

Misdirect Movies explores new possibilities of collage, through artist's use of imagery gleaned from the cinematic. With access to the internet and the digitalisation of film, artists are now able to appropriate films to create different and innovative approaches to collage. The artists in the exhibition touch on the Quixotic — a slippage of reality and illusion — to re-present and re-employ the content of mainstream feature films. Placed together within the gallery context the artworks create a kind of hybridised 'cinematic' experience.

The catalogue is a continuation of the overriding theme of collage incorporating: newly commissioned contextual essays; installation images and reproductions of individual artist's work; glimpses of artistic process through studio images and reprinted influential texts.

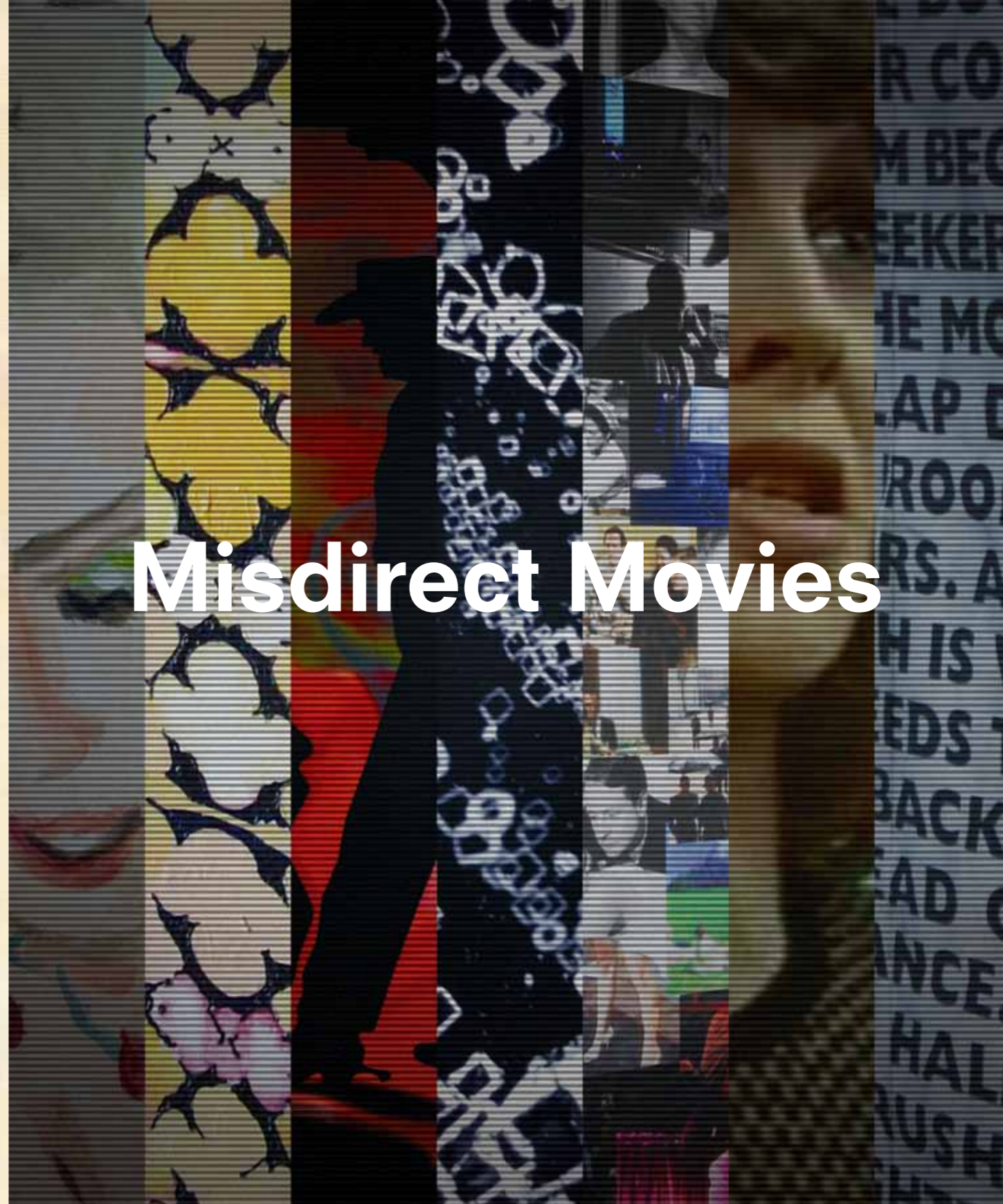


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ISBN 978-0-9569571-5-3

www.misdirectmovies.co.uk

Misdirect Movies Andrew Bracey and John Rimmer

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Misdirect Movies

Curated by Andrew Bracey
and John Rimmer

Rosa Barba
Andrew Bracey
Dave Griffiths
Cathy Lomax
Elizabeth McAlpine
David Reed
John Rimmer

The Royal Standard, Liverpool
16 — 31 March 2013

Standpoint Gallery, London
5 July — 3 August 2013

Greyfriars, Lincoln
4 — 26 October 2013

Meter Room, Coventry
8 November — 1 December 2013

Below: Installation view, *The Royal Standard*
Right: Giorgio Agamben, *The Six Most Beautiful Minutes in the History of Cinema*



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CHAPTER TEN

**The Six Most Beautiful Minutes in
the History of Cinema**

Sancho Panza enters a cinema in a provincial city. He is looking for Don Quixote and finds him sitting off to the side, staring at the screen. The theater is almost full; the balcony – which is a sort of giant terrace – is packed with raucous children. After several unsuccessful attempts to reach Don Quixote, Sancho reluctantly sits down in one of the lower seats, next to a little girl (Dulcinea?), who offers him a lollipop. The screening has begun; it is a costume film: on the screen, knights in armor are riding along. Suddenly, a woman appears; she is in danger. Don Quixote abruptly rises, unsheaths his sword, rushes toward the screen, and, with several lunges, begins to shred the cloth. The woman and the knights are still visible on the screen, but the black slash opened by Don Quixote's sword grows ever larger, implacably devouring the images. In the end, nothing is left of the screen, and only the wooden structure supporting it remains visible. The outraged audience leaves the theater, but the children on the balcony continue their fanatical cheers for Don Quixote. Only the little girl down on the floor stares at him in disapproval.

What are we to do with our imaginations? Love them and believe in them to the point of having to destroy and falsify

them (this is perhaps the meaning of Orson Welles's films). But when, in the end, they reveal themselves to be empty and unfulfilled, when they show the nullity of which they are made, only then can we pay the price for their truth and understand that Dulcinea—whom we have saved—cannot love us.

CHAPTER ONE: C

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2. See Friedrich
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CHAPTER TWO: I

1. See Walte
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2, 1927-1934, ed
trans. Rodney Lā
1999), p. 798.

Break On Through To The Other Side

Andrew Bracey

Orson Welles' unfinished version of *Don Quixote* was possibly his most personal project. Over the space of three decades the script was continuously revised, with filming taking place around the globe; as a result the cast aged or were replaced. In this way, *Don Quixote* could be viewed as a patchwork collage of a film, both in its manufacture and fragmented unfinished form.

Cervantes' masterpiece is widely credited as being the first modern novel; in turn Welles recognised the postmodern qualities inherent in the text and amplified them in his film. The setting of the film in the present day, whilst retaining the seventeenth century garb of the main characters, most significantly articulates this. In a recently discovered scene (**Rosenbaum**) a distressed Quixote enters a cinema and leaps onto the stage to chivalrously fight with celluloid soldiers in a misguided attempt to rescue a damsel in distress (fig. 1). The audience reacts in a riotous manner as Quixote destroys the screen as he slashes away at it with his sword. Cinema's power to suspend disbelief (**Harbord**) is both perfectly encapsulated and deconstructed in Quixote's confusion over image replacing reality. This scene, Giorgio Agamben's related essay *The Six Most Beautiful Minutes in the History of Cinema* and the imaginary films of Max Castle in Theodore Roszak's novel, *Flicker* (both texts reprinted here) reflect and have inspired the somewhat quixotic curatorial tone of *Misdirect Movies*.



Fig. 1

(**Jonathan Rosenbaum**) "It seems to me that as a fragment, it speaks as itself very eloquently and it also seems to capture the essence of Cervantes" ¹

(**Janet Harbord**) "What the character of Don Quixote has done is to expose the structure that supports the function and experience of cinema: the projector, the screen, the frame, in short what film theorists have for some time called the apparatus." ²

(**Michel Foucault**) "Don Quixote must remain faithful to the book that he has now become in reality; he must protect it from errors, from counterfeits, from apocryphal sequels; he must fill in the details that have been left out; he must preserve its truth." ³

(**Dorothea Von Hantlemann**) "Compared to the theatre or a concert, or a church mass for that matter, the format of the exhibition introduced a highly flexible format, with flexible forms of usage (which also meant that people can decide for themselves the extent to which they want to become involved)." ⁴

(**Caroline Douglas**) "Cinema and film techniques have remained key elements in collage, both for the repository of material they represent and for the, potentially subversive, visual vocabulary of the physical manipulation of film. Splicing, jump-cutting, superimposing — all forms of film editing relate directly to the modes of collage." ⁵

(**Paul Young**) "Yet the very notion of collage is somewhat problematic for cinema since film is by nature a time-based medium that can only present shots in sequence as opposed to all at once... But if collage can be defined as a process of using real, found objects in the

In many ways Welles and Quixote could be seen as paralleled idealist figures. In the second part of Cervantes' novel, Quixote must retain a sense of authenticity in the face of absurdity and adversity (**Foucault**). Arguably Welles became a parody of himself in later life, taking on numerous lesser parts in films and adverts, in order to raise money to make the films he wanted to make. He trusted no major film studio with *Don Quixote* or other personal projects, especially after the unsatisfactory editing of *Touch of Evil* by Universal Studios that was ironically achieved as a result of Welles filming scenes for *Don Quixote* in Mexico.

By the end of Welles' life there was over 300,000 feet of film of *Don Quixote*, much of it in a very raw, silent form. Very little of it had even begun to have been sorted into any order. In many ways it was a project that spiralled out of control by Welles' ambition for it. This dilemma must be common to many filmmakers, and also to artists who scour the archive of cinema in order to create works of art.

I interpret Welles' *Don Quixote* scene in the cinema of being indicative of his overall relationship to cinema. I suggest he was a film director who wanted to reinvent film and to do this he slashed away at the 'baggage' of previous films and the studio system that dominated (American) cinema of the time. It could be argued that canonical artists (Cezanne, Picasso, Schwitters, Duchamp, Warhol) have similarly battled with what existed before in order to progress art, in what could be interpreted as quixotic art practices.

In a sad twist of fate Welles' *Don Quixote* has been released posthumously in a version that has been critically panned, largely due to the editing of exploitation film director, Jess Franco. The project that arguably meant the most to Welles has ended up, at least for now, in a form unrecognisable from the potential brilliance of the scene featuring Quixote's battle with the celluloid soldiers and by extension cinema itself.

The artists in *Misdirect Movies* all make work that uses images and footage gleaned from cinema and film. The artwork included pushes at new possibilities of collage, through diverse media. The idea of collage is extended into the changing selection of artworks and overall tone (**Von Hantlemann**) of the exhibition, as it moves from venue to venue and this essay's parallel cluster of quotes. Montage and collage (**Douglas**) have long been intrinsically interrelated and the digital revolution has recently opened up myriad avenues for both filmmakers and artists (**Young**) in this regard. Building on Duchamp's legacy of the readymade, factors such as the ability to pause and grab from a DVD (**Mulvey**) or the wealth of information (**Colomina**) readily available on the web have allowed existing images to come to the fore as a medium to use by artists. The principles of collage or sampling have, arguably, become the defining principle of recent art, with countless artists appropriating material to reconfigure and shift meaning to create new artworks.

picture plane (à la Picasso), one could argue that the found footage film, where pre-existing material is appropriated and transformed through montage and juxtaposition is the cinema's equivalent." ⁶



Fig. 2

(**Laura Mulvey**) "The pensive spectator who pauses the image with new technologies may bring to the cinema the resonance of the still photograph, the association with death usually concealed by the film's movement, its particularly strong inscription of the index. These reflections are not lost when the film is returned to movement. On the contrary, they continue and deflect the film's sense of 'past-ness'. And the 'pensive' spectator ultimately returns to the inseparability of stillness from movement and flow: in Bellor's words, 'two kinds of time blend together'." ⁷

(**Beatriz Colomina**) "We are surrounded today, everywhere, all the time, by arrays of multiple, simultaneous images — in the street, at airports, shopping centres, and gyms; but also on our computers and television sets. The idea of a single image commanding our attention has faded away. It seems as if we

Like the majority of the artists in the exhibition, Elizabeth McAlpine mines the archive of cinema to create artworks. A forensic approach is coupled with a consistent economy of means, as she looks to the simplest way of resolving her ideas. *Light Readings: 1500 Cinematic Explosions* is perhaps the most colourful monochrome imaginable, with 1500 whites digitally sutured (**Burgin**) together in time. The brightest moments from a selection of films have been rendered inert as isolated images by the removal of the original explosive context, only for a pulsing power to be reinstated by the frantic movement and the crackly soundtrack.

A similar sensitivity to her craft is equally visible in McAlpine's condensing of *Don't Look Now*. By filming someone watching the film the artist was able to carefully note and retain every moment of Nicolas Roeg's masterpiece that was missed by a viewer's blink, whilst stripping away the footage technically seen. The logic of this conceptual gesture allows for a strangely harmonious (time-based) collage, whilst also removing the tension that was so essential to the original narrative. This perhaps pre-empts a generation that increasingly views films on mobile devices and in snapshot scenes on YouTube.

Conversely all the footage from a more traditional form of the highlight, the trailer, is kept in *The Fly* (fig. 2) and yet the imagery is removed. The two minutes of 35mm film have been cut, frame-by-frame, on the projectionist splicer to create a minimalist column. There is a strange contradiction between the denial of the hidden imagery and the potency contained in this monolith.

Cathy Lomax's *Film Diary* is an on-going painted database that reflects her nostalgic love for cinema (**Michon**). Every film watched by Lomax is carefully recorded in a notebook, with each dissected into moments significant to the artist. These are accompanied by a short phrase, which later work their way onto the bottom of the paintings.

These grabbed images are printed and pinned in the studio, within a grid (fig. 3). Often multiple possibilities for each film remain open on the studio wall, as the decision over which image works best with the others in the grouping is refined. The frozen frames from each film are combined with 11 other images (**Rohdie**) in the group to create potential meta-narratives, expanded from the 12 original films. The viewer is rewarded by the alchemic transmutation of film imagery into paintings, which reflect an obvious passion for and knowledge of cinema.

This love for cinema is present in my own work in the exhibition. *The Six Most Beautiful Minutes in the History of Cinema* offers a bewilderingly cacophony of iconic stills from films (**Newhall**). The evolution of film history is presented on mass, from the Lumière's *La Sortie des usines Lumière à Lyon* through French New Wave to

need to be distracted in order to concentrate, as if we — all of us living in this new kind of space, the space of information — could be diagnosed en masse with attention deficit disorder." ⁸

(**Victor Burgin**) "The arrival of the domestic video cassette recorder, and the distribution of industrially produced films on videotape, put the material substrate of the narrative into the hands of the audience. The order of narrative could now be routinely countermanded. For example, control of the film by means of VCR allows such symptomatic freedoms as the repetition of a favourite sequence, or fixation upon an obsessional image. The subsequent arrival of digital video editing on 'entry level' personal computers exponentially expanded the range of possibilities for dismantling and reconfiguring the once inviolable objects offered by narrative cinema. Moreover even the most routine and non-resistant practice of 'zapping' through films shown on television now offers the sedentary equivalent of Breton's and Vaché's ambulatory *dérive*." ⁹



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

the latest Oscar winners; and from a diverse geography, from India to Thailand to Cuba. Each film is treated equally, irrespective of profit, taste or awards, and in turn, our brains seek to make sense of the mass by recognising the familiar. In the wall-sized digital print version, the images compete across space that the audience scans (**Campany**) with the eyes wandering almost like termites (**Farber**) scattering all over the image. In the earlier film incarnation, an infuriating pulsing of images fly by relentlessly, like the famous scene from Abel Gance's *La Roue* (**Cousins**).

An earlier work, *Frames* (fig. 4), saw single insignificant moments from various films painted onto 35mm film-strip, in an effort to release them as images from restraints of the narrative. They are displayed on mass in the order of the 'best of' lists that I used to make my selection and, similarly to Lomax's configurations, they can conjure up other potential narratives by this placement. In *The Jump*, each frame from *La Jetée* (famously made up of still black and white photographs) is transformed into intensely coloured oil paintings before being placed into a timeframe that matches Chris Marker's original film. In my silent version, the narrative appears somewhat fractured and nonsensical; becoming akin to a walk around a gallery. In this case the audience's time in front of each painting is dictated by Marker's editing, as opposed to the habits of the viewer. In this way the paintings become a moving collage of imagery.

David Reed's paintings have literally inhabited iconic films; he famously inserted (**Ryan**) two of his paintings into Judy and Scottie's bedrooms from Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. The black outline of the doorway (**Deleuze**) in Reed's *The Searchers* (**Reed**) is a constant stillness that frames the shifting image of the silhouetted figures and scrolling landscape of his painted marks, which stand in for Monument Valley. Curiously Reed visited this iconic location to paint *en plein-air* in the late 1960's at a time when he shifted away from the landscape

(**Alex Michon**) "Lomax's resulting mini mise-en-scene melodramas are both depictions of an ongoing love letter to film and a deferred psychological form of self portraiture. As she says, the choices she makes from the depictions of someone else's lives, 'say something about me and probably define me at this moment in time as much as anything could'." ¹⁰

(**Sam Rohdie**) "The mini-narratives are arbitrary and necessary: arbitrary because there is no evident connection between the images in a given narrative; necessary, because once the images are grouped there appears to be a connection (causation, linearity)." ¹¹

(**Beaumont Newhall**) "To examine individual stills is to see only parts of a whole, the words of a sentence, the notes of a bar of music. Enlargements from actual cinema film often have remarkable force; this may be due to the fact that from so vast a choice of pictures, the most effective arrangement can be chosen." ¹²

(**David Campany**) "Barthes was interested in the idea that the mechanically recorded image, filmic or otherwise, contains more potential meaning than can ever be accounted for. In cinema we do not see excess, since the individual images are not there long enough for us to contemplate them. Imagine a cinema audience watching a narrative film. At any one moment most eyes will be focused on just one portion of the screen, usually a face or something on the move. Given just a single frame to look at, the gaze will begin to drift around the image in more individual ways. Eyes and mind can wander, chancing upon details beyond the conscious intention of the director or performers." ¹³

(**Manny Farber**) The most inclusive description of the art is that, termite-like it feels its way through walls of particularization, with no sign that the artist has any object in mind other than eating away the immediate boundaries of his art,

tradition towards the expansion of (abstract) painting, (**Danto**) informed by the language of cinema.

There is an analogue attitude to Reed's work, but mapped onto a curiously digital feel; these are paintings which look like they are made in Photoshop when seen reproduced on the screen or in print and could only have been made by hand when seen in the flesh. I would argue that Reed has a collage affinity within each of his richly distinctive canvases. Elements appear to float within each composition, as transplanted from another canvas, perhaps akin to the layer feature in Photoshop, but infinitely more complex. *The Searchers* appears to inhabit this space between the painterly and the digital in an exemplary manner; there is confusion over what is created in the 'real-world' and what in the digital. There is also a sly nod to the painterly possibilities of creating worlds within films with the use of CGI, whilst maintaining a wonder in the majesty of landscapes captured by celluloid in films such as Ford's masterpiece.

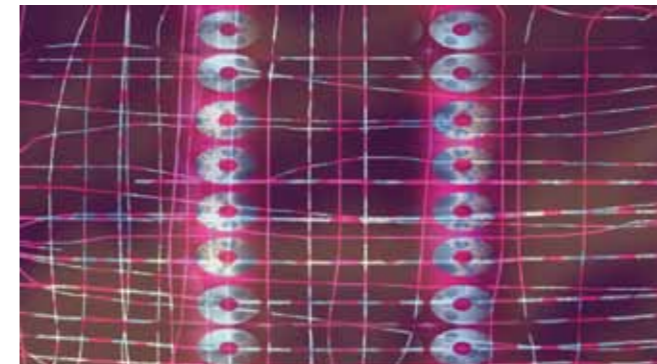


Fig. 5

John Rimmer's interest in film is matched by a cynicism of the structures that surround the industry. His work nods towards this darker side by his use of footage appropriated (**Bourriaud**) not only from films, but alongside associated imagery of advertising, war and pornography. These later issues (in)directly feed and sustain the cinematic machine. Rimmer's films similarly keep the imagery lurking in the background, there if you dig a little, but safely hidden from surface viewing. In pieces such as *Derivatives* (fig. 5) and *Conveyer* the recognisability of the footage Rimmer initially grabbed is overwhelmed by the compression, juxtaposition and shifting of the image into moving, digital, abstract paintings. In a further development some films are translated into paintings, such as *In My Room #2*, where the imagery is further distorted by the brush and the decisions in the painter's studio.

The hand is also visible in many of the digital works created by grabbing footage and image, to render and rotoscope the data. I would argue that Rimmer is in a lineage that can be traced back

and turning these boundaries into conditions of the next achievement." ¹⁴

(**Mark Cousins**) "These single frames were just one twenty-fourth of a second in length. When viewed on the cinema screen in real time, they rush past in a disorienting blur. Gance knew that each could not be seen clearly by the audience, but wanted to give the impression of panic in his main character, the sense of perception and feeling accelerating intolerably. The scene was revolutionary and caused artist, poet and filmmaker, Jean Cocteau to say "There is cinema before and after *La Roue*, just as there is painting before and after Picasso." ¹⁵

(**David Ryan**) "Reed sets up possible vampiric, parasitic relationships with such mediated images. Through digitally inserting his own paintings into video footage of these films, they become one fictional image within, and amongst, a host of others." ¹⁶

(**Gilles Deleuze**) "Doors, windows, box office windows, skylights, car windows, mirrors, are all frames within frames. The great directors have particular affinities with particular secondary, tertiary, etc. frames. And it is this dovetailing of frames that the parts of the set or of the closed system are separated, but also converge and are reunited." ¹⁷

(**David Reed**) "When I was painting, I kept imagining ways to break open the space to see what would leak out. In *The Searchers*, I love the scene behind the cave when John Wayne is cut open with a knife to remove an Indian arrow he's been shot with, because it represents the breaking open of his image as well as the space." ¹⁸

(**Arthur C. Danto**) "It is a practice in which painters no longer hesitate to situate their paintings by means of devices which belong to another media — sculpture, video, film, installation and the like. The degree to which

to Méliès; of a magician-like figure playing with layers of moving imagery. The impossible reality of the space in both Rimmer and Méliès' films, gives way to a delight in the imaginative and the fantastical that recalls the imaginary films of Max Castle. The floating philosopher and theorist's heads that hover around the footage from *Annie Get Your Gun* in *Interference*, could be seen as being like the aliens zapped by umbrellas in *Trip to the Moon*.

There is a similar tenuous kinship between Charles and Ray Eames' iconic *Power of 10* and Dave Griffiths' detection and use of the now redundant projectionist's cue dots (Palmer). Each plays with scale and what can transpire when you look just that bit harder. The *Griffiths Cue-Dot Observatory* has resulted in a diversity of media in his works, including films, solarplate prints, light boxes and even a microfiche viewer. In *Columbarium* (fig. 6) the grid of 'frozen' frames, (Barthes) can be slowly or quickly scanned over. The viewer directly re-activates a movement that has been removed in Griffiths' collection of still images; this is far from a deathly archive of image. (Cubitt)

A new work, *Views from Inner Space*, shifts from an archivist or astronomer-like approach, to that of a biologist or forensic scientist's study of the microscopic. Griffiths has created magical digital collages viewed on slides through a microscope. *Views from Inner Space* is inspired by late Victorian slide-mounters, who created magnificent and elaborate arrangements of tiny objects. This work again magnifies Griffiths work's empathy with *Power of 10*.

Rosa Barba has been creating a secondary printed archive since 2004 to accompany her more familiar celluloid and projector works. *Printed Cinema* (fig. 7) offers a glimpse into the research process that surrounds her films, whilst also acting as a stand-alone document. Each of the 13 issues produced so far has a different tone and feel and is essentially nomadic in nature. Sometimes they relate directly to exhibitions or film works and sometimes the relationship is more abstract or seemingly ambiguous.



Fig. 7



Fig. 6

painters like Reed are eager to do this is evidence of how far painters have departed from the aesthetic orthodoxy of modernism.”¹⁹

(Nicolas Bourriaud) “When we start a search engine in pursuit of a name or a subject, a mass of information issued form a labyrinth of databanks is inscribed on the screen. The “semionaut” imagines the links, the likely relations between disparate sites. A sampler, a machine that reprocesses musical products, also implies constant activity; to listen to records becomes work in itself, which diminishes the dividing line between reception and practice, producing new cartographies of knowledge. This recycling of sounds, images and forms implies incessant navigation within the meanderings of cultural history, navigation which itself becomes the subject of artistic practice.”²⁰

(Judith Palmer) “If the cue dot marks a point of transition in a movie (from one reel to another), Griffiths' cue dot filmworks mark a point of transition in film history.”²¹

Printed Cinema offers an intriguing way of returning film in a texturally rich manner (Vishmidt) to the page format from which it usually starts in the scriptwriter's hand. Like a script they also open up different possibilities for reading Barba's films, adding further layers of context and meaning. Intriguingly in the context of this exhibition they offer a different possibility for reading film (or even asking whether you can read a book cinematically). The reader can edit together their own take, by the time they take or the order they turn the pages. This order can be changed and becomes a form of collage.

In 1927, Esfir Shub directed and edited *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*, which is regarded as the first instance of a film using material gleaned from (hundreds of) other films, including newsreels and home movies. Shub unearthed and rescued these from damp cellars and other neglected corners of the Soviet Union and spliced them into a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts. In much the same way *Misdirect Movies* can be read as a collage of an exhibition, incorporating artists that in turn are testing the idea of what collage can be. Each start with found footage, captured in diverse ways and then, like Welles' version of *Don Quixote*, slash and break the imagery of cinema to create new possibilities. I believe that each artist uses the footage to interrogate cinema in interesting and intelligent ways to create works of art, that are a far cry from Jess Franco misguided use of Welles' vast amount of footage for *Don Quixote*.

(Roland Barthes) “The still, by instituting a reading that is at once instantaneous and vertical, scorns logical time (which is only operational time); it teaches us how to disassociate the technical constraint from what is the specific filmic and which is the ‘indescribable’ meaning.”²²

(Sean Cubitt) “As divine and changeless present, the frameline as we see it in those lightbox displays cannot act but can only be. A gallery exhibition of motionless frames is like a museum case of pinned butterflies: lovely but dead.”²³

(Marina Vishmidt) “As the book is deemed to be the home of narrative, so *Printed Cinema* adopts that format only to displace it from its likely paths, reshaping the shards of word and image from the films into provisional stillness.”²⁴

Notes

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