Post-what? Post-when? A conversation on the 'Posts' of post-media and post-cinema

De Rosa, M & Hediger, V

Post-what? Post-when?
A Conversation on the 'Posts' of Post-media and Post-cinema

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Abstract

The text retraces the current debate around the notions of post-cinema and post-media. Employing a dialogic approach, the editors propose a theoretical framework to provide context for the main contributions on these topics published in recent years, highlighting the conceptual connections to the previous scholarship. The resulting reflection serves as a platform to introduce and situate the contributions to this special issue. In particular, the editors propose to use the term configuration to account for the various aspects and facets of contemporary cinematic experience.

The idea for this special issue of *Cinema&Cié* came out of a dialogue. Having both worked on questions of post-media and post-cinema for some time, and for a time in the same institution, we found that one point where our interests intersected was the question of temporality, i.e. the contours of the historical break suggested by the prefix 'post-'. Usually, productive intersections involve twists, negotiations, or even jolts. As befits the object of study, our exchange saw our perspectives converge, but also deviate, sometimes clash and ultimately interweave.

This is why we decided to preserve a dialogic approach to introduce the questions provocatively posed by the title of this special issue, and the answers given by our authors. The six essays, which we had the privilege of selecting from among an impressive number of exciting proposals, offer a good survey of the current state of the debate. We want to present this special issue as an opportunity to expand the dialogue and include a variety of different perspectives on the temporality of the 'post-' in post-media and post-cinema. We hope the reader will find our exchange as productive, engaging and poignant as we felt it was when we prepared it.

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mdr: I should probably start by asking you what you think post-cinema is. Instead, I will begin with a confession. I have been working on 'post-cinema' for a while now: much has been written on the topic, many, diverse voices have contributed to set in motion what I genuinely feel is an extremely stimulating debate.[1] Yet, after all that has been said and written, I am still not quite sure what post-cinema is.

Is the shift from cinema to post-cinema solely a question of what we might call the 'nature' of the medium? Is it determined by its material support and, therefore, by the technological element? Is post-cinema a broader term that describes the fact that — borrowing from Rodowick[2] — the film has entered its 'virtual life'? Or again, is it about the aesthetic changes that we can observe in much of the contemporary cinematography? Or maybe a combination of both? Not to mention other vital aspects of cinema and their most recent transformations, such as distribution, spectatorship, etc.

To be honest, I am not sure post-cinema is about film at all. In fact, I would argue that cinema is not only about film either. Conversely, I suspect that the ontological interpretation of post-cinema (to which I also adhered, at first) is based upon a sense of permanence and immobility which I now think is inherently extraneous to cinema. To some extent, Shane Denson's essay which opens our edited special issue implicitly addresses this point, in that the reflection on the speculative nature of post-cinema he proposes focuses solely on computational images and elaborates on the material engagement of media in a 'discorrelated' present. As a phenomenological object, cinema of course needs 'a body' delimited by a tangible skin (be it the film strip, as in the beautiful pages written by Laura U. Marks and somewhat echoed by the texts by Sabrina Negri and Rachel Schaff included in this volume, or the threshold of the red velvet curtains we have so often crossed to enter the movie-theater).[3] Yet the idea of cinema is not

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[1] Among the most recent and influential works, please refer at least to *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st Century Film*, ed. by Shane Denson and Julia Leyda (Falmer: Reframe Books, 2016); Félix Guattari, 'Vers une ère post-média', *Terminal*, 51 (1990), trans. into English as 'Towards a Post-Media Era', in *Provocative Alloys: A Post-media Anthology*, ed. by Clemens Apprich and others (Lüneburg: Post-Media Lab; London: Mute Books, 2013), pp. 26–27; Rosalind Krauss, *'A Voyage on the North Sea'. Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1999); Lev Manovich, 'Post-Media Aesthetics', <www.manovich.net/DOCS/Post_media_aesthetics1.doc> [accessed 20 October 2016]; Chris McCrea, 'Explosive, Expulsive, Extraordinary: The Excess of Animated Bodies', *Animation*, 3.1 (2008), 9–24; Steve Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect* (New York: Zero Books, 2010); Peter Weibel, 'Die Postmediale Kondition', in *Die Postmediale Kondition*, ed. by Elisabeth Fiedler, Elisabeth Fiedler, Christa Steinle and Peter Weibel (Neue Galerie Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum: Graz, 2005), pp. 6-13, trans. into English as 'The Post-Media Condition', *Postmedia Condition* (Madrid: Centro Cultural Conde Duque, 2006). <http://www.medialabmadrid.org/medialab/medialab.php?l=0&a=a&i=329> [accessed 20 October 2016].
[2] D. N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).
[3] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000); on the red velvet curtains delimiting the movie-

about permanence and immobility. It is a powerful repository of memory and an archive of the past, but it is in that which enlivens memory and the past, in that which keeps memory and past alive, moving, and vivid, which I think cinema resides.

I am extremely simplifying but, to summarize, I believe many contemporary cinematic forms do not provide us with anything but the constant evidence that cinema is something variable, (positively) precarious, and changeable. Precisely such mutability is what I feel inclined to identify as cinema — moving images and, therefore, essentially, motion.

I think that the notion of the apparatus can serve to illustrate this point: looking more carefully at the theory of the apparatus, it seems to me that this concept covers a number of recurring elements, which contributed to its institutionalization over the years, but a great deal of elements is not fixed at all.

vh: To take up your point about the mutability and even the malleability of cinema, we could approach the post-cinema debate from a history of science point of view and take a page from Bruno Latour, arguing that cinema has, in a way, never been modern. By this, I mean that cinema has never been a medium with a consolidated specificity, but rather a medium in permanent transformation. In that sense, the cinema which now appears to be over, in the wake of which the suffix 'post-' positions us, should only be considered a snapshot of a particular moment in that permanent transformation.

In his book, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes*,[4] first published in 1991, Latour argues that most of the concepts and conceptual distinctions of modern scientific practice, most notably the distinction between 'nature' and 'society', are a lot less stable than we assume. Making these concepts operable requires a constant effort of articulation through material practices and institutional frameworks. We can argue that this analysis also pertains to aesthetics. In the realm of aesthetics, one of the quintessentially modern concepts is, indeed, the concept of medium specificity. It can be traced back to Lessing's 1766 essay *Laokoon*,[5] in which the author proposes that the arts may be distinguished from each other by the material and structural properties of their medium of expression. This is a stance that Lessing takes against Horace's dictum '*ut picture poesis*', i.e. the notion, inherited from antiquity, that the arts can mutually express each other, independently of their medium. Lessing's essay belongs to a broader moment in modern thought, the emergence of aesthetics as a sub-field of philosophy. It appears a few years after Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* and Burke's essay on the sublime

theater and the sense of magic unfolding once crossed, the fascinating account by Antonello Gerbi as reported by the equally vivid prose by Francesco Casetti in *The Lumière Galaxy: Seven Keywords for the Cinema to Come* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015) comes to mind.
[4] Bruno Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991).
[5] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon. Oder: Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1994 [1766]).

and the beautiful.[6] Very broadly speaking, all three are concerned with aesthetic value judgments, but while Baumgarten and Burke focus on questions of logic and the logical form of value judgments, Lessing focuses on material properties and the medium. If we fast-forward to the Twentieth century, we find that art historians and art critics such as Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, but also film theorists like Siegfried Kracauer, still operate within a Lessing-style framework. Whether a specific work has aesthetic value continues to depend on how well it accords with the properties of the medium.

mdr: The lineage connecting Lessing to Greenberg, Kracauer and Fried is quite obvious. The correlation between aesthetic value and properties of the medium selected to express it reminds me of Arthur Danto's critique of aesthetics. Rather than as a branch of philosophy, Danto contends that aesthetics is in fact a philosophy of art.[7] The 'aesthetic' value is for him to be understood as the result of a number of relational properties of the work of art. It is in this frame — and this is why we could well call them 'relational' properties — that he includes the essential connection among meaning, process of interpretation and underlying intention of the author. I find an echo of Danto's argument in the text by Malcom Turvey and Ted Nannicelli included in this special issue. This might sound like a detour, but is in fact of crucial importance because it takes us back to the *ut pictura poiesis*-debate that you mentioned above. If we return to the sources, I believe we could consider Horatio as an epitome of a relational conception of art — better yet, of the arts. This conception turns on the dichotomy specific/general, and I think that it implicitly permeates the reflections by some of the authors you named. Rosalind Krauss and her famous reference to Marcel Broodthaers' 'fin(e) arts' claim in her opening of '*A Voyage on the North Sea*' is a case in point.[8] Krauss' argument plays with the idea of *fine* arts as several different media, each with its own specificity, and their end (*fin*), which in a way only defers the problem. Jean-Luc Nancy found a wonderful way to synthesize this, which in my opinion is closer to solve the problem, when he proposed the idea of '*être singulier pluriel*'.[9] According to Nancy, arts are as a matter of fact separated but would stem from a unique essence which found diverse modes of expression over time, thus determining the emergence of

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[6] Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, repr. as *Ästhetik* (Meiner: Hamburg, 2007 [1750]); Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 [1757]).

[7] Arthur Danto, *The Trasfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981). In the same vein, the perspective adopted by analytical philosophy may provide an interesting frame to look differently at issue of medium specificity. It refuses to conceive modernity and the postmodern as separated eras, each of which characterized by specific arts and interpretive modes, in favor of a more consistent — albeit fluid — historical continuity along which various particularisms would characterize various historical moments. Consequently, this view seems to offer some suggestions to tackle the question of temporality at the heart of our inquiry.

[8] Krauss, '*A Voyage on the North Sea*'.

[9] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

specific yet complementary arts. Therefore, the end of a certain art would stand, in fact, for the beginning of its own plurality.[10] In this view, cinema would be one among multiple languages (arts), having its own 'specificity' but at the same time sharing a common root with others and, consequently, it would not be a monolithic, autotelic and, so to say, 'closed' medium, but would rather be in constant connection with other media.

vh: Well, things are not quite as harmonious for Kracauer, for instance. For him, the specificity of film needs to be thought independently and in contrast to the other arts. Thus, any piece of a newsreel is filmic, because it redeems physical reality, while a filmed adaptation of a Shakespeare play is not filmic, because it stresses the *formgebende tendenz*, the intervention of the artist, over the properties of the photochemical reproduction of film. It is treading in those same footsteps, that Rosalind Krauss introduces the concept of post-medium, when she is confronted with works that are indisputably art works like those by Broodthaers, but no longer conform to the criterion of medium specificity. Now my claim would be that, even after Kracauer, whose *Theory of Film* is the last, great explicitly Lessingian attempt to get to the heart of cinema in the history of film theory, film studies and film theory, whether explicitly or not, took a page from art criticism and art theory when they defined their object. The challenge in the 1960s and 1970s was to delineate cinema as an epistemic object that was solid and consistent enough that it could legitimize an entire academic field devoted to its study. Now it's important to add a caution, in order not to overly homogenize film studies as a discipline. Film Studies first emerged as an interdisciplinary field in post-war Europe in the shape of the filmology movement, but it only became a discipline in the 1970s, in the US, Germany and Britain largely by branching out from literature departments. To the extent that Film Studies has a certain coherence as a field, one could argue that the outlines of academic film theory were formulated in Paris in the 1960s and 1970s. Their teachings were exported to other countries through a generation of film scholars who made a passage through Paris, to study with such scholars as Metz and Bellour, from Constance Penley and Janet Bergstrom to David N. Rodowick, Francesco Casetti and many others.

Now this is where the apparatus comes into play, and where it becomes important that, as you say, the apparatus is far from a fixed entity…

mdr: And that 'cinema' does not only just equal 'apparatus'…

vh: Exactly. I would argue that to the extent that film studies as a field gave a coherent answer to the challenge of delineating their object of study, it could be summarized by a formula comprised of the triad of 'canon + index + apparatus/ dispositif'. 'Cinema' was, first, a catalogue of canonical works, roughly the canon

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[10] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Muses* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

of auteur cinema; 'cinema' was, second, a photographic medium whose core material property was photomechanical reproduction, or, to phrase it in the terms of Peircean semiotics, a medium based on 'indexicality'; and 'cinema' was, third, a dispositif (or, to put it in more properly Althusserian terms, an apparatus), an aggregation of a public space, a technology of projection, and the social habit of movie-going and the mental framework of spectatorship. As it turned out, the triad of canon, index and dispositif that defined 'cinema' as an object of study proved to be prone to accidents and episodes of instability. The transition to digital photography in the 1990s threw the index in crisis, the development of digital networks and platforms ended the privilege of the dispositif of cinema over other modes of circulation, and new modes of digital access and the discovery of new fields of research such as ephemeral and orphan films subverted the canon.

One way of dealing with this triple crisis is to declare, once again, the death of cinema and adopt an attitude of protracted mourning. Krauss actually makes a similar point with regards to the visual arts: the obsolescence of the medium coincides with the highest point of its maturity; the 'post-medium condition' is to be addressed in the mode of an elegy. In our issue, in addition to the essay by Ted Nanincelli and Malcom Turvey a review of a new book by André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion discusses these attitudes in a critical perspective. But another way of dealing with the triple crisis of canon, index and dispositif is to argue, quite to the contrary, that cinema has never been modern: that the search for a media specificity of cinema is futile and misses the point, because cinema is an unspecific medium, a medium of constantly changing and often transitory configurations, of which 'cinema' was only one.

mdr: If there is, indeed, no specificity to lose, but only a succession of transitory configurations, the question in our title — post what? post when? — acquires a new, and somewhat polemical, meaning.

vh: Yes, there is a stance in there somewhere that could be paraphrased as 'enough already with the post-talk; can we move on, please?' I think it's a good question to ask, particularly in a situation where we are at risk of making our lives in the long shadow of a traumatic experience of loss permanent. To argue that cinema has ever been modern seems like a good cure for the melancholia of a modernism, which has just ended forever.

mdr: One might add that not only cinema has never been modern, but Film Studies have always been a permeable field of inquiry, one — as you maintain — with an internal coherence but with an openness to other fields of inquiry, shifting between discipline and field, as Roger Odin recently reminded us.[11]

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[11] Roger Odin, 'A propos de la mise en place de l'enseignement du cinema en France. Retour sur une experience', in *Il cinema si impara? Sapere, formazione, professioni / Can we Learn Cinema? Knowledge, Training, the Profession*, ed. by Anna Bertolli, Andrea Mariani and Martina Panelli

Furthermore, I think the suggestion you used is very much in line with what I was trying to touch upon earlier: cinema is fluid, and there are moments throughout history which correspond to major or minor fluctuations, that is, major or minor variations in terms of established objects and basic notions such as the film, the apparatus, etiquette and patterns of spectatorship, etc. When the 'fluctuation' is minor, then a solidifying impulse crystallizes a number of forms into canons, behaviors into habits and, eventually, rituals. When variation prevails, then certain aspects of the medium are reconfigured and the objects, as well as the critical and scientific approaches studying them, also undergo a process of transformation. To push the metaphor further — we could perhaps describe these dynamics in terms of solidification, liquefaction and sublimation: through recurrence, certain aspects of the cinematic experience turn into stable elements; they gain consistence and, therefore are (temporarily) solidified. Conversely, whilst certain traits raise and come to the surface others lose their consistency and are somehow diluted, watered down, as if liquefied throughout the folds of time and replaced by new practices. Such a perspective ultimately describes a modulation, for I assume the changes affecting the moving image over time we are alluding to are the results of complex processes produced by a number of interwoven factors.

There is one further dynamics that may complement the two I just named and which complete my 'alchemic' reading, namely sublimation. When the changes are conspicuous, we could well visualize 'major fluctuations' introducing a prominent alteration of the 'liquid cinematic atmosphere' I tried to describe here — sublimation would then indicate a more radical metamorphosis, that is, a passage that is a faster or more evident transition from one configuration to another, resembling a profound modification of an established filmic form, its parameters and surrounding critical discourses. Experimental projects such as Tony Oursler's environmental projections are a good example and a quite thought-provoking metaphor of this (fig. 1).

These mechanisms do not exclude each other. Rather, they co-exist and emerge with a varying strength throughout time, readjusting the new balance at every turn. As in a sort of cycle, certain aspects emerge and establish themselves as a standard, whereas others are surpassed and therefore progressively abandoned, either proposing what may be an original nuance, just a slim novelty or rather determining a real shift and a consistent change. Such a logic rests upon a conception of continuity, which, as Bolter and Grusin pointed out,[12] would feature the moving image as part of a broader media environment. Besides remediation, which I am not sure is a concept we really need to employ here, this reminds me some beautiful pages by Italo Calvino, as he compared Ovid's linguistic structure to that of cinema. I would argue his remarks offer an eloquent and valuable reflection to observe contemporary (audio-visual) media on the whole:

everything has to follow apace, […] every image must overlap another, emerge […]. It is the principle of cinema: each frame, as each verse, must be full of moving visual stimuli. [...] A law of maximum economy dominates this poem [according to which] new forms draw as much as possible from the old ones.[13]

Not by chance, Calvino is commenting on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. I cannot but see a similarity between his acute observations on the rough material composing the poem, and the moving image as a rough material of sorts which is to be found in a number of diverse contemporary cinematic forms: as the former represents an *ensemble* of possible stories synthesizing the 'living multiplicity'[14] typical of myth, so the latter is the basic malleable material that can well be shaped into a number of different fashions giving birth to diverse cinematic forms. The scenario where this complex and constant process takes place is a moving territory crossed by clashing and convergent tensions at once,[15] occurring in a transition phase. The post-media age is one of these transformation moments in which a "metamorphosis", an important reconfiguration of both cinema as an object and the critical discourse about it takes place. The reconceptualization of a number of moving image practices including those connected to archive, exhibition and preservation to which the volume edited by Giovanna Fossati and Annie van den Oever reviewed in this issue is devoted, is emblematic to this extent (fig. 2).

vh: I prefer the notion of 'living multiplicity' to that of 'remediation'. 'Living multiplicity' revives the long tradition of biological metaphors that address cinema as a living organism rather than technical tool or just another art form. This tradition stretches from early film theory and its borrowings from *Lebensphilosophie* and Bergson — a connection thoroughly studied by Inga Pollmann in a forthcoming book and, similarly, by Chris Tedjasukmana in a book published last year — to Bazin and the life cycle metaphors of genre theory and on to Vivian Sobchack's concept of film viewing as an encounter and interaction with the film's lived body.[16] Life metaphors deserve a critique

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[13] Italo Calvino, 'Gli indistinti confini', in *Metamorfosi,* Publio Ovidio Nasone (Torino: Einaudi, 1987), pp. XII–XIII (my translation).

[14] Ivi, p. X.

[15] Implicitly sitting upon the idea of the 'art after the art', thus recalling a similar rhetoric we are analyzing as regards to cinema, Nicholas Bourriaud also questioned the future of art looking at a number of dynamics which led him to identify an object that he terms 'exform'. Albeit articulating a different theoretical framework based on a different set of labels, he seems nonetheless to identify the necessity to address the mechanisms defining the artistic discourse and its objects proposing a conceptual category which encapsulates the same aesthetical sensitivity we are trying to elaborate on. See Nicholas Bourriaud, *The Exform* (London, New York: Verso, 2016).

[16] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (New York: Sheba Blake, 2015 [1907]); Inga Pollmann, *Cinematic Vitalism: Film, Theory, and the Question of Life* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming); Chris Tedjasukmana, *Mechanische Verlebendigung. Eine Theorie der Kinoerfahrung* (München: Fink, 2014); André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* ed. by Hugh Gray, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: a Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

in their own right, but I think that 'living multiplicity' opens up a rich set of possibilities. My problem with 'remediation' is the same as my problem with the concept of 'intermediality': both reify the medium as an ontological unit and turn it into an underlying substance, to which the processes of remediation and intermediality relate as accidents. This creates what is in my view a completely unnecessary problem of discovery: first we must find, delineate and describe the medium, and then we can move on to an analysis of whatever it is that we describe as 'remediation' and 'intermediality'. I believe we should try to avoid this 'substantiality trap', and I think that the concept of reconfiguration can help us here. In your study about postmedia, you worked on the relationship between the relocated moving image and space — you termed it 'space-image' — and proposed to define it as a 'configuration of experience:'[17] if we agree that cinema is indeed a shape-shifting object of study, we can expand on your insight and use the term 'configuration' to apprehend cinema in its varying shapes, both as they develop over time and as they co-exist and interact with each other.

mdr: I think we agree on 'living multiplicity'. Also, I do agree with the idea of reading post-cinema in relation to a wider context and — as I argued elsewhere[18] — of putting other configurations of the moving image on equal footing with 'cinema'. Your historical take is very convincing, too; perhaps I wouldn't sketch the phases — the three successive crises of the index, the dispositif and the canon — that you brought up earlier in such a linear way, though: on the one hand there is indeed a chronological development, especially in terms of the agenda of Film Studies as a discipline, but on the other hand I believe the three focuses you identified do not simply make room one to the other — they somehow continue being co-present, albeit with a different centrality in the frame of the theoretical discourses which progressively took shape around cinema.

vh: One of the advantages of the concept of configuration to me seems indeed to be that it allows us to move on from modernist melancholia, and embark upon a variety of avenues to more or less completely rewrite the history of cinema.

mdr: Which would then mean that configurations may well emerge out of a disruption of the institutional and established way of conceiving history. In other words, I'd rather go for a non-linear configuration of such discourses, one which

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[17] Miriam De Rosa, *Cinema e postmedia. I territori del filmico nel contemporaneo* (Milano: postmedia books, 2013), p. 66.
[18] I had the chance to approach this issue as regards to artistic moving images during my research stay at Goethe University in Frankfurt, where this dialogue started taking shape more consistently. The first result of that strand of my research is published as Miriam De Rosa, 'From a *Voyage to the North Sea* to a *Passage to the North-West*. Journeys Across the Contaminated Histories of Art and Film', in *A History of Cinema without Names*, ed. by Diego Cavallotti, Federico Giordano and Leonardo Quaresima (Milano and Udine: Mimesis International, 2016), pp. 149–55.

would enable to acknowledge the inherent complexity of our object of study. I would suggest to adopt complex theory as a lens through which looking at cinema and post-cinema. This would quite fit with the concept of configuration as a key-term to understand moving images and their pattern of entanglements (rather than evolution) in the post-media age. The essays by Saige Walton and Monica Dall'Asta included in this collection might be seen as important contributions to a similar framework, notwithstanding the fact that they do not aim at proposing a new reading of post-cinema per se. Moreover, your account of Agnès Varda's photographic work, particularly her work on Cuba, which you review in this issue of the journal, confirms that moving images are part of a wider visual culture and that its components are dynamic forms[19] — configurations, as we are claiming — continuously influencing each other.

vh: However, I do think that the concept of configuration offers an opportunity to re-frame the post-cinema debate. Let's get specific. In terms of unraveling the complexity of configurations of the moving image, we could distinguish between several levels of analysis: we could ask what it is that a given configuration of moving images does, i.e. we can discuss a configuration in terms of its operative aspect — which can be to provide an aesthetic experience, as in the classical dispositif of the cinema, or to produce knowledge, as in laboratory and scientific uses of film; we can study the ways in which the moving image relates to other elements of its configuration — for instance, to paratexts in the case of commercial cinema, or to writing and other modes of notation in film-based research such as visual anthropology, for instance; and we can study the spatial dimension of a given configuration, precisely what you called 'space-image'. We can distinguish between these levels for the purposes of analysis, while still keeping in mind that the operational, relational and situational aspects are intertwined. But what such an analysis could help us to achieve is to subvert the primacy of the object of 'cinema' by aligning it, on equal footing, with a multitude of other configurations of the moving image. This would also help us understand that what remains of cinema (to quote the title of a recent book by Jacques Aumont)[20] requires no mourning, but merely our sustained curiosity and attentiveness.

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[19] The concept of 'dynamic forms' as key-notion to understand cinema as a language encapsulating an essential sense motion is at the heart of an on-going research project devoted to artistic moving images I am developing in association with Catherine Fowler. Its first output has been presented as a joint conference paper 'Contaminated Histories of Art and Film: Thinking Topologically', at FilmForum XXIII International Film Studies Conference, Gorizia, Italy, 9 - 15 March 2016.
[20] Jacques Aumont, *Que reste-t-il du cinema?* (Paris: Vrin, 2012).

Tony Oursler
The Influence Machine, 2000
Video and sound
10/19/2000 – 10/31/1000
Photo by: Aaron Diskin
Courtesy of Public Art Fund, NY

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