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## Image as gesture: notes on Aernout Mik's *Communitas* and the modern political film

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Walking through Aernout Mik's exhibition *Communitas*, dwelling in the encounter with the people and situations in front of and on the screens, one is struck by the cinematic and political qualities of the gestures in these powerful video installations. In this article I will develop some film-philosophical reflections on the silent performative force of the image as gesture and as politics. Drawing on Giorgio Agamben's "Notes on Gesture", Robert Bresson's "Notes on the Cinematographer" and Gilles Deleuze's reflections on the modern political film, I will contextualize Mik's work in the tradition of the modern political film. Being in between language and image, a go-between that connects people, things and the world, the gesture belongs to ethics and politics more than to aesthetics. Characters in Mik's work perform gestures that express the possibility of resistance and of the possibility of a shared community, a gesture which is shared by the artist, his actors and the visitors of the exhibition alike. Just like the modern political film the video works manage to change our perception of familiar situations via a simple tic, a spasm or a shared bodily posture.

**Keywords:** Mik; gesture; cinema; politics; performance; Agamben; Bresson; Deleuze

Walking through Aernout Mik's exhibition *Communitas*, dwelling in the encounter with the people and situations in front of and on the screens, one is struck by the cinematic and political qualities of the gestures in these powerful video installations.<sup>1</sup> In this article some film-philosophical reflections on the silent performative force of the image as gesture and as politics will be explored.

### White suits, black hats

A good place to start Aernout Mik's exhibition *Communitas* is the three-channel video installation *White Suits, Black Hats*, composed of archival images of the EYE Film Institute Netherlands. Mik (2012) selected silent images from the 1920s and 1930s from the colonial Dutch Indies presented on parallel screens: recordings of parades, funerals, dances and physical exercise but also images of tea and rubber factories, work in the rise fields, traders, all kinds of Dutch companies ranging from Heineken's beer brewery to the "Oranje Hotel" and other scenes of daily routines in the Dutch Indies such as missionaries in action.

While Mik usually presents original material in his installations, as a found footage piece *White Suits, Black Hats* nevertheless offers significant entrance points into his

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work, firstly because the images are silent. Most of Mik's video installations are without sound and therefore have a silent cinema quality.<sup>2</sup> The silence of the images emphasizes quite literally the bodily movements and gestures of the people on screen. On a more abstract level this also allows us to see the image itself as gesture, rather than as spectacle. In the first part of this article I will elaborate on this notion of the image as gesture as discussed by Giorgio Agamben. Besides silent cinema, the cinematographic style of Robert Bresson will be another important reference to develop this idea in respect to Aernout Mik's work.

Secondly, implicated actually in the idea of the image as gesture, but explicitly evident in the historical political situation of the colonial times in which the images from *White Suits, Black Hats* were made, is a reflection on the political and ethical dimensions of images. The images of *White Suits, Black Hats* are from a period of emerging political transition. While the colonial power relations between the colonizers and the colonized were still in place in the Dutch Indies, elsewhere in the world communist revolutions had already inspired emancipatory movements for "the people". Eisenstein's revolution films, for instance, are exemplary for the classic political film, where the ruling classes are resisted with an enormous sense of community and intensive hope for revolutionary change for "the people". But what happened with this notion of "the people?" In the second part of this article I will look at the development of the modern political film as put forward by Gilles Deleuze and discuss the ways in which Aernout Mik's work is a form of political cinema with other means.

### Notes on gesture

Let me first return to the silent cinema qualities of Mik's work. In film history and theory, the visuality (or muteness) of the moving image has often been related to the realm of the spectacle, to the dominance of the eye, the frenzy of the visible and the ideology of the power of the gaze, often controlled by patriarchal or imperial masters. Giorgio Agamben's short text, "Notes on Gesture" claims an alternative genealogy for grasping the powers of the moving image (Agamben, 2000, pp. 48–60). Agamben starts his reflections on cinema by arguing that the scientific experiments of Gilles de la Tourette on the human gait allowed for a new take on gesture, walking being one of the most basic gestures. De la Tourette is of course mostly known for the syndrome named after him, and I will return to that condition later on. But first it is important to note the connection that Agamben makes between Tourette's studies on motion, such as his footprint reproductions and the invention of the cinematograph by Muybridge and Marey. Agamben claims that humanity had lost the gesture in the early nineteenth century because they had become frozen in symbolic representation, for instance, the gesture as an expression of moral character in Balzac's work, and given way to the interiority of psychic life (2000, pp. 50–53). Science and cinema, according to Agamben "leads images back to the homeland of gesture" (2000, p. 56).

For Agamben "cinema has its center in the gesture" and therefore it goes beyond aesthetics and "belongs essentially to the realm of ethics and politics" (2000, p. 56). So by focusing on the gesture, a certain ethics and politics of the image is foregrounded. Agamben explains that gesture differs from *action* and from *making*. Gesture stems from the word "gerere", "to carry or to carry on". And thus what characterizes gesture is that something is carried or carried on: something is being endured and supported (2000, p. 57). The gesture as *endurance* breaks with the idea that action (or producing something) needs to have a goal, an end:

Nothing is more misleading for an understanding of gesture, therefore, than representing, on the one hand, a sphere of means as addressing a goal (for example, marching seen as a means of moving the body from point A to point B) and, on the other hand, a separate and superior sphere of gesture as a movement that has its end in itself (for example, dance seen as an aesthetic dimension). [...] If dance is gesture, it is so, rather, because it is nothing more than the endurance and the exhibition of the media character of corporeal movements. *The gesture is the exhibition of mediality: it is the process of making a means visible as such.* It allows the emergence of the being-in-a-medium of human beings and thus it opens the ethical dimension for them. (Agamben, 2000, p. 58)

Human beings in “pure and endless mediality”, that is what gesture relays. Agamben argues that “cinema’s essential ‘silence’ (which is not necessarily related to the presence or absence of a sound track)” shows us the sphere of pure means, the gesturality of human beings (2000, pp. 59–60). “The gesture is essentially always a gesture of not being able to figure out something in language” (2000, p. 59). So the gesture is neither image nor language, but mediation between the two. In this mediation, the gesture also implies a shared endurance in time, a participation in the world in its making, in an endless go-between of things and people. In gesture, we weave the fabric of the world between life and art. Mik’s *Touch, Rise and Fall* can perhaps elucidate what the gesture as endurance and mediality means in concrete art practice.

### Touch, rise and fall

The situation that *Touch, Rise and Fall* makes us encounter is very familiar – at least to post 9/11 humanity in the grip of fear and control. The screens of the two-channel installation are placed on the floor and as visitor we can physically connect to the situations on the screens. We see people at airports, a typical shared “non-place” of contemporary modernity (Augé, 1995). They are waiting, enduring time together (Figure 1). While I



Figure 1. *Touch, Rise and Fall*, two-channel video installation (Mik, 2008).  
Note: Courtesy carrier I gebauer, Berlin.

was sitting on a bench opposite of the work, other visitors sat on the floor for a while, just like the tired passengers at the airport or walked along the line of people in the image. The gestures of walking and of waiting, very literally started to make connections between art and life. We not only recognize the situation but also connect to it due to the way the video installations allow a human scale in the events. The words, “touch, rise and fall”, also indicate this dimension of the gesture that is expressed in this work where there is no total divide between us, the visitors and the actors.

Nor is there an enormous difference between the security officers and the passengers. We see moments where the security officers are “killing time”, fighting playfully with one another; their office space looks like a joyless bedroom in an asylum centre rather than an office. At other moments they pull themselves through the security scanner or they sink on the floor in bored waiting – just like the passengers. But as they put on their blue gloves, this seems to be the cue for stepping into their assigned role and starting to search all luggage. Dolls and stuffed animals bought at the gift shop are considered as suspicious and cut open, an action which seems all the more violent in light of the common humanity that was exposed just moments before. And then, all of a sudden, after all the checking and cutting, everybody is simply allowed to pass through the checkpoints. The alarm lights are all red, but no bag nor body is searched any longer. The security guards stand inoperative, almost mesmerized and no longer able to perform their controlling gestures, perhaps realizing the endlessness of it all.

In these moments we can sense the difference with television programmes such as *Border Security* (Seven Network, Australia, 2004) that has hundreds of episodes in which security personnel are followed at the Australian airport borders, looking for criminals, drug dealers and illegal immigrants. They are actually experts on reading gestures and body language. And they are all doing their jobs in full sincerity. But these television images are no gestures in Agamben’s definition, they remain on the side of representation and more specifically on the side of representing the law. The common gesture of mediated and shared humanity is not given to us. The possibility for resistance is not part of these series. This does not mean that this is not possible on television, but it is not given in *Border Security* where a voice-over explains the rules and regulations and the “blue gloves” never leave the hands of the officers to humanly touch, rise and fall.

### **Middlemen**

Let me move back to the exhibition. From where I was sitting and observing *Touch, Rise and Fall*, I could also see another installation, *Middlemen* from 2001. This work was made before 9/11 and is maybe one of the most well-known works of the exhibition. Here again, the scene is familiar, certainly after 9/11 and the subsequent financial crisis that we are still in. And yet it is eerily strange as well. Here, we see stockbrokers in a crisis situation, not being able to act or make a deal; the only movements left are gestures of the people in the scene: some characters write aimlessly something on their note block; others sit down moving in a stiff way, one man is running back and forth, others have bodily tics or make sudden spasmodic jerking movements (Figure 2).

Again, from my bench I noticed that visitors immediately connected to these movements, some even embodying the intensities of the gestures by imitating the spasms and tics. In the installation itself I was also affected by the sometimes



Figure 2. *Middlemen*, single-channel video installation (Mik, 2001).

Note: Courtesy carrier I gebauer, Berlin.

spasmodic movements of the camera itself, making sudden zoom movements, literally shaking the image. And at one point one of the machines in the middle turns around, uncontrolled by anyone. We have here an ecological crisis landscape where people, objects and technology move on the same level and to which we can connect on an embodied level. In “Notes on Gesture” Agamben addresses this loss of control of motor and speech coordination in Tourette’s syndrome and remarks that after Tourette’s description of the disorder it seemed to have disappeared for decades, only to reappear in the 1970s when Oliver Sacks reports three cases of Tourettism in a few minutes while walking along the streets of New York. He then puts forward the hypotheses that:

in order to explain this disappearance is that in the meantime ataxia (lack of voluntary coordination of muscular movement), tics, and dystonia (abnormal muscle contractions and twisting) had become the norm and that at some point everybody had lost control of their gestures and was walking and gesticulating frantically. (Agamben, 2000, p. 52)

This is where we are in *Middlemen*: a visionary point of view on our current situation where we all seem to have lost control, in any case collectively in the financial world and to which we can only connect by uncontrolled gestures. Upon closer inspection we see that one of the persons is actually a mannequin, a doll figure that imitates the movements of his human double or is it the other way around. Most of the time Mik does not use professional actors and so his characters do not perform in any conventional way. They all seem more like living dolls, puppets that are in the grips of something intolerable.

### Notes on the cinematograph

This style of performing brings Mik's work in relation to a precursor in cinema, the films of Robert Bresson. In his "Notes on the Cinematographer" Bresson reflects in short and powerfully poetic statements about his filmmaking: "your film is not made for a walk of the eyes but to be penetrated by it, to be completely absorbed by it" (Bresson, 1977, p. 97, my translation). We recognize here the connecting, inserting and interfacing power of the sensibility of the gesture. It is impossible to do justice to Bresson's thoughts and observations, but one element is of particular interest in reference to the video installations of Mik. Instead of actors Bresson prefers to talk about "models". Like Mik, he mostly worked with amateurs, actors without acting habits who are able to perform in such a sober and blank way that they lay something bare to the camera that does not seem to belong to themselves, through gesture, excavating inward movements that endure at a deeper level: "If, on screen, the mechanisms disappears and the phrases you have made them say, the gestures you have made them make, have become one with your models, with your film, with you – then a miracle" (Bresson, 1977, pp. 41–42, my translation).

So what Bresson wants to bring out of his models, is an intensity that lies beneath the overload of images that we know, to reveal "the connections that wait beings and things to live" (1977, p. 81, my translation). Bresson's film style is very restraint and his "models" will never express any psychological or dramatic emotions. And yet the "cinematographer" explores a new way of sensing, his style is one of affection-images, as Gilles Deleuze characterized Bresson's films (Deleuze, 1986, pp. 108–111). It is a tactile style, full of hands in close-up and other techniques to make the felt and the gesture primary. For instance, Bresson's last film, *L'Argent* (1983), presents interesting parallels to Mik's style. In *L'Argent*, forged money is around and at the beginning of the film we see how a simple worker, Yvon Targe, is duped by a shopkeeper who has decided to pass on the forged money that he himself accepted earlier that day. Because of the restrained way of filming, every shot in medium close-up fragments filmed spaces and brought out the gestures of the actors more than anything else. Even with sound this is a "silent film" in the sense that Agamben meant in his "Notes on Gesture". The blank performance of the models, in both physical and vocal performance brings out intensity in jerks. Because of the lack of orientation – we never get a full establishing shot that allows spatial orientation – aesthetically these images have a vertiginous effect. Space is composed fragment by fragment. And in this way, precisely because we cannot orientate ourselves, the image becomes affectively expressive, tactile and full of potentiality. As indicated, Deleuze has defined these as affection-images that work directly on our senses first, before they mean anything. This type of constructed space Deleuze calls "any-space-whatever":

Any-space-whatever is not an abstract universal, in all times, in all places. It is a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, the principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. It is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible. (Deleuze, 1986, p. 109)

Back in the exhibition space, watching the puppet-like performances in *Middlemen*, interchanged with looking at *Touch, Rise and Fall*, Bresson's style comes to mind. The dominant use of medium close-ups, often we see only feet or middle parts of the body, as well as the breaking of the image over several screens from different vantage points.

This breaks up and fragments the space, creating a similar affective style that transcends any psychology: characters are not motivated by a cause-and-effect chain but express and impersonal event, a gesture of the world. The “non-place” of the airport then turns into an “any-space-whatevers” full of potentialities. And this gives us the feeling that, in spite of all the control and loss of control, something is still possible, and that a connection can be made. Just like in *L'Argent* some police officers step into a bakery not to arrest somebody but just to buy some baguettes, such kind of a connecting gesture can be made in Mik's world.

Several scenes of *L'Argent* take place in court. Yvon Targe is innocently accused of forging money. He gets away the first time, but because of the scandal loses his job and gets involved in a hold-up. He appears in court a second time, again based on false accusations and ends up in prison. After three years he is released, during which time his little daughter has died, his wife left him. He then makes a conscious choice to become the criminal he was judged to be, kills several people and turns himself in: this time guilty “by choice”.

### Shifting sitting

Thinking of these moments in *L'Argent* the next installation *Shifting Sitting* (2011) presents another court scene.<sup>3</sup> Here, a Berlusconi lookalike figure appears in the benches. The personal and collective dramas of money as presented in *L'Argent* and *Middlemen* have become completely political. In *Shifting Sitting*, we don't have an innocent man who is wrongly convicted and who in turn takes his fate upon him, but we have a guilty man who knows how to shift and bend the media, politics and the law to make him appear innocent. What is more, judges, accused and public take at certain moments each other's places. Many people even chose literally the “mask” of Berlusconi. We could say that perhaps here we have entered in the nightmare of the gesture – where everything connects indeed, and in such an uncontrollable way that money, politics and justice have become unpredictably interchangeable (Figure 3).

In gestural terms we can say that the whole system has become spasmodic, the trias politica, the separate legislative, executive and judicial bodies gone awry. The whole situation seems so surreal that it seems laughable though crying would be more appropriate. Is there a way to wake up from this nightmare? Let us move to the last installation that I would like to discuss, *Communitas* (2010) the centre piece of this exhibition where the questions of politics presents itself again, under the burning question of its possibility, under all these conditions of crisis. In our contemporary age and day, it is still possible to have something “in common?”

### Notes on the political film

In cinema this notion of the common (that binds “the people”) has found its expression in political cinema. Here I am referring again to the cinema books of Gilles Deleuze where he remarks that the political film, such as the Russian revolution films of Eisenstein, has changed. The biggest modern political filmmakers – Deleuze situates modern cinema after Second World War, starting with Italian neo-realism ranging from Alain Resnais to the Egyptian films of Yousef Chahine and Palestinian films of Michel Khleifi – have this in common: they know how to show “the people”, who are always present in classic political cinema and also “what is missing” (Deleuze, 1989, p. 215). This is the first big difference with classical and modern political cinema. In Soviet



Figure 3. *Shifting Sitting*, three-channel video installation (Mik, 2011).  
 Note: Courtesy carlier I gebauer, Berlin.

cinema, but also in American cinema (Ford, Vidor) there are people. In all the colonized parts of the world, too, at the beginning of the decolonization struggles after Second World War there is “a people” that can be addressed in order to raise emancipatory consciousness. But this does not last for long: the euphoria of independence changes soon into disappointments about dictatorships, crisis and migration. And so the acknowledgement of a people who are missing becomes the new basis on which political cinema is founded: “Art, and especially cinematographic art, must take part in this task: not that of addressing a people, which is presupposed already there, but of contributing to the invention of a people” (Deleuze, 1989, p. 217).

The second big difference with classical political cinema is that the political and the private are no longer separate. “[I]n modern political cinema, where no boundary survives to provide a minimum distance: the private affair merges with the social or political immediate” (Deleuze, 1989, p. 218). And so, raising awareness and revolution is no longer the basis of political cinema. No longer is it a “becoming conscious” that makes a film political. Rather political cinema consists of

putting everything into a trance, the people and its masters, and the camera itself, pushing everything into a state of aberration, in order to communicate violence as well as to make private business pass into the political, and political affairs into the private. (Deleuze, 1989, p. 219)

Showing these conditions of the impossible is what constitutes the modern political film.

The third difference that Deleuze distinguishes is related to the fact that the people only exist in the condition of minority, which is why they are missing. The modern

political film has been created on this fragmentation, this break-up of the people. We get shattered states of emotions or drives, a plurality of stories and intertwined lives. One of the consequences is that individuals get a different, more gestural in Agamben's words, relation to the world: no longer one of representation but of resonance, of contact between inside and out, between the private and political. In Deleuze's words:

Communication of the world and the I in a fragmented world and in a fragmented I which are constantly being exchanged. It is as if the whole memory of the world is set down on the oppressed people, and the whole memory of the I comes into play [...] The arteries of the people to which I belong, or people of my arteries. (Deleuze 1989, p. 221)

The last words are a reference to director Yousef Chahine's embodied relation to Alexandria ('Alexandria-I, I-Alexandria' in the Alexandria Trilogy: *Alexandria ... Why?* (1979); *An Egyptian Story* (1982) and *Alexandria Again and Forever* (1989)).

The final difference between classic and modern political film is that the author/filmmaker/artist needs to decolonize all kinds of myth, and becomes a sort of intercessor, becoming part of his film:

The author takes a step towards his characters, but the characters take a step towards the author: double becoming. Story-telling is not an impersonal myth, but neither is it a personal fiction: it is a word in act, a speech-act (or a performance) through which the character continually crosses the boundaries which would separate his private business from politics, and which itself produces collective utterances. (Deleuze 1989, p. 222)

So what we see here is that the modern political film does not produce "the myth of a past people" even though everything is permeated with memories, but it produces "the story-telling" or performance of "a people to come" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 223). The work of art creates itself as a foreign language in a dominant language, precisely in order to express an impossibility of living under domination. So let me make all this more concrete with an example of a modern political film, to point out the connections to both the work and style of Bresson and the video installations of Aernout Mik.

Elia Suleiman's trilogy on 'the Palestinian situation', *Chronical of a Disappearance* (1996), *Divine Intervention* (2002) and *The Time that Remains* (2009), very powerfully shows what the modern political film entails. Far from making cinema a matter of representing the people, a raising of consciousness, he shows that the modern political film is made under conditions of the impossible. Elsewhere I discuss these films more elaborately (Pisters, 2012), but for now it is important to see how as director Suleiman, as a silent witness, walking, observing, waiting, in his films, becomes part of their performance: a mutual becoming of the filmmaker, his characters and the world. The film and the filmmaker, insert themselves quite literally in the fabric of fiction and reality, which is not an impersonal myth and nor purely his personal story. Rather he performs a silent embodied, endured, engaged gesture as a sort of Bressonian model. In a striking scene, some Israeli soldiers shout through their megaphone to some dancing youngsters, who simply ignore the commands. But while commanding, the soldier's body cannot help moving to the rhythm of the music. What we sense is a mutual sharing of rhythms and intensities of life, a mutual becoming, even of "oppressor" and "oppressed". It is this affective level of a common humanity that Bresson searches in his style as well. The film in itself – as film – is political because it becomes part of the invention of a people. It exists, not just as a fantasy but operates as a material/immaterial gesture between the possible and the impossible.

### Communitas

I think we have already seen, for instance in *Touch, Rise and Fall* and in the way that visitors of the exhibition embody the affects and gestures of the people on the screens, how Mik's work follows a poetics of the modern political film. While all of Mik's installations are political in this sense of the gestures, the fabrics of the world that we share, *Communitas* refers even more explicitly to the idea of "the people". Set in the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, this building that was a gift of Stalin to the Polish people in the 1950s, was used for party meetings. However, while the location is very specific, the space is fragmented over several screens and the causes or aims of the meetings are undefined (Figure 4). What we see is not a political meeting with an aim or a programme but a people in the making through gesture, as a pure means, as a "Means without End" (Agamben, 2000). Quite literally, *Communitas* presents as a gesture as/of a shared feeling of resistance. Or, again quite literally, as a gesture as endurance in Agamben's sense: the video installation has a duration that invites visitors to participate in the endurance of the political gesture. The people on screen in the rally also eat there, and fall asleep.

Or, perhaps they have not fallen asleep – but have died. The image stays persistently open to all these possibilities, including the violence that is implied. The motionless bodies in red velvet chairs recall the virtuality of our collective memory that is implied in all of Mik's images: we all remember the horrific images of Chechen rebels and hostages that died in their red theatre chairs of a Moscow theatre in 2002 through the violence and the poisonous gas that was used to break the resistance. We cannot help seeing that violent dimension of the images as well, that violent dimension of the political gesture.



Figure 4. *Communitas*, three-channel video installation (Mik, 2010).  
Note: Courtesy carrier I gebauer, Berlin.

And yet, under the conditions of the people that are missing, it is the “performative energy”, as Aernout Mik refers to his work in the exhibition catalogue, and of the possibility of any kind or form of resistance that we share here in the work (Mik in Milewski, 2011, p. 211). Or to quote him more fully:

There are all these streams of action that suddenly crystallize into a certain moment, like the possibility of resistance by the people. These appear almost like after-images that viewers carry with them and which can develop into their own cells of possibility. They offer something, and that’s how I want to work. That’s why it’s political, even if few people in the political world would have any idea how to relate to my work. (Mik, 2013, p. 4)

### Insurgence

In 2012, in Montreal, in the wake of the global occupation movements, students in Montreal protested for seven months, everyday and every night against the raise of tuition fees for higher education. In the end they did win, although maybe not for long. However, what was more important, what made this movement and this film political is the collective gesture of resistance, the shared affective energy that, in the words of Aernout Mik could be even called an erotics of the group:

an erotic sameness in which members of the group are all equally part of that group and physically engaged with each other or determined by each other. There is something that connects and spreads through the group and sometimes spreads from people into objects, creating a kind of animism. (Mik, 2013, p. 3)

This is what we can feel and endure in the collective film *Insurgence* which was made by the Collective Cinema Epopee, 2012. But this is what also can be sensed as the political gestures of the people at the squares in the Arab world, in the park in Turkey, in the streets of Brazil.<sup>4</sup>

And this is what we can feel in the work of Aernout Mik. In the exhibition space as a collective space, we start to connect to the people on the screens – each one of us on his or her own way, taking out new images or new perceptions on known images, and perhaps some energy for our own gesture of resistance whenever possible or necessary. Aernout Mik as a “political filmmaker” in his own singular way shows us that art and life are made of the same gestures where the common can be found. In a way we are all Bressonian models, knowing or at least sensing that “life cannot be rendered by photographic recopying of life, but by the secret laws in the midst of which [we] can feel models [ourselves as models] moving” (Bresson, 1977, p. 77). Here, we have the landscape of a political ecology where everything connects.

What struck me upon leaving the exhibition space was that the silence of the works, also made the visitors silent – the exhibition space felt like a church, all I heard was sometimes somebody coughing, some whispers, footsteps every now and then. But in this collective space, there is no priest, no leader pointing the way – all there is, are images as gestures, and gestures as images to connect to in a thousand different ways. Leaving the museum, the images of the installations still returning in my mind, I felt like having been a “model” in a political film.

## Notes

1. The exhibition *Communitas* took place between 4 May and 25 August 2013 at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. This article was initially conceived for the Public Programme alongside the exhibition. See <http://www.stedelijk.nl/agenda/tentoonstelling-aernout-mik-communitas>. Commissioned by Teatr Dramatyczny, Warsaw and the Biennial de Sao Paulo with additional support from the Mondriaanfonds.
2. *Raw Footage* (2006) and *Convergencies* (2007) that are made from found documentary material from among others Reuters and ITN are with sound.
3. Commission by Jeu de Paume, Paris; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; additional support by the Mondriaanfonds, the Netherlands Filmfund and the European Cultural Foundation.
4. I am referring here to the Arab Spring revolution on the Tahrir Square in Cairo on 2011, the Gezi park demonstrations on the Taksim Square in Istanbul in 2013 and the social protests in Sao Paulo, Rio and other Brazilian cities in 2013.

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