, and objects from his Time Capsules, a serial work made up of drawings, photos, newspaper clippings and magazines, source images for art-works, exhibition catalogues, correspondences, rare archive material and audio fragments that were originally stored in sealed cardboard boxes but were now put on display. The result was an eclectic bricolage of a specific era that, according to the curators, “highlights the master’s thinking and way of working.”38

“TV-Scape” (see fig. 1.4) was made up of an elevated platform surrounded by a curtain of colored strings on which Warhol’s television productions from the 80s, mainly of interviews with the famous and the unknown, were simultaneously presented on several television sets. I visited the exhibition on two or three different occasions. Wandering through the exhibition the first time, the room initially made me resist investing much time in it – I was not compelled to sit down, stay put, and confront, for example, Fran Lebowitz’s cynicism, a male model’s life story, or even Warhol’s own boredom with his subjects. When I entered the room a second time, however, “TV-Scape” called for an extended investment of time, of quite a different sort from the one required by “Filmscape” (to which I will turn shortly), as it was impossible to get an impression of what was going on without actually sitting down, uncomfortably on pillar-chairs with headphones, facing a flat screen that on the flipside faced yet another visitor. Instead of allowing the
Fig. 1.4 (above): “TV-Scape”; Fig. 1.5 (bottom): “Filmscape.” At Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms. Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 12.10.07 - 13.01.08.
visitor the distracted, fragmented viewing position (or, if you will, the flânerie) of the living room, the makeup of the room was such that, despite the multitude of televisions, each single screen held its viewer in place, demobilized the visitor. Each television set had its own chair and pair of headphones, inviting the visitor to sit down and watch a clip, fragment, or slot of television in isolation amid the crowd, as if the curators thought television a less wearisome medium than cinema (and the programs less boring than the films).

Conversely, the “Filmscape” (see fig. 1.5) encouraged anything but the one-on-one viewing that characterized the “TV-Scape.” The section featured films like Warhol’s Screen Tests (1964-1966), Blow Job (1963), Sleep (1963), Empire (1964), Henry Geldzahler (1964), Outer and Inner Space (1965), Mario Banana (1964 & 1965), Kitchen (1965), Chelsea Girls (1966), and Mrs. Warhol (1966). Of these films, only the Screen Tests were projected in a separate room, one on each of the four walls of the square space. (see fig. 1.6) The other films were projected on a vast number of screens in a large, open space, arranged in such a way that one could hardly watch a film without simultaneously seeing another, either out of the corner of one’s eye or in the reflection of – or even through – the partially transparent silver screens (see fig. 1.7 & 1.8). As such, the “Filmscape” resisted isolated viewing, in the double sense of an experience that would be private (being alone when watching something) and single (watching a single film/clip on its own). The very fact that the museum had organized an alternate, marathon theatrical screening of the films in succession stipulates the relevance of this different way of presenting the films.

The interrupted viewer position often associated with television’s flow, and its repetitive, fragmentary, and redundant mode of address, in the exhibition, were thus retained for “Filmscape” rather than for “TV-Scape.” While the configuration of the two media spaces on the one hand upheld and even accentuated the opposition between television’s individual and cinema’s collective mode of address, it reversed the conventional opposition between the television viewer’s potential itinerancy and the cinema spectator’s typical immobility. Whereas “TV-Scape” made the visitor sit down, the flow of images in “Filmscape” – due to their composition, and the films’ extended duration and eventless character – invigorated the viewer’s wandering and distracted glance. The result was as affecting as it was ungraspable, and thus anything but the low-affect state McCarthy associates with televisual waiting and the proliferation of tv screens in contemporary life.

Weighed down by the high contrast of the black-and-white imagery and multiple screen projections, I sit down on one of the odd-shaped uncomfortable couches somewhere in the middle of the room. On my far right I see the once
famous but now camera-shy artist Paul Swan dancing, rehearsing, hiding, dancing again, performing (Paul Swan, 1965). Close to me on my left, a campy lady swings as the camera zealously zooms in and out. Behind it somewhat to the right, a man dressed like a woman is peeling, eating and mock-fellating a banana, as if in slow motion, alternately in black-and-white and in color (Mario Banana, 1964 & 1965). On the far left wall, Edie Sedgwick’s androgynous being is flirting with the camera in multiple iterations (Outer and Inner Space). I get up and walk around. I witness curator Henry Geldzahler looking straight into the camera, stubborn, bored, self-conscious, uncomfortably awaiting the film’s end (Henry Geldzahler). Geldzahler faces the unchanging and motionless hour-long image of the Empire State Building.
seemingly shot in real-time (*Empire*). To his right, my left, John Giorno is sound asleep (*Sleep*). A bit further on, Andy’s mother is ironing, her chattering voice reaching me from above, where apparently a speaker is located (*Mrs. Warhol*). The sounds of the various films were projected via a sound-beaming system, which relayed the sound of each film to the predicted position of the visitor when watching that particular film, generating the sensation of walking in and out of reach. Yet despite this high-tech sound-system, the multiple audio-projections in the open space resulted above all in a cacophony of sounds, in which it was hard to hear what the various people in the separate films were saying. As a consequence, the individual films were rendered illegible, words and sounds became noise, and the images were of interest only in their confrontation with each other. Detail was subordinated to as well as magnified through scale.

This situation invoked, by contrast, the question of the status of the detail. In her article on detail and scale in the cinematic close-up, Mary Ann Doane argues that “‘[T]he semiotic status of the close-up seems to bear within itself a structuring contradiction, […] between detail and totality, part and whole, microcosm and macrocosm, the miniature and the gigantic.’” (2003: 107–108) On the one hand, the legibility of the close-up, she claims, is intimately linked with its lack of autonomy: the pressure of narrative, of the look, culminating in the close-up, forces the close-up into decipherability. On the other hand, the close-up foregrounds details, contingencies, and idiosyncrasies as it expands the time of the moment at the expense of linear, narrative time, transforming the screen, momentarily, into a surface, a mere image. The hyperbolic nature of the close-up abstracts its subject from its surroundings, the face from the body, the object from the mise-en-scène. In a sense, Doane writes, a close-up is always “an autonomous entity, a fragment, a ‘for-itself.’” (2003: 90)

This confusion between detail and totality, according to Doane, reveals a theoretically maintained division between two spaces: the space of narrative, and the space of the audience. Seen from the perspective of the narrative space, the status of the image is one of detail. Seen from the space of the spectator, however, the close-up constitutes itself as a momentary totality, an autonomous entity. Traditional film theory has insisted on classical cinema’s tendency to work towards the annihilation of spectatorial space, putting forth the narrative world as the only world. Conversely, the celebrations of the close-up as an entity “for itself” by theorists such as Béla Balázs, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean Epstein, Doane contends, must be read as attempts to reaffirm the spectatorial space, to break open the seemingly self-enclosed space of the diegesis of traditional film theory. By explicitly linking
the close-up to both detail and scale, then, Doane draws attention to the interlacing of ideologies of interiority and public space, as well as to the desire to develop a theory of cinema that can account for cinema’s transmission of affect. For, Doane argues, the “celebration of the close-up is also an attempt to reassert the corporeality of the classically disembodied spectator.” (2003: 108) This is so because scale can be understood only in relation to the human body.

In the case at hand, it can be argued that it is in the out-of-the-corner-of-one's-eye perception of either a detail of an image or an entire other screen pulls the visitor’s perception out of the perspectival grid, as it enhances the tension between scale and detail, between spectatorial and narrative space as theorized by Doane. Closing in on the pro-filmic real and slowing it down, the camera’s gaze forces the viewer to the image surface, complicating the double spatiality of the close-up. Slow-down is, in this sense, the exact temporal equivalent of the close-up. As I will argue in the next chapter, this has consequences for the temporal aspect of affect. Moreover, in the conversion to digital technology the spatial analogy between the represented world and pro-filmic real is broken and replaced by a form of temporal analogy whereby the image first and foremost refers to the “here” and “now” of its ongoing emergence, which is suggestive of the conversion of the space of the encounter into a “place.” The result is a mixed reality, in which the physical “here” of the encounter is augmented, i.e., complemented by virtual spaces that are by definition fragmented and reconstructed pixel by pixel, each time anew.42 As such, the films do not open up an unknown world for us, but rather refocus or “re-scale” our own familiar, but paradoxically unrecognized one.

The “here” thus negotiated in our encounter with the multi-media environment pertains not only to the place and corporeality of the human body, but also to the punctuation of that place though mediation. In her book The West in Early Cinema, Nanna Verhoeff uses the term “punctuated places” in reference to panoramic stereo cards and what she refers to as filmic postcards, static shots of moving images, e.g., a waterfall, that “depict geographically significant locations, meaningful for their capacity to offer a point of view.”(2006: 264) Verhoeff thus illuminates the subtlety of what she is looking at by means of a temporal term, associated with the interval between events or the rhythms of language, applied to a spatial issue. Punctuated places, she writes, are places with a name that signifies the direction of a look to other places. It is punctuated because it is a “starting point” of
a look elsewhere: [...] the camera points at, or rather from a specific spot that is emblematic for its vantage point. (2006: 264)

In the case at hand, the terminological crossover leads to the following insight. Our place, our position in the exhibition room is always punctuated in the triple sense of the word: first, as the place from which we look (“here”) is punctuated by the screens – some nearby, others more remote – we are, second, punctuated, interrupted, by the rhythms of the films, which, third, emphasize, punctuate their own specific temporality and the latter’s inherent relationship to the viewer. Furthermore, our vantage point is mobile, despite being momentarily suspended when we stand still or sit down, as we (are likely to) wander around in the room full of projections. The section’s title suggests as much. As we physically or virtually navigate the filmscape, the images contaminate each other, in part sequentially, yet quite differently than they would in the case of a successive screening. For, unlike the traditional experience where the order of the images is predetermined by the film itself, here it is the visitors who “sequence” them. Moreover, what our view brings to each projected image is contingent, random within the parameters of the space, as our view oscillates between the various screens. The passage of the void between the screens by the “thinking eye” with which we add up the images, pricks – punctuates – the visitor like the Barthesian punctum, “at once brief and active, [...] by chance and for nothing.” (1982: 49, 42) This punctum can expand a tiny shock into a timeless time, generating an intense immobility in (and not necessarily of) the visitor.

This leads me to posit the following generalization regarding the specificity of the “here” within installations of moving images in exhibitions. Neither representation nor spectator is held in place by a fixed vantage point. It is in this sense that the parameters of the multi-media exhibition differ from those of the traditional museum, with its still images and moving spectator, as well as of those of classical cinema, characterized by its moving images and the stillness or immobility of the spectator. With its combination of moving images and moving viewers – a multiplied variation on the dynamic of domestic television – the multi-media installation resembles the modern cityscape primed with media façades and mobile screens.

What the images in their joint projection reveal to the “me” in the exhibition is that within the multi-media environment it is no longer possible to occupy a space outside of images. Embedded in, situated by, and constitutive of the cinematic encounter, the multi-media exhibition’s viewer is punctuated in three
additional ways: first, by what he or she adds to the image; second, by the way he or she is affected by the image-as-totality; and third, by the (image-as-totality)-as-detail of a space-time continuum that encompasses both images and “world.”

When it comes to our understanding of the relation between images and world, this view of the cinematic is closer to Bazin’s celebration of mainstream cinema’s potential to achieve an “integral realism” than the view of his materialist opponents. Such a difference is relevant because it brings home to us what the current rescaling and punctuation of the place of our encounter with the cinematic amounts to. It goes beyond the scope of this study to go into a detailed discussion of Bazin’s ideas on cinema and those of his opponents. Suffice it to say that for Bazin, the ontology of the photographic and by extension the cinematic image was identical to the ontology of the pro-filmic image. In his view the natural process of registration transferred the being of the pro-filmic event to the being of film, canceling out the irreversibility of time along its way.

Historically as well as theoretically, Peter Wollen asserts in his seminal essay “‘Ontology’ and ‘Materialism’ in Film,” the aesthetic and theoretical concern for cinema’s ontology passed from Bazin’s belief in the possibility of an “objective” reproduction of a pro-filmic object or event to a reflexive exploration and demonstration of the material properties, processes, and structures of the filmic support that challenged its reproductive and illusionistic potential. According to Wollen, there are two versions of this materialist critique of Bazin’s ontology that are often juxtaposed. First, the modernist current of the American avant-garde aimed to negate reproduction by reducing non-cinematic codes “to their material – optical, photo-chemical – substrate (‘material support’) to the exclusion of any semantic dimension other than reference-back to the material of any signifier itself.” Ontology here is reintroduced through the self-referentiality of the film-object, so that film is about its own material or structure. A second, post-Brechtian form of materialism, associated mainly with French auteurs such as Godard, is concerned with the subversion of the conventional codes of cinema and the “de-structuration” of the viewer. According to this view it is not the intentional subject but the ordering of the signifiers, or style, in the film-text that determines the production of meaning. Signifiers are thus privileged over signifieds.

The shift in focus from the ontology to the material of film, as discerned by Wollen, reveals a shift from what I would like to call an outside-in view towards an inside-outside view of the relation between cinema and world. Whereas in Bazin’s

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Here - Locating the Cinematic reflections film is considered to be an integral representation of the pro-filmic real, suggesting that what is captured on film is identical to the world outside (the outside world is in the film), materialist critics and filmmakers regarded their metacinema as a “self-enclosed world” while upholding a clear distinction between what is inside film and what belongs to the world outside (hence: inside-outside). To these two visions of the linkage between cinema and world, I contend, we must add a third, inside-out view that partially returns to Bazin’s outside-in view, if we want to account for the ontological (con)fusion of the contested categories of “cinema” and “world” within the multi-media exhibition under scrutiny. I therefore adopt Bazin’s view of the ontology of the moving image, which resides in the conflation of the filmic and pro-filmic real instead of in the objecthood or language of the film-object or film-text alone. I depart from Bazin, however, in maintaining that in the media-saturated world we inhabit today, media and reality have merged so completely that the cinematic no longer solely mediates reality, but now makes up a “first reality” in itself. That is to say: what is inside the image is now also already out-there in the world.45

It becomes clear that this simultaneous extrusion and implosion of the cinematic is not merely a contemporary phenomenon, and can, with hindsight, be traced back to Warhol’s cinematic productions of the 60s, when we consider Annette Michelson’s musings on the dissimilarity between Warhol’s long takes (inside-out), and the assertive editing of Stan Brakhage’s modernist films (inside-outside). What the discrepancy reveals, Michelson suggests, is a difference between a cinema that presupposes the predominance of subjectivity and a cinema postulated on its dissipation.46 This is significant because it underscores the distinct deictic markers that in part make up the particular chronotope of Warhol’s films, especially (though not exclusively) as staged within the design of the multimedia museum. On the one hand, Brakhage’s films are characterized by a rapid and hyperbolic fluidity of images that disclose to the spectator something relating to his being or world, by transforming the spatio-temporality on which their subjectivity is built. On the other hand, Warhol’s extended portrait films foster a different kind of temporality that eliminates subjectivity altogether. It is a carnivalistic time, states Michelson making reference to Bakhtin, in that it abolishes the dividing line between performer and spectator, since everyone becomes an active participant and everyone communes in the carnival act, which is neither contemplated nor, strictly speaking performed by it; it is lived.47
More than a momentary state-of-being, this interchangeability of positions – in the case at hand among “making a movie,” “being in a movie,” and “watching a movie” – in my view hints at a more general disintegration of the border between an inner and an outer perspective on the cinematic that has significant implications for our understanding of the “here” of our encounter with it. In the following section I will therefore turn, once more, to the “subject” of the exhibition (Warhol), and the “subject” in the exhibition (both the sitters and the visitor/“me”), and suggest that the “here” that is negotiated not only pertains to the physical place of the encounter and the augmentation, punctuation, and rescaling of that place through mediation, but is also suggestive of a further extension of the cinematic into the multiple spaces of everyday life.

Outer and Inner Space: Expanding

In several recent publications that explicitly take up Warhol’s audio-visual productions – including his films, television programs, and the EPI performances – a recurring theme is precisely this confusion between lived and mediated experience, between images and world. Writing on Warhol’s Screen Tests, for example, Ursula Frohne has argued that Warhol’s suggestion of real-time, his use of amateurs, and his preference for the absolutely unspectacular, in retrospect “marks the beginning of an era in which media attention became the focus of social identification, the new mirror for the individual self-perception,” to the extent that in her view nowadays non-mediated threatens to become synonymous with non-person. (Frohne, 2002: 254) Of particular relevance to this development, Frohne writes, is the incarnation of the camera gaze, “the all seeing, seemingly omnipresent ‘eye of God’ […] in the presence of the observer.” (2002: 256) For the internalized camera gaze turns every “subject” into a potential actor and transforms our daily environment into a stage. Along similar lines, David Joselit has suggested that the power of Warhol’s EPI promotional performances for the Velvet Underground lies in their destabilization and reinvention of the figure-ground relationship between image and world within the rapidly ascendant media saturation of the everyday. As becomes clear from the lengthy quote by Joseph cited earlier in this chapter, it was typical during the EPI to project several films and stills simultaneously on the Velvet Underground as they played, including footage of the band itself. In addition, the use of stroboscopic lighting cut the audience up into frames, creating a
complex circuit of media feedback in which “the line between performing oneself and becoming an image was perpetually crossed and recrossed.” (Joselit, 2002: 71)

Although the 2007 Warhol exhibition was not as radically nor as deliberately confrontational in its collision of images and world as the 1960s EPI performances had been, the exhibition nonetheless offers an exemplary case for analyzing the implications of the extension of the cinematic into the various realms of public and private life. The most explicit articulation of this performative cross-over between images and world occurs in the shattered selves of the various “subjects” in the 2007 exhibition: first, the filmmaker, who claimed to be nothing but image; second, the films’ “real-life” characters, whose unremitting poses are entirely produced for the camera; and third, the participating viewer, for whom the extension of the cinematic manifests itself in a tension between observing and being observed. Whereas in the first part of this chapter I examined the developing sense of “here” through various reflections on time and temporality in Warhol’s films, in this section I will address the further thickening of this “here” through the destabilization of various forms of subjectivity in a complex circuit of media feedback in which images and world continuously de-realize and reconfirm each other.49

Ultimately, the multi-media installation as articulated through this Warhol exhibition plots subjectivity on the dialectic of presence and absence. Within this dialectic, the medium’s ontology writes itself upon the human being that we can no longer regard as a “subject.” This dialectic is first articulated in Warhol’s projected persona. In her essay “Warhol as dandy and flâneur,” Patrizia Lombardo argues that certain classical themes link Warhol to Baudelaire. Both emphasize the importance of technique for a theory of art. Both foreground the role of fashion and approach the artist as being part of, as well as different from, the masses. And both aspire to “capture the rhythm of the world.” (1997: 33–34) The way this aspiration translates itself into a reflector of a mediated reality can be understood in terms of Warhol’s paradoxical persona. He appears on the one hand as a man who wanted to be all surface, an image or even, as he famously said, a machine; and on the other hand, he was a man pathologically inclined to withdrawal from the world and emotionally preoccupied with violence and death.50 This paradox, Lombardo argues, “is the result of the interplay between the dandy and the flâneur, between the impersonal and the emotional.” (1997: 35) Whereas the flâneur embraces the ephemeral, the surprises of life, nothing surprises the dandy, because a relentless, cool-headed anticipation based on past observations orients his perception. In the work of Warhol, Lombardo argues:
Dandy and flâneur fuse in the artist, dandy and flâneur fuse in the spectator. The timing of the event is double; double that of the artistic object; double that of the artistic perception. We realize that we are confronted simultaneously with a piercing image, the aesthetic of mass consumer production and also with some inevitable nostalgia for the past. (1997: 39)

This view helps account for the “Filmscape” of the exhibition, which resembles the metropolis of the flâneur in its vitality and intangibility. It is an immense non-stop happening, “a series of events, in which different images come together, jam together, break up, vanish from site.” (Lombardo, 1997: 35) Yet whereas the flânerie of Baudelaire was practiced by only a few, the tension between involvement and detachment, between looking and idling, has become for the visitor-viewer within the contemporary multi-media environment a common practice, a form of urban literacy lived out by a growing number of media-savvy city-dwellers. This is the sort of visitor-dweller posited by the exhibition.51

Moreover, in creating his own version of a cool Baudelairean “elsewhere,” states Stephen Koch, Warhol “lived out an obsession with withdrawal’s opposite: Immediacy.” (1974: 28) Yet, this immediacy is found in distance: in the voyeur's gaze that obliterates social hierarchies between whomever and whatever is observed. Warhol relentlessly employed self-protective evasions, or what Henry Geldzahler has called his “baffles,” ranging from the technological interventions of a telephone, tape recorder, Polaroid or film camera, to mental or physical withdrawal, witty evasions, lack of commitment, or even dishonesty. (Koch, 1974: 25) Rather than an obsession with recording, capturing, and observing, what these interventions reveal is an incessant attempt to give form to the present. In this sense the claim to be all surface, all image, must be seen as an attempt to maintain a presence within absence, to substitute an image of his “presence” for his actual presence, to celebrate pure style over substance, surface over depth, while suggesting a witty merging of the two categories, as in his famous aphorism, “I’m a deeply superficial person.” Similarly, Warhol’s transformation into a persona – the embodiment of both a witness (mass-subject) and icon (mass-object) – can be seen as a means of surviving a threatened sense of self by reinserting the “self” in the “world” as an image. (Foster, 2001: 81) The “hereness” I have been focusing on serves this purpose. As Erika Billeter put it: “Warhol creates a world of absolute sameness in terms of both content and value, a world in which the individual withers and ceases to exist.”52
Warhol’s famous motto “I want to be a machine,” therefore, Hal Foster argues, can be regarded as a mimetic defense against the shock of modern-day serial production and consumption. By taking on the form of what most shocks him, Warhol exposes capitalist nihilism through an ambiguous and excessive performance of it. (2001: 71) Read against the backdrop of this “break of subjectivity, [...] a disorientation of time and space” in an era of increasing media-saturation, the compulsive repetition in the work and persona of Warhol, Foster contends, must be read as both a defense against traumatic affect, as well as a production of it. A multiplicity of repetition facilitates the Warholian paradox, Foster writes,

not only of images that are both affective and affectless, but also of viewers that are neither integrated (which is the ideal of most modern aesthetics: the subject composed in contemplation) nor dissolved (which is the effect of much popular culture: the subject given over to the schizo intensities of the commodity sign). (2001: 75)

I will return to this transition of affect understood as traumatic in the following chapter.

Arguably located in the “aesthetical distance of immediacy” (Koch, 1974: 29), the early portrait films such as the Screen Tests, but also some of the longer films, equally display a tension between presence and absence, in this case in particular between the presence/absence of the human body and that of the camera. These stillies (as opposed to movies), as Warhol tended to call them, each last approximately three minutes and feature static portrait performances of Factory visitors with “star-potential.” Like the serial photo-booth photographs Warhol began making in 1963, the film-portraits are records of change over time. Apart from requiring the visitor to simply “be there,” the Screen Tests followed a basic set of rules: the camera had to be static and the background plain; the subject was to be well-lit and centered, and was also instructed to face forward and to remain as still as possible, as when sitting for a portrait photograph.33 “By transporting the conventions of the formal or institutional photographic portrait into the time-based medium of film,” Callie Angell writes in her introduction to Andy Warhol Screen Tests, “Warhol pushed the tension between stillness and duration to the extreme.” (Angell 2006, 14) Yet the Screen Tests, more than adopting the conventions of still photography, can be said to remediate one of the oldest of photographic processes, namely that of the daguerreotype. Walter Benjamin, writing at length about the protracted pose necessitated by the daguerreotype’s long exposure time, celebrated the medi-
umi for its potential to expose “a human nature settling into its own specificity.”

Notorious for the habit of walking away during a shoot, leaving the “sitter” alone with the camera, Warhol subverted reality, transformed his subjects, tore them apart. Facing Warhol’s Bolex, the sitters struggle “to hold a pose, while their brief moment of exposure was prolonged into a nearly unendurable three minutes.” (Angell 2006, 14) Unlike in the daguerreotype, movement in the Screen Tests is not lost, swallowed up by the long exposure time required for the image. On the contrary, every miniscule gestural movement is blown out of proportion, both spatially, in its larger-than-life appearance in the close-up, as well as temporally, in its eventfulness amid eventlessness. Moreover, while we may scrutinize the image in search of involuntary gestures in hopes of glimpsing the “real” person “behind” the pose, this “realness” has become part of the pose, just as the pose is already part of the pro-filmic, the “real.” What any one of the Screen Tests thus reveals to us is neither the “real” person “behind” the pose, nor merely an “image” of that person, but rather an ongoing oscillation between the two in which neither one is privileged over the other. And this, in turn, demonstrates what a post-subjective human existence amounts to. It also demonstrates the importance not of subjectivity, but of an intensified and above all thickened sense of “here.”

Whereas in the manifestations of Warhol’s projected persona the camera functioned as a way to give shape to the present, in the Screen Tests the presence of the camera punctuates the space of its attention, transforming that space into a stage for self-presentation built around the logic of the pose. This has direct consequences for the space and place of the encounter. For, as Kaja Silverman convincingly argues in The Threshold of the Visible World, “the pose always involves both the positioning of a representationally inflected body in space, and the consequent conversion of that space into a ‘place.’” (1996: 203) While the place in question is, technically speaking, not the same as the place where the viewer resides and around which my conception of the “here” of the encounter revolves, what the Screen Tests bring to light is a more general tendency, whereby anyone, in the face of the camera, projects an image for the camera and often plays directly to it, with an intensity that mirrors the viewer’s “investment in the image on the screen.” (Taubin, 1997: 27) In the anticipation of being recorded, that is: in the pro-filmic, projected self-image that the cinematic folds back upon its “subject” and thickens the “here” of the encounter.

This thickened here, in turn, calls attention to the subject in the exhibition, the participating viewer’s “me.” In its 2007 Amsterdam installation, the Screen
Tests, by being projected on the four walls of a square room, transformed the place into a multifarious surveillance space. Due to the frontality of filming and the sitters’ direct address of the camera, the viewer of the Screen Tests was performatively put in the position of the seemingly absent observer, the director or camera, filling that absence with a presence of his or her own. To engage with the films in the exhibition, moreover, the visitor had to occupy the space between them, so that looking at one or more of the sitters automatically meant turning one’s back on the relentless stare of at least one of the other (pseudo-)subjects on display. The place from which the visitor-viewer observed the portraits was thus punctuated both by what he or she was looking at, i.e., the image of the sitters, as well as by the latter’s mediated glares that implicated him or her in the act of looking. To the extent that the films produce discomfort in the viewer, I believe this has less to do with the portraits’ extended duration and more with what is exposed by the camera: the sitter’s struggle with the merciless mechanical eye of a camera that refuses to look away; the internalized gaze through which the sitters project their self-images to the screen; and the viewer’s own desire to see while knowing that within our media-saturated world this desire to see is precisely what puts him or her in the position of being observed. To look away means to step out of the equation, to move away from the “here” of the encounter, only to realize that – especially within the contemporary multi-media environment, pervaded by multiple and mobile screens and image-capturing technologies – the “here” moves along with you, is where you are, and continues to affect the “here,” “now,” and “me” of our encounter with the cinematic in locally specific ways.

This brings me to another example that clarifies the ways the cinematic extends into the pro-filmic real. It concerns the ontological uncertainty brought about by the use of video in the seminal multiple-screen film Outer and Inner Space, to which I kept returning during my various visits to the exhibition. (see fig. 1.7) What drew me to the film repeatedly was its offering of a miniaturized version of what I found captivating in the exhibition as a whole: its multiple screens, its mixed reality, and its self-reflexive staging of the encounter between viewer and image, between sitter and her projected self-image, and finally between two media, in this case film and television. The film consists of two reels, projected side by side. Each reel ends twice, first, after 30 minutes, on video, then, after 33 minutes, on film. The result is a panoramic image of four talking heads alternating video-film-video-film, accompanied by a soundtrack that remains cacophonous due to the four clashing reverberations.\textsuperscript{36}
Outer and Inner Space is the only film in Warhol’s oeuvre to incorporate videotape and is arguably the first documented artistic use of home video equipment. (Angell, 2002) The film features “poor little rich girl” Edie Sedgwick who is filmed as, on a monitor to her right (our left), a videotape plays back an earlier recorded interview with her. The film is comparable to the Screen Tests in that it foregrounds the act of portraiture as a performance. But here Sedgwick not only faces up to her anticipated filmed portrait, but she is also engaged in a “live” struggle with her own pre-recorded image. For as the video-Edie almost faces the film-Edie on the right, the latter occupies the same space and time as her earlier recorded self, seemingly “listening to her own voice whispering into her ear like a ghost from the past, while facing down the movie camera that is recording every moment of her existential ordeal in the present.” (Angell, 2002) The issue of this work, in other words, is the intensification and thickening of the “here.”

Fig. 1.7: Warhol’s Outer and Inner Space (1965). At “Filmscape,” Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2008.

The presence of the video display monitor, transmitting an uninterrupted video-record of an earlier taped video-portrait of Sedgwick in real-time, introduces an element of immediacy to the filmed image, so that the film-Edie appears to be more live, more real than the video-Edie. Yet, while the film-image seems to preserve Sedgwick in her specificity, the television-image flattens her appearance into a shallow phantom. In addition, in contrast to the deep-space of the filmic image, the monologue of the film-Edie appears to be much more superficial than that of the video-Edie in the flat image. Though clearly a played-back recording, nonetheless the video-image is seemingly transmitted live on film, while the filmed image
clearly remains an instance of frozen and captured time (despite the suggested liveness of the film-Edie’s appearance). An irony here is that the film *Outer and Inner Space* actually preserved the video images by reshooting them on film, as the Norelco’s “slant scan video”-technology Warhol used soon became obsolete and additional recorded tapes can no longer be screened.⁵⁸

In *Audiovisions*, Siegfried Zielinski states that the video recorder – when it became established as a widespread technology in the seventies – was one of the first technologies that made it possible for the average user to easily manipulate audiovisual time structures. As a replaying tool it intervened with the filmic syntax, which could be sped up, slowed down, skipped, or frozen to a virtual standstill. As a (television) recording device it enabled the viewer to deconstruct standardized television time, which figured as a tool for standardizing social time. In combination with a camera, it provided the user with the possibility of preserving, processing, and reviewing life-events. In the mid-sixties, however, video’s technological development was still rudimentary. The fact that it was virtually impossible to edit drove many artists away from filmic conventions towards experimentations with the medium’s specific qualities. Pioneer Nam June Paik’s single-channel video installation 9/23/69 for example remediated several television streams on multiple monitors, thereby exposing and overlaying the multiple occasions of its production (broadcast, recording, distortion, live-performance) and reception (real-time, (re)mediated, replayed).⁵⁹ Likewise, the instant playback of Sedgwick’s pre-recorded portrait; the experimentation with the medium’s performative potential; the lack of editing and the intervention into the process of transmitting by filming a replayed recording; and finally the play with notions of immediacy and liveness – all articulate artistic interests in what critics today often regard as the intrinsic properties of the medium.⁶⁰

Yet if video’s specificity lies in its handling and re/production of (audiovisual) time, when considered as a theoretical object *Outer and Inner Space* takes an a-teleological stance on the (features of the) “thing” it investigates. By foregrounding the medium’s specific characteristics, it turns video’s hypothesized idiosyncrasy into its performative potential. The film thus reveals for us, retrospectively, Warhol’s recognition of the creative potential of video’s technology. This suggests that a medium’s materiality is not fixed or pre-given, nor integral to the object or technology, as the notion of “intrinsic properties” suggests. Rather, the material characteristics must first be recognized, explored, and made perceptible as performative potential, before they can be fully developed into or further evolve as an audiovisual *practice*. I will return to this notion of performative potential and

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the notion of materiality it implies in the third chapter of this study. Suffice it to say for now that in destabilizing the stable figure-ground relationships between image and world, mediated and live, *Outer and Inner Space*, like the EPI of Joselit’s reflections, embodies a “model of media spectatorship in which television, film, and kinesthetic experience mutually derealize one another” in a media fission in which, “bombarded by its multiple representations, the self is fatally undermined.” (2002: 74)

For the exhibition visitor the camera’s presence played a less significant role, if only because filming and photography were strictly prohibited. Surely cameras were there, either in the pockets of the wandering visitors or in the surveillance devices that scrutinized the rooms, but, strictly speaking, within the exhibition’s specific locale the extension of the cinematic took the form of neither a “baffle” nor of a pose. This is not to say, however, that for the exhibition visitor (me), the cinematic does not extend into our daily lives in similar ways. In fact, it can be argued that the exhibition offers a model-world through which the viewer can observe our own world, in which the cinematic practices mentioned above have become ubiquitous. Because of the tremendous proliferation of affordable, easy-to-use handheld recording devices among an ever-expanding group of amateur users, for the “me” within the encounter with the cinematic today the distinction between “making a movie,” “being in a movie,” and “watching a movie” has become increasingly blurred. This may well be because all three engage the necessary deictic placement: “here.”

What the exhibition also makes clear is that our encounter with the cinematic today is always already tightly tied to a larger media-saturated cinematic environment, in this case of the city at large, with its pervasive urban screens and incessant surveillance cameras, its endless flow of streaming images on television and the internet in the homes of its inhabitants, and the ever-present mobile communication and recording device in the hands and pockets of its dwellers. In the 2007 Warhol exhibition, this larger environment incidentally also comprised the Post-CS building itself, which – besides housing a number of other media companies and another multi-media exhibition – also was home to *Club 11* on the building’s upper floor, the restaurant in fig. 1.2, famous for its panoramic view of the city, as well as for its ongoing live-stream of images on its immense interior walls. Although this larger multi-media environment does not directly concern the “here” of the exhibition’s viewer (unless he or she had a coffee there before or after visiting the show), it does point to the paradox of a “here” that is very concrete, physical, and localized, even as it is also peripatetic, transportable, and mobile.
The “impression of the Warhol exhibition” provided by the museum’s website suggests as much. A camcorder speedily navigates the exhibition, turning it into an almost impressionistic blur, though recording some recognizable details. The camera does not hold, it never reveals, it only moves from one screen to the next, from one room to the next. It never fixes its position, its gaze, except for rare occasions at the end of the clip when the camera does not pan or tilt, but zooms in and out of details. It conveys the feel of navigating a present-day media-soaked landscape equipped with one’s own handheld camera.

The clip highlights another aspect of the tension between localization and displacement when it comes to our encounter with the cinematic today. The clip’s vivid impression of navigating a cityscape notwithstanding, we would most likely encounter these particular images neither in the exhibition, nor on a portable display while walking through the city, but rather at home, behind a computer, perhaps in anticipation of or after a trip to the exhibition itself. Physically detached from the exhibition and temporarily immobilized behind the computer (though laptops, notebooks and tablet computers such as iPads most certainly allow for mobility within the home), this viewer too is engaged in a cinematic “here” that comprises both the physical space of the encounter as well as the various media with which or through which that space is augmented. The “here” encompasses the “there” where the viewer may imagine himself or herself to be, even as he or she remains at all times firmly grounded in the intensified “here” and a thickened yet unattainable “now” – in this case, behind the computer.

Locating the Cinematic: Here

This chapter has aimed to locate the cinematic in the dynamic and changing sites where we encounter audiovisual images today. Looking into the discussions of time and temporality in the films of Andy Warhol in the first part of this chapter, I have argued that any conception of the “here” of our encounter with the cinematic today must start by acknowledging the physical place of the encounter, which includes the viewer’s body, as well as the particular orchestration of cinematic images and media technologies within that space. Time, in other words, makes sense only in a “here.” Ruminating on the 2007 Warhol exhibition in the second part of this chapter, I have then suggested that this “here” is rescaled, augmented, and punctuated through mediation, so that the virtual and physical space collide into one thickened “here,” where neither the wandering visitor nor the moving images
are held in place by a fixed vantage point. Situated in a world increasingly made up of images, we relate to and engage with these images in different ways than would an outside observer. The “here” of the encounter is therefore never fixed, but rather punctuated, governed by a logic of layering and contamination, guided by the physical and optical traversals of the viewer-visitor through the space of the encounter that turns that space into a place. The “here” negotiated in the encounter is set apart by the pointed accumulation of the virtual and the physical, organized around the mobile though situated body of the participating viewer for whom the distinction between kinetic and mediated experiences is increasingly blurred.

In more general terms, I have sought to historicise this “hereness.” What the multi-media exhibition makes explicitly clear is that to fully grasp the sense of “here” that emerges from our encounter with the cinematic today, what is needed is a functional conception of space and place. Such a conception surpasses the notions of objective and subjective space as well as their binary opposition. The “here” of the encounter with the cinematic is explicitly double: it refers at once to the physical space occupied by the “me” within the encounter and to how that me relates to other spaces and places, real and imagined, yet neither concrete nor referential but constantly emerging within the here and now. There is no outside of this “here” within today’s media-saturated world, because for as long as we are in contact with cinematic technologies (and arguably even when we are not) the “here” of our encounter with the cinematic is where we are. For this reason our relation to the place of the encounter not only can but must be at once mobile and localized, and at once virtual or distributed, and physical.
now
NOW

Navigating Cinematic Time

Thus begins Robert Jan Westdijk’s film Zusje (NL, *Little Sister*, 1995 – see fig. 2.1-2.6). The film is seemingly shot from the perspective of Martijn’s home-video camera, with which he travels from London to Amsterdam to make a film about his little
sister. Though we hardly ever see Martijn, we hear him commenting on most of what he films. His obsessive attempt to capture his sister’s everyday life triggers an almost tangible tension that pushes their shared traumatic childhood experience to the surface. This process is strengthened by the incorporation of 8mm home movies that function as flashbacks of their childhood, threatening some ominous disclosure.

Although not branded as belonging to a particular movement, like the Danish Dogme 95 films, Zusje can be considered an example of that international trend of mainly European low-budget films that use mobile (digital) video technology to comment on the ambiguous status of the photochemical index. This trend emerged in the mid-to-late 1990s, more or less simultaneously with the advent of digital image technologies, and subsided quickly thereafter. Titles include the Danish Dogme films Festen (The Celebration, Vinterberg, 1998) and Idioterne (The Idiots, Von Trier, 1998), other European arthouse films such as Kutzooi (Bloody Mess – NL, Crijns, 1995), C’est Arrivé Près de Chez Vous (Man Bites Dog – BE, Belvaux et al., 1992), Rosetta (BE, Dardenne Br., 1998) and Planet Alex (DE, Schüppel, 2001), as well as American independents like Time Code (Figgis, 2000), Elephant (Van Sant, 2003) and The Blair Witch Project (Myrick & Sanchez, 1999). What these films obviously share, despite their many generic and even technological differences, is first and foremost their mode of filming: the use of an often unsteady handheld film or video camera which closely follows the characters and action.

In this chapter I propose the term “handheld aesthetic” for such films’ particular aesthetic vision. When I speak of a handheld camera I am not referring primarily to the presence of a hand holding the camera as such. After all, a camera mounted on a dolly or tripod is also often manually operated, but not handheld. Rather, I seek to explore the construction of a notion of handheld-ness, connoting authenticity, authorial presence, and corporeal engagement. Often, the two senses of “handheld” coincide, so that what is generally perceived as a handheld-camera shot is in fact shot with a handheld camera device that requires the presence and corporeal engagement of someone holding it. I speak of a new aesthetics when referring to the ostensible use of handheld equipment from the 1990s onwards in particular, because in my view these films put forward a distinct spatial and temporal configuration that feeds on the viewer’s spatio-temporal disorientation within the film’s diegesis, as well on his or her impulse to anticipate what is yet to come. This effect is enhanced by or sustains the films’ pursuit of a new mode of authenticity, or rather their faux-realism and the performed immediacy that
is characteristic for this aesthetic. As such, this aesthetic helps me articulate the second juncture of my project, i.e., the “now.”

With regard to the cinematic venture of the Warhol exhibition, I have argued that the visitor-viewer is both embedded in and situated by a space-time continuum that encompasses images and world. This situation, I suggest here, is not unique to a multimedia exhibition, but is more generally in keeping with our contemporary world of omnipresent storage media. Rather than claim that the specific museal multi-media installation of the Warhol exhibition, with its moving images on multiple screens and its mobile spectators, must be defined in opposition to traditional so-called theatrical cinema with its single-screen moving images and static viewers, I maintain that the feature films considered here as examples of handheld aesthetics situate and affect the viewer in significantly similar ways. Whereas the focus of the previous chapter concerned the intensified “here” of our encounter with the cinematic, the emphasis in this chapter stresses the sense of a thick “now” that is negotiated by means of this particular aesthetics. In the course of my discussion I will take up the wish expressed in the previous chapter to further develop an understanding of cinema that accounts for its renegotiation of its spatio-temporal markers, as well as the ways it resituates the embodied subject.

As this chapter’s title indicates, I propose to pair the conception of cinematic time with the spatial metaphor of navigation. Navigation here is not so much understood in line with its usage in debates on digital-media practices, as the technical possibility of – or even need for – user intervention as a distinct feature of an information space such as a hypertext or a game. Nor is it understood in strict opposition to narrative. Rather, in pairing navigation with temporality, I wish to refer to the simultaneity of mapping out time and mapping with time that I believe is inherent to the cinematic practices I am interested in here, and thus has a strong impact on our engagement with them. For even though most of these films are constructed as irreversible linear narratives with clear beginnings, middles, and ends, and do not allow the user to intervene within the film’s plot, I argue that they nonetheless operate on a variety of temporal planes and appeal to a multicursive, non-linear conception of time. In doing so, the films, I contend, draw attention to cinema’s capability to envision time as something other than linear transformation; as something that is simultaneously perceived and conceived in our encounter with cinematic practices such as those under investigation here.

To frame this aesthetic historically, I will first briefly reflect on handheld camera usage within predominantly documentary and avant-garde practices in the first
half of the 20th century. I will argue that many of the concerns that prevail within (the discourses on) handheld aesthetics today find their roots in earlier discussions and usages of the handheld camera technique. I will highlight three of these concerns, each in relation to a different media practice, namely authenticity vis-à-vis documentary, reflexivity vis-à-vis avant-garde films, and corporeality vis-à-vis the handheld camera’s difference from the Steadicam.

The analytical part that follows is divided into three sections, each dedicated to a specific film and titled after the kind of encounter each generates. In the first section, Authentic Encounters, I will look into what handheld aesthetics’ pursuit of a new mode of authenticity entails in terms of the films’ temporal configuration. Through an analysis of the Dutch film Zusje I will demonstrate that the films dislodge us from our sense of “now” by duplicating it within the diegesis. The now that is generated, however, is highly fragmented, multiple, disconcerting, and ultimately, I will argue, inaccessible to the viewer.

To clarify this process I will then, in Affective Encounters, consider the specific ways that this handheld aesthetics engages us affectively, using the Belgian film Rosetta as a case in point. My starting point is the observation that the handheld camera’s close proximity to the action instigates what Giuliana Bruno has called a disorienting space-affect, a disorientation that seems to be counterbalanced by the performed immediacy that is characteristic of this aesthetics. The “now” made available to us, however, is accessible to the viewer only when and if that viewer navigates the film with and within the time of affect. The film puts the viewer-listener in a state of anticipatory alertness that is indeterminately linked to the past but nonetheless takes shape in the present. Such temporality of emergence is indicative of the thickness of the “now” of our contemporary encounter with the cinematic. Incidentally, this thickness is also suggestive of the viewers’ engagement with this aesthetic as a body in motion, even if seated in an auditorium or in front of an LCD screen.

In the section Traumatic Encounters, finally, I take up Thomas Elsaesser’s understanding of trauma as a “negative performative,” and suggest that it is through the temporality of trauma that we can come to understand some of the paradoxes inherent in this temporal thickness of the “now” that characterizes our encounter with the cinematic today, a “now” that brings together past, present, and future, motion and stillness, the instant and a multitude. The case study here is the Danish film Idioterne, which, despite its apparent spatial and temporal continuity, radically breaks with every suggestion of logical coherence. The result is a (latent) lack of temporal orientation that is comparable to the spatial disorientation caused
by the camera’s spatially limited point of view. I argue that by navigating the film
with and within the time of trauma, we are challenged to renegotiate a sense of
self in relation to a potentially mediated here-and-now that is no longer necessar-
ily knowable.\textsuperscript{63}

Handheld Histories:
Authenticity, Reflexivity, Corporeality

Handheld cinematic devices are not unique to this specific historical moment, and
early examples of the handheld technique can be found as far back as cinema’s
silent era. Although the earliest movie cameras had been too bulky to be operated
by a single person, several cameras introduced in the 1920s could be operated
by hand: examples include the Newman-Sinclair, the Eyemo, and the De Vry. In
stead of being hand-cranked, these cameras contained a spring motor that could
manually be pre-wound to last continuously through a roll of film. Because such
cameras could only hold a short length of film, however, they were of limited use
for fiction filmmaking.\textsuperscript{64}

The emergence of sound in the late 1920s and the 1930s necessitated that
movie cameras be further motorized in order to maintain a constant film speed,
as well as encased. They were also encased so that the mechanism’s sound was
dampened. This resulted in a generation of weighty cameras, like the Mitchell
BNC, that more or less precluded handheld usage and dictated the limits of the
“reality” that could be (re)presented onscreen. (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 220) The
introduction of innovative lightweight reflex cameras, such as the Eyemos, Ar-
riflex, and Cameflex, made professional in the years surrounding World War II,
brought about a radical change in terms of portability. (1985: 221) With motors
integrated into a handle supporting the camera’s body, these cameras facilitated
(though they did not dictate) easy handheld usage, as evinced by the rise of several
documentary and avant-garde movements in the 1950s and 60s that, each in its
own way, made an effort to liberate the moving image from the constraints of
the heavy static camera: \textit{free cinema} in Britain, \textit{candid eye} in Canada, \textit{direct cinema}
and the \textit{New American Cinema Group} in the United States, and \textit{cinema vérité} and
the \textit{nouvelle vague} in France.\textsuperscript{65} Despite apparent differences in style and viewpoints
between the various movements and individual directors, these trends cannot be
conflated on grounds other than the handheldness they shared.

\footnotesize \textit{Pepita Hesselberth - Cinematic Chronotopes: Affective Encounters in Space-Time} \hspace{1cm} 71
The films of the cinema vérité and direct cinema movements were deeply embedded in a rhetoric of authenticity that partially derived from the shaky hand-held imagery of these films. They embraced and reinforced this claim to authenticity in their hyperbolic rhetoric of proclaimed spontaneous observation, anchored in self-imposed methodological constraints, e.g., no tripods, no scripts, no artificial lights. With the rejection of the traditional staged camera set-up, the cameraman’s immediate and often improvised gestures became ever more important. The idea was to be fully engrossed in the observed world – either “without” intervention (direct cinema) or through provocation (cinema vérité) – that is, to allow the camera(man) to capture that moment that reveals the thing one could not otherwise see. The American observational documentaries in particular were especially organized around a set of strategies, Paul Arthur has argued, in which spontaneous performances of both subjects and cameramen are embedded in, first, a register of resistance to the conventions of both Hollywood and the traditional documentary, and second, a rhetoric of authenticity, i.e., the images’ proclaimed neutrality and their openness to multiple perspectives.

Yet despite the often-cited claim that these documentaries changed the way human events are reported and recorded, their rhetoric of neutrality and authenticity in particular was soon condemned by post-1968 film scholars who, as Jeanne Hall puts it, started to “call into question the very nature of the cinematic sign.” (1991: 27) Far from being unbiased or neutral, Arthur claims, these films – in agreement with the political climate of their time – valorized the political progressiveness of the cinematic, not by mobilizing the personal as political, but rather by constructing “everyday life as a temporally distended preserve of idiosyncratic behavior.” (1993: 112) This is evinced by the celebrities-as-individuals at the center of many of these films, such as John F. Kennedy (Primary), Bob Dylan (Dont Look Back) and Paul Anka (Lonely Boy). Apart from offering a locus of performance that justifies the presence of the camera, these celebrities endowed direct-cinema filmmakers with established identities and role expectations needed to mask their interventions. For, rather than providing insight into character, the manifestation of “personhood” lent force to a heightened sense of authenticity and immediacy embodied in the restless long take. (1993: 122) What was at stake here, Arthur contends, was not so much “neutrality but mastery: how to realize the ideal performance for image/sound recorders in the theatricalized role of ‘pure observer,’” or, one might add, the provocative interrogator. (1993: 118-123) Direct cinema’s virtual metaphysics of presence (indeed a “reality effect” in Roland Barthes’ sense) is therefore grounded in an almost transcendent belief in technology, in the very
performance of recording itself, and in the professed accumulation of decontextualized “non-signifying details” open to the perceptual freedom of the viewer. (1993: 118–123)

Mastery – against its potential loss in the face of the unanticipated – is precisely what was at issue for the young directors who embraced the portable lightweight cameras with sound synchronization for making feature films in the postwar years. By the end of the 1950s, the handheld technique was used most notably in the various emerging New Waves that revolted against previous generations of filmmakers. The looseness afforded by the new technological possibilities – not only handheld cameras and direct sound, but also reflex viewfinders and light-sensitive film stock – gave the films a rough documentary look. In addition, the handheld camera’s spatial navigation and its potential incorporation into the action of the film itself, which was unthinkable with a Dolly, reinforced the impression of real life.

Frequently employing cinéma-vérité techniques, American underground artists started to make films that were – to quote the New American Cinema Group’s manifesto – “rough, unpolished, but alive,” such as Shirley Clarke’s The Connection (1961) and John Cassavetes’ Shadows (1957, 1959). The latter film, in which a gang of street-smart thugs confronts a modern art exhibition, is perhaps most exemplary of the embrace of the handheld camera by this generation of filmmakers to develop an aesthetics based on (suggested) spontaneity and improvisation. In France, too, nouvelle vague directors – for whom in particular “hand-held cameras served to foreground authorial presence” – adopted the handheld camera in their attempts to break with the formulaic and studio-bound “quality” tradition of their cinematic forebears. They wanted to develop an audiovisual language comparable to writing that could fulfill their belief in cinema as a medium of personal expression. Here the handheld camera technique did not operate in a vacuum, but was part of a range of strategies aimed at generating a new mode of address, including the use of complex camera movements; on-location shooting and interior staging; shooting in close proximity to the characters; zooms to generate a sense of immediacy; long takes, often combined with abrupt, fragmentary or discontinuous editing; and, finally, narratives built around chance events whose unforeseen turns and mishaps prompt a visual rush.

Despite vast variations and differences in their work, what these filmmakers had in common – and, incidentally, what called for the historical survey I am writing here – was a responsiveness to cinema’s history, includes its technological history. Their varying film styles were all highly self-referential, i.e., they reflected
on their own emerging conditions and history. Out of this awareness, writes Jean Douchet, addressing the French New Wave in particular, “a new and unexpected style exploded across the screen and added a sense of buoyancy to otherwise serious issues.” (1998: 205)

The popularity of the handheld camera technique dipped in the 1970s, a drop that coincided with the introduction of yet another mobile cinematic device, i.e., the Steadicam, which responded to Hollywood’s demand for continuity, a clear limitation of handheld camerawork. Like the handheld equipment used by direct-cinema and New Wave directors, and in contrast to the Dolly’s massive physicality, the Steadicam – introduced in 1975 by Garrett Brown and most commonly known from Stanley Kubrick’s The Shining (1980) – was flexible, easily brought up to speed, extremely mobile and responsive. The combination of its relative lightness and its physical detachment from the hands and eyes of the operator, gave rise to a specific scopic regime that was completely different from the handheld aesthetics I am referring to here.  

The difference resides especially in the camera’s detachment from the body, or rather, the hands of the operator. Where the massiveness of the Dolly and the instability of the handheld camera both anchor the presence of human agents behind the camera’s movement (investing it with the intentionality and historical reflection of a director), Jean-Pierre Geuens contends, the Steadicam, by contrast, captures and presents its images with a clinical distance. (1993) Ostensibly emanating from a non-space and timeless time, the Steadicam’s disembodied vision no longer reflects the production of a human agent. As such, Geuens suggests, it dispenses with the subjective enunciation of the cinematic author and virtually sucks the life out of the image’s former self. Conversely, the crystallization of time through the intentionality of camera movement – of either the Dolly or the handheld camera – makes us aware of our self-presence, as, in the words of Vivian Sobchack, it is “perceived existentially and experientially as bodily perception and expression, as a being and becoming in the world, as intending toward that world or towards its own acts of being and becoming.”

This brings me to the 1990s and the new handheld aesthetic I see emerge there. In the 1990s there was an enormous increase in the use of often relatively cheap, (high-resolution) digital video equipment, most notably in European art-house films, although this technological circumstance doesn’t always pertain: of the films I will be discussing in more detail below, only Idioterne was shot using a dv-camera. Zusje and Rosetta were shot using different formats: Zusje was shot on Betacam, and Rosetta on super 16. The latter film in fact only appropriates a
video look, remediating, if you like, video into and onto 16mm film. How, then, should we frame the use of handheld equipment in this specific moment against its earlier usages?

What this brief historical survey indicates is that the discourses surrounding earlier usages of the handheld camera mainly revolve around three major topics: the asserted authenticity of the imagery (here discussed in relation to documentary), its appeal as a medium of or means to (self)reflexivity (as discussed in relation to the avant-garde), and finally its foregrounding of corporeality as an expression of intentionality (here addressed in its contrast to the Steadicam). As will become clear in the following sections, these notions of authenticity, reflexivity, and corporeality still prevail in the handheld aesthetics of the 1990s, when the use of handheld camera techniques reach a new state of vibrancy and richness exceeding anything that had come before. I will argue, however, that even though the conceptual pillars of the debate have largely remained the same, the content they are given has been subjected to a radical transformation that is in tune with contemporary cinema’s renegotiation of its spatio-temporal markers. As I will demonstrate in the section on *Idioterne* in particular, today’s handheld aesthetics takes an overtly ironic stance towards its own self-reflexivity, instead of taking seriously its ability to reflect on cinema’s history and language. Mastery here thus devolves to mockery. In the section on *Rosetta*, moreover, I will argue that the performative corporeality of handheld aesthetics no longer primarily serves to draw attention to the intentionality of the director, but rather—especially in its coupling with a changed notion of authenticity—has come to foreground the problem of spatial and temporal orientation in our encounter with technologically mediated sounds and images.

Before I return to the issues of corporeality and reflexivity, however, I will first look at handheld aesthetics’ new claim for authenticity. The claim of authenticity in the 1960s was embedded in a rhetoric of truth and verisimilitude. But the 1990s handheld aesthetics’ pursuit of authenticity is actually quite ambiguous, and is inflected by the demise of photo-chemical indexicality. As Caroline Bainsbridge remarks with regards to *Idioterne*, “The hand-held camera style in itself becomes iconographic of a particular drive towards authenticity in the context of cultures of postmodernism.” (2007: 110) For what is specific about the gritty handheld aesthetics of the 1990s, states Thomas Levin in “Rhetoric of the Temporal Index,” is its revival in the context of the loss of what he calls the “referential surplus value” of photo-chemical indexicality. (2002: 584) One rhetorical consequence of the post-indexical image, writes Levin, is cinema’s adoption of the rhetoric of television,
whose major category (its base and reference), according to Mary Ann Doane, is not space but time. (1990: 122) Where cinema’s impoverished spatial rhetoric resided in its photochemical indexicality and the coupling of pro-filmic and narrative space, television’s temporal indexicality consists in its insistence on presentness, the instantaneous and, indeed, the event. The ambiguous prevalence of the temporal index, I will argue in the next section on Zusje, is what lies at the core of handheld aesthetics’ claim for authenticity; it forces the viewer to navigate time differently than in traditional cinema.

Authentic Encounters: Zusje (Little Sister)

A recurring feature of the films under consideration is the camera’s “subjective” point of view, which becomes particularly clear in the example from Zusje I mentioned in this chapter’s opening section. In Zusje (1995) we see the world from start to finish through the camera’s I/Eye of the narrator(s) from within the story. This mode conveys a very intimate vision of the diegetic world, in which direct address (a person looking straight into the camera) is not so much a possibility as it is the norm. Rather than appropriating a documentary look, the film adopts a different cinematic style – that of the amateur home video, which also connotes authenticity but of a radically different kind than the traditional documentary film.

Home movies are marked by what renowned home video archivist and filmmaker Peter Forgács has referred to as “vernacular narrative imagery.” (2007: 49–51) That is to say: they are rites of narration under permanent construction, which include all kinds of filmic mistakes, perfect imperfections, random sequences, and shifts in time and space. Although Zusje is structured like a traditional feature film, all its visual imagery is narratively motivated, meaning that all images (except the opening credits) stem from within the film’s diegesis, either from Martijn’s (Romijn Coonen) camera or, later, also from a second video camera (operated alternately by his little sister Daantje [Kim van Kooten] and her boyfriend Ramon [Roeland Fernhout]), or from the old 8mm footage that intersects the film’s suggested “live” streaming. One consequence of this cinematic trope, which is not unique to Zusje but typical for the handheld aesthetics of the 1990s in general, is that it generates a sensation both of being there and of bearing witness to the film’s coming into being, to its very process of construction. In other words, its “nowness.”

Although not, strictly speaking, a “live” film, I argue that the film’s performed immediacy is characteristic of the handheld aesthetics under investigation here. In
using the term performed immediacy I take my cue from Stephanie Marriott, who in her book *Live Television* observes that although only a modest amount of television’s output actually is broadcast (and received) live, liveness is often considered to be a - if not *the* - defining feature of the medium of television. (2007: 49) To understand this discrepancy Marriott distinguishes three discrete strands in the conception of television in which liveness is considered to be its defining characteristic. (41-48) Whereas the first two definitions of liveness – either as a property of television’s *scanning beam* technology (e.g. Zettl, 1978), or as instantaneous and endless *flow* (e.g. Williams, 1975) – imply that all television is live in essence, the third understanding of television as immediacy treats liveness “as effect, rather than a concrete question of time and space.” (Marriott, 2007: 53) Though not realized on every occasion, this immediacy effect is enhanced by the “propensity in certain genres at least, to shoot events ‘as live,’” (2007: 53) for example by means of direct address, spatial remoteness, the use of continuous takes, or by what Paddy Scannel has referred to as the *pervasive effect* of broadcast television, i.e., the effect whereby the duration of the captured event is equivalent to the duration of its reception, suggesting real-time duration.74

In *Zusje*, this performed immediacy is mainly achieved through the apparent prevalence of what Thomas Levin has called the temporal index, which he describes as:

> an image whose truth is supposedly “guaranteed” by the fact that it is happening in so-called “real-time” and thus – by virtue of its technical conditions of production – is supposedly not susceptible to post-production manipulation. (2002: 592)

Yet unlike the continuous flow of surveillant real-time, the condensed real-time of the suggested home-video *Zusje* is decided upon via the click of the button. Real-time here thus comes to connote the real-time of the performance, of the event of filming that has fractured the time of the filmed event. With hindsight, what seem to be randomly captured moments “culled from the continuous flow of time” add up to what appears to be a private history that nonetheless encompasses only select moments of the subjects’ waking lives. For this reason Forgács speaks of the private film as a “paradoxical mirror.” (2007: 51) The small portable camera seems to erase the gap between the filmed event and the event of filming, which is accentuated in *Zusje* by the frequent looks into the camera that draw attention to the apparent lack of distinction between the camera and its operator.75 (see fig. 2.7-2.9)
Such looks are projected into a future that coincides with the present moment of our encounter, from the perspective of which the “local time” of the look itself is marked as the past. (Forgács, 2007: 53) Yet the frequent looks into the camera are not targeted at an anticipated audience, conforming to the default value of direct address in live television, nor do they serve to short-circuit the fictionality of the film, conforming to the default value of direct address in fiction. Seemingly in line with the default value of direct address in home videos, the looks appear to call attention to the lack of distinction between the camera and its fictional operators (Martijn, Daantje, Ramon). However, an awareness of the film’s fictionality instantly breaks down this illusion, which leaves the looks to draw attention to nothing but the performative presence of the camera itself.

The suggestion of real-time recording in Zusje is further emphasized toward the end of the film by the introduction of a second camera, with which the performance of the first camera is put under surveillance. We actually get to see big brother Martijn filming his little sister Daantje. (see fig. 2.10-2.12) The use of sound in the film also enhances the suggestion of real-time duration. As Babette Mangolte stresses, the inability to separate sound from image is one of the greatest hallmarks and burdens of the shift from analogue to especially early-electronic and digital-recording technologies. (2002) In Zusje sound and image are interdependent. The sound fully matches the visual imagery; there are no smooth audio transitions between one shot and another, no apparent added extra-diegetic sounds, and
each visual jump-cut is accompanied by a sonic one, anchoring the temporal index of the image through sound.

In its incarnation of the home video, then, handheld aesthetics’ claim for authenticity, which is governed by the rhetoric of the temporal index, is ambiguous, for it does point, at least in part, towards the feasibility of its own fabrication. In fact, Zusje shows us not only that images, even home videos, can be both manipulative and revealing, but also how they can become such. To persuade Daantje to drop her boyfriend Ramon, who is an obstacle in Martijn’s quest to gain narrative mastery over his childhood trauma, Martijn shows Daantje a clip of film in which Ramon appears to be in the company of another woman. Daantje initially kicks Ramon out, but later in the film she discovers that Martijn has deceived her by editing together unrelated – and for the viewer initially unseen – footage.

In contrast, in the film’s final scene the second camera, now no longer operated by a human hand, is placed on a cupboard or table in such a way as to witness the reenactment of the traumatic moment captured on 8mm film when Martijn and Daantje were caught in bed together, naked and in a seemingly compromising position, after which the boy was sent off to boarding school. In front of the small surveillance handycam it turns out, however, that Martijn has been falsely accused of abusing his sister, because Daantje had actually challenged him just to lay on top of her without his clothes on. The reenactment thus discredits the 8mm footage that both the protagonists and the viewer have taken to be a faithful representation of real events, revealing it to be fragmentary and therefore biased. It seems to do so without further questioning the credibility of the temporal index. In fact it is by means of the contrast between possible manipulation and eventual revelation that the reliability of the temporal index is ultimately validated, or so the film suggests, since only in real-time can the truth be revealed. The reenactment scene, however, also hints at the opacity of the film’s temporal map. It does so because it conflates repetition with revision – a revision not of the pro-filmic real but of the 8mm footage – in an attempt to track down the recollection of the “originary” event. The scene further suggests that memory and identity can be (re)programmed by navigating time cinematographically, that is, through (instant) replay, reenactment, and montage.

The apparent real-time, or performed immediacy, in Zusje is thus disjointed and imbued with multiple temporalities. Moreover, despite the film’s apparent offer of a reorientation in the “now” to compensate for the spatial disorientation
caused by the camera’s extreme mobility, the “now” it performs remains remarkably inaccessible to us. Instead, it primarily serves to thrust us forward in anxious anticipation. This will become particularly clear in what follows, an analysis of the film *Rosetta*.

Affective Encounters: *Rosetta*

Take-off. A girl dressed in a factory worker’s uniform walks steadily through a narrow corridor. A wobbly handheld camera follows her closely from behind, staying within close proximity. Left, right, a slamming door, a flight down a staircase. Then a rapid maneuvering through a labyrinth of machinery, jump-cut after jump-cut, as the camera cannot keep up with the woman’s pace. And finally, a violent struggle, captured only with difficulty by the devoted camera, between the girl and the factory manager as she tries to resist being released. Time-out. Heavy breathing.

![Fig. 2.13-2.18: Opening sequence Rosetta (Jean-Luc and Pierre Dardenne, 1999)](image)

This is the opening scene of *Rosetta* (1998, see fig. 2.13-2.18), directed by the acclaimed Belgian brothers Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne. The film tells the story of the seventeen-year-old Rosetta (Emilie Dequenne), who desperately attempts to lead a normal life despite harsh circumstances: stuck in a trailer camp with her alcoholic mother, she is often bereft of food and money, and, unwilling to accept charity, she cannot find a proper job that lasts for more than a few days. The only thing that keeps her going is her anger, which is mirrored in the unsteady use of the handheld camera that is always kept close to her body. In this way the film establishes a link between the socio-economic hope and despair of the protagonist, and the film’s confining mode of address.
Although the film won the Palme D’Or at Cannes in 1999, online reviews of professional and non-professional critics reveal that the film was not only praised but also fiercely criticized upon release. Most reviewers refer to the unsteady camera and its extreme proximity to the main character. The camera, one critic remarks, is “often so tight that we can’t see what it is Rosetta is doing.” (Urban, 2000) Whereas the rickety camera-work of the relatively lighthearted Zusje was mostly met with giggles and even loud outbursts of laughter by viewers, user comments refer to Rosetta as being “intimate” (Guthmann, 1999) and “immediate,” (Smith, 2004) but also “claustrophobic” and “suffocating,” “disorientingly close,” even “dizzying,” (Travers, 2001) or “sickening.” (Edelstein, 1999).

Others suggest that despite the camera’s closeness to Rosetta we are hardly if ever allowed access to her feelings, other than her visibly vented frustration. We remain emotionally detached, not through rational distancing practices (as in a post-Brechtian cinema) but rather through immersion in a sensation, which, according to one commentor, has a forceful effect:

Aside from enhancing the immediacy of [Rosetta’s] experiences [the film] forces us into her physical plane, intensifying her determination and suffering. (Smith, 2004)

What is lost because of the camera’s close proximity to Rosetta is first and foremost our sense of spatial overview and orientation, a sensation that Giuliana Bruno, in *The Atlas of Emotion*, has called a destabilizing space-affect. She defines this space-affect as the “simple desire to know the location, or more commonly, a fear that develops into the need to be reassured of one’s whereabouts” within the film’s diegesis. (2002: 271) Whereas this reassurance is conventionally provided by means of, for example, an establishing shot, Rosetta explicitly refuses to offer such reassurance. For, as Joseph Mai rightly observes in his extensive monograph on the Dardenne brothers, in Rosetta

[N]obody and really nothing shares the frame with her. Space is distended, alienated from her, and unlike many realist filmmakers, the Dardennes rarely exploit depth of field. (2010: 68)

Pushing the space-affect to its limits, the camera in Rosetta remains at all times suffocatingly close to Rosetta’s body, so that, for example, we never know where she is headed until she reaches her destination, as we never get an overview of the spaces which she occupies – not even of her tiny mobile home. The result is a lack of spatial orientation that puts the viewer in a state of anticipatory alertness,
thrusting us forward into a “now” that is ultimately inaccessible. It only serves to trigger our anticipation for what is yet to come.

Rosetta is indeed physically difficult to watch, for there is no escape from the camera’s shaky imagery. But is it true, I wonder, as one reviewer suggests, that because “you can’t see anything when it’s pressed up against your face [...] it won’t engender any kind of real thought”? (Adams, 2002) This view is based on a confusion between physical and emotional space. Physically, extreme proximity does indeed preclude clarity of vision, as we know from Proust. In the famous passage in which he recalls kissing Albertine on the cheek, Proust observes that as he approached her cheek, as if in slow motion, his “eyes, in changing position, saw a different pair of cheeks,” triggering a sense of displacement of his object of vision (for “What I saw, in the brief trajectory of my lips towards her cheeks, was ten Albertines”), until eventually, when he actually kissed her, his eyes “ceased to see” at all. (2004: 361) What is lost in the coarseness of proximity, of his nose crushing against her cheek, is neither sensation nor thought, but rather his pre-conceived idea of the kiss, of the “taste of a rose,” and arguably of the illusion of unity via physical contact. (2004: 361)

In the case at hand, the camera’s close proximity to Rosetta’s face and body indeed prohibits us from obtaining narrative mastery over the story space. Yet, rather than discouraging thought, what the reviewers’ vocabulary connoting corporeality suggests, in my view, is that our “thinking” may be provoked on a plane other than that of visual perception and reason. Instead of the lack of clarity suggested by such a physiological conception, I speculate that in that particular combination of seeing and imagining that is film viewing, the extreme proximity entails an intensity that I see in terms of affect.

The term “affect” alludes to the moment or energy that precedes perception and thought and adds a sense of urgency to proprioception. The latter term is here understood with Kaja Silverman as “the egoic component to which concepts like “here,” “there,” and “my” are keyed.” (1996: 16) To illuminate its operation, let me highlight some of the key characteristics of affect that are particularly relevant for our purposes. First, affect is a physiological, material thing or, rather, process; it is embodied, part of our lived experience. “When properly conjured up,” writes Jill Bennett in Empathic Vision, it “produces a real-time somatic experience, no longer framed as representation.” (2005: 23) Second, although affects can arise within a person, they can also be “conjured up,” transmitted in our encounter with others or with the world, as with a work of art or a film. The fact that affect can be transmitted in our encounter with cultural artifacts and practices like cinema suggests
that affect works to disintegrate the distinction between subject and object. This is so, cultural theorist Teresa Brennan writes, because

\[\text{The transmission of affect means that we are not self-contained in terms of our energies. There is no secure distinction between the “individual” and the “environment.” (2004: 6)}\]

Affects, therefore, Brennan maintains, are social rather than personal or subjective.\(^7\)

Third, in terms of the specific temporality of affect, it should be noted that affect emerges in the present, where it produces “a real-time somatic experience,” an increase or decrease of what Deleuze refers to as intensity. Its process is one of becoming, involving a temporality that has little if anything to do with phenomenological time, as it resists chronologization and localization. The time of affect is one without diachrony. What is transmitted through affect is the past as presence, rather than a representation of the past in memory or narrative; an instance of pure pastness that in its transmission emerges in the present and primarily serves to thrust us forward, into a future that is unknown. What a work of art registers, at least potentially, is such an instance of pure pastness. The pastness it registers is in the first instance that of what Brian Massumi calls the “expression event.” (2002a: 27) In Deleuze’s famous and oft-quoted reflections on the work of Francis Bacon, the expression event that is registered and transmitted is the bodily sensation of the artist, sustained in his paintings. At stake here, Deleuze maintains, is not a representation of Bacon’s body, but a “sustained sensation” of a body manifested in the materiality of the painting, as energy, a moment of pure, unformed, and unstructured potential that precedes content and meaning and operates independent of it. (Deleuze, quoted in Bennett, 2005: 37)

In the case of Rosetta, the expression event that is registered, I argue, is the sustained sensation of the hand and body holding the camera, up close, too personal, which is transmitted to us in our encounter with the film. To say that the image affects us means it “touches” us, stirs a sensation in us, and in doing so, through the process of contagion, induces us to become that image. The image we become is a position to look from, to feel from, while nonetheless being able to maintain a sense of difference. We keep hold of the difference between, first, the image and oneself; second, between being affected as a partaker and being affected as participating observer; and, third, between being affected by a real body and being affected by an image of a body. For, writes Bennett, “[B]y sustaining sensation, we confirm our sense of the ontological status of the image and inure
ourselves to its effects – effects that are, nevertheless, felt.” (Bennett, 2005: 43) Important for our purposes here is that this sensation is not an end in itself (it is in this sense not a spectacle) but rather serves as a means through which we can come to a different, more profound kind of understanding, a deeper truth. Already hinting at the linkage between affect and thought, Deleuze, in his early book *Proust and Signs* (2000), speaks of the “encountered sign” when talking about the transmission of affect, a sign that is felt rather than recognized. As Jill Bennett nicely sums up, affective imagery does not serve to draw us into the narrative, but rather

promotes a form of thought that arises from the body, that explores the nature of our affective investment, and that ultimately has the potential to take us outside the confines of our character and habitual modes of perception. (Bennett, 2005: 43–44)

Far from foreclosing thought, then, affect must be understood as the means through which thought proceeds: it is that which incites us to look, to interpret and, to think.

It is through its transmission of affect, I contend, that *Rosetta* mobilizes our bodies and redirects our engagement with the film away from the level of representation and interpretation towards an embodied mode of critical inquiry grounded in affect. Rather than being about Rosetta’s struggle to survive or inciting a moral response to her poverty, the physical nearness and unsteadiness of the handheld camera in *Rosetta* compels us first and foremost to register her determination and despair as lived experience, in the “now” of the encounter, triggered in particular by the use of what Luc Darnenne has called the body-camera. What this notion of the body-camera hints at, writes Joseph Mai, is

a reciprocal relation between the terms, one in which vision is not an independent entity but is reseated in the body, (moving) the emphasis away from the psychodrama of the characters, from representation, towards the physical encounter between the camera, the person holding it and the one it records. (2010: 56)

In other words, it suggests that the handheld camera is a point of contact between Emilie Daquenne, the actress who plays Rosetta, Alain Macoen, the cinematographer (the man whose hands hold the camera), and Benoît De Clerck, the boom
operator responsible for the sound recordings. It is through this physical encounter, I speculate, that the film affects us physically and draws us into a temporality that is other than that of a linear transition. Moreover, it sets our body in motion, even if, for the full duration of the film, we remain seated, either in the cinema or in front of our television or computer screen. Rather than teleporting us into the film, as the idea of (primary) identification or immersion would have it, the affective imagery and framing in Rosetta above all offers us a position to “see” and feel from, physically, while at the same time being reminded of our own immobility and lack of agency in relation to the camera’s mechanical eye. It enacts and even physically demarcates our reliance and dependence on the camera’s necessarily restricted point of view.

This becomes particularly clear in the final scene of the film. (see fig. 2.19-2.24) Lying on her bunk bed after eating an egg, Rosetta stares unsentimentally off-screen, listening to the hissing gas, which she has turned on in an attempt to kill herself. More than a minute passes until her stare is interrupted by the sound of the valve running out of gas. In what follows we bear witness to her arduous journey through the desolate terrain of the trailer camp, as she carries the observably too-heavy cylinder to the camp manager in order to have it replaced. Upon her return, now carrying an even heavier cylinder, we hear the remote sound of an approaching moped. The sound is familiar. The moped belongs to Riquet (Fabrizio Rongione), the boy Rosetta has just double-crossed in order to take his job.

Throughout the film the encounters between Rosetta and Riquet are marked by physical clashes. When he comes to tell her that his chef has a vacancy, they end up in a brawl on a muddy patch of grass. When he tries to help her catch her fishing rod and tumbles in the water, she nearly lets him drown in quicksand. Conversely, after she has betrayed him, he obstructs her passage on an overpass, demanding, with hardly any words, an explanation. But all we see now, for the longest time, is simply Rosetta, fully aware of the approaching moped we still cannot see, carrying the far too heavy cylinder, dropping it, picking it up again, walking, dropping, lifting, losing heart. With the sound of the bleating moped now threateningly near, the camera’s unyielding gaze at Rosetta is almost unbearable: where is he, what are his intentions, what is he here for, is it even him at all?

Riquet finally enters the frame when he aggressively starts driving in circles around Rosetta, anger written all over his face. Then he disappears again, the sound of his moped briefly fading away. On the verge of collapsing, Rosetta stubbornly continues her journey. She ignores Riquet, throws rocks at him; finally, she gives in to the weight of the cylinder and drops to the ground, leaning on it, crying.
We hear the sound of the moped's engine being turned off. Then, all we see and hear is Rosetta's sobbing, until, eventually, after more than three minutes, Riquet's arm and back enter the frame as he helps her to her feet. The film ends with an image of Rosetta, standing now, catching her breath, looking slightly towards but not into the camera, facing Riquet, whom again we cannot see.

Fig. 2.19-2.24: Final scene in Rosetta (Jean-Luc and Pierre Dardenne, 1999)

It is through the spatial mobility of the handheld camera that mimics corporeality, then, that the transmission of affect brought about by Rosetta – and by extension, by other films with this aesthetic – is at once multidirectional and temporally fragmenting. That is to say, on the one hand the camera releases intensity through an intimate corporeal confrontation between the camera and the actress who is challenged at once to resist and endure the camera's presence. The shooting of the scene discussed above, for example, was repeated more than a dozen of times, so that, writes Mai, “the exhaustion on Daquenne's face” is not staged but real: what we see here is not “someone acting a role” but “someone suffering.” (Mai, 2010: 79–80) Partaking in the captured event, the body-camera penetrates the actor's protective layer of professionalism. This phenomenon also occurs in Idioterne and The Blair Witch Project. As a result, the viewer experiences the event as being more real, more live. On the other hand, the intensity that is released is both suspended and prolonged through storage and transmission. This has consequences for the “nowness” of the film. The “now” of the affective encounter between camera and actress collides with the “now” of our affective encounter with the film, the one past, the other future-oriented, yet both taking place in the present, in our presence, time and again. As such, we are framed as witnesses to an arguably traumatic event, while the encounter at the same time renegotiates the very conditions of witnessing in the face of mediated encounters. For, after
all, such encounters happen somewhere else and to someone else, and thus they challenge and compromise the customary emphasis on authenticity and truth.

While temporally severing the viewer from the release of affect in the confrontation between camera and actress/character (we are, after all, not there, in the “now” of then), the image as an entity in itself affects the viewer through a disorienting space- and time-affect. Whereas we are spatially constrained by the image frame, in terms of temporality we are trapped in a perpetual present that is inaccessible as it feeds on the erasure of images of past moments and on the potential of what is yet to come. We are constantly invited to virtually touch the boundaries of the image frame, and continually tumble into a “now” that remains unattainable, as it only serves to thrust us forward into an unknown, virtual future. As a result, the viewer is always untimely in his or her encounter with the captured event. It is precisely this untimeliness, I suspect, that is responsible for the discomfort produced by Rosetta and other films like it. It simultaneously substantiates our presence in the here and now and produces a sense of being dislocated from it, if only briefly, time and again. For, as Gareth Evans has pointed out, we always conceive of ourselves as being somewhere and, so to speak, some-when. This is the position from which we speak, listen, watch, and to which we have maximal sensory commitment. It is the zero point from which all other places and times are indexed as somewhere else. (here quoted in Marriott, 2007: 6–10) To argue that the body-camera offers us a position to see or feel from, and at the same time reaffirms our physical presence in relation to it, is to suggest that the position from which we speak, listen, and watch within such a cinematic encounter can no longer be placed, need no longer be placed. For it is a punctuated “here,” at once situated and in motion, and a warped, multiplied “now” for which our normal categories of chronology and linearity no longer seem to be the appropriate time-frames.

Enduring the disorienting temporal and spatial affect of handheld aesthetics and its ambiguous claim of authenticity, then, entails taking the risk of losing ground, of letting go of our protective shield of banal, linear temporality. For the moment of the encounter itself, for the full length of the film, remains, at least partially, dislocated in time. Moreover, as I will demonstrate in the following section, the encounter leaves the viewer trapped in an echo of a traumatic event that is in itself traceless, perhaps even nonexistent, except in its endless iteration. To clarify this I will look at one final example: a film that especially disrupts the traditional forms of cinema that are familiar to us, Dogme#2: Idioterne (The Idiots).

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Traumatic Encounters: *Idioterne (The Idiots)*

*Idioterne* (1998) is the second film in Lars von Trier’s Golden Heart Trilogy, which also includes *Breaking the Waves* (1996) and *Dancer in the Dark* (2000). The film centers on a commune of seemingly anti-bourgeois residents who spend their time seeking their “inner idiot.” They do so by releasing their inhibitions and behaving, both in private and in public, as if they are mentally retarded – a behavior they call *spassing* – and commenting on each other’s success or failure to do so. Built up out of “real-time” material seemingly collected at random, *Idioterne*, like *Zusje*, makes an ambiguous claim of authenticity that is destabilized in its very process of construction. Like *Zusje* and *Rosetta*, the film is shot with an unsteady handheld, and in this case digital, video camera. Unlike in *Zusje* and *Rosetta*, however, the camera in *Idioterne* is not primarily fixed on one person but rather on a group of people. Yet, although its optical range is not as spatially constrained as in the other two films, it remains limited and spatially disorienting for reasons that will become clear below.

In the previous two sections I have argued, first, that despite the apparent claim of authenticity, anchored in the suggestion of real-time recording and the performed immediacy of the films under consideration, our encounter with handheld aesthetics is organized around a temporality of a “now” that is not only disjointed but also multifaceted. Second, I have proposed that to fully grasp the “now” that is negotiated we have to approach it through the body, that is, through affect, which has a temporality of its own and operates outside of the habitual modes of perception. In what follows I will take this argument one step further and suggest that the aesthetics of the handheld camera not only challenges us to navigate cinema with and within the time of affect but also with and within that of trauma. Here, trauma is understood, with Elsaesser, as a “negative performative,” as a presence that is marked by the absence of traces, that nonetheless affects the texture of our experiences by suspending the categories of truth and falsity, here and there, then and now. (2001: 199–201) Such an understanding of trauma, states Elsaesser, allows for an understanding of a self that no longer needs to be placed. The time of trauma is one of repetition and deferral, of a delay between an event that is too shocking to be registered, and its compulsive, repetitive return as affect without apparent reason or cause. More specifically, the time of trauma is that of *nachträglichkeit* or belatedness, a skewed temporality that is “simultaneously outside time and eternally, disruptively, present within” it. (Pozorski, 2006: 76)
In “Postmodernism as Mourning Work” Elsaesser refers on the one hand to the persistence, in the late 1990s, of the institutionally more acknowledged theories of trauma concerned with the primary experience of trauma (as in Holocaust studies and clinical cases), and on the other hand to the emergence of a relatively recent body of work that addresses trauma first and foremost as a hermeneutic principle. In the context of these two frames, Elsaesser suggests that trauma has become such an abiding concern within the humanities because it prompts a revision of our very understanding of hermeneutics. This new understanding is one that is relative to the critique of poststructuralism and deconstruction, but nonetheless coerces us to rethink theories of referentiality so as to allow for paradox and non-linearity.\(^{79}\) The term trauma, moreover, he writes, is of particular interest for the study of ubiquitous sound and image technologies for which geography and chronology no longer seem to be the appropriate space-time frames.

Although I have already briefly touched on the topic of trauma in the previous two sections when referring, first, to the thematic reenactment of a traumatic event in \textit{Zusje}, and second, to the performative staging of a traumatic event in \textit{Rosetta}, I am not referring here to the presence of a traumatic encounter on the level of representation nor on that of the performance. Like so many of the films I have put under the label of handheld aesthetics, \textit{Idioterne}, nonetheless, also deals with the topic of trauma on a thematic level. Here it is the death of Karen's child that constitutes the first blow of trauma, an event the viewer learns about only towards the end of the film, but for which the rest of the film, Caroline Bainbridge has convincingly argued, is nothing but preparation. What is crucial about this final sequence, in which we learn about Karen's recent, unspeakable loss, is not so much its thematic occurrence as the fact that, as Bainbridge has observed, it coincides with a significant shift in cinematic mode-of-address. Whereas the film up until that moment is shot in a \textit{cinema vérité} documentary style, engaging the viewer as witness to the unfolding events, in the final sequence the camera reverts to an overtly pre-scripted fictional mode, in which it anticipates rather than reacts to the action. Here, the viewer is no longer addressed as a witness but rather as an onlooker drawn into the narrative trauma so violently and unexpectedly that “our relationship to the cinema and to cinematic form has been undone.”\(^{79}\) The only way to work through the embodied emotional response invoked by this violence imposed on the viewer, Bainbridge argues, is to go back to the film and watch it again, even if the film continues to disrupt our patterns of seeing and knowing without offering any real closure as to the “truth”
and status of the cinematic events. Here trauma thus presents itself as the need for retro-causality, the desire to “read” the film through its future consequences.

*Idioterne* indeed lacks many of the traditional stabilizing devices that give viewers the necessary clues to “read” the film and to assure them of their relation to it. This immediately becomes clear in the opening scenes. The film begins with a shot of Karen (Bodil Jørgensen), who, in the opening sequence, is introduced to the odd group of wanna-be idiots in an expensive restaurant where they are having dinner. When the waiter asks the group to leave because they are causing a scene, Stoffer (Jens Albinus), one of the “idiots,” grabs hold of Karen’s hand and refuses to let go. This is how Karen comes to join the group. In a taxi on their way to the next outing, with Stoffer still obsessively holding on to Karen’s hand, the now-no-longer-idiots suddenly burst out laughing, except for Karen, who (like us) only then learns about the group’s spassing-trips. She herself is one of the people they have fooled into believing they were really mentally retarded. Then a number of interview-clips are introduced in which various spassers reflect on their period of spassing. The clips are crosscut with a scene showing the now larger group of spassers on a field trip to a factory. It is in these images, too, that, for the first time, we “accidentally” see the recording microphone manifestly within the image. Since this is not the default mode of the film up until that moment, the sudden appearance and disappearance of the microphone disrupts the film’s own mimetic pact, a strategy that continues and intensifies as the film progresses.

In contrast to the highly media-literate, citational and self-reflexive cinematography in von Trier’s earlier films such as *The Element of Crime* (1984), *Epidemic* (1987), *Europa* (a.k.a. Zentropa, 1991) and the miniseries *The Kingdom* (1994), in *Idioterne* von Trier thus shrewdly alludes to his own approach to filmmaking, and to the Dogme rules themselves. These rules, Timothy Walters states, are “blatantly played out by his characters’ spassing.” (2004: 47) What the film suggests, Walters argues, is that “spassing” – both thematically and cinematographically – is not more strange or pointless than actions in other films or other ways of filming, only less familiar. Instead of generating a belated understanding of a conventional cinematic style through pastiche, identifying an established film form as the first blow of a trauma, *Idioterne*, in its play with film form and content, thus circles back to its own mode of filming. It taints the moment of our encounter with the film with a traumatic affect in which the first and second blow can neither be distinguished from each other nor located. This muddles our sense of the moment, our “nowness.”
The one-to-one interviews offer little if any explanatory value. Conducted by von Trier himself and recorded long after the shooting of the film had been completed, they only serve to deepen our confusion. Moreover, we are denied any sense of narrative direction or closure, as the film keenly resists identification with either the camera or one of the characters. Not only is Karen’s passive observing gaze soon discredited as the “outsider with whom we can identify in order to ease our discomfort” when she starts spassing too. (Walters, 2004: 50) Also, as a mockumentary the film as a whole resists identification both with the characters and the allegedly all-knowing eye of the seemingly authentic reporter, in this case von Trier himself. As a result, we are constantly challenged to adopt different interpretive strategies, not only successively but also retroactively. While on the one hand the handheld fly-on-the-wall style of shooting, the added interviews, and the apparently accidental visibility of the overhead microphone or cameraman, make the film’s documentary look seem more substantive, on the other hand it is precisely due to these cinematic devices that we are constantly reminded of the fact that what we are watching is in fact a fictional narrative. By explicitly foregrounding this double role of cinematic image technologies, i.e., their capacity to both claim and fake authenticity and immediacy, Idioterne is indeed suggestive of what Elsaesser refers to as “the now definitely ‘traumatic’ status of the moving image in our culture as a symptom without a cause, as the event without a trace.” (2001: 197)

But how then does this “event without a trace” manifest itself in the film, and how does it affect the “now” of our encounter with it? In many instances Idioterne radically disrupts its own peculiar spatial and temporal continuity, which it owes to its suggested real-time recording and home-video montage, in such an ambiguous manner that it may well be unnoticed on a first viewing. Although these instances occur throughout the film, there is one scene in particular, towards the end of the film, that is exemplary in this regard. When the group is about to part company, right before Karen returns home and we learn about her traumatic loss, she summons everyone together in a small corridor in the house where they have been staying. Face to face with the camera in the cramped passageway between various rooms, she tells everyone how much she has enjoyed her stay. The scene – especially upon closer inspection – reveals a blatant lack of spatio-temporal coherence, as all characters, except for Karen, seem to be in different places after each cut, without there being, on the level of narrative, the suggestion that time has passed. We can only determine the location of the various characters by following their looks, which are at all times directed at Karen, who serves as our focal point. When Karen praises Susanne (Anne Louise Hassing) for her kindheartedness,
Fig. 2.25-2.26 (top), 2.27-2.28 (second), 2.29-2.30 (third) and 2.31-2.32 (bottom): Corridor sequence. Idioterne (Lars von Trier, 1995)
for example, the camera tilts to Karen’s right and faces Susanne standing in the doorway across the hall from Karen (see fig. 2.27-2.28) – even though we had just seen her sitting down next to Ped (Henrik Prip) to Karen’s left (see fig. 2.25-2.26). The camera cuts back to Karen, and eventually follows her look to her right, facing Susanne again now standing to her close right (see fig. 2.29-2.30). The camera cuts back to Karen once more, who after a short moment of contemplation glances to her left, yet again facing Susanne, whom Karen asks to join her on her trip home, where she plans to release her “inner idiot” among her family (see fig. 2.31-2.32).

Besides posing a radical break with the rules of continuity editing, the film, here, as in the examples from Rosetta and Zusje discussed earlier, compensates for a lack of spatial orientation by a reorientation in the “now” of the film’s suggested real-time recording. But it is a “now” beset with the skewed temporality of trauma that resists chronologization and localization. Karen’s voice, surrounded by a silence of listening that masks the sonic cuts, suggests an uninterrupted real-time performance and recording of the event. This illusion, however, is instantly shattered by the complete lack of logical spatial and temporal coherence between the shots. This becomes even more evident when (if!) we realize that one of the characters, Jeppe (Nikolaj Lie Kaas), has not only teleported from Karen’s right to her left, but is also wearing an entirely different outfit and mysteriously has grown a two-day beard. (see fig. 2.33-2.34)

Fig. 2.33-2.34: Jeppe, corridor sequence. Idioterne (Lars von Trier, 1995)

Constructed rather freely out of material collected from dispersed moments of shooting, the film charges the performed immediacy of Karen’s speech with a disjointed temporal order that identifies neither a before nor an after, neither a beginning nor an end. This creates a sense of suspension, which is different from classical suspense or surprise, and constantly keeps the viewer on edge. Rather
than merely alienating us from the film’s fiction or defamiliarizing the conventional language of cinema, instances like these immerse us in the specific temporal configuration of nachträglichkeit. It simultaneously constructs and deconstructs the “now” of the event through editing and recording, and reconstructs it as a cinematographic “now” composed out of a multiplicity of instances. In other words, there is no consistent (indexical) trace of the event, despite the film’s suggestion to the contrary. What remains is a deictic (indexical) “now.” The fact that this uncoupling may very well go unnoticed upon a first viewing suggests that, as in a traumatic encounter, the experience comes too early for us to understand at the level of consciousness. Instead it affects us physically, with an intensity that thrusts us forward in anxious anticipation. And, by the logic of retro-causality and the power invested in us by our capacity to see and to imagine, this intensity may indeed – to speak with Massumi – shock us to thought. (Massumi, 2002b)

This thinking extends far beyond the duration of the film itself: it manifests itself in hindsight and in an accumulative and traumatic awareness of the ambiguous status of indexicality proper. Trauma here alludes to the loss of the possibility of an authentic encounter. This is not to say that this particular film can be identified as the “originary” moment of the traumatic affect instigated by the loss of photochemical indexicality. On the contrary, if it is an exemplary case, it is so because the locus of trauma as a “negative performative” lies not in the traumatic event nor in its distortion or narrative integration, but rather in the specific structure and disjuncture between seeing and knowing that manifests itself in traumatic affect. This affect is brought about in our encounter with the cinematic today, whereby the handheld aesthetics under scrutiny merely functions as a case in point.

Navigating Cinematic Time: Now

In this chapter I have looked at the aesthetics of the handheld camera to assess the thickening of the “now” that in my view is key to our encounter with the cinematic today. After briefly extending the scope of the aesthetics of the handheld camera to include its prior cinematic usages, I have argued that the films under investigation cultivate the “now” as their primary temporal marker through their suggested real-time recording that points towards the handheld camera’s propensity to shoot “as live.” Even though we know, if only because of the (ambiguous) fictional status of the films, that these films are not actually brought to us live, they reveal the
capacity of the medium to do so. Although this is true for any camera shooting moving images, it is emblematic for the handheld aesthetics I have discussed here that it has incorporated this reorientation in the “now” into its aesthetics, into its constructed perception of the world. I have further suggested that this is enhanced by the spatial disorientation prompted by the camera’s constrained optical range, i.e., the fact that we seldom see beyond the subjective or otherwise restricted camera’s eye that stays in close proximity to the action. Additional establishing shots or a narratively motivated exploration of the story space sometimes make up for the lack of spatial orientation. Most of the time, however, such compensation is missing. The result is a disorienting space-affect that puts the viewer in a state of anticipatory alertness, provoking a sensation of untimeliness that is comparable to the lack of spatial orientation caused by the camera’s limited point of view. Taking our cue from Bruno, we could thus speak of a disorienting time-affect.

What is particularly striking about the “now” of our encounter with the cinematic today is that it does not share the commonality of either phenomenological or historical time; the thick time of the cinematic is outside of causality. For what we are dealing with here, in particular when referring to the handheld aesthetics under scrutiny, is a type of film that disjoints time in certain ways, generating a sense of “now” that is ultimately inaccessible to the viewer – unless, I have argued, he or she navigates the films with and within the time of affect and trauma, a temporality that forces us to renegotiate our sense of self in relation to a potentially mediated here and now that are no longer necessarily knowable.

This aesthetics of a thickened “now” carries several consequences that I see as the inherent features of such films. By mapping time in an often refreshing and at times provocative manner, the films produce forms of intelligibility that we normally do not have. Thus, the films can be said to offer a meta-commentary on a culture and aesthetics in which real-time media technologies predominate. But they do so within a more or less traditional narrative framework, i.e., fiction film, thereby subjecting the technology through which they have been established. The handheld aesthetics’ affective surcharge in this sense can be seen as a return of the repressed, the surfacing of a technological complexity that can no longer be comprehended. In the next chapter I will elaborate on the implications of this intensification of the cinematic material for the sense of self of the viewer, the “me,” that it affords.
Situating Cinematic Presence

A large black shadow dances on a highly illuminated surface, a building façade consisting of one square and two more or less triangular planes. In the shadow a reflection, not of the person casting the shadow, but rather a residue of a projected body, much smaller than the silhouette that traverses it. Next to it another shadow, bevel-edged, and slightly moving to adjust its size and posture to match one of the portraits beneath the bright layer of light. At the bottom, assemblies of smaller, high-contrast shadows pass by. King-sized hands hover above them, as if belonging to a puppeteer, pulling their strings. Some playfully respond; others appear oblivious to their surroundings. Then one of the tiny shadows faces up and shakes one of the enormous hands. A gigantic – initially decapitated – silhouette approaches the building’s surface, only to shrink to minimal size. After a while, props such as bags, bottles and bikes enter the scene: two rotating wheels imprison a dwarflike figure behind its spokes; a gigantic handbag crushes one of the silhouettes; liquid pouring from an oversized bottle becomes a waterfall from which another miniature drinks.

This is the playground of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer’s large-scale media installation *Body Movies*, commissioned by the institute for Unstable Media V2, and first presented at the Schouwburgplein in the centre of Rotterdam in 2001 when the city was Cultural Capital of Europe. In its 2001 installation the work transformed the public square into a participatory stage for city dwellers, by projecting more than a thousand portraits onto the façade of the Pathé cinema in random sets of seven at a time. These images were then overexposed by a bright layer of light coming from two extremely powerful Xerox light projectors placed at ground level. Between the building and the projectors lay the large public square, populated by peripatetic urbanites whose bodies intercept the light and cast onto the façade shadows that vary from two to twenty-five meters in length, depending on the participants’ positions between projector and screen. Encouraged to
match the portraits on screen, or rather, on the wall, the shadows at times appear in tandem with the underlying imagery. Most of the time, however, we find the visitor-dweller in “playful, if ephemeral, engagement” (Fernández 2009, 83) with his or her own shadow or with those of others. For, as a result of the play with scale and size, shadows can be stepped on, kicked, and cuddled; while their owners may be physically meters apart, shades can stroke and pat, hit and tease each other under the observing eyes of the motionless projected portraits that await their mirroring match.

Based on Samuel van Hoogstaten’s engraving *The Shadow Dance* (Rotterdam, 1675, see fig. 3.2), *Body Movies* calls to mind Plato’s allegory of the cave from the *Republic*, so often employed within film theory to explain its conception of cinema’s theatrical dispositif. In Plato’s allegory, the shadows on the cave’s wall represent the distortion of the world of ideas by the world of things. For Plato, a perfect, “authentic” world is one in which the light is omnipresent. This world, in fact a hermeneutics of seeing, is not only non-communicable to those that dwell in the dark, but can also only be obtained by those few who manage to endure the pain inflicted on them in the process of mastering the light. In his essays on “the cinematic apparatus,” Jean-Louis Baudry draws a parallel between Plato’s cave and
the spatial arrangement of the cinematic apparatus, set-up in the darkened hall, with back projection, and a seemingly disembodied and immobile spectator who frontally faces the screen, deluded into mistaking the shadowy projections for “real.”

Yet *Body Movies*’ spatial configuration is radically different from that of a traditional cinema setting: it is designed to be set up in a large, empty public space, outside, in between buildings and urban displays, using the façade of one of the buildings as its central “screen.” Unlike in traditional cinema the visitor is mobile and can navigate between screen and projector, and beyond. Moreover, the projected imagery and sounds can be altered, depending on the visitors’ engagement on the public square. What continuity, then, exists between *Body Movies* and the organization of the visual we call cinematic? And what insights can be gained from analyzing the particular ways that *Body Movies*, in constituting a cinematic environment, situates and engages the participating viewer through the use of luminous projection and the real-time technologies that are contingent on the visitor’s participation in the square?

In the first chapter, I addressed the mobilization and thickening of the “here” in our encounter with the cinematic, through the thick time of the Warhol exhibition that foregrounds this “hereness.” In the second chapter, I explicated how the thick time of the cinematic manifests itself physically to the viewer-user in the cinematic “now,” by looking into our encounter with the handheld aesthetics of European art-house films. In the present chapter, I will focus in particular on the “me” within our encounter with the cinematic. Taking the large-scale urban media installation *Body Movies* as, again, a particularly strong emblematic case in point, I will argue that we are in a better position to understand the ever-expanding habitat of the cinematic and its bearing on the viewer engaged with it if we approach the cinematic as a lived environment. This environment consists of a mixed reality that affords certain site-specific, embodied interactions while prohibiting others. It does so by thickening the time and space of the encounter through the use of sound and imaging technologies. In the following sections I will unpack these aspects of embodied interaction, site-specificity, and sound and image in relation to the “me” of the participating viewer.
Much in synch with our contemporary media-saturated world, *Body Movies* is full of cross-medial references to practices varying from early immersive environments like the panorama and the phantasmagoria, to illuminated surfaces and light shows, and from stereoscopic fantasies to responsive environments. As was the case in the nineteenth century panorama, for example, the visitor is implied in the space of the encounter. As a reactive installation, however, *Body Movies* offers more than a panoramic view: it dynamically implicates the participant’s projected body-image and augments the space of the encounter, thereby enhancing the impression of a lived or even “living” environment. *Body Movies* thus revisits – or remediates, if you will – many pre-existing (pre)cinematic forms, drawing on and taking issue with the central concerns and fantasies that surround them. Although I will address some of these forms in passing, I will focus on the form of classical cinema in particular. For if my aim is to establish the conceptual relevance of our recognition that *Body Movies* belongs to the experiential category of the cinematic for the “me” within the encounter, then it is important first to determine how the installation resembles and departs from its theatrical counterpart – the “Movies,” unambiguously referred to in the work’s title.

By effectively displacing the concept of cinema from the confined spaces of the theatre and resuscitating it within the augmented space of the city, I contend, in the first section of this chapter, that the installation breathes new life into a fantasy pervading the histories, discourses, and technologies of the cinema, i.e., that of cinematic three-dimensionality. The notion of cinematic three-dimensionality surfaces primarily in the context of and the debates on cinema’s traditional apparatus, yet its persistence throughout the history of and discourses on cinema pertains to a number of fantasies and fears, most notably those orbiting around the collapse of representational and spectatorial space and the demise of the Euclidean subject. I will expand on these fears and fantasies in the first section, and demonstrate that not only do they reappear in the debates on and practices of non-theatrical cinema, but they also bear on our understanding of today’s media-infused world. The case at hand figures as an example.

In the subsequent sections I will then consider the critical implications of the collapse of representational and spectatorial space for the “me” that emerges in the encounter with the cinematic today. Using *Body Movies* as my interlocutor, I will, in section two, address the changing role and use of projection. I will argue that *Body Movies* challenges traditional conceptualizations of luminous projection and corresponding notions of the cinematic based on perspectival vision, and forces us to rethink projection as emanating from the body, from a “me” situated
in the “here” and “now” of the encounter. In doing so, I argue in the third section, *Body Movies* produces a particular presence-effect, where presence is understood as the perception of self-existence, of a “me” that becomes tangible to our bodies in our encounter with sound and imaging technologies. What becomes tangible to our bodies through the embodied interactions afforded by *Body Movies*, I propose, is a sense of self in its interrelationality, a condensed and thickened “me,” part of a complex network of mediated interactions that continually feed the viewer’s body-image back to him or her in real-time and real-space. In the final section I will end by suggesting that *Body Movies*, as a cinematic encounter, further intensifies our perception of self-existence, of “me,” through a conjunction of affect and agency in the experience of limits, which in *Body Movies* is sidetracked through the probing of a narrativity that cannot be integrated.

### 3D and the Demise of the Euclidian Subject

Desire for and resistance to cinematic three-dimensionality have been recurrent tendencies throughout cinema’s (pre)history and its imagined futures alike, and have often been associated with the desire, paradoxical regarding cinema, to eliminate the screen altogether. This desire is paradoxical because it amounts to giving up on what is considered to be one of cinema’s primary characteristics, essential to its ontology (Lippit, 1999). The notion of three-dimensionality materializes along different axes, two pertaining to the space of the image, i.e., *depth* and *relief*, and one addressing the potential extension of the composite cinematic space itself, an expansion that goes well beyond the auditorium, into the museum and beyond. What unites these axes is their shared allusion to a fear of, and coexisting desire for, a compound merger of representational and spectatorial space, of cinema and the world at large.

For example, as Jonathan Crary has argued in *Techniques of the Observer* (1990), around the end of the nineteenth century – the era of the dawn of cinema – there were many competing visual regimes associated with different media technologies and forms of art and entertainment. Crary convincingly demonstrates that besides photography, stereoscopy was one of the most dominant visual regimes that had a significant impact on early modern visual imagery, including that of cinema. Stereoscopy offered a model of perception based on binocular disparity, not only suggesting depth or relief but also enhancing a sense of tangibility and immediacy of the space-time represented in the image. As such it posed a radial break with
the visual regime of the camera obscura, which maintained a strong division between the viewing subject and the object viewed.

Early cinema also struggled with the potential three-dimensionality of the cinematic image, a struggle that lies as much at the heart of Méliès’ avowal of the cinematic surface as it is central to Lumière’s affirmation of scenic depth. It also re-occurs in (the analysis of) so-called primitive cinema’s building of a “haptic space” through the physical expansion of the tableaux (Burch, 1991: 162–185); as well as in what Michael Wedel has referred to as early cinema’s relief-effect, i.e., its potential to seemingly invade the auditorium space, suggesting relief through a “sculpting with light.” (Wedel, 2009) The tension between the three-dimensionality of the projected image and the potential negation of the difference between “real” and “unreal” space, i.e., between auditorium and narrative space, also characterizes the denial of the “frame” as limit of the visible in the discourses on widescreen cinema, consolidated in the 1950s. As Mary Ann Doane has pointed out, drawing on John Belton’s Wide Screen Cinema (1993), the “illusion of limitless horizontal vision” intensified the spectator’s sense of immersion or absorption in the space of film.” (2009b: 74) Yet although widescreen cinema denies the existence of an outside, its promise of the infinite depth of the image, Doane insists, served above all to compensate for widescreen cinema’s being “paradoxically only a more intense demonstration of the aspiration of the cinema to represent, within a finite image, the sense of an infinite expanse of space.” As such, it thus reestablishing the difference between the space of the auditorium and that opened up through projection. (2009a, 75)

The same holds true for stereoscopic 3D cinema, which is now enjoying a monumental revival. Although 3D cinema seems especially to revitalize fears and desires along the depth axes of three-dimensionality, alluding to discourses on virtual reality, i.e., of being “immersed” in or teleported to the films’ virtual world – as evidenced by CNN’s item on the “Avatar Blues” (Piazza 2010) – there are other issues at stake in the persistence of the discussion about 3D cinema. These include, first, a fear of or desire for the (de)materialization of the cinematic image; second, the expansion of cinematic perception beyond the visual; and, finally, the augmentation and possible merger of formerly discrete cinematic spaces. Fear and desire, that is, concerning the relationship between what is seen and the identity or sense of self of the participating viewer, of “me.”

As Akira Mizatu Lippit convincingly argues, 3D cinema has been celebrated for its potential to reproduce reality to the fullest, to “become” reality or, in Bazinian terms, to bring cinema closer to its origin, i.e., to the pro-filmic real on which
it is based. It has also been applauded for its mimetic promise, for its potential to extend our perception beyond the merely audio-visual, to involve the full sensorium. Yet, Lippit argues, 3D has also been fiercely criticized on grounds that reveal a number of anxieties associated with the annihilation of (the flatness of) the screen. Although this critique is partly informed by a desire to protect the screen as the sanctuary of cinema as art, it also exposes another anxiety, namely, the uncertainty associated with the disappearance of the screen as a protective shield against living presence, delineating inside from outside, public from private, spectacle from spectator, and real from virtual experience, or even psychosis. (Lippit, 1999: 219) Together these three fantasies – of reproduction, mimesis, and annihilation – that circulate in the discussions of 3D cinema thus paradoxically hint at once at cinema’s disappearance and its ontological completion. In all three, the “me” of the viewer is either augmented or under threat.

In this context the three-dimensionality of cinema’s spatial configuration, and its potential to expand beyond the confines of its traditional theatrical setting, become particularly relevant. Cinematic projections have always taken place outside the movie theatre, for example at fairs and in vaudeville shows in the early days, during the performances and happenings of the avant-gardes of the 1920s/30s and 1960s/70s, and today more and more often in museums, in galleries, at festivals and biennales, and in public spaces. Of these non-theatrical projections, one particular pre-cinematic habitat draws our attention in the context of the expanded media-rich environments under investigation. This is the phantasmagoria, whose current relevance is underscored by its popularity as a historical locale for staging the rise of optical media in a mainstream Hollywood film like *The Illusionist* (Burger, 2006).

The phantasmagoria was one of the most popular forms of entertainment and awe of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Tom Gunning has pointed out, unlike in theatrical cinema, within the phantasmagoria as presented by Etienne-Gaspard Robertson, the space where the projection takes place is simultaneously cancelled out by darkness, as well as conjured up through a play with light and shadows. (Gunning, 2009: 24) Owing to a complex trajectory of sensual withholding and overstimulation preceding the introduction of images, and the near invisibility or even apparent absence of both magic lantern and screen, the projected imagery seemed to appear out of nowhere, as if summoning the dead into the room.

Apart from the ideological implications of taking place in-between and giving shape to the relation between science and superstition (as elaborated on by Gunning), what is important for our purposes here is that the phantasmagoria’s
engagement with space is marked by an ongoing transition between the physical and the illusionary. This oscillation takes place not along the axis of the depth of the image, but through a suggestive play with the relief of the image and, above all, through the apparent merger of the space of illusion opened up through projection with the space within which the visitor resides. Thus the fears and desires surrounding the spatial augmentation of the cinematic habitat were to some extent already awakened in the phantasmagoria. Moreover, the case of the phantasmagoria highlights once again the importance, in each of these discourses, of the presence of a threshold separating representational from spectatorial space, and the fear or desire of losing it. That the screen frame is more often than not considered to be the form in which this threshold (de)materializes is, I believe, of less importance. Of greater significance is that in lowering the threshold, the viewer's situated yet mobile body becomes more important as the locus of perspective, a ubiquitous “here” from which the participating viewer's sense of “now” and “me” emanate.  

It is on this note that I want to turn to the multi-layered urban interface of Lozano-Hemmer’s *Body Movies*. Here, in my view, the sensation of an entire world “rendered filmic” – which Lippit ascribes to the potential elimination of the screen in the ideal of 3D cinema – returns with a difference. (1999: 221) This difference can perhaps best be described as a conceptual shift away from a focus on a subjective conception of space towards an attentiveness to the physical space of the encounter, and therewith from a discourse of immersion to one of augmentation. I propose this view because it concerns the positioning and activity of the viewer. Unlike (stereoscopic) theatrical cinema – or early fantasies of VR, for that matter – *Body Movies* is not shaped by its potential to virtually teleport the viewer into a representational world, as the metaphor of “immersion,” frequently used as a perspectival one, would have it. Instead, *Body Movies* offers a form of engagement characterized by an explicitly embodied situatedness within an acutely technology-driven, but most importantly, everyday urban milieu. In this environment, the cinematic screen is not so much eliminated as it is multiplied, mobilized, and complemented – augmented, that is, by other, more pervasive, multi-sensory sound and image technologies that thicken the time and space of our everyday urban environments.

This friction between the physical space of the encounter and sound and imaging technologies through which it is augmented is epitomized in *Body Movies* by the sonic amalgam of the installation’s projected sound, a jittery tapping that is indicative of the conversion of real space and movement into dynamic data, and
the haphazard soundscape of the city of Rotterdam: its means of transport, its noisy dwellers, the sonic evidence of its overall dynamism. Here in particular does the installation reveal the permeability of its borders. It does so by bringing home to us the ramifications of the discussions on cinematic three-dimensionality for the positioning of the viewer. These ramifications and dilemmas, rather than 3D-ness as such, are particularly perceptible in the debates invigorated by 3D (Dolby Surround) sound, according to which the space-time of the cinematic needs to be reconsidered as a realm of constantly moving centers with no unifying subject to speak of. Thus the demise of the Euclidian subject positions the omni-present “me” in a whole world that is, so to speak, rendered cinematic.

Projection: From Subject-Effect to Presence-Effect

The changing role and uses of projection are crucial here, because they underscore in multiple ways the relevance of rethinking the changing spatio-temporal configuration of the cinematic today from the perspective of the “me” within the encounter. Apart from its numerous connotations in debates varying from alchemy and geography, to philosophy and psychology, psychoanalysis and aesthetic theory, the notion of projection has been a recurrent point of reference in traditional film theory. There, Mary Ann Doane notes, this notion became “instrumental to the establishment of the opposition between internal and external, subject and object” through its linkage with the conception of both “representation” and “subjectivity.” (2009a: 160) For this fundamental reason, a few remarks seem in order so as to clarify the ways that, through projection, Body Movies interpellates the viewer-visitor differently from theatrical cinema, and thereby clarifies what happens in the latter encounter. Crucial to classical theories of cinema, in particular those known as apparatus or Screen theory, is the equation of cinematic with psychoanalytical projection. According to Jean-Louis Baudry, the latter is what the “projection room scrupulously reproduces.” (1986a, 286) According to this view, based as it is on Euclidian perspective, theatrical cinema produces “‘the subject’ as the active centre and origin of meaning.” (1986a: 286) The transcendence that this necessitates, however, is an ideological construction brought about by the black-boxed operation we call cinema. The camera’s monocular creation of “ideal” vision; the feigned multiplication of points of view through camera movement; the meticulous selection of images through decoupage and montage; and the restoration of the illusion of continuity of time and movement through projection: all
these devices work to conceal the fact that (theatrical) cinema lives off the negation of difference, which is effectuated through luminous projection.\(^9\)

By its title alone, *Body Movies* alludes starkly enough to cinema for a comparative probing. For if this work is affiliated with cinema, what precisely, then, is projected, and perhaps more importantly, where, how, and to what effect for the “me” of the participating viewer? Projection is there in the display of the gigantic portraits, in the bright layer of light that delineates the fluid space of the encounter, and in the casting of the shadows. Projection, incidentally, is also there inside the multiple-screen cinema on whose surface these portraits, lights, and shadows are displayed (that is, in the Rotterdam exhibition). Whereas the shadows abide by the causal chain of spatial analogy between the viewer’s body and the shadow it projects, the portraits – stripped from their background, and composed in random sets and sizes on the Pathé façade – overtly lack any such spatial continuity and duration. Accentuating the vertical stretch of the projective surface rather than its depth, they call attention to the scale of the viewer’s body in relation to the size of the images, on the square, in-between other tall and monstrous buildings within the city at large. This is how *Body Movies* both resonates with and responds to cinema. Although it can be argued that all projected and blown-up images have this quality, its potential is taken to the extreme in *Body Movies*. This is underscored by the random play with the sizes of the portraits that differ in each set of projections, hindering any mapping of scale in terms of a fixed distance. (see fig. 3.3)

*Body Movies* is not the first installation to both acknowledge and gloss traditional cinema. In making the viewer’s body-image part of the installation’s interface, *Body Movies* draws on a rich tradition of interactive installations and responsive environments, with pioneers like Peter Campus’ *Interface* (1972, see fig. 3.4), Dan Graham’s *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974, see fig. 3.5), and Myron Krueger’s *Videoplage* (1975, see fig. 3.6). Like these works, *Body Movies* extends the viewer’s physical body through projection, so that it becomes part of the installation’s (audio)visual in- and output. It departs from these earlier examples, however, by not treating the relation between body and projected body-image as a bi-location.\(^9\) This is how Erkki Huhtamo characterizes the “experience whereby the body seems to be in two places simultaneously,” one grounded in physical presence, the other operated through remote control. (1995) Instead, the shadows primarily serve to gauge space in relation to the time and movement of the participating viewer, at once spatializing his/her body on-screen and stipulating the importance of the space of the in-between.
In activating the space of reception, *Body Movies* forces us to rethink a deep-seated disorientation caused by the “trauma of scale” (Doane, 2009b: 65) and the arguable dematerialization of the moving image through luminous projection: its “larger than life” appearance, its (lack of) indexical grounding, its event-like status, and its dependence on the illusion of movement and light itself. The fact that the dematerialization of the image – especially in its classical-cinema incarnation – is seen as controversial, states Mary-Ann Doane, has to do with cinema’s struggle with a fundamental undecidability about the location of the image. This is what disorients the viewer in terms of time, space, and vision. Doane writes:

> the screen intercepts a beam of light, but the perception of the moving image takes place somewhere between the projector and screen, and the temporary, ephemeral nature of that image is reaffirmed by its continual movement and change (2009b, 152)

Whereas classical cinema can be seen as an attempt to resolve this disorientation by domesticating scale from within, thus providing “an abstract space populated
by virtual bodies,” *Body Movies* explicitly abandons the screen/frame paradigm. Instead, it confronts the anxiety of dematerialization associated with luminous projection head-on by resuscitating the body as a measure of scale and materiality. In doing so the work operates much in line with the so-called para-cinema of the 1960s and 70s of, for example, Anthony McCall and Paul Sharits. Body Movies differs from these works, however, in its displacement of the encounter from the gallery to the augmented space of the city, thus offering new ways to inhabit an already existing physical space and epitomizing an urban milieu that is frequently encountered.

*Fig. 3.4* (left): Dan Graham’s *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974); *Fig. 3.5* (middle): Peter Campus’ *Interface* (1972); *Fig. 3.6* (right): Myron Krueger’s *Videoplance* (1975)

By engaging the viewer’s body in its mobility and linking it to the malleability of its projected body-image and those of others, *Body Movies* intimates a conception of projection as something embodied (“here”) rather than abstracted, lived (“now”) rather than figuratively inhabitable. Crucially, projection here is located in as well as operated by “me.” As a theoretical object, then, *Body Movies* forces us to rethink cinematic projection along the lines of embodiment. I use the term embodiment here largely to capture the sense of “presence” or being-in-the-world that arises from our corporeal engagement with a given environment. It thus refers to the common way we encounter our everyday world, in real-time and in real-space, while being embedded in it. Rather than a property of a thing – a physical reality, a body, a technology – embodiment is a property of interaction, a participatory status that precedes the body, any body, as spatialization precedes space. It exists not prior to relations, but it is the substance of those relations, produced between the body’s corporeal capacities on the one hand, and the environment where it operates on the other. With embodied interaction as a generative principle, the viewer’s body and the environment of the installation can still be recognized as separate entities, though it must be acknowledged that they can never be fully understood apart from this figurative third, which is embodied interaction. In this context Phillip E. Agre speaks of the interactionism (as opposed to
mentalism) between human experience and a given technological (in his example computational) environment. Interactionism, he states, is “more than the study of interaction; it is, more fundamentally, the use of theoretical categories (units of analysis) that are defined in terms of interaction.” (Agre 1997, 53; emphasis in text)

Projection would be one of those theoretical categories. Understood as such it refers to our (pre-reflexive) corporeal opening towards the world via perception, in real-time. It is through this, rather than solely through psychic or unconscious mechanisms, that we make the world part of our bodies, spatially, and through this our body-image is reciprocally transformed. Such a conception of projection means that our orientation in space is no longer a fixed point of reference in relation to a horizon or vanishing point but a ubiquitous “here,” a being all over the place, just as the temporal vector is no longer past-present-future, but a perpetual “now.” Important for our purposes here is that this sense both of “here” and “now” emerges from and contributes to the sense of “me” that is tied to the viewer’s embodied interaction with the installation’s responsive environment. Within such an environment, states Elsaesser in a somewhat different context, perspective still survives – not in the form of infinity, but rather as ubiquity, here simply understood as the “pure presence as felt space” inherent to the unlocatable omnipresence of the technologies of vision that valorize our being-in-the-world. (2009a)

Therefore, through close engagement with Body Movies as my interlocutor, I propose the following generalization regarding the notion of projection vis-à-vis the positioning of the “me” within a given cinematic environment. It is more productive to contemplate the cinematic in terms of the presence-effect it produces in the viewer, the “me” within the encounter, than in terms of the subject-effect it is said to fabricate. In the following section I will address this presence-effect produced by Body Movies and argue that it is intimately tied to the thickened time of the encounter, thereby justifying its classification as cinematic.

Presence and the Temporality of the Event

In the discussions on mediated environments, presence is often defined as the subjective experience of “being there,” commonly understood as the “perceptual illusion of non-mediation” during a technologically mediated experience. (Lombard and Ditton, 1997) According to this view, presence is provided by suitable technologies – often associated with notions like immersion, perceptual realism, and interactivity – that allow for a narrative, physical, or social involvement with
a mediated world. I do not wish to draw on this understanding of presence here, however, because it builds on an ontological view that, like the discussions on luminous projection described above, is firmly rooted in Cartesian dualisms between mind and body, between subjective and objective space, despite its emphasis on the relation between them. An alternative, and philosophically more grounded view of presence can be found in several more recent reflections on imaging technologies, and in particular on computation, that favor the existential phenomenology of Martin Heidegger (1977) and the ecological psychology of J. J. Gibson (1986) as points of reference. Presence, here, is understood not in reference to metaphysics but as being within reach, tangible with our bodies, of what Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has referred to as the “materialities of communication.”

Reacting against a specific epistemological fixation of the humanities on interpretation, described as the “identification and attribution of meaning,” Gumbrecht traces the rise of what he calls the hermeneutic field to the transition from a medieval cosmology to the subject-object paradigm of the Renaissance and early modernity. (2004: 21) This transition, he states, corresponds with two major changes. First, men were no longer perceived to be part of God’s universe, but rather were considered to be eccentric to the World, which incidentally also included the human body. Second, the human being was conceived of as a purely intellectual, and above all disembodied, self. Known as the subject-object paradigm, this new form of self-reference, states Gumbrecht, defines the relation between human and world along two axes that together are constitutive of the hermeneutic field. The first axis is that of the subject, the eccentric, disembodied observer within a material world; the second is the act of interpretation, where the subject extracts knowledge from the surface of the world to establish the underlying truth. (Gumbrecht, 2004: 8–20). In Gumbrecht’s view, systems theory brought about a major crisis in this epistemological worldview, as it gave rise to a growing awareness to the infinity of renditions, dependent on the angle of observation, as well as to a rediscovery of “the human senses as integral point of any world observation.” (2004: 39) Yet the subsequent struggle with the incompatibility of experience (understood as world-appropriation through concepts) and perception (understood as world-appropriation through the senses), states Gumbrecht, has come at a great price. This price is the loss of, first, any non-Cartesian, non-experience-based type of world reference, and, second, of the dimensions of perception, most notably in Heidegger’s reaffirmation of the materiality of Being. (2004: 21–49) Both structuralism and constructivism can be seen as attempts to overcome this double loss; but the subsequent alternation between the two approaches resulted in a kind of
circularism, which has not brought us back in touch with the world. This being-in-touch-with-the-world is what I am interested here, and is what my understanding of the presence-effect brought about by the cinematic refers to.

Presence, here, is tied to action, or to be more precise: it is tied to the perception of the possibilities for actions, or affordances, that emerge from the environment where one is situated. Originally coined by J. J. Gibson (1982 orig. 1977), the term affordance was appropriated to the field of human-machine interaction by Donald Norman (1990), who used it in reference to only those possibilities for action perceptible to the viewer, the “me” in question. As a projectable property, then, presence – understood as the perception of self-existence, of “me” – arises from the embodied interactions afforded within a given environment, in real-time and real-space.

As I have argued in the introduction to this study, drawing on the writings of Mary Ann Doane, Gilles Deleuze, and Vivian Sobchack, the cinematic offers our lived body a specific way of being-in-the-world that is set apart by its potential to thicken the present in the process of negotiation between a technologically produced and a corporeal habitual time and space. This potential, in my view, is not unique to one specific viewing situation, i.e., theatrical cinema, nor is it tied to one material carrier, i.e., the film-strip. In fact, I would argue that a focus on presence intimates a different conception of materiality, one that is much more in synch with the cinematic project as a whole, as it picks up precisely where the fear of the dematerialization of the image associated with luminous projection has left us: at the loss of the image’s indexical grounding in a material object – be it celluloid or, as in the case of the optical toy, in the “afterimage.” The title of Gumbrecht’s treatise, The Production of Presence, suggests as much. Besides noting that presence refers to that which is “in reach of and tangible for our bodies,” the author further explains that

if producere means, literally, “to bring forth,” “to pull forth,” then the phrase “production of presence” would emphasize that the effect of tangibility that comes from the materialities of communication is also an effect in constant movement.

(2004: 17; second emphasis added)

Crucial for our view of how the “me” is entangled in these processes is Gumbrecht’s insistence on tangibility as effect. The production of presence, of being in touch with the world, that is induced by media technologies thus has a spatial as well as a specific temporal dimension: it refers both to physical closeness and to
the process of emergence. For if tangibility is something that is effectuated by the “materialities of communication” and cannot be fixed in time, then materiality must be understood as something other than mere objecthood. Put differently, the idea of presence intimates a conception of materiality as process, as a coming into being, a “becoming.” More specifically, materiality then refers to the specific ways in which sound and imaging technologies manifest themselves physically to the participating viewer in the event of the encounter. Following this line of reasoning it can be argued that the cinematic, as an experiential category, emerges when the thickness of time becomes tangible to our bodies in the event of our encounter with sound and imaging technologies.

How, then, does this happen in *Body Movies*, and how does this relate to the perception of self-existence, of “me,” that it allows? To answer this question it is important first to establish what kind of environment *Body Movies* constitutes. Key to the embodied interaction afforded by *Body Movies* is the technological possibility to monitor, track, and display digitized information in real-time. I have addressed the theoretical ramifications of the concept of real-time in the previous chapters; here it seems important to briefly consider the technical side. Interaction with the work can only take place in real-time, and the real-time principle is one of the technological imperatives of its mixed reality. The installation is operated by several surveillance cameras that monitor and track the matching of shadows and portraits, as well as by three network computers: a camera server, a video tracker, and a robotic controller. These are used to process and feed back this information to the participating viewer on the square. Feedback occurs by means of, first, the projected shadows; second, the blackouts that occur when all portraits are matched; and third, a midi-signal, a jittery tapping, rhythmic yet unpredictable, with a logic seemingly dictated by speed and volume. The more portraits are matched by shadows, the faster the clicking goes, accelerating and every so often decelerating its speed, vaguely hinting at the volatile monitoring of human motion.

The real-time imperative thus refers not only to the interaction between the viewer’s activated body and the reactive interface of the installation, which takes place in real-time. It also refers to the installation’s ongoing algorithmic transformation of data, drawn from and fed back into the work’s overall environment, and dependent on a dynamic system of feedback between the situated viewer and the context-aware interface. Its operational logic is one of process and communication, made possible by the massive increase in computational power and the expansion of contexts in which they are put to use. In the digital event, carefully
defined by David Rodowick as “any discrete alternation of image or sound data at whatever scale internal to the image,” (2007: 167) sounds and images have no spatial unity, nor do they have a unique duration. Instead, they are modulated, transcoded into discrete and variable bits of information that are constantly degenerated and regenerated when put on display.

In a slightly different context, Wendy Chun has referred to this temporal mode as the enduring ephemeral of digital information: its ongoing process of degeneration and regeneration, passing and repetitive. (2008) Thus, despite the installation’s unambiguous references to the praxis of cinema – which are present in the work’s title, its use of projection, and its initial display on the façade of the Pathé cinema – *Body Movies* explicitly departs from classical cinema’s dependence on photographic (i.e., spatial) indexicality, or the trace, as the contested ground of the real. In its place another form of indexicality is foregrounded: a temporal indexicality that intimates real-time monitoring, tracking, and display as the new (but by no means less contested) ground of the “real.” While the prevalence of the spatial index in classical cinema is closely linked to the archival order of modernism, marked by its desire to record and document the “external world” and an obsession with the possibility of archiving time itself, the temporal index meets the demands of today’s relational paradigm. Informed by the logic of computation, by systems theory and cybernetics, the relational paradigm is governed by a self-referentiality that is inherently time-critical, invested in the present, and oriented towards future events.

*Body Movies*’ reliance not only on the technologies but also on the rhetoric of real-time surveillance – cumulating in what Thomas Levin has called a form of surveillant enunciation – suggests as much. (2002) Rather than addressing a world at a distance, and interpellating the participating viewer as at once “here” and “elsewhere,” the installation engages us in a perpetual present that emerges from the dynamic conjunction of seeing, anticipating, and responding, and of being seen, processed and fed-back to ourselves. Media-artist and critic David Rokeby has discussed this specific feedback quality of real-time media in terms of its potential to refract, rather than reflect, our self-image to ourselves. This quality, in his view, lies at the heart of their potential to establish a dynamic-dialogue between the self and the world, between the participating viewer and the surrounding media-infused environment that surrounds him. (1995)

The image of self-existence refracted to the viewer in *Body Movies* is one of a self that emerges in its embodied encounter with other entities, both sentient and non-sentient. *Body Movies* explicitly underscores both forms of relationality. First,
it interpellates the viewer not as singular but as “being singular plural,” in the phrase of Jean-Luc Nancy (2000), as being-with, part of a community, interchangeable with others, but a “me” nonetheless.

Like the experiments with illuminated surfaces at World’s Fairs and other grand expositions, and those staged in nineteenth-century cities that aimed at demonstrating the omnipotence of electricity as a new form of energy (Canogar, 2004), the illuminated façade in *Body Movies* unveils an at times equally invisible though by no means imperceptible energy. This is the energy, not only of omnipresent media technologies, but also of what Villem Flusser has described as the city as an intersubjective field of relations, where the self emerges only in its embodied encounter with other entities (2005). It is through our interaction with images of strangers – both as portraits and as shadows, the one relayed, the other more or less immediate – that the “me” is revealed, interpellated if you like, as a constitutive part of a complex network of mediated interactions that make up the city at large.

This is accentuated by the actions afforded by the installation: the matching of portraits and shadows, and the playful interactions between the shadows themselves. Taken on the streets of Rotterdam, Montreal, and Mexico City, the portraits neither suture nor mirror a “beholder” placed at distance. Instead, they first and foremost serve to establish a relation between the viewer and the local-global urban city-dweller, the other-self of the visitor on the square. This is emphasized by the fact that the portraits only become visible in the viewer’s reflection, his or her shadow, offering an asymmetrical portraiture in which the viewer becomes one with him- or herself as a stranger. Likewise, the playful interactions among the projected shadows underscore the relationality between the participant’s own projected body-image and those of other viewers.

Much in line with the participatory art experiments of Fluxus and the Happenings of the 1960s and 70s, the installation celebrates public space as a site of experimentation, and creates an audience where none had seemed to exist. Scott McQuire has referred to this social dimension of *Body Movies* as a technically enhanced version of what Richard Sennett has called “playacting”: a form of social role-playing among strangers that generates a sense of public culture within an otherwise anonymous city. (Sennett, 1977; McQuire, 2008) What becomes tangible to our bodies is the simultaneous and reciprocal presence of others. “Me,” that is, cannot exist in isolation.

Second, the perception of self-existence, of “me,” afforded by *Body Movies* underscores the viewer’s interconnectivity with the technologies of vision that
valorize our being-in-the-world. “The self-image,” writes Rokeby, “is the known reference against which the phenomena of transformation are witnessed.” (1995) Yet the refracted self-image in *Body Movies* is an image of the self from the point of view of someone or something else, a vantage largely dependent on the non-sentient technologies that feed back our self-image to us. This presence-effect is produced, in particular, at the dynamic junction of what I earlier described as the “the processes of seeing, anticipating and responding, and of being seen, processed and fed-back to ourselves.” Important for our purposes here is that action, in *Body Movies*, is contingent on anticipated environmental response. Or, to phrase it differently, the embodied interaction afforded by *Body Movies* is governed by the projected body-images the viewer anticipates seeing or hearing in real-time. Time is thus made perceptibly thick in the event of the encounter. This links the notion of presence explicitly to the temporality of the event, described by Doane in *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* as “the most condensed and semantically wealthy unit of time.” (2002: 141)

The cinematic and the event stand in a peculiar relation, as the former is often considered to provide the technological means to capture, tame, or structure the contingency of the latter. This also holds true for live coverage on television and real-time surveillance, especially in the event of a catastrophe. A striking example, coming from the realm of media art, is Wolfgang Staehle’s solo exhibition “2001,” which was on view at Manhattan’s Postmasters Gallery from September 6 to October 6 of that year. A follow-up on his Warhol adaptation *Empire 24/7* (1999-2004), the exhibition comprised three real-time video renderings of different – and supposedly eventless – locations: the Fernsehturm in Berlin, Comberg in Baden-Württemberg, and the skyline of lower Manhattan. Needless to say, the camera of the latter fortuitously witnessed the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

What this grim coincidence makes evident, Lee Rodney points out, is that surveillance is the formal complement of disaster. Or, to phrase it differently, more in line with the discussion above: surveillance makes (the potential of observed) disaster tangible to our bodies, even when it is not captured “on tape.” For even then it is there in each “tragic moment, rendered over and over again”: absent yet anticipated. (2005: 39) Even though *Body Movies* is less complementary to catastrophe than the example mentioned above, the implication of the observation made by Rodney and others, namely that the event of our encounter with real-time media is subject to contingency and hinges on anticipation, holds equally true for *Body Movies*, even if real-time surveillance here is put to use for self-reference.
In Doane’s view of the event, no event is possible without a “me.” For the event “is a deictic marker of time, a ‘this is happening, this is taking place.’” (2002: 140) It is a pure indicator, a pure assurance of existence. As such it is resistant to meaning. It is that which is unassimilable. Writing about the actualities of early cinema in particular – i.e., films in the tradition of Lumière that, to quote Tom Gunning, place “the world within one’s reach” (1990: 96) – Doane maintains that the cinematic is marked by its aspiration to capture and store the “real-time” of the event, and as such, to archive presence. But like trauma, Doane insists, the event somehow persists, in a semiotic limbo, as a kernel of the real that awaits only a second event whose collusion with the first generates readability. In a sense, any event is by its nature that which is unassimilable, that which resists meaning, that which like the index, serves primarily as an assurance of the real. (2002: 140)

In *Body Movies*, the “captured” event and the event of capturing and display are folded into one thick temporality that, together with the event’s inherent futurity, makes the thick time of the event itself perceptible to our bodies. The tension between structure and contingency here still exists in the unattainable “now” of the event itself and in the absent presence of a future, anticipated but not yet there. And if we consider the event as a deictic marker of time, as Doane suggests, then the perceptibility of its thickness afforded by *Body Movies* necessarily affects our perception of self-existence, of “me.” It thickens our being-in-the world, postulating a sense of self, of “me,” in its relationality, interconnectivity, and co-dependency on the environment in which it operates. Moreover, the temporal excess of the event vis-à-vis an emphasis on embodied interaction intimates a third and final condition of the “me” in our encounter with the cinematic that I wish to address here: the experience of agency through the perception of boundaries, or limits. I will therefore address the experience of agency in *Body Movies* in the third and final section of this chapter, and relate it to the intensification of the sense of “me” that the installation conveys.

**The Experience of Agency**

The notion of experience has been a central concern throughout this study, a point of departure upon which the valorization of my classification of the cinematic
depends. I have referred to the cinematic as an experiential category, an encounter, a lived environment. I have also alluded to here-ness and now-ness as the terms on which the lived experience of the cinematic is grounded. In all these accounts, I have used the concept of experience neither in reference to the personal or the subjective, as in “subjective experience,” nor in reference to a fixed form, a past tense, a representation. Rather, I have used the term to refer to the cinematic as it is lived, as a chronotope, “at the edge of semantic availability.” (Williams 1977, 134) I have thus referred to experience as event, or rather, to the event-ness of cinematic experience.

To consider experience as event requires us to consider being as emergent. It intimates a performative understanding of being as becoming. One way to frame this emergent quality of being is through the writings of Deleuze. Being, in Deleuze’s vision, cannot possess or presuppose itself, as we are made up of (time-space) relations. It is in, or rather, of these relations embedded in experience that subjects are constituted. Experience, then, refers to the a-subjective and impersonal “milieu which provides the capacity to affect and be affected,” Inna Semetski summarizes. It is rendered meaningful to us only if we grasp the difference embedded in the said experience, “thereby transcending the faculty of perception beyond the ‘given’ data of sense impressions.” (2005: 91-92) Deleuze invokes the term singularity to indicate the condensed event, or “a decisive point and a place where perception is felt in movement,” which allows for the world to be perceived as, at once, infinitesimal and infinitely. (Conley, 2005: 255)

What sets apart the cinematic, Elsaesser has convincingly argued, is its potential to offer an extreme experience, or rather, a limit experience or an experience of limits that enables recovery from extremes. (2009c: 297) Drawing on the writings of Walter Benjamin in particular, Elsaesser suggests that there are “three kinds of ‘limits’ that are the conditions of possibility of the cinematic experience as Erlebnis always at the edge of Erfahrung: the body as limit, time as limit, and agency as limit.” (2009c: 298) Whereas I have attended to the first two kinds of limit experiences in the previous two chapters, when addressing, respectively, the intensified “here” of the projected body-image in the Warhol exhibition, and the intensified and thickened “now” of trauma and affect of handheld aesthetics, here I focus on the intensification of the “me” that is afforded through the “conjuncture of affect and agency” in Body Movies. (2009c: 297)

What, then, does it mean to experience agency as limit? Elsaesser confronts this question by drawing on examples mainly from narrative cinema, suggesting
that the limit experience of agency is above all enacted through the action-hero of post-classical Hollywood cinema. He meets the limits of experience head-on, often through an excess of action and bodily exposure, habitually depicted as spectacle; through catatonia (he’s either undead or mentally troubled); and through a “failure of experience” as such, here understood in terms of trauma. The latter limit experience is especially indicative of a more general mode of contemporary spectatorship, Elsaesser writes, a “new mode of Erlebnis without Erfahrung” that is not only symptomatic of our encounter with the media-infused environments we inhabit today, but has in fact become the default value of technologically mediated experience. (2009c: 308–309) For, Elsaesser writes,

“Successful” immersion in this environment would have as its correlative a “traumatic” mode of spectatorship, by which I mean the kind of flexible attention and selective numbness that absorbs the intermittent intensity of affect, the shallowness of memory, the ennui of repetition, the psychic tracelessness of violence which constant contact with our contemporary mediatized world implies. (2009c: 309)

Although the cinematic environment that Body Movies constitutes is different from the theatrical narrative cinema referred to by Elsaesser, his observations regarding the conjuncture of affect and agency hold equally true for Body Movies. For, what is Body Movies if not a hyperbolic “larger than life” version of precisely the kind of environment saturated with media-experiences he seeks to describe?

Capitalizing on our skills and experiences in dealing with the now unavoidably familiar, media-infused world that surrounds us every day, Body Movies challenges these skills and experiences by conjuring up an alternate “world” – in part physical, in part virtual – that is governed by its own set of rules. The affective impact of the installation, I contend, is precisely grounded in the participating viewer’s unfamiliarity with these rules, or if you like, with the untried contract of the encounter in which he or she is challenged to improvise, negotiate and evolve a system of embodied interaction with the work. Experience here hinges on experiment, on improvisation. For rather than constituting an unchangeable object for public display, Body Movies remains in process for its full duration, an infinitely half-finished product, emergent in its encounter with the viewers who engage with it. In this the work draws on a central tendency within twentieth-century media art to engage the viewer as an active participant in aesthetic creation.
As we become more familiar with the rules of engagement, or others like it, improvisation may give way to repetition, playfulness, or even – at its worst – lack of interest. While familiarity with the encounter’s contract or protocol may well dull the sharp edges of the desires and anxieties associated with the event, as a form of literacy that comes with the passing of time, such familiarity also makes it more difficult to grasp how these encounters (continue to) affect our sense of being-in-the-world, of “me.” A compelling association can be made with the incubation time of a film like *Memento* (Nolan) released in 2000, or the first season of the television series *Big Brother*, broadcast in the Netherlands in 1999. The initial impact of both was largely caused by their invitation to an unprecedented contract, in the first case of the viewer unfamiliar with the film’s cognitive switch, in the second case of the participants unaware of the impact of their behavior on a growing audience of viewers. Once familiarized with the cognitive switch of the reversed narrative in *Memento*, or with the desired (i.e., profitable) behavior in *Big Brother*, comparable films and television had less of an impact and were not as successful. Such diminishment did not occur because their initial principles ceased to exist or ceased to affect us; on the contrary, these principles have become so commonplace and we have become so used to (though not unaffected by) them, that they are now almost invisible. This highlights the importance of the historicity of the event and the contemporaneity of the encounter, an analysis of which, I contend, gives insight into the ways that the cinematic, in its various constellations and each time anew, affects our sense of being, or coming being, in a world where sound and imaging technologies are ever more pervasive.

Whereas experience is linked to experiment, agency in *Body Movies* is contingent on possibilities for action afforded by the work. In discussions of multimedia forms, the concept of agency is often placed alongside that of interactivity, which in turn is habitually conceived as a technological formal property. Drawing on a long philosophical tradition, the concept here is tied to notions like volition, freedom, and intention, and therewith to a coherent sense of individual identity. In the more recent debates, however, as for example in those inspired by Bruno Latour’s reflections on technological mediation, agency is a trait no longer considered particular to humans. (1994) For Latour, agency is always hybrid and distributed, formed in the alliance between human and nonhuman actors. Here, as in much poststructuralist philosophy, Katerine Stiles and Edward Shanken maintain, “the centered, autonomous, humanist subject ceases to exist as subject *qua* sub-
ject.” This is so because the perception of self-existence, of “me,” according to this view, “is always already constructed as a social entity in relation to technology.” (2011) Or, to phrase it more in line with the terminology used above, our sense of agency is contingent on affordances or, if you will, on the performativity of the environments in and with which we engage, to the extent that these environments demand conformity, which they do by setting limits to the possibility for actions.

Important for our purposes here is that agency is thus perceived not so much as the freedom to act but rather as the faculty to act. Agency, as the faculty to act, must not be mistaken for freedom: there is no possibility to exert meaningful action when there is total freedom, for total freedom implies chaos. David Rokeby’s reflections on his own interactive sound installation Very Nervous System (1986-1990) are salient here. Very Nervous System is an audio-environment, in which various video cameras, imaging processors, and computers, as well as a synthesizer and a sound system are used to create a space where the movements of the participant’s body are interpreted and fed back to the interactant as sound and/or music. To grasp the implications of this, it is worth quoting Rokeby at some length:

In the early days of Very Nervous System I tried to reflect the actions of the user in as many parameters of the system’s behaviour as possible. I worked out ways to map velocity, gestural quality, acceleration, dynamics, and direction onto as many parameters of sound synthesis as I could. What I found was that people simply got lost. Every movement they made affected several aspects of the sound simultaneously, in different ways. Ironically, the system was interactive on so many levels that the interaction became indigestible. People’s most common response was to decide that the sounds from the system were not interactive at all, but were being played back on a cassette deck. I found that as I reduced the number of dimensions of interaction, the user’s sense of empowerment grew. (Rokeby, 1997)

Rokeby’s reflections thus underscore Elsaesser’s suggestion that agency is only experienced when (if!) it is recognized as such through the experience of its limits. Seeing one’s “volition” materialized through the projection and movement of one’s body-images in Body Movies, which in fact is the experience of agency through limitation, thus arguably increases the engagement of the viewer on the square with the installation, with others, and with the world at large. Action here is consid-
Elsasser's insistence on trauma as a way of mastering the exposure to extremes raises another issue, namely that of the relationship between experience, event, and narrative, that primary mode of classical cinema, so thoroughly sidetracked or ignored in *Body Movies*. Reminiscent of what Noel Burch (1991) has called the punitive ending of early cinema – in which the catching and beating of the tramp or voyeur announces the film's ending – the patting, teasing, hitting, and kicking that is typical of the viewer's interactions with the projected shadows, foreground a desire for narrative closure in an encounter marked by an overstimulation of the senses and an abundance of affect. (see fig. 3.7-3.18) Here the point of reference is thus once more early cinema, which Maxim Gorky in his 1896 review of the Lumière brothers' cinematograph appropriately described as the kingdom of shadows. “It is not life but its shadows,” he wrote, “It is not motion but its soundless specters.” (1896)

 Conjuring up the motif of the doppelgänger, *Body Movies*, like these early cinematic encounters, invokes a tension between our living bodies and their technological double: not dead, but not quite alive either. This brings home to us Doane's discussion of the curious merger of structure and contingency that marks the cinematic event. For the true element of chance in our encounter with the real-time interface of *Body Movies* is the self-same observed observer on whose refracted self-observation that interface depends. Catastrophe, in the event of live-coverage associated with death, is here linked to the undead, or rather to the fear of being halfliving, perhaps best described as a fear not of distributed agency, but of becoming the distributed agency of “something” else. Yet, rather than threatening and emptied out, the relation between body and double in *Body Movies* is immediate and playful. In it, the work revitalized the figure of the Rube, described by Elsaesser elsewhere as the simpleton spectator of early films like *Uncle Josh at the moving picture show* (Porter 1902) and *Sherlock Jr.* (Keaton, 1924). This is the stock figure who – dwelling in ontological confusion – grasps at the images mistaking them for real. Like these early films, *Body Movies* promotes “a form of spectatorship where the spectator watches, reacts to and interacts with a motion picture,” yet unlike
in theatrical cinema the viewer of *Body Movies* does so without “remaining seated and still.” (Elsaesser, 2006: 213) We become the Rube, not in (usually) his naiveté or illiteracy, but rather in our attempt to cope with a more profound philosophical-ontological ambiguity regarding our own position in a world increasingly made up of images.

The punitive mode of interacting, thus, can be seen as an attempt to overcome a resistance to meaning in the face of an abundance of affect: a search for narrative, for a closure to make the event of the encounter “readable” to the viewer. It is at once invested in a now that is unattainable and in a future that is not there, anticipated yet unknown, a “something about to happen” endlessly reiterated in the present. There lies its ambiguous narrativity. It is a narrativity
probed and explored, but one that does not add up to story. The same holds true for the participating viewers who end up playing wheelbarrow or puppeteer. (see fig. 3.19-3.22) Legibility marks presence as time-out-of-joint; hence the formulation, here and in the previous chapters, of presence as unattainable. There is no closure to presence.

In sum, as a site for experimentation, *Body Movies* disarticulates the present and intensifies the event of our encounter with real-time sound and imaging technologies. Rather than leaving us powerless before the sound and imaging technologies that surround us, *Body Movies* returns the participating viewer his or her agency in the form of this narrative probing. Through this probing the self emerges – not in the classical sense as a coherent subject, but rather as intensity, a coming being. This is what the thickening of the “me” in *Body Movies* amounts to: a condensed and concentrated “me,” encapsulated by restriction and empowered through a “traumatic” mode of spectatorship.” A “me” for whom the perception of self-existence is inseparable from the perceived necessity to relate oneself to the world and to others. It is me, but I can’t do it alone.

*Fig. 3.19-3.22: Rafael Lozano-Hemmer’s Body Movies. New Zealand International Arts Festival, Wellington, 2008.*
Situating Cinematic Presence: Me

In this chapter I have used *Body Movies* to assess the thickening of our perception of self-presence, of “me,” that in my view characterizes our encounter with the cinematic today. After a brief consideration of *Body Movies* against the backdrop of the discourses on and practices of cinematic three-dimensionality, I have argued that *Body Movies* breaks away from a Cartesian conception of space. This conception is anchored in the tradition of Euclidean perspective and has been secured via the gamut of modern technologies of vision, i.e., from the photographic lens “engineered to produce perspectival vision,” (Lister, 2005: 39) to the “perspectival grid” of computer graphics (Manovich, 2001: 254). *Body Movies* leaves this conception behind first and foremost through its lack of pictorial “depth,” and through a systematic breakdown of the so-called privileged point of view, resulting in an adaptable dispersion of omniscient perspectives that are reinscribed into the many eyes/I’s of the installation’s interface. Through the use of shadows, moreover, the installation emphasizes the viewer’s body as the locus of his or her projected body-image, thus forcing us to rethink projection as emanating from and pointing back to the body, from and to “me.” In doing so *Body Movies* challenges us to reassess the cinematic in terms of the tangibility or presence-effect it produces, and opposes the classical understanding that cinema is to be organized around the subject as a self-contained entity, outside of time and at a distance from the world viewed.

What becomes tangible to our bodies in our encounter with the cinematic, I have argued through my analysis of *Body Movies*, is an intensified sense of self, a “me” interrelated with other entities, both human and non-human, and co-dependent on the environment in which it operates. Our encounter with the cinematic is necessarily embodied, and interactive, I have suggested, as our perception of self-existence, of “me,” is largely dependent on our corporeal engagement with our environment. In *Body Movies* this intensification is achieved mainly through the usage of real-time technologies, as well as through the viewer’s anticipatory engagement with the installation in real-time. *Body Movies*, I argued, coerces us to rethink the cinematic as a lived environment that affords certain actions while prohibiting others. Cinematic experience here hinges on experiment, which becomes most clear by looking into the historicity of the event, and the contemporaneity of our encounter with the cinematic, in its various constellations, each time anew.

A focus on presence, I have further argued, intimates a different conception of materiality, and therewith of the material condition of the cinematic, because
the effect of tangibility, or presence, is one of constant motion. It is inherent to
our encounter with the cinematic as event, or to the event-ness of cinematic ex-
perience. What distinguishes our encounter with the cinematic is its potential to
make the event-ness of mediated experience perceptible to our bodies. The linkage
between our embodied interaction and the temporal excess of the event led me
to address a third and final condition of our perception of self-existence, of “me,”
besides projection and presence, and that is the experience of agency. I argued
that our sense of agency in the encounter with the cinematic is contingent on
the possibilities for actions afforded by a given work. Agency, in other words, is
perceived through limitation and partially distributed to the technologies of sound
and vision with which we engage. In *Body Movies*, these limitations, I have sug-
gested, are affectively lived through by way of a failed and therefore traumatic
attempt of self-narrativization, a narrative probing, in which participating viewers
engage with their own technologically mediated doubles and those of others, in an
attempt to gain narrative mastery in the face of an abundance of affect. Closure,
however, is unattainable.

The sense of self that emerges through this encounter with the thick time
of the cinematic in *Body Movies*, therefore, is that of a “me” that does not exist
in isolation, but comes into being in dynamic conjunction with its environment.
This thickened, intensified “me” differs both from the self-enclosed unified subject
of classical cinema and film theory and what is arguably the bi-located subject of
early installation art, as well as, philosophically, from the post-humanist, post-
Lacanian subject for whom the ideal of a self fully knowing and embodying itself
is put into doubt. It also competes with the Deleuzian schizo-subject or other
“dispersed” subjects, whose radical instability disrupts any notion of self-presence.
The thickened and condensed “me” that emerges in the encounter with the cine-
matic is at once singular and plural, mobile and fleeting, embedded and embodied,
distributed and intensified.
coda
Coda
Flash Forward

In this study I have made a case for analyzing the chronotopes of the cinematic as affective encounters in space-time. I have argued that, while the site of cinema is on the move, the extent to which technologically mediated sounds and images continue to be experienced as cinematic today is largely dependent on the intensified sense of a “here,” a “now,” and a “me” that they convey. This intensification, I have suggested, is fundamentally rooted in the cinematic’s potential to intensify our experience of time, to convey time’s thickening, of which the sense of space or place, and a sense of self or self-presence are the correlatives.

We are in a better position to understand the extended habitat of the cinematic and the bearing it has on the viewer, I have argued, if we approach the cinematic as a lived environment that affords certain embodied interactions while prohibiting others. It is in the encounter that the thickness of time becomes tangible to our bodies, and that the fleeting image of that thickness emerges from that body. The encounter is thus inherently synesthetic, affect-laden, and it entails all kinds of cognitive and interpretative processes that cannot be disentangled from the event of the encounter itself. A focus on the encounter, I have demonstrated in chapters one, two, and three, therefore intimates a focus on the dialogic relationship between the participating viewer and the concrete cinematic environment he or she inhabits. To study this dialogic relation I have proposed the paradigm of a bodily-spatial deixis, the notion of the chronotope, and the deicitic terms “here,” “now,” and “me.”

Cinematic chronotopes can be encountered in different kinds of settings and on various kinds of platforms. Each require their own in-depth analysis. In this study I have addressed three such spatio-temporal configurations: a multi-media exhibition featuring the early avant-garde films of Andy Warhol in chapter one; the handheld aesthetics of European art-house films in chapter two; and a large-scale interactive media installation in public space in chapter three. None of these
configurations, I have shown, can be considered as a self-enclosed entity, because each necessarily partakes of a much larger lived environment, that of our contemporary media-saturated world. Moreover, they all reflect on the viewer's own viewing and/or mediating position within this network of mediations from which there no longer appears to be an outside position available to occupy.

In my attempts to think through the terminology used to describe my cases, and to develop a conceptual toolbox to analyze them so as to do justice to the theoretical challenges they put forth, I have often placed the cases in opposition to classical theories of film that elaborate cinema's theatrical viewing situation, in particular to those pertaining to classical (Hollywood) cinema. The cases discussed, I contend, call for such a comparative probing precisely because of their resemblances to and significant differences from classical cinema. Insofar as my cases can be called post-cinematic, in the sense that they both resemble and differ from those of so-called classical or theatrical cinema, I have argued, they are also suggestive of the survival of the cinematic within a world increasingly made up of technologically mediated sounds and images.

By way of synthesis, and conversely, in this Coda, I will revert to some examples of contemporary mainstream Hollywood cinema, as a way to expound on the artistic as well as the theoretical implications of the paradigm shift that I have elucidated in this study. Drawing, once again, on an extreme example, i.e., the innovative use of the trope of the flash-forward in mainstream Hollywood films, I will argue that the model of analysis I have developed, using examples that significantly differ from what transpires in classical cinema, is equally apt to illuminate our encounter with contemporary post-classical Hollywood films that are commonly described in terms of their narrative complexity. This is so because, from the viewpoint of a bodily-spatial deixis, each encounter with technologically mediated sounds and images in which the thickening of time becomes tangible to our bodies and affects our sense of self-presence and agency can be considered a cinematic environment. This is also the case when that encounter is organized, once more, around an arguably immobilized viewer in a darkened auditorium watching a “single-channel” linear narrative film. In fact, I would argue that being seated while watching is part and parcel of the embodied interactions afforded by feature-length films such as those under consideration here.

Like the 1990s, the first decade of the 21st century saw the release of several films that are decidedly self-referential about time and invoke a sophisticated media-literacy on the part of the viewer. In these films past, present, and future are often portrayed as highly mutable domains that can easily be accessed, erased,
(re)designed, or modified. Examples include films such as *The Source Code* (Jones, 2011), the main case-study of this Coda, as well as *Inception* (Nolan, 2010), *Sherlock Holmes* (Ritchie, 2009), *Next* (Tamahori, 2007), *Deja Vu* (Scott, 2006), *The Butterfly Effect* (Bress & Gruber, 2004), *Paycheck* (Woo, 2003), *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Gondry, 2004), *Minority Report* (Spielberg, 2002), *Donnie Darko* (Kelly, 2001), and many more. As theoretical objects, these cases stand out for the ways they deploy their own artistic potential to foreground, articulate, and conjure up critical thought about their own temporality and the modes of existence they afford. These films can be called post-classical to the extent that they resist classical modes of cinematic storytelling in favor of what Warren Buckland has called “puzzle plots,” i.e., they are films in which the “arrangement of events is not just complex, but complicated and perplexing.” (2009: 3)

In many early reflections, these films and others like them were often placed against the backdrop of classical modes of cinematic storytelling. Their narratives have thus been referred to as “non-linear” (Isaacs, 2005), “parallel” (Smith, 2001), “disordered” (Denby, 2007), “circular” (Villega, 2000), “forked” (Branigan, 2002), “networked” (Bordwell, 2002), and “episodic” (Diffrient, 2006). In the recent discussions, however, a number of scholars, in a more thought-provoking vein, have opted for a terminology that defies such a normative view that sets off these films against cinematic narrative proper. They introduce notions like the “mind game film” (Elsaesser, 2009b), “modularity” (Cameron, 2008), “narratography” (Stewart, 2007), “the cinema effect” (Cubitt, 2005), or a “data base aesthetics” (Manovich, 2001; Kinder, 2003), or consider the films against the backdrop of what they refer to as the “neuro-image” (Pisters, 2011), “cinematic complexity” (Poulakki, 2011) and “post-cinematic affect” (Shaviro, 2010). Such terms speak to different aspects and workings of the films, but they all suggest, in one way or another, that we need to come up with ordering principles other than – or at least in addition to – narrative if we want to come to grips with the complexity of contemporary cinematics and the kind of viewer engagement it demands. Here I have proposed the deictic terms “here,” “now,” and “me” as one such alternate ordering principle, which I will now bring to bear on one of these Hollywood films, *The Source Code*.  

In chapter one I showed that the multi-media exhibition’s ambulant visitor and its expanded cinematic site prompts us to readdress the tension between the situatedness and mobility of the viewer, as well as the reversals of “inside” and “outside” of the image, its framing and unframing – in short, what I have called the destabilization of the figure-ground relationship between image and world. Here I will argue that *The Source Code*, and by extension many of the aforementioned
films, similarly renegotiate the tension between situatedness and mobility, framing and unframing, figure and ground, image and world, via the film's multiple plots, its take on the embodied interaction, and its suggestive play with the paradox of higher-order observation.

The “performed immediacy” of handheld aesthetics addressed in chapter two, in turn, I argued, challenges us to rethink our engagement with cinematic time on grounds other than that of past, present, and future, of linearity and logical coherence, as it draws the viewer into a disjointed and multifaceted “now” that is beset with the time of affect and trauma. It is my contention here that, despite the much-theorized differences between European art-house films and mainstream Hollywood cinema, differences that cannot (and need not) be disregarded, the innovative usage of the flash-forward in the aforementioned films fulfills a significantly similar function, albeit by different means. Moreover, like the interactive media installation addressed in chapter three, the film, I will demonstrate, compels us to confront our encounter with the cinematic in terms of an embodied interaction and a distributed sense of agency, thus further destabilizing a view of the cinematic based on a strict separation between spectatorial and representational space.

Like most of the aforementioned films, Duncan Jones' *The Source Code* quite explicitly challenges us to rethink our encounter with technologically mediated sounds and images in terms of a bodily-spatial deixis by way of its particular mediations of time, space, and embodied agency. The film centers on Capt. Colter Stevens, a decorated US Army helicopter pilot, played by Jake Gyllenhaal, who is forced to relive the last eight minutes of someone else's life just before being blown up by a bomb on a commuter train, over and over again. Initially unknowingly, Stevens partakes in a military experiment called Source Code, a complex contraption that allows him to enter the body of Sean Fentress, a schoolteacher from Chicago, in the last eight minutes before his death. His mission is to obtain information to prevent a possible future terrorist attack. The premise of the film is simple: each time Stevens re-enters the body of Sean Fentress on the train, a parallel universe is opened that ceases to exist when Stevens/Fentress dies – until, eventually, he doesn't.

The film, like so many of these mind game or puzzle films, opens *in medias res*. Stevens/Fentress awakes on the train. He doesn’t know where he is, how he got there, or who his fellow passengers are, even though they appear to know him. His state of spatial and temporal disorientation mirrors that of the viewer,
who equally is denied reassurance about his or her whereabouts within the filmic diegesis. Stevens’ anxiety is grows even greater when he catches glimpses of his reflection in the train window and restroom mirror and realizes, as does the viewer, that his projected self-image does not match the reflection that he sees, for he sees Fentress (see fig. 4.1). This is the beginning of a mise-en-abyme of bodily projections that ends at Cloud Gate, the gigantic sculpture that Stevens/Fentress encounters towards the end of the film, set in Chicago, designed by Anish Kapoor, and known for its warped and multiplied refractions of the city scape as well as of the visitor’s projected body-image. Or arguably, it ends at (or begins with?) the viewer’s own projected body-image, which, though unobservable to him or her in the encounter, is nonetheless there (I will return to this issue shortly). Seconds later a bomb explodes.

Fig. 4.1 (left): Stevens/Fentress in the mirror. The Source Code (Duncan Jones, 2011)

A myriad of images pass by, including the first of many flash-forwards to Cloud Gate, before Stevens awakes for the second time in what appears to be a flight capsule, grim and claustrophobic. (see fig. 4.2) Once again he is spatially and temporally disoriented. He is hanging upside down, a recurring motif in many of these films. He has no knowledge of where he is, no recollection of how he got there, and no recognition of who is talking to him via the small screen and audio signal. His only memory is of being under siege in Afghanistan. It takes some “rotation adjustments” and a “pattern recognition” procedure before Capt. Stevens can identify the person talking to him as Capt. Goodwin (Vera Farmiga), who refers
to her location and unit as Beleaguered Castle. The remainder of the film is spent shifting from scenes of Stevens/Fentress on the train, continually reliving his last eight minutes; of Stevens in the capsule, tormented by existential questions, as well as by Source Code’s continuous physical assault on his body; and of Goodwin, in what appears to be a media control-room at Beleaguered Castle, growing ever more sympathetic towards Stevens’ personal quest.

How, then, does the film challenge us to address our encounter with the cinematic in terms of an intensified “here,” “now” and “me,” and how does the concept of deixis help us understand this challenge? It is significant for my view as laid out in this study that the film attends to the relation between situatedness and mobility, embodiment and projection, image and world, quite literally, through the main characters’ explicit and repeated references to their bodies’ presence in space in terms of a “here.” For example, when Stevens awakes in the capsule for (what appears to be) the first time, he states: “I was on a mission, I was flying, and then I woke up on a train…. Now I am here. I need to be briefed.” When Goodwin later informs him that he has actually been present as Stevens/Fentress on the train, in a parallel universe, he skeptically answers: “No, no, I am right here, you are talking to me, right now.” Moreover, when Goodwin tells him during another debriefing that, in fact, only his brain still remains active, he incredulously asks, while looking at his body: “What about the rest of me? I can see my hands and my feet, they still move.” Yet Stevens does not only refer to his own presence and whereabouts in the capsule in terms of a “here.” When he is sent back on the train for the third or fourth time, Stevens/Fentress utters in aggravation to Christina, one of the other characters on the train: “You’re still here.” And Goodwin, too, repeatedly refers to her immediate surroundings as “here,” for example when she states, “Out here, the clocks only move in one direction,” or when she contrasts her presence-to-the-world to that of Stevens, declaring: “What you experienced was a shadow. It was the afterimage of a victim on a train. This is real life, here.” To which Stevens, incidentally, cynically answers, “The one where you are talking to a dead helicopter pilot?”

Each perceived environment thus emanates from and points back to a body, a concrete material existence, here/now/me, whether the environment is referred to as “just a manifestation,” (Stevens in the capsule) “a shadow,” an “afterimage” but “not a simulation,” (Stevens/Fentress on the train), or “real life,” and a “parallel universe” (Goodwin at Beleaguered Castle). In fact, the film works towards a disintegration of classifications such as “real,” “virtual,” or “illusionary,” in favor
of a view of the “here” of the encounter as necessarily augmented, punctuated, and rescaled. In chapter one I used the terms *augmentation* to indicate the collision between physical and mediated timespaces; *punctuation*, to refer the viewer’s presence in this augmented space as at once situated and ambulant and thus intensified; and *rescaling* to stipulate the disintegration of an “inner” and “outer” perspective on this place/space once the body is reinserted a measure of distance and proximity, presence and absence, situatedness and mobility.

This is underscored by the fact that, on plot level, the film does not discriminate among the various environments. None of its realms are distinguished as being more or less real or illusionary than the others. The capsule is repeatedly transformed in front of our eyes, as is Stevens’ presence in it. At times it looks big, at other times cramped; sometimes Stevens is fixed and seated, at other times he can walk around; at one point he wears a t-shirt, the next moment he is fully dressed in his military uniform. (see fig. 4.2-4.3) Likewise, on the train, events are continually re-wound, re-lived, fast-forwarded, altered, or frozen, while characters break up into pixel-like glitches, produce uncanny mirror-images, or die a dozen deaths. And even Goodwin’s “real-life” environment cannot be considered as such the moment we learn that she continues to exist in what is now, and was perhaps all along, a “parallel” universe. However, regardless of the scale of (technological) mediation involved, each perceived environment is always *actual* from the point of view of the person or persons observing it, “here.”

Three “heres” converge first and foremost in the figure of the participating viewer, Capt. Colter Stevens, whose existence on the train appears to emanate from his non-actual existence in Source Code (the capsule), which in turn emanates from and points back from his wired and mutilated body at Beleaguered Castle. Without Stevens’ body, environments cease to exist, as in the event of his death, first in Afghanistan, then many times on the train, and eventually also at Beleaguered Castle. Significantly, Stevens aptitude to observe is based on his abil-
ity to distinguish between his own “being alive” and “being dead,” his presence and absence to the world, from a position which can perhaps best be described as being undead, or not dead but not quite alive either. This distinction is the prerequisite for all of his (and our) observations, yet throughout the film it remains unobservable and incommunicable to him. Even though he is the only character who can observe the various environments from the perspective of his peripatetic and intensified “here,” he cannot observe himself as an observer, at least not in an act of self-transparency, and not while simultaneously observing himself as “being alive” elsewhere (e.g., in the capsule, on the train). It requires a second-order observer, Capt. Goodwin, to observe and reveal his undead body to us and, therewith, the operation of his observation. Yet her observation is dealt the same fate, as it too would require an even higher order of observation to become observable and communicable, for example by the viewer in the cinema or at home, *ad infinitum*.

In a very rudimentary manner, the film can be said to entangle us in a paradox that social systems theorist Niklas Luhmann considered to be inherent to all observation. To observe, in Luhmann’s theoretically dense and complex argument, means to distinguish and to indicate, i.e., to implement a distinction, and to indicate one side of this distinction in one single, simultaneous operation. Luhmann thus upholds a purely formal conception of observation that is not limited to consciousness, and goes well beyond the strictly optical or specular sense of the word. Important for our purposes here is Luhmann’s suggestion that all observation necessarily produces its opposite: by indicating something, something else is simultaneously excluded, concealed. What is concealed is not observation’s negative, or what Luhmann calls the “unmarked space,” i.e., that which lies beyond the frame of that which is indicated, like in our example Stevens’ “being dead” (absent) with which his “being alive” (present) is affectively charged. What is concealed in the act of observation, according to Luhmann, rather, is the frame of reference itself, the distinction utilized by the observer, sentient or non-sentient, whose own observation remains unobservable to him-, her-, or itself in an act of self-transparency.112

By re-entering the distinction between presence and absence, real and illusionary, actual and virtual, into the film’s plot in the form of Stevens’ undead present-absent, real-illusionary, actual-virtual body, *The Source Code* thus actively engages the participating viewer in Luhmann’s paradox of observation. Via an exploration of this paradox the film slots its viewer into its mise-en-abyme-like structuring of the “here” of the encounter, in which neither viewer nor representation is held in place. According to Luhmann such a communication of paradoxes is productive,
precisely because it “fixes attention to the frames of common sense, frames that normally go unattended.” (2002: 81) This is what keeps a system dynamic and open to transformation. Thus even if we were to subscribe to classical film theorist David Bordwell’s claim, on the subject of puzzle films, that their “[n]arratives are built not upon philosophy or physics but folk psychology, the ordinary processes we use to make sense of the world” (2002: 90), we cannot but acknowledge that the film’s narrativity serves precisely to “deframe and reframe the frame of normal thinking, the frame of common sense.” (Luhmann, 2002: 81)

How, then, does this expansion of the cinematic material into the thickened “here” of the encounter intersect with the thickening of its “now”? As I have argued in this study, what is deframed in our encounter with the cinematic today is a framed view on the cinematic image itself (as window, threshold, or mirror), as it is reframed in and through the body, through affect. This brings me to a second paradox introduced by The Source Code, pertaining more directly to the fragmented, multiple, and disconcerting “now” that it negotiates, namely the paradox of the flash-forward. As Sean Cubitt has pointed out in his reflections on what he calls the neoclassical cinema of the 1960s, historically, flash-forwards are rare in cinema, because, he writes:

Future events cannot be thought, much less displayed, without betraying the secret of narrative cinema: that everything is either pre-determined (the film plays to its end) or nonexistent (the film breaks down in projection), in either case removing motivation from the diegesis. (2005: 212)

The use of the flash-forward in cinema thus produces a paradox in the sense that the conditions of its possibility are on par with the conditions of its impossibility. This is so, Cubitt suggests, because “in cinema the future has either already been written – the script preexists the film – or, bluntly, does not exist.” (2005: 211) The future, thus, is the unmarked space that lies beyond the frame of that which is indicated, but with which the event-ness of our encounter with the cinematic, in my view, is nonetheless affectively charged.

Contrary to Cubitt’s observation, today, the trope of the flash-forward is a particularly widespread phenomenon in mainstream Hollywood, and beyond. Its innovative usage unites all of the aforementioned examples, and links them to a series that carries its name, Flash Forward (which ran from 2009 to 2010). In fact, the trope has been so popular since the turn of the millennium that it has
led media scholar Richard Grusin to argue, only a few years after his renowned publication with Jay Bolter, that now *premediation*, not *remediation*, is the primary underlying logic of technologically mediated sounds and images within today's media-saturated world. (Grusin, 2004; Bolter and Grusin, 1999) To support his argument Grusin draws both on news footage from the dawn of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, and on Steven Spielberg’s *Minority Report*, in which so-called precogs, evolved human beings that have the extraordinary capacity to see and project the future, are exploited to prevent future crimes from happening.

It is because of its paradoxical operation, I contend, that the flash-forward can help us demonstrate most clearly that it is no longer tenable to think of our encounter with contemporary Hollywood films in terms of linear, or consecutive time, but, rather, that this encounter needs to be reconsidered as beset with the time of affect and trauma. My thesis demands that the flash-forward, which one would assume entails a “thinning” along the reversibility of the arrow or line of time, in fact entails a thickening of time. To explain how this works, it seems useful to draw, briefly, on another, more condensed example of the usage of a flash-forward, which is the opening sequence of Guy Ritchie’s *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), starring Robert Downey Jr. (Sherlock) and Jude Law (Watson).

Once again the film opens *in medias res*. Two horse-drawn carriages chase through the night; a man rushes through labyrinthine passageways; there are bombastic music, rapid cuts, and many close-ups. Then: silence. Sherlock has entered a building. He pauses for a moment when he spots a guard, contemplating his attack. As he leans back, in utmost concentration, his voice-over recites: “Head cocked to the left, partial deafness in ear: first point of attack.” The image cuts to an extreme slow-motion shot of the first blow, a flash-forward (or is it, now, a flashback?). The sound is now nearly completely turned off, except for a thunder-like clatter that accompanies the blow, and a decelerating high-pitched tone that calls attention to the physicality of its impact. “Two: throat; paralyze vocal chords, stop screaming.” Another jolt. “Three: got to be a heavy drinker, floating rib to the liver. Four: finally, drag in left leg, fist to patella.” Two more close-ups of fists striking in slow motion follow, accompanied by more rumbling. “Summary prognosis: unconscious in ninety seconds, martial efficacy quarter of an hour at best. Full faculty recovery: unlikely.” The image then cuts back to Sherlock, leaning against the corridor wall. The sound his cloak makes is amplified as he covers up his face. As the guard reaches the corridor the music swells again. One, two, three, four, and the guard is down on the floor. Sherlock picks up the man’s hat and lantern and disappears, running into the night.
Significantly, the flash-forward here is forcefully presented through the use of 3D sound effects and slow motion. As I have indicated in my reflections on the fear and desire of cinematic three-dimensionality in chapter three, the deframing instigated by the use of Dolby Surround Sound contributes considerably to (the discussion of) the annihilation of the screen as threshold, and therewith to the demise of the Euclidian subject, as 3D sound refigures the cinematic as a realm of constantly moving centers with no unifying subject to speak of. As I have argued in chapter one, moreover, slow motion can be seen as the temporal equivalent of the close-up, the affection image par excellence, because it abstracts the image from the spatiotemporal coordinates of the diegesis and presents it as an entity in itself, thus, to speak with Cubitt, “removing motivation from diegesis.” What the usage of the flash-forward in *Sherlock Holmes* makes explicitly clear, and tangible to our bodies, is the simultaneity of mapping out time and mapping with time that is inherent to our encounter with the cinematic today. Although it can be said that this is the case for all cinematic images, its potential is taken to the extreme in the flash-forward. This is what makes this figure an exceptional theoretical object.

The flash-forward cannot be caught in any one moment. To the extent that we can even speak of a flash-forward we can do so only by virtue of the film’s further narrative unfolding, at which point the flash-forward becomes a flashback. At once revealing the film’s pre-scripted-ness and requiring the viewer to rerun it through the logics of a retroactive causality, the film – if only momentarily – draws us into a temporality that is other than that of linear causation. It reveals the emerging quality of each encountered (moving) image by drawing us into a discontinuous, multiplicitous, and thickened “now” that is intimately linked to both past and future, but which nonetheless takes shape in the present, where it resists localization. It is this emergent, wavering temporality that is indicative of the film’s narrative thrust.

In *The Source Code*, the flash-forward is most clearly introduced in the film’s final sequence, when Stevens has managed to create a sustainable parallel universe from which he sends a now unknowing Goodwin a text message that informs her of a bomb explosion that has been averted before the actual occurrence of the event, thus turning the whole film, with hindsight, into an extended flash-forward masquerading as a flashback; a view of the present from the perspective of a memory of a future that doesn’t exist.113 Cubitt draws on philosopher of science Mauro Dorato, who refers to this position as an “empty view of the future.” Dorato explains that, “the essence of the present event is, not that it precedes future events, but that it quite literally has nothing to which it has a relation of precedence.”
Cubitt stresses that according to Dorato, therefore, “this view is best suited for mind-independent theories of becoming.” (2005: 211)

Yet the trope of the flash-forward has already been introduced much earlier in the film, through not only the figure of Cloud Gate but also through Stevens/Fentress’ many reentries on the commuter train, which alternately function as a flashback and a flash-forward for Stevens as well as the viewer. Because of his aptitude for observation, and his ability to build up new memories, Stevens’ know-how of the situation on the train accumulates, and this helps him to anticipate and change “the future” with mounting accuracy, to the point that the event of the explosion itself turns out to have been nothing but a diverted future, a flash-forward. Significantly, as in Zusje, repetition here is conflated with revision, as well as with habit, recollection, and excess. This kind of conflation has prompted media scholar Patricia Pisters to argue, in direct relation to the innovative usage of the flash-forward, that contemporary cinema is predominantly based in what Deleuze calls the third synthesis of time, which she describes as “the time of (endless) serial variations and remixes of pasts and presents,” and to which Deleuze refers as “the repetition of the future as eternal return.” (Deleuze, 2004: 90; here in Pisters, 2011: 106) This is what governs the flash-forward’s peculiar relation to the future: an “empty view of the future” that presents itself as a “repetition of the future as eternal return.”

It is through the limitation imposed on us in our encounter with the cinematic that this inherent futurity becomes tangible to our bodies. The encounter, which is in fact a mode of embodied spectatorship, therefore, can be called traumatic, not so much because the film portrays a traumatic event, i.e., of Stevens who is forced to relive his death over and over again, but rather because it negotiates a sense of self, of “me,” in relation to a mediated “here” and “now” that is no longer necessarily knowable, as it is perceived from the point of view of a future anticipated yet not there, except as a promise of an eternal return. The film thus underscores Elsaesser’s claim that a traumatic mode of spectatorship might very well have become the default value of cinematic experience today.

This brings me to the third and final aspect of our encounter with the chronotopes of the cinematic that I have addressed in this study: the intensification and thickening of “me.” As we have seen, The Source Code attends to the loss of the screen as a protective shield against living-presence, as a threshold that separates what is seen and heard from the viewer’s identity. It challenges us to rethink projection as emanating from the body, as located in and operated by a “me” that is at once situ-
ated in and mobilized by the “here” and “now” of the encounter. Significantly, this
“me” becomes tangible to Stevens only in his encounter with others, like Goodwin
at Beleaguered Castle and the passengers on the train, and only by means of the
technologies of sound and vision, that is, Source Code, that valorize his being in
the world. His being is a being-with, in the sense of both being with others and
being with technology.

From the outset, Stevens is seen as becoming one with himself as other,
a condensed and thickened “me.” This becomes most clear when he confronts
Fentress’ reflection on the train (see fig. 4.1), a motif that bears a striking resem-
bance to the viewer’s engagement with the projected portraits in体 Movie. In
fact, Stevens has no perception of self-existence, of “me,” outside his mediated
encounter with others through Source Code, despite the presence of his body at
Beleaguered Castle; his sense of self-presence is wholly dependent on his being
part of a complex network of mediated interactions with other entities, sentient
as well as non-sentient.

Stevens only gradually learns the conditions under which he can perform his
tasks, and as to why he is the only “viable candidate” for his observations. He has
died in Afghanistan, and the military are using the memory capacity of his brain in
the afterglow of his death. He is, quite literally, a body without organs: a brain, in
a head, with only half a trunk, held in a container, on life support, and physically
connected to Source Code via a number of tubes, wires, and data streams. (see
fig. 4.4) He is the catatonic (re)action-hero of post-classical cinema about which

Fig. 4.4: Steven’s BWO at Beleaguered Castle.
Elsaesser writes: he is haunted by a traumatic “failure of experience,” in the most radical manifestation of it, namely his death. Only when he overcomes his initial resistance to this fact does he regains his sense of agency, at which point he starts referring to himself as “the new me.”

The film thus precludes a vision of the cinematic in terms of a unified, coherent subject-position, as Stevens’ “subjectivity” is dispersed across the multiple flexible networks of the many mediated worlds he observes, while nonetheless being situated and singular in its very multiplicity. It is from the point of view of this renegotiation of the sense of self that we can also understand the significance of recurring figure of Cloud Gate, the odd bean-shaped sculpture made up of transforming mirror surfaces that Stevens comes across in the film’s final sequence, after he has managed to create a sustainable universe in which he survives as Sean Fentress. Stevens/Fentress faces the sculpture twice, once while standing in front of it, and once while passing through it. The first image shows Stevens facing Fentress at the center of the sculpture’s fish-eye exterior with the whole of Chicago in the background, centered but not unified; the second shows Stevens/Fentress in a vertigo of refractions in the interior hall of mirrors, his reflection undistinguishable from those of his fellow city-dwellers, yet clearly projected from his situated bodily presence. (see fig. 4.5 & 4.6)

Yet the true moment of surprise in The Source Code comes not so much when we learn that all we have witnessed so far has not yet taken place and never will, nor necessarily when Goodwin discloses Stevens’ mutilated body, but rather, when the film reveals to us, while still concealing, how Source Code has in fact observed Stevens, Goodwin, and the world at large. This moment occurs just before Goodwin decides to help Stevens by “uploading” him one last time into Fentress’ body on the train before unplugging his undead body from the machine. In the brief conversation that follows, we observe Stevens sitting on the capsule’s flour, his back turned to the little screen that contains Goodwin’s talking head. Throughout
the conversation, Goodwin looks straight into the camera, seemingly at him. When Stevens asks Goodwin to send him back in, he resolutely turns to face Goodwin on what appears to be the other end of the screen/webcam. “I’m asking you,” he utters insistently, “I’m asking you. Send me back in. Then switch me off.” (see fig. 4.7-4.10) Yet, rather than the anticipated reverse-shot over Goodwin’s shoulder facing Stevens on screen, we are confronted with an elongated close-up of the webcam itself, an image that has recurred throughout the film from various angles, but up until then has never faced us directly. (see fig. 4.11)

The image cannot be attributed to Goodwin’s point-of-view, nor to anyone else’s for that matter. It is not looked at by her, but looking at (at her, at the diegetic world, and arguably out of the diegetic world, at us). As the image tilts down to the screen she has been facing from the beginning, but which has been blocked from our view by her presence, we realize that all it contains are words, a chat history saying

I’m asking you. I’m asking you.
Send me back in.
Then switch me off.

This is how Goodwin has observed Stevens all along, as a chat, a brain scan, a pulse, a temperature, an oxygen level, as data-bits and data-bases amid live-streamings of the world “out there.” (see fig. 4.12 & fig. 4.10)

Even more important than this revelation is its implication, i.e., the realization that Stevens does not so much observe via Source Code, but rather as source
code: whatever we have seen him “see” up until then – his presence in the capsule and on the train, the audio-tracks and pattern recognition program, the news footage that is fed to him, the image-feed of Goodwin’s presence at Beleaguered Castle – all is observable to him only as uploaded data, as algorithm. His entire perceptible existence is source code. And in this the true function of the depicted camera is revealed to us; its role is not to observe, nor to record, but rather to project. What it projects, media artist and critic David Rokeby states, are judgments based solely on quantifiable features, as an algorithm can only respond to and assess quantifiable data. This raises the question of what other kinds of tangible, artificial subjectivities the cinematic gives rise to. For, if projection can be described as the “pre-reflexive corporeal opening to the world” (as I have suggested in chapter three), and if the “empty view of the future” on which the flash-forward relies is indeed “best suited for mind-independent theories of becoming” (as Dorato insists, in Cubitt, 2005: 211), and if, moreover, cinematic chronotopes enable us “to enter into dialogue with autonomous affects in the system cinema” (as Cubitt concludes; 2005: 363), then it is possible, not to say necessary, to also address the forms of subjectivation that take place on the side of technologies of sound and vision themselves. Future studies will have to show what this kind of cinematic subjectivation amounts to and what it might tell us about the participating viewer’s own limits of self-knowledge, self-explanation, and self-presence within our increasingly media-saturated world.

Over the last two decades, cinema studies has sought to come to terms with the transformation, and what is arguably the loss, of its initial object of inquiry, cinema. I have demonstrated that it is productive to build on and rethink certain film theoretical notions such as time, movement, and scale (chapter one); authenticity, reflexivity, and corporeality (chapter two); projection, presence, and agency (chapter three) for the analysis of cases that by any strict definition do not belong to the category of cinema. Conversely, I have used these cases to stipulate the limita-
tions of such classical theories of film, e.g., their reliance on a strict segregation of spaces, on a unified self-enclosed notion of the subject, and on an essentialist understanding of the materiality, and therewith the specificity, of film. The Source Code actively contributes to these discussions via its negotiations of the (linear) time of narrative, of the position of the viewer, and of the different networks of mediation of which it partakes.

This study has been devoted to the search for new ways to analyze the cinematic within our increasingly media-saturated world in order to resituate the embodied subject. The key concepts I have introduced to rethink the cinematic through embodiment – the cinematic chronotope, the affective encounter, and the deictic terms “here,” “now” and “me” – provide a framework for such an analysis, which opposes the seemingly open-ended indeterminacy of approaches that focus merely on the radical eclecticism, the hyperconscious awareness, and the convergence culture of our time.

The notion of cinematic chronotope highlights the constructed character and interrelatedness of spatial and temporal configurations of the cinematic, while stipulating that it is with and through these configurations that we interact and give shape to our sense of self within our media-saturated world. A focus on the affective encounter redirects our attention away from the processes of sense-making (without refuting their relevance), towards the bodily-spatial aspects of our engagement with the technologies of sound and vision that valorize our being in the world. The emphasis on the three corners of the deictic triangle, “here,” “now” and “me,” is instrumental for rethinking our encounter with the cinematic in terms of the intensified sense of space, time, and being that it brings about.

This intensification, which becomes apparent in our encounter with the cinematic, makes tangible a more general (critique of the) “spatialization of time” that is a symptom of our cultural moment. Therefore it is not surprising to find such intensification across a wide spectrum of art practices, as well as in the discourses that revolve around them. Juxtaposing these practices and discourses by looking at what they have in common, this study contributes to bridging the gap between museum art and art-house cinema, between avant-garde and mainstream, between analog and digital. Moreover, my framework offers a way to overcome the limitations of classical film theory by opening up the debate to include concepts derived from theories of “new” media that are grounded in philosophy and critical theory. In doing so, it is my hope that my thesis offers a timely contribution to media-theoretical debates.
Endnotes

1. The clip can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5yhxqkJjAQ (last accessed on 21 November 2011)


4. In her reflections on Jesus Segura’s duo-channel video installation *I Can Be You* (2003), Mieke Bal uses the term *foreshortened time* to refer to this thickening. As a spatial metaphor, foreshortening intimates an optical illusion whereby an object or distance is contracted so as to obtain the illusion of a projection and extension in space. This illusion differs from linear perspective, she states, in that it is a deception that immediately flaunts itself (2008: 48). Applied to a temporal phenomenon, then, foreshortened time indicates time that is perceptibly “distorted – made wider or thicker – so that we experience the almost tangible push of time” (2008: 44).

5. Machinima refers to the use of graphics engines from video games to create cinematic productions, often by fan laborers.

6. “Filmic experience,” Francesco Casetti writes, “presents itself as a moment which ‘enlivens’ our senses and nourishes sensibility.” It is here in particular, he states, that the participating viewer “seizes control of her/his given situation” and that “the restructuring of spectatorial subjectivity” after the rigorous relocation of the cinematic from the movie theatre around the turn of the 21st century takes place. (2009: 66)

7. It is only because “(m)oving images transformed the nature of the photographic image,” Campany suggests, that “stillness” was turned “into arrestedness.” Conversely, “the cinematic spectator is made pensive” only by the on-screen appearance of a still, that is “photographic,” image. (2007, 12)

8. In part, Sobchack’s view on the electronic can be attributed to her writing in the early 1990s, when much of the critical debate on electronic media and the digital still revolved around the now contested disconnection between consciousness, perception, and living human matter. Since then, however, the metaphors and paradigm of the discussion have shifted and embodiment has come to occupy the centre of most if not all the more recent discussions on cinematic and electronic presence alike. In line with these more recent discussions, the distinction between cinematic and electronic negotiations of time, as theorized by Sobchack, can equally be disputed.


10. Elsaesser (2004a, 2006). Elsaesser reintroduces the term (expanded) *diegesis* to refer to the regulated interaction between articulated forms of space, time, agency, and subject, through which moving images constitute a world. (Elsaesser: 2006, 216-217) Although Elsaesser puts the term to a productive use, I prefer to use the notion of the chronotope here, because I am interested more in the time-space configurations that affect our sense of self-presence, and less in the ways of world-making and of telling stories (as opposed to showing or enacting them), which the term diegesis entails within critical, literary, and film theory.

11. Norman Bryson was first to appropriate the term for the analysis of visual art. (1983)

12. For a concise reflection on the concept of suture see Heath (1981).

13. For my reflections on the dispute between Casetti and Metz I mainly draw on Buckland (1995; 2000), along with Casetti’s and Metz’s own writings.

14. Poststructuralist film theory on subject positioning include Baudry’s writings on the cinematic *dispositif* (1986a, 1986b), the “screen theory” built on both Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis,
and Althusser's notion of interpellation (e.g. Heath, 1981; MacCabe, 1985; Rosen, 1986), as well as the feminist critiques by, for example, Laura Mulvey (1975) and Tania Modleski (1988).

15. Elsaesser and Hagener (2010) Moreover, this paradigm is fully in synch with a much wider trend within the humanities at large, encompassing both the critical embrace of the idea of relationality and the gradual decline of the dominance of the Cartesian paradigm on which most classical film theory is based, resulting in a shift of attention within theories of vision away from ocular-centrism and towards embodied modes of perception. See, for example, Jay (1988, 1993) and Crary (1988, 1990) on the scopic regimes of modernity.

16. All statements and quotes regarding the exhibition stem from the press release: www.centre-pompidou.fr/Pompidou/Communication.nsf/docs/ID47851AD2CA1DD6A7C12571650050AF45/$File/1dpm%20mouv%20anglais.pdf (last accessed on 18 February 2012)

17. The exhibition underscored Ursula Frohne's observation that “the museum itself is undergoing a metamorphosis, and is becoming a cinema in-process.” (2008: 357)

18. As critic J. Hoberman notes, moreover, the film offers “a particularly brutal dramatization of the Warholian discovery that the camera's implacable stare disrupts “ordinary” behavior to enforce its own regime.” (2002) Yet, watching the film today, one reviewer rightly remarks, it is “hard not to think of it as primarily a film about the aesthetics of surveillance.” (Sandhu, 2009)

19. For a description of the works as well as some visuals see Christian Moeller's homepage at http://www.christian-moeller.com/ (last accessed on August 12, 2010).

20. For visuals and reflections on his own work, see David Rokeby's homepage at http://homepage.mac.com/davidrokeby/home.html (last accessed on August 12, 2010).


22. Part of an earlier draft of this chapter has been published in Apertura (2008).

23. Heiss and Lowry (2004: 8) The exhibition Andy Warhol: Motion Pictures originated as Andy Warhol: Screen Tests shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2003, and has been traveling ever since. But there are earlier accounts of multiple screenings of Warhol's films, such as during a one-day screening event during a Warhol exhibition at the Los Angeles Museum of Modern Art (1993) and possibly during Andy Warhol, Cinema at Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1990, although the catalogue does not give a clear indication of how the films were actually shown there (Blistene and Bouhours, 1990).

24. Renan (1967: 104). The term expanded cinema was further developed by Young (1970).


27. Also see Peter Bourdon for an early critical response and a lengthy discussion on the exaggerated and artificial use of time in the films. (Bourdon, 1997, orig. 1971)

28. See for example Joseph (2002b) on surveillance and Warhol's TV-productions; Rodney (2005) on surveillance in Empire and Empire 24/7 (Staehle 1999-2004). References to the films in terms of the real-time logic of video are also made in Angell (2002), Grundmann (2004), Hoherman (2003), Uhlin (2010).

29. Williams (1975). The films' extended duration and lack of narrative, moreover, elevate the “anticipation of an end to an end in itself,” a quality Tanja Modleski (1982) has ascribed to the genre of the soap opera. (2010: 11)
30. Uhlin (2010: 5–7); McCarthy (2001). For our purpose here it is worth noticing that McCarthy explicitly links the temporality of waiting to the proliferation of television screens in the many places and spaces of everyday life.


32. This “What is sleep, after all,” Stephen Koch writes, “but the metabolic transformation of the entire experience of time, our nightly release from the clock’s prison, filled and flashing with the dreaming motions of the mind and yet an immobility, a quietude in which seconds and hours are confounded.” (1974: 40)

33. The echo of Jim Collins’ “Watching Ourselves Watch Television” (1989) is on purpose.

34. Nam June Paik’s Zen for Film (1964) is a film without images, a looped 16mm blank filmstrip on which can be discerned only the gradual and unrecoverable degradation of the film’s physical material through projection and particles of dust. According to Nick Kaye, “[...] Zen for Film points to a plurality of times, playing across the present-tense contemplation invited by the white wall, the accumulating traces inscribed by its past and present projection, as well as its future erasure in the mechanics of the film medium itself.” (2007: 51–52) Seeing the film on YouTube, however, completely undoes everything the film purports to do.

35. For an insightful reflection on museum presentation as script, see Julia Noordegraaf’s Strategies of Display (2004). Noordegraaf draws on Bruno Latour and Madeleine Akrich’s notion of the script, who use the term to analyze the interactions between humans and non-humans, or artefacts. For Noordegraaf, the script becomes a conceptual tool that allows her at once to describe the strategies of museum display of the museum presentations she investigates, and to analyze “framework for action” that the displayed object prescribes, intentionally and unintentionally. (2004: 12–13) In chapter three, I use Gibson’s notion of affordances to refer to the actions a given environment prescribes. The term scripted spaces was coined by Norman Klein, who uses it to refer to “walk-through or click-through environments [...] designed to emphasize the viewer’s journey – the space in between.” (Klein, 2004: 11)

36. Navigating through the exhibition was like walking down the streets in Amsterdam, where many of the traffic lights in the city’s centre now have similar countdown clocks to prevent impatient pedestrians from crossing the street. We are reminded of our haste, our impatience: even though it may feel as if we have to wait endlessly, we now know that it hardly ever takes more than, say, 60 seconds. Yet whereas the stop-sign countdowns are always of short duration – for our good manners should not be challenged too much all – the countdown clocks in the Warhol exhibition display not seconds but minutes and hours.

37. One of the documentaries was Ronald Nameth’s Plastic Inevitable (1967), a registration of a week in a series of the EPI organized by Warhol between 1966 and ’67. The film displayed a nervous combination of stroboscopic lighting, odd slow motions, stop motions and freeze-frames, frantic on-stage performances and intermingled projections of films, shadows, superimpositions, and reflections.


39. A critical perspective on what the author condenses under the heading “glance theory” – or the theory of distracted domestic television viewing, associated with theorists such as Raymond Williams (1975), John Ellis (1982), and Marshall McLuhan (1964) – can be found in John Caldwell’s Televisuality (1995: 22–27) and White (2003).

40. The varying quality of the sound and the crowdedness of the room also played its part. When I returned to the exhibition for a second time I had the uncanny experience of entering the room when the sound was switched off altogether.

41. According to Epstein, the close-up is the privileged site for the (experience of) photogénie, a concept designed to account for the inarticulable enhancement of an object or being by photographic or filmic reproduction. For Béla Balázs (2007), “The close-up underwrites a crisis in the opposition between object and subject,” because it is anthropomorphic, while at the same time it tends to transform the very locus of subjectivity, i.e., the face, into a series of objects. (Doane, 2003: 94) Finally,
Gilles Deleuze (1986) reasons that the close-up raises its object to the state of entity. A Deleuzian affection-image, the close-up provides the viewer with a surface that is both sensible and legible, and, in Deleuze's view, intense.

42. To give an indication of how radical the consequences of such a conversion can be, note how the issue of digitization is introduced in the curator's statement of the 2004 exhibition Andy Warhol: Motion Pictures (Berlin, 2004), where Mary Lea Bandy remarks, almost in passing, that: “For the exhibition, excerpts of Empire and Sleep were transferred to DVD at the slower speed: the transfer of the entire eight hours of the one and over five hours of the other would cost more than any cultural institution’s film restoration budget could provide.” (2004: 19) In other words, seeing Empire in this particular exhibition meant seeing some excerpts of the film, over and over again. Extended duration here is thus replaced by repetition, and spatial references are substituted with a temporal indexicality, so that both are folded back onto the “here” and “now” of the images’ unremitting materialization.

43. The first punctuation echoes once again Barthes' description of the punctum: “It is this element which rises from the screen, shoots our of it like an arrow and pierces me [...] It is what I add to the photograph and what is nonetheless already there.” (1982: 55)

44. (1982: 199) The distinctions made between representation, object, and text are Wollen's.

45. The allusion to the X-Files slogan “the Truth is Out There,” which concludes the show’s opening credits, is intentional.

46. (2001: 93–95) Michelson explores this transition in Kleinian terms as a transition of “the primacy of the part object to that of the whole object.” (2001: 96–97, 106)

47. Bakthin, here quoted in Michelson (2001: 101–102) For this view of the annihilation of subjectivity is shared by both Michelson and for example Foster, Frohne, Joselit, and Joseph to whom I will turn below, but disagreed with by Roy Grundmann, who sees Warhol's subjectivity reconfirmed in his role as Master of Ceremony (2004), or by Rosalind Krauss who observes a structuring tension between individual creativity and the “collapse into sameness” in the work of Warhol. Warhol's insistence on difference within the same, she argues, reveals a subject-in-crisis, who (quoting René Girard on the notion of mimetic rivalry in Dostoyevsky) wants to “‘be the Other, and still be himself. The wish to be absorbed implies a insuperable revulsion for one’s own substance, a subjectivity charged with self-hatred.’” (2001: 117)

48. Frohne (2002: 255, 259, 261) Drawing on Beatriz Colomina, Frohne convincingly argues that this development is not limited to audio-visual media, but extends to the architecture of, for example, Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, where “under the influence of mass media, the spatial consistency of the interior dissolves and (the) inhabitants become performers, playing themselves (in real-time) on the set of modern architecture.” (Frohne, 2002: 266) Needless to say, Frohne draws on Kaja Silverman’s musings on the gaze and the pose for her rumination on the internalized camera gaze. (1996)

49. The term media feedback comes from David Joselit. (2007, 2002)

50. This tendency towards withdrawal became quite literal in 1972, when Warhol withdrew all his films from circulation; they remained unseen until the mid-eighties.

51. Although the label “urban literacy” is mine, it is based on Mark Featherstone's reflections on the return of the flâneur within our media-rich world today (Featherstone, 1998: 913). For further reflections on the argued “return” of the flâneur in the museum see Païni (2000); in the mall see Friedberg (1999); and on the internet Featherstone (1998)


53. On the premise of “being there” see Pauls (2007); for an introduction to the Screen Tests, see Angell (2006).

54. Rosalind Krauss (1999) on Walter Benjamin. In accordance with the art essay, Benjamin, in “Little History of Photography” (1999) regards very positively the potential of the daguerreotype, which he felt possessed the means to liberate the subject from the authorial voice, in this case the hand and eye of the artist.
55. In fact this strategic absence, both as director and persona, raises the question of intentionality, especially when framed in the exhibition currently under consideration, where Warhol’s apparent absence critiques the teleological design of the exhibition, premised on the life story that forms the narrative thread in the main entry hall “About Andy.”

56. This is the case when seeing the film not only in the exhibition installation, but also in its celluloid projection in a more traditional screening situation, as during the To Be is to Be Perceived film program at the Tate Modern in London (where I saw it on 18 September 2010). For a clip of the film see: http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/outer-and-inner-space/video/ (last accessed on April 14, 2011)

57. A transcript of the film is available in the exhibition catalogue From Stills to Motion & Back Again (2003: 27–40)

58. Incidentally, this adds another temporal dimension to the already multi-faceted temporality of the exhibition, namely the degree to which the screening of such a work turns a museum of modern art into what Elsaesser has called a “storage space of obsolete technologies.” (2004b: 25) And this, in turn, stipulates, once more, cinema’s peculiar relation to time, as a medium that both stores and freezes time.

59. Kaye (2007: 59). Nick Kaye further points out that Paik’s installations and videos anticipate the multiplication of times identified by Elizabeth Ermarth-Deeds in A Sequel to History (1991). Reflecting on time and subjectivity in so-called post-modern literature, Ermarth-Deeds argues that by oscillating between different points of view, post-modern literature produces a “rhythmic time” that allows for the unique and unrepeatable experience of the time of reading itself. Rhythmic time, she writes “is over when it’s over and exists for its duration only and then disappears into some other rhythm.” (Ermarth 1991: 53, quoted in Kaye 61) Rhythmic time, Kaye summarizes, reflects the fact that “postmodern subjectivity is without a subject”, for the ‘subject is dispersed in the world it observes’ (Ermarth, 1991, 123).” (Kaye, 2007: 59)

60. On “video specificity” see for example Partridge (2008).

61. Even though I speak of a trend, these films do not belong to a specific genre. Festen is in many ways a more or less traditional feature film. Idioterne, The Blair Witch Project, C’est Arrivé, Rosetta, and Kutzooi can be called fake-documentaries or mockumentaries, although some are shot in a reflexive and others in a more observational mode. On the distinction between observational and reflexive documentary, see Nichols (1991: 32–71). Zusje is a simulated video diary, Planet Alex a science-fiction film, Elephant a remediated third-person shooter game, and Time Code a split-screen real-time experiment.


63. Parts of earlier drafts of this chapter have been published in: In the Very Beginning, at the Very End. Film Theories in Perspective (2010), and in the Slow Criticism Project 2011: Out of the Comfort Zone (2011).

64. Some examples can be found, as in F.W. Murnau’s Last Laugh (1924), where the handheld camera is used to constitute the subjective point of view of a drunken doorman, creating an image that, according to Jean-Pierre Guensburg, “almost allegorically anchored the presence of the viewer in the text.” (2002: 9) Other examples can be found in The Passionate Quest (Blackton, 1926), Quality Street (Franklin, 1927), and King of Kings (DeMille, 1927). Also, Dziga Vertov’s 1919 Kino-Pravda manifesto, in which he put forward his ideas for a new style of reportage based on real life – most memorably put into practice within the technical confines of his time in his 1929 film Man with the Movie Camera – seems to call for a camera technique that would allow the operator to penetrate life as it is lived with a portable camera. (Vertov, 1984)

65. Their attempts were supported by as well as contributed to the refinement of portable cameras with synchronized sound equipment, resulting in films ranging from Jazz Dance (USA, Tilton, 1954), Les Raquetteurs (Canada, Michel Brault & Groulx, 1958), The Days before Christmas (Canada, Jackson, Koenig, et al., 1958), Primary (USA, Drew, 1960), Lonely Boy (Canada, Koenig & Kroitor 1961), La Lutte (Canada, Brault et al., 1961), Chronique d’un été (FR, Morin & Roux, 1961), Dont Look Back (USA, Pennabaker, 1966), and Salesmen (USA, Maysles Bros., 1969). These films all embraced the new possibilities
offered by sound-synchronized mobile cameras: the increased speed and mobility, the representa-
tional view, and a simplified process of production.

66. On the distinction between direct cinema and cinema vérité see Musser (1996: 257) and Nichols (1991: 35–72). As a side note: in the 1940s Italian neorealist filmmakers had already pioneered in liberating filmmaking from the confines of the studio by shooting on location and encouraging improvisation in the script (often using non-professional actors). Constrained, however, by the technical limitations of the time, they mainly used tripod-mounted cameras.

67. On this transition phase in French cinema also see Vincendeau (1996) and Graham (1996).

68. These directors include Cahiers du Cinéma critics-turned-auteur directors such as François Truffaut (e.g., Jules et Jim, 1961), Jean-Luc Godard (e.g., A bout de souffle, 1959), Claude Chabrol, Jacques Rivette, and Eric Rohmer, as well as the “Left bank” directors Chris Marker and Agnès Varda. On the stylistic markers of the nouvelle vague see for example Austin (1996), Bordwell (1985), Cook (1981), Douchet (1998), and Mast & Kawin (2000).

69. The term “scopic regime” was introduced by Martin Jay in his “Scopic Regimes of Modernity” (1988), and elaborated in his book Downcast Eyes (1993).

70. Sobchack quoted in Geuens (1993: 10; emphasis in text).

71. In fact Rosetta was only originally shot on super 16mm, but was then digitally transferred onto 35mm for its theatrical release. The copy I used for my research, however, is recorded from television onto a VCR tape, then manually digitized using a little tool called Eye-tv for Mac. Once it was uploaded onto my computer I converted it several times into different formats for various purposes (from the .mpg of Eye-tv, to .mov for quicktime, and from .mov to .mpeg4 for PowerPoint), only to finally download another – illegal – copy via the internet in yet another format, which would allow me to edit it while keeping the soundtrack intact.

72. As John Belton has pointed out, “In many ways, amateur-filmmaking serves as a site of intersection for the development for new film technology and of new film-making practices.” (Belton, 1996: 489)

73. The role of Martijn is actually played by three different actors, Romijn Coonen being the one whose body we learn to identify as Martijn’s in the film, while Hugo Metsers provides his voice, and Bert Pot, the film’s cameraman, “plays” Martijn when it comes to his subjective camera usage.

74. Scannell (1991: 1) Understood as a technological affordance, then, liveness and immediacy are “not ontologically given but rather devolved from the communicative imperatives of the medium.” (Marriott, 2007: 52) Other indices of liveness include auto cues, and the use of personal pronounces, which suggest immediate interaction at a distance. On the debate on television’s liveness and immediacy, also see Caldwell (1995), Feuer (1983), Vianello (1985).

75. For this observation I am indebted to Ernst van Alphen’s essay on the use of home footage in Peter Forgács’ films (2004).

76. As some of the film’s reviewers rightly remarked, thematically as well as in its relatively raw cinematography Rosetta calls to mind two other European reflections on the poverty and isolation of underclass women, i.e., Robert Bresson’s Mouchette (1966) and Agnès Varda’s Vagabond (1986). (Ebert, 2000; Hoberman, 1999; Smith, 2004)

77. For these comments on the critical reception of Zuisje I draw on the director’s comments on the DVD.

78. For a concise overview of the debates on the “Affective Operations of Art and Literature” see Van Alphen (2008)

79. For a concise reflection on the shifts in the discourses on trauma, from a primary focus on the actual experience of trauma towards a discussion on the hermeneutics of trauma, both addressed by Elsaesser, also see the introductions to Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer’s Acts of Memory (Bal et al., 1999), Karyn Ball’s Traumatizing Theory (2000), Cathy Caruth’s Unclaimed Experience (1996), and Jill Bennett’s Empathic Vision (2005).

80. V2 is located in Rotterdam. Besides the organizing of exhibitions and workshops, their activities include the development and distribution of artworks, as well as research and publications in the field
of art and technology and the establishment of an online archive of media art. Since its development for V2 and exhibition in Rotterdam, *Body Movies* has been exhibited at the Liverpool Bienniale (Williamson Square, 2002); Ars Electronica (Hauptplatz, Linz, 2002), Sapphire (Atlantico Pavillion, Lisbon, 2002); Akzente Festival (Duisburg, 2003); HKADC, Museum of Art (Hong Kong, 2006); New Zealand International Arts Festival (Wellington, 2008); and Québec City 400th Anniversary (Parc de la Cétière, Québec City, Canada, 2008). Although on each occasion its appearance was adjusted according to the conditions of its new habitat, the design of the interface has remained more or less the same.


82. I borrow the term “mixed reality” from Milgram and Kishino (1994), who use the term in reference to “technologies that involve the merging of real and virtual worlds somewhere along the ‘virtuality continuum’ which connects completely real environments to completely virtual ones.” For a concise overview of the difference between terms like “virtual reality,” “mixed reality,” “hybrid reality,” and “augmented reality” (and variations thereof) see Galloway (2004). For a compelling overview of the theories and practices of interaction design and ubiquity cultures see Ekman (2011).

83. The term responsive environment was coined by Myron Krueger to refer to an environment where “a computer perceives the action of those who enter and respond intelligently through complex visual and auditory displays.” (1977: 423)

84. On the role of the panorama in the shift from the paradigm of illusion to that of immersion see chapters two and three in Oliver Grau’s *Virtual Art* (2003); on the return with a difference of what she calls the “panoramic complex” in contemporary screen culture, see Verhoeff (2012).


86. Think of the release of *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009), *Alice in Wonderland* (Tim Burton, 2010), and *A Christmas Carol* (Robert Zemeckis, 2009), all the way up to Wim Wenders’ *Pina* (2011) and *The Adventures of Tin Tin* (Spielberg, 2011). Experiments with 3D cinema, however, have occurred throughout the history of cinema, going back as far as cinema’s earliest days when – after a history of filed patents and production experiments – *Jim the Penman* (Porter, 1915) and *The Power of Love* (Elder, 1922) were shown, representing the first successful attempts at stereoscopic public projections. (Zone, 2007)

After 3D’s alleged “golden age” in the early 1950s (now awaiting its media-archeological re-evaluation) and its sporadic revivals (with minor successes in soft porn and horror films in the 1960s and 70s and the IMAX of the 1980s), we seem today to have reached a point of no return. Indeed, the fact that early 2010 also saw the introduction and announcement of several other 3D applications and media – varying from handcams to televisions and home-screen projectors – suggests that we are no longer dealing with something that is a mere novelty for a cinema-going audience, but are witnessing the establishment of 3D as a new perceptual regime or cinematic norm. Thomas Elsaesser suggests that to a greater extent than with competing formats of display, or with other media that compete with cinema for the viewer’s attention, 3D theatrical cinema in its current breakthrough iteration may have more to do with what he provocatively calls “the logic of the supplement.” That is, he suggests that the standardization of 3D is not a goal in itself but a means to something else, be it the completion of the digitization of cinematic exhibition, the generation of possibilities for crossing over onto different carriers such as laptops and/or iPads or, potentially, even the realization of aspirations and objectives within completely different paradigms such as those determined by the military-industrial complex and our current culture of control and surveillance. See Elsaesser (2010).

87. On the phantasmagoria as one of the “befores” of cinema, see Clee (2005); on its “multi-media afterlifes” see Grau (2007a); also see Castle (1988) on the notion of the phantasmagoria as a metaphor, a “traveling concept” (Bal, 2002) that has become indicative of what he calls the “spectralization of mental space” over the last two centuries.

88. Thomas Elsaesser theorizes “ubiquity” as the form in which perspective survives after the dissolution of perspectival “infinity.” (2009a)

89. Although the term has been put to productive conceptual use (see Grau, 2003, 2007b; Huhtamo, 1995; McQuire, 2007), I refrain from using the metaphor “immersion” here, because as a metaphor the
concept is often, and especially in cinema studies, made highly dependent on a Cartesian notion of space and the conventions of pictorial (Albertinian or Euclidian) perspective with which Body Movies precisely takes issue. For a persuasive reflection on the risks and stakes of the use of the metaphor of immersion see Lister (2005).


92. Another way that Body Movies differs from these works is that, unlike the responsive artworks of the 1960s and 70s, Body Movies is not primarily aimed at attacking a bourgeois notion of art and a corresponding conception of the viewer as contemplative. (Dinkla, 1994)

93. It is in light of cinema’s increased dematerialization that Doane points towards the optical toy as cinema’s discursive or long lost “other,” marking a transition from the miniature, touchable, manipulable, opaque, and material towards the larger than life, sight-based, unalterable, abstract, and immaterial projected image. For a thought-provoking reflection on the tension between the miniature and the gigantic vis-à-vis discussions on interiority and exteriority, narrative, language, experience and the body, see Stewart (1993). On the paradigm shift implicated in the transition from the question “what is film,” to “where is film,” see Hagener (2008).


95. There is an increasing body of work that addresses our engagement with media technologies in terms of interactivity and embodiment, including titles such as Performance and Technology: Practices of Virtual Embodiment and Interactivity (Broadhurst and Machon, 2006); Where the Action is! The Foundations of Embodied Interaction (Dourish, 2004), and Materializing New Media: Embodiment in Information Aesthetics (Munster, 2006). Seminal titles on technology and embodiment from a feminist perspective include Haraway (1991), Grosz (1994), and Hayles (1999). For a reflection on embodiment and moving-image culture rooted in an explicitly phenomenological tradition see Sobchack (1992, 2004) and Barker (2009). For a concise overview of the notions of embodiment, spatialization, and centred subjectivity in the social sciences see Van Loon (2002).

96. Other key readings for this approach, besides Lombard and Ditton, include Heeter (1992), Sheridan (1992, 1996), Slater & Usoh (1993) and Steuer (1995). For a summarizing overview of the different types and conceptions of presence along this line of reasoning also see Ijselsteijn & Riva (2003)


99. With regard to media technologies the concept of affordance intervenes in the debate on technological and symptomatic determinism (see Williams, 1975), as it allows us to consider technology and technological development as something that is shaping as well as shaped by the practices in which, for which, and by which they are put to use. On the relevance of the concept of affordance in the debate on communication technologies see also Gaver (1991, 1996), Zahorik & Jennison (1998), Hutchby (2001), and Dourish (2004: 117–119).
100. An additional plasma screen displaying the installation’s mechanisms was placed at ground level below the work’s central plane in order to make the work’s infrastructure transparent.

101. Many media scholars have written about the implications of the transformation from the archival order to the paradigm of computation. Among the scholars linking this shift explicitly to that of spatial to temporal indexicality see Doane (2002), Levin (2002) and Rodowick (2007). Other relevant readings include Wiener (1965) on cybernetics; Luhmann (1995) on systems theory; Hayles (1999, 2005, 2007) on the implications of the regime of computation for critical analysis; and Soderman (2007) on the specific tension between the index and the algorithm. Also see Halpern (2005) for an insightful reflection on the tension between the archival order and cybernetics from the perspective of media theory; and Ernst (2007) for a related critique of the use of the spatial metaphor of mapping.

102. This self-referentiality should not be mistaken for the notion of self-reflexivity, which Gumbrecht refers to as the conceptual loop of hermeneutics, in which the analyst is “condemned to observe him/herself in the act of observation.” (2004: 38)

103. Philosopher and media scholar John Mullarkey also uses the term *refraction* in his film-philosophical commentary on the cinematic in *Philosophy and the Moving Image: Refractions of Reality*. (2010) Mullarkey offsets his use of the term against that of David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson who use refraction as a term in their reflections on Godard and Gorin’s *Tout Va Bien* (1972) to refer to cinema’s potential to “draw attention to media that stand between the depicted events and our perception of those events.” (2000: 439) Mullarkey, instead, draws on Bergson’s notion of “impeded refractions” (1994: 30) to develop his conception of the cinematic event as a “refraction between different times (my own, that of the world and that of the screen) [...] whose product is a new reality, [a] sedimentation or multiple refraction, whereby the early mediation has become so overlaid with other mediations (social, psycho-logical, biological, physical) that the overall effect is one of opaque, thick truth.” (2010: 169, 172, 190)

104. Classical cinema is invested in the taming of chance events through narrative, or in denial of them through spectacle. The contingent here still surfaces, Doane argues, in the temporal instability of the cinematic image itself, unspcific and unverifiable in duration but nonetheless perceived as real. (142, 169-170)

105. The essays of Doane (1990) and Patricia Mellencamp (1990) on television, the event, and catastrophe are particularly illuminating in this regard.

106. The artist later renamed this part of the work “Untitled.” For a compelling analysis of Staehle’s *2001* as what he calls ” contemporary allegory of [...] mediatic temporalization, [i.e.] the spontaneous transformation of time from a relentless machine-like churning of before and after to a positive feedback-loop of an escalating quasi-vital media spectacle” see Mark Hanssen’s “Time’s Obsolescence” (2007)

107. Elsaesser in this context speaks of the cinematic as a form “contractualism,” which he defines as the mutual negotiation of conventions. (2009a: 8)

108. It goes well beyond the scope of this chapter to offer an extensive historical account of participatory art, and much ground-laying work has been done in this direction. Suffice it to say that *Body Movies* draws on a rich tradition with which it shares a conception of media art as a dynamic process open to participatory intervention. For a concise overview of the history of participatory art from the perspective of a discussion on social, creative and technological interactivity see, for example, Arns (2004), Daniels (2000, 2003), Dinkla (1994, 1997), and Huhtamo (1995, 2007).

109. For a concise overview of the discussion on what Manovich has called “the myth of interactivity” (2001), on social theories of interactivity and the relation between the notion of interactivity and user-generated content in theories of so called “new” media, see Gane and Beer. (2008: 87–102)

110. I am indebted to Elsaesser who has addressed the new ubiquity of the cinematic in terms of this distinction and coined the phrase “here/now/me.” (2004a, 2006)

111. In proposing the paradigm of deixis to rethink contemporary cinematic indexicality, as well as its renegotiations of time and being I take my cue from Doane (2002, 2007a, 2007b) and Elsaesser (2004a, 2006).
112. Even though I draw on Luhmann’s terminology to illuminate the film’s considerations on the topic of observation, which in my view are intimately linked to the way it engages the viewer through a bodily spatial deixis, it is important to note that Luhmann, in fact, has very little to say on the topic of affect or on body in general.

113. Similar endings occur in films like Donnie Darko, Next, Deja vu, and – perhaps the most extreme example – The Butterfly Effect (Director’s Cut), in which the protagonist ends up killing himself in his mother’s womb, in a kind of hyperbolic exercise of and ultimate negation of the Sartrean notion of free will and responsibility.

114. I borrow the notion of the “camera as projector” from David Rokeby, who uses it to stipulate the importance of studying how, in systems of surveillance, the camera “projects” whatever it is that it “sees.” What it projects is quantifiable data. Because of this, Rokeby maintains, non-quantifiable features remain largely underdeveloped, which means that their importance is downgraded within social digital space. The question Rokeby then seeks to address, as programmer, artist, and critic, is how we can hold ambiguity inside a digital structure, and how we can study the political, psychological, and philosophical implications of a programmer’s pragmatic decisions (to which he answers: through literacy). Rokeby’s artistic work is largely devoted to generating surveillant systems that make tangible the feeling of being interpreted, or rather, of being judged as quantifiable data. (Rokeby, 2011)
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Summary

In this study I have made a case for analyzing the chronotopes of the cinematic as affective encounters in space-time. I have argued that, while the site of cinema is on the move, the extent to which technologically mediated sounds and images continue to be experienced as cinematic today is largely dependent on the intensified sense of a “here,” a “now,” and a “me” that they convey. This intensification, I have suggested, is fundamentally rooted in the cinematic's potential to intensify our experience of time, to convey time's thickening, of which the sense of space or place, and a sense of self or self-presence are the correlates. I have traced this thickening of time across four different spatio-temporal configurations of the cinematic that have traditionally been conceived as different from, or even antagonistic to, each other: a multi-media exhibition featuring the early avant-garde films of Andy Warhol in chapter one; the handheld aesthetics of European art-house films in chapter two; a large-scale interactive media installation set-up in public space in chapter three; and the usage of the trope of the flash-forward in mainstream Hollywood cinema in the Coda. Only by juxtaposing these cases by looking at what they have in common, i.e. intensified thickening of time that they share, I argue, can we grasp the complexity of the changes that the cinematic is currently undergoing.

In my attempts to think through the terminology used to describe my cases, and to develop a conceptual toolbox to analyze them in a way so as to do justice to the theoretical challenges they put forth, I have often placed these cases in opposition to classical theories of film that elaborate cinema's theatrical viewing situation, in particular to those pertaining to classical (Hollywood) cinema. The cases discussed, I contend, call for such a comparative probing precisely because of their resemblances to and significant differences from classical cinema. Insofar as my cases can be called post-cinematic, in the sense that they both resemble and differ from those of so-called classical or theatrical cinema, I maintain that they are also suggestive of the survival of the cinematic within a world increasingly made up of technologically mediated sounds and images.

We are in a better position to understand the extended habitat of the cinematic and the bearing it has on the viewer, I have argued, if we approach the cinematic as a lived environment that affords certain embodied interactions while prohibiting others. For, it is in the encounter that the thickness of time becomes tangible to our bodies, and that the fleeting image of that thickness emerges from
that body. The encounter is thus inherently synesthetic, affect-laden, and it entails all kinds of cognitive and interpretative processes that cannot be disentangled from the event of the encounter itself. A focus on the encounter thus intimates a focus on the dialogic relationship between the participating viewer and the concrete cinematic environment he or she inhabits. To study this dialogic relation I have proposed the paradigm of a bodily-spatial deixis, the notions of the chronotope, and the deictic terms “here,” “now,” and “me.”

The notion of the cinematic chronotopes helps clarify how, within our contemporary media-saturated world, technologically mediated times and spaces are transformed into constitutive categories of subjectivity via their intensification of the participating viewer's sense of being “here,” “now” and “me.” Throughout the chapters, I have looked at the contested and contingent time/space/subjectivity configurations that the cinematic gives rise to, as well as at the mobile, fleeting, embedded, and embodied selves that the cinematic, para-cinematic and post-cinematic leaves us with, selves that are necessarily entrapped in (mediated) space-times, indeed can be said to exists of it. An emphasis on the three corners of the deictic triangle, “here,” “now,” and “me,” moreover, I maintain, is instrumental for rethinking our encounter with the cinematic in terms of the intensified sense of space, time, and being that it brings about. Deixis allows me to demonstrate coherently that the cinematic exceeds cinema and yet is still sufficiently central to our experience of time and being within our contemporary media-saturated world. My thesis, in this sense, can be understood to offer a different reading of the apparent paradox of the death of cinema and its proclaimed ubiquity.

In chapter one I look into the 2007 multi-media exhibition Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms which took place at the Post CS building which offered a temporary home to Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. I argue that the multi-media exhibition’s ambulant visitor and its expanded cinematic site prompts us to redress the tension between the situatedness and mobility of the viewer, as well as the reversals of “inside” and “outside” of the image, its framing and unframing – in short, what I have called the destabilization of the figure-ground relationship between image and world. I argue that in the multi-media exhibition the “here” is at once augmented, punctuated, and rescaled through mediation. I use the terms augmentation to indicate the collision between physical and mediated timespaces; punctuation, to refer the viewer's presence in this augmented space as at once situated and ambulant and thus intensified; and rescaling to stipulate the disintegration of an “inner” and “outer” perspective on this place/space once
the body is reinserted a measure of distance and proximity, presence and absence, situatedness and mobility. In this thickened “here,” neither viewer nor representation is held in place. Nor is it necessarily possible, at least within our everyday media-infused urban environments, to occupy a place outside of this thick “here” that is the cinematic.

In chapter two I then look at the aesthetics of the handheld camera in European art house films of the 1990s to assess the thickening of the “now” that in my view is key to our encounter with the cinematic today. I argue that these films cultivate the “now” as their primary temporal marker through their suggested real-time recording that points towards the handheld camera’s propensity to shoot “as live.” This is enhanced by the spatial disorientation prompted by the camera’s constrained optical range, i.e., the fact that we seldom see beyond the subjective or otherwise restricted camera’s eye that stays in close proximity to the action. The result is a disorienting space-affect that puts the viewer in a state of anticipatory alertness, provoking a sensation of untimeliness that is comparable to the lack of spatial orientation caused by the camera’s limited point of view. What we are dealing with here, thus, is a type of film that disjoints time in certain ways, generating a sense of “now” that is ultimately inaccessible to the viewer unless, I have argued, he or she navigates the films with and within the time of affect and trauma, a temporality that forces us to renegotiate our sense of self in relation to a potentially mediated here and now that are no longer necessarily knowable. It is by navigating the film with and within the time of trauma, I maintain, that we are challenged to renegotiate a sense of self in relation to a potentially mediated here-and-now that is no longer necessarily knowable.

Using *Body Movies* as my interlocutor in chapter three, finally, I consider the critical implications of the collapse of representational and spectatorial space for the “me” that emerges in the encounter with the cinematic today. I argue that it is more productive to contemplate the cinematic in terms of the presence-effect it produces in the viewer, the “me” within the encounter, than in terms of the subject-effect it is said to fabricate, where presence is understood as the perception of self-existence, of a “me” that becomes tangible to our bodies in our encounter with sound and imaging technologies. What becomes tangible to our bodies through the embodied interactions afforded by *Body Movies*, I propose, is a sense of self in its interrelationality, a condensed and thickened “me,” part of a complex network of mediated interactions that continually feed the viewer’s body-image back to him or her in real-time and real-space. This thickened, intensified “me” differs both from the self-enclosed unified subject of classical cinema and film theory.
and what is arguably the bi-located subject of early installation art, as well as, philosophically, from the post-humanist, post-Lacanian subject for whom the ideal of a self fully knowing and embodying itself is put into doubt. It also competes with the Deleuzian schizo-subject or other "dispersed" subjects, whose radical instability disrupts any notion of self-presence. The thickened and condensed "me" that emerges in the encounter with the cinematic is at once singular and plural, mobile and fleeting, embedded and embodied, distributed and intensified. Finally, in the Coda, I have assessed the relevance of the proposed approach for the analysis of contemporary Hollywood films characterized by their complex narrative unfolding, their often affective appeal, and their reliance on the logics of retroactive causality. In particular I look into the use of the trope of the flash-forward in The Source Code (Jones, 2011), to explore the theoretical ramifications of the paradigm shift I seek to capture in this study for their analysis.

The cases I have chosen are extreme cases. I approach them as theoretical objects, in the sense that they actively contribute to the film-philosophical debates on the changing spatio-temporal configuration of the cinematic; they revisit some of the basic premises undergirding most classical film theories, such as perspectival vision, linearity, and subjectivity, and the related categorical oppositions of motion and stillness, real and virtual, cause and effect, body and mind. They are theoretical objects in that they are "brought into existence in the encounter between object and analyst, mediated by the theoretical baggage each brings to that encounter." (Bal, 2003: 24) Yet, thoughout the chapters they also function as media-archeological objects, in the sense that they offer us a place to see from, a searchlight that allows for a critical and retroactive re-examination of cinema's (pre)history so as to "overcome the opposition between 'old' and 'new' media." (Elsaesser, 2004a: 75) In doing so, it is my hope that my thesis offers a timely contribution to media-theoretical debates.
Samenvatting

In dit onderzoek staat de vraag centraal hoe we cinema, of liever het cinematische, kunnen analyseren in een tijdperk en samenleving waarin technologisch gemedieerde beelden en geluiden een steeds dominantere plek innemen. Omdat het gros van de klassieke filmtheorie de traditionele bioscoopsetting, oftewel cinema, als uitgangspunt neemt, zijn de termen die wij tot onze beschikking hebben om de veranderende rol en functie van het cinematische binnen onze hedendaagse samenleving te bestuderen niet langer toereikend, zo luidt mijn stelling. In deze studie pleit ik voor een alternatief conceptueel raamwerk, dat meer recht doet aan de complexiteit van veranderingen waaraan het cinematische binnen onze hedendaagse cultuur onderhevig is.

De cases die ik heb onderzocht dwingen een dergelijke heroverweging af: een multimedia-tentoonstelling van de vroege films en televisieprogramma’s van Andy Warhol in hoofdstuk een; de esthetiek van de hand-gedragen camera in Europese arthouse films uit de jaren ’90 in hoofdstuk twee; een grootschalige interactieve media-installatie in de publieke ruimte in hoofdstuk drie; en het gebruik van de troep van de flash forward in hedendaagse Hollywoodfilms in de conclusie. Ondanks dat deze cases traditioneel doorgaans worden beschouwd als verschillend en zelfs antagonistisch ten opzichte van elkaar, benadruk ik in deze studie juist wat zij met elkaar gemeen hebben, en dat is de geïntensiveerde ervaring van tijd, en een daaraan gerelateerde geïntensiveerde ervaring van ruimte en daarzijn (self-presence). De mate waarin technologisch gemedieerde beelden en geluiden vandaag de dag worden ervaren als cinematisch, valt in mijn ogen grotendeels samen met de geïntensiveerde ervaring van een “hier,” een “nu” en een “ik” die onze affectieve ontmoeting met het cinematische teweeg brengt, tastbaar maakt voor het lichaam.

In het conceptueel raamwerk dat ik voorstel om deze geïntensiveerde ervaring van tijd, ruimte en daarzijn te analyseren, neem ik de notie van de chronotoop, het paradigma van deixis, en de deictische termen “hier,” “nu” en “ik” als vertrekpunt. Chronotoop betekent letterlijk tijd-ruimte. Het gaat hier om de tijd en ruimte waartoe wij ons verhouden, of sterker nog, waaruit wij bestaan. Een analyse van het cinematische als chronotoop, zo laat ik zien, geeft inzicht in de manier waarop gemedieerde vormen van tijd en ruimte transformeren in constitutieve categorieën van subjectiviteit, of subjectivering. Deixis en de deictische termen “hier,” “nu” en “ik,” bieden vervolgens een systematisch kader om de veranderende ervaring van
tijd, ruimte en daarzijn te analyseren in een samenleving waarin technologisch
gemedieerde tijd, ruimte en zelf-presentatie een steeds dominerende rol vervullen.
Het stelt ons bovendien in staat om binnen eenzelfde raamwerk cinematische vormen en praktijken te identificeren en analyseren die voorbij gaan aan cinema, in
de strikte zin van het woord.

In het eerste hoofdstuk analyseer ik de multimetriadentoonstelling Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms, Stedelijk Museum Post CS, Amsterdam 2007. In het klassiek filmtheoretisch debat zijn Warhol's films veelal besproken in termen van hun expliciete manipulatie van en spel met gemedieerde vormen van tijd. Ik laat zien hoe juist in deze discussies over tijd al de eerste sporen te vinden zijn van een opvatting van het cinematische voorbij cinema, een opvatting die draait om een geïntensiveerde ervaring van het “hier,” het hier namelijk van het lichaam, zowel gesitueerd, als in beweging.

In hoofdstuk twee analyseer ik vervolgens de esthetiek van de hand-gedragen camera in Europese arthouse film, zoals Zusje (Westdijk, 1995), Rosetta (Dardenne, 1998) en Idiotere (Von Trier, 1998). Ik laat zien hoe de films het gebrek aan ruimtelijke oriëntatie, veroorzaakt door het beperkte perspectief van de camera, compenseren door een schijnbare heroriëntatie in een “nu.” Dit nu, echter, is uiteindelijk alleen toegankelijk voor de kijker als hij of zij de film navigeert met en binnen de tijd van affect en trauma, een temporaliteit die ons dwingt onze ervaring van daarzijn in relatie te plaatsen tot een potentieel gemedieerd hier en nu dat niet langer noodzakelijk kenbaar is.

In hoofdstuk drie analyseer ik Rafael Lozano-Hemmer’s installatie Body Movies, Schouwburgplein (Rotterdam, 2001) waarbij ik stilsta bij de impact van de destabilisatie van de traditioneel veronderstelde scheiding tussen de ruimte van representatie en die van de kijker, als het gaat om onze ervaring van zelf, of daarzijn in de confrontatie met het cinematische. Wat tastbaar wordt in onze interacties met cinematische praktijken als Body Movies, zo luidt mijn stelling, is een ervaring van een zelf in zijn interrelationaliteit, een gecondenseerd en geïntensifieerd “ik” als onderdeel van een complex netwerk van interacties met andere entiteiten, zowel geanimeerd als technologisch, tegelijkertijd enkelvoudig en meervoudig, mobiel en vergankelijk, ingebed en belichaamd.

In de Coda, of conclusie, tot slot, sluit ik af met een analyse van de hedendaagse Hollywoodfilm The Source Code (Jones, 2011), om zo de relevantie en bruikbaarheid aan te tonen van de theoretische grondslagen van de paradigmaverschuiving die ik probeer te vangen in dit proefschrift.
De cases die ik bestudeer zijn extreme gevallen. Het zijn theoretische objecten, in de zin dat ze constructief bijdragen aan het hedendaags film-filosofisch debat, onder meer door een aantal basisaannames van klassieke filmtheorieën aan de kaak te stellen – zoals een opvatting van tijd als lineair, van het subject als eenduidig te herleiden coherente constructie, en de veronderstelling van een strikte scheiding tussen de ruimte van representatie en de ruimte waarin de kijker zich begeeft. Hiermee komen tevens gerelateerde categorische opposities zoals beweging en stilstand, echt en virtueel, oorzaak en gevolg, lichaam en geest op losse schroeven te staan. De cases doen tevens dienst als media-archeologische objecten, in de zin dat ze ons dwingen om met terugwerkende kracht kritisch te kijken naar gangbare opvattingen over de (voor)geschiedenis van cinema, waarmee de tegenstelling tussen “oude” en nieuwe” media feitelijk wordt ondermijnt. Op deze manier hoop ik met dit proefschrift een eigentijdse bijdrage te leveren aan het hedendaagse mediatheoretisch debat.