

# LET'S RESET THE CLOCK FAMILY FOOTAGE TO REMEDIATE DISTANCE CREATED BY MOURNING

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## ESSAY 54/03

DISTANCE  
GRIEF  
HETEROTOPIA  
FAMILY FOOTAGE  
IMAGINARY

From *Sherlock Jr.* (1924) by Buster Keaton, to *Laura* by Shuji Terayama (1974), or *Videodrome* by David Cronenberg (1983), to more recent to *Leto* by Kirill Serebrennikov (2018), experimental and mainstream cinema has explored crossings through the screen to attempt erasing borders between the viewers and those represented. *Let's Reset the Clock* (from French *On va remettre les pendules à l'heure*), is a two-and-a-half minute colour

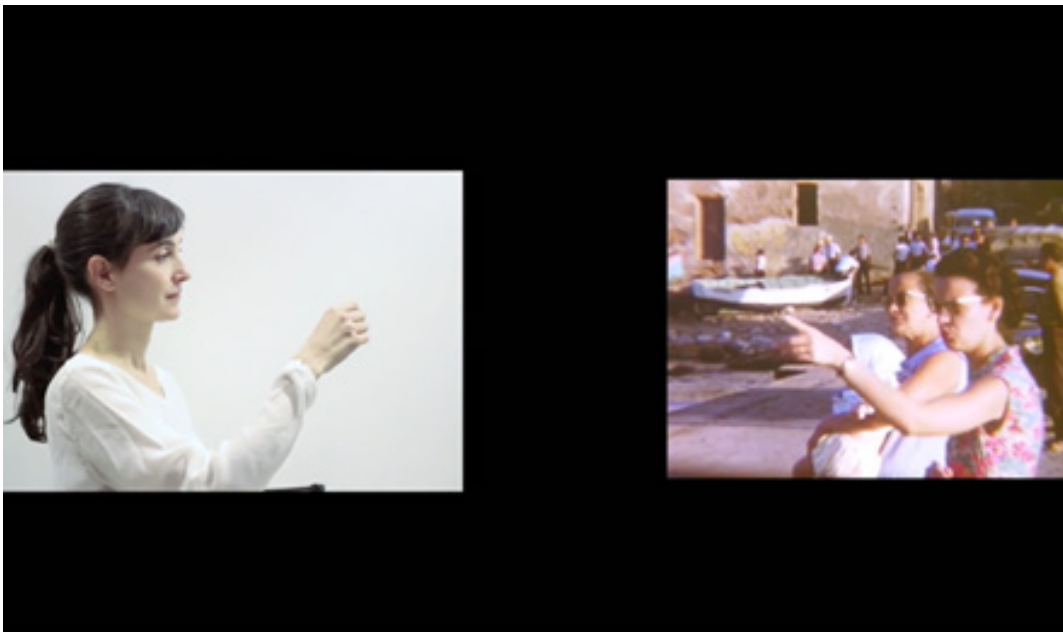
video that I chose to inscribed in this tradition. In this artwork, split screen visual process is used to remove distances, in order to put two characters – I, the author, and my own grandmother – face to face. As the latter has passed away, *Let's Reset the Clock*, constitutes an attempt to remediate distances created by the mourning. It is also a reflection about the way images can bridge those separated by space and by the time.

## TO REMEDIATE DISTANCE CREATED BY THE MOURNING

There is the space of what was and can no longer be, and there is the space of memory. Between the two is a feeling of absence and, sometimes, of loss.

Through the use of family footage included in *Let's Reset the Clock*, I illustrate my feeling of grief and attempt to remediate the distance between the living and the dead. With aim to erase this distance, I filmed myself while watching images of my grandmother that have been shot by my grandfather at the beginning of the 1960s. While watching images of her, I mimic a connection that no longer exists, and create a new relationship that now can only be found through fiction, within the space of an artwork. On this, *Let's Reset the Clock* constitute utopia of a travel through time. Or rather, it recreates what Michel Foucault defined as a "heteropia" (1967): a place which exists in the space where the imagination resides, in the child's playhouse where one can do 'as' if one's grandmother was still there. By using images to create this imaginary space, *Let's Reset the Clock* recalls

**Fig. 1** Screenshot from *Let's Reset the Clock*, 2'37" colour video.



Christian Marclay editing work in *The Clock* (2010). In this film, the American artist challenges corridors of time by assembling various footage of well-known and lesser known films around a clock running for 24 hour in real time. With *Let's Reset the Clock* I suggest that playing with images can remediate distance between temporal and spatial spaces that separates me with my grandmother. Yet even in this game, the interaction does not always work. The video thus suggest following mourning process: to play a broken game, by facing someone who can no longer be found, even through a trick.

#### TO REMEDIATE THE DISTANCES THANKS TO IMAGES

*Let's Reset the Clock* also constitutes a reflection about images. It is part of a broader set of artworks in which I question my colonial European identity through the use of my grandfather footage. My family fled Franco's Spain to migrate to Algeria at the time it was a French territory. I only know this

**Fig. 2** Screenshot from *Let's Reset the Clock*, 2'37" colour video.



country and the story of migration which for me accompanies it, through old films footage shot by my grandfather. I have digitalised these images which constitute a time-window towards a bygone era of French history and towards a knowledge on my family past. The *mise en abyme* arranged when filming myself looking at these archives is a way to consider this footage as part of my own imaginary. Through this act of family archaeology, I stage my identity and, in the same movement, when facing the camera in the end, I break the *mise en scène* and take distance from this identity. On this, remediation proposed by *Let's Reset the Clock* is close to Woody Allen's *Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985). In this 1985 film, main protagonist tries to escape gloom of her existence by watching ceaselessly same film until being part of it.

Distance provided through the mediation of images would thus saves us from such a bleak reality and would allow us to explore hitherto unnoticed spatial and temporal paths.

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**Article available at**

DOI: 10.6092/issn.2724-2463/12258

**How to cite**

**as article**

Gomis, E. (2020). Let's reset the clock. Family Footage to Remediate Distance Created by Mourning. *img journal*, 3, 258-263.

**as contribution in book**

Gomis, E. (2020). Let's reset the clock. Family Footage to Remediate Distance Created by Mourning. In M. Treleani, F. Zucconi (Eds.), *img journal 03/2020 Remediating distances* (pp. 258-263). Alghero, IT: Publica. ISBN 9788899586119