

ENCHANTED DRAWING - ANIMATION AS IMAGING CULTURE

Conference in Two Parts

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A collaborative project of the Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte - IKB, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Department of History of Art / Cinema Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

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Part One

SET, SUBSETS AND INTERSECTIONS

Framing Animation as an Imaging Culture

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ABSTRACTS

Karen Beckmann: Animating Analog Histories: Cinema, Photography and the Adaptive Pressure of New Media.

In recent years, discussions of the modernist question, “What is cinema?” have largely been framed by a return to the work of André Bazin, which, in the wake of both the propagandistic uses of the film medium during World War II and that war’s atrocities, privileges a cinema of truth, revelation, and witnessing. Though Bazin’s work was discredited as displaying an unfashionable and reductive faith in realism during the height of Marxist, Structuralist and psychoanalytic film theories, the recent return to a more complex view of his work was provoked in part by cinema’s evolution from an analog to a primarily digital medium. This technological adaptation has focused critical attention on Charles Peirce’s concept of indexicality, which scholars have considered in relation to Bazin’s writing on photography and cinematic realism, in which the referential image, the long take, on-location shooting, and the use of non actors become privileged encoders of truth.

Dudley Andrew has played a lead role in this resuscitation of Bazin, most explicitly in his polemic recasting of Bazin’s question in the form of an assertion, *What Cinema Is!* This short manifesto emerges in response to the rise of digital cinema, composited images, and the increasingly frequent appearance of film within the alternate context of the art museum. Andrew highlights the ethical aspirations and achievements of what he calls “the cinema of discovery” beloved by Bazin, and considers whether contemporary cinema can live up to the ambitions of the medium’s earlier manifestations.

On the one hand, Andrew's work is suffused with a nostalgia that seems to prohibit any evolution of an ethical cinema beyond the postwar model. "The cinema of discovery," he writes, "stands at the antipodes of a cinema of manipulation, including most animation and pure digital creation" (Andrew 42). Yet on the other hand, Andrew also recognizes that Bazin "kept the cinema an open question" (98), and so ends his polemic with a call for cinema to adapt, and for criticism to keep up with those evolutions: "Cinema, essentially nothing in itself, is all about adaptation, all about what it has been led to become and may, in the years to come, still become" (Andrew (141)). How, though, do we reconcile Andrew's belief that cinema and its criticism must adapt with his view that the forms that this adapting cinema do not and cannot live up to "what cinema," at least for him, simply "is"?

Andrew is not alone among critics of his generation struggling to understand how contemporary images will be capable of generating the kind of deep thought that postwar art cinema successfully did. David Rodowick, for example, in *The Virtual Life of Film*, asks, "Why have digital presentations not yet provoked the same kind of ontological perplexity and inquisitiveness that so strongly characterized classical film theory, and which return to haunt us today? Perhaps the new media still run ahead of philosophy... [p]erhaps we are not yet ready to raise these questions" (178).

The temporality of analog media's evolutions seems out of joint with the critical discourses we have to engage the adaptations of earlier media forms. Consequently, we are left pondering how we might bridge the interwoven developments of theory and practice as they adapt at different velocities, and even in different directions. In response to these issues, I plan to discuss a series of artists who produce animated digital work that explicitly uses animation to adapt narratives, sounds and images from the canonical histories of analog photography and film. In *How to Fix the World* (Jacqueline Goss, 2004), Goss uses Machinima technology to animate and color the 1930s black and white photographs shot by Soviet documentary photographer Max Penson in Uzbekistan. In *You, Starbucks* (2006), Jennifer Levonian offers a contemporary animated adaptation of scenes from Alain Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1964), an art cinema classic that enjoys a second animated life in the form of German-Japanese artist Kota Ezawa's project, *L.Y.A.M. 3D* (2008) (Ezawa has also produced a slide show in which he has redrawn iconic images from the canon of analog photography's history, as well as stills from Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*). Another of Levonian's animated works, *Take Your Picture with A Puma* (2009) adapts sequences from one of Eric Rohmer's "Six Moral Tales," *The Bakery Girl of Monceau* (1963), setting Rohmer's amorous bakery encounter in the context of modern-day Mexican tourism. My paper will explore what both hand-made and digital animation brings to a mode of image making that some now consider obsolete.

Short Bio: *Karen Beckman is a Professor of Cinema and Modern Media in the Department of the History of Art, University of Pennsylvania. She is currently working on a short book entitled Animation and the Contemporary Art of War, as well as an edited volume entitled Animating Film Theory, which will explore the challenges animation poses for the discourse of film theory. Prior publications include: Vanishing Women: Magic, Film and Feminism (Duke UP, 2003), which examines the relationship between the elusive female body and the medium of film; Crash: Cinema and the Politics of Speed and Stasis (Duke UP, 2010) which includes chapters on early cinema, slapstick comedy, educational safety films, Warhol, and contemporary disaster films; Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography, co-edited with Jean Ma (Duke UP, September 2008); and Picture This! Writing with Photography, co-edited with Liliane Weissberg (U of Minnesota P, forthcoming). She has published articles on a range of subjects, including feminism and terrorism, death penalty photography, the relationship between cinema and contemporary art, documentary reenactment, and Iraq war photography. She is a senior editor of the journal Grey Room. (Source: <http://www.arthistory.upenn.edu/facultybeckman.htm>)*

Suzanne Buchan: Pervasive Animation: Locus, Technique, Style.

Animation is pervasive: it has infiltrated our visual culture, occupying, informing and politicising many public and private spaces. It has long had a constitutive role in disseminating ideologies with a mind to shaping public attitudes. Animation is ubiquitous: computer, phone and web interfaces, sci-tech CG modelling, architectural design, computer games, distance learning and feature films with synthesians are examples of forms of animation in public, private and working environments that expand what the word 'animation' usually calls to mind when we think of it: entertainment. In its visualisations of physically and impossible, but strangely credible, worlds, animation will continue to have incisive impact, not just on visual culture and entertainment, but also in relation to individual and shared experience.

This contribution places the spectator as the focal point of convergence to explore the experience of animation in contemporary platforms: the cinema, the museum and the digital realm. Each of these virtual or extant loci has specific limitations and advantages for affecting the spectator's engagement with animation – immersive, reflective, passive or active. Besides the locations of its reception, specific stylistics and techniques trigger different responses. Photochemical puppet animation's sets and puppets have a direct photoindexical relation with our lived material and spatial experience. Drawn or painted flat artwork can be mimetic, representing 'worlds' with varying degrees of relation to the corporeal, material world. The MMORP(G) *Second Life* draws on lived physical experience, but its digital manifestation offers an idealised version of one's self, environment and community. Finally, the manifold artistic styles of animation offer the spectator alternate ways of understanding the world she lives in: they can generate empathy, (de-)construct ideologies and provide access to private, otherwise invisible individual and social injustice. Working with a corpus of exemplary pre- and digital animation, the contribution aims to show how animation can function as an alternate epistemological tool to augment 'real world' based limits of knowledge and experience.

Short Bio: *Prof Dr Suzanne Buchan is Professor of Animation Aesthetics and Director of the Animation Research Centre at the University for the Creative Arts, UK. She was a founding member and co-director of the Fantoche International Animation Film Festival in Baden, Switzerland, and is the founding Editor of animation: an interdisciplinary journal (Sage Journals). She teaches, curates and advises on the history, theory and aesthetics of animation. Recent publications include The Quay Brothers: Into A Metaphysical Playroom (2010), "Experiencing Animation" in Greg Hilty (ed): Watch Me Move. The Animation Show. London: Merrell, 2011, "A Curious Chapter in the Manual of Animation": Stan VanDerBeek's Animated Spatial Politics," (animation: an interdisciplinary journal, July 2010). She is currently preparing an AFI Film Reader anthology, Pervasive Animation, commissioned by Routledge. (Source: Email by Suzanne Buchan)*

Erna Fiorentini: Introduction as a notice of intent: Animation as cultural set

Animation does more than string images together to make them move: It is a process that confers on images new meanings and new roles. As such an iconic process, Animation has a multitude of different facets, manifold intentions and diverse potentials for impact. Given this diversity, the main project asks whether and why animation should be considered as a cultural space with own motivations for the generation, exhibition and application of images, a space that in spite of its heterogeneous character is a definite culture of imaging.

To approach this problem, the first part of the conference brings together experts studying the production, the uses and the meanings of animation in such different fields as media studies, art history, the history of science and animation arts. In this interdisciplinary context we want to open up a new discourse by framing animation as a cultural set displaying manifold subsets and intersections. This approach offers animation as a concept that encompasses a broad terrain of imaging subsuming a multiplicity of forms, intentions and result possibilities that can, but do not

necessarily need to interact with one another. In other words, the first part of the conference investigates animation as a multiple iconic strategy able to constitute an overarching, strong culture of imaging, considering whether it deserves a critical boundary demarcation and an ontological specification.

In this sense, it also already addresses major convergences and divergences of cultures of animation and film, tentatively asking whether and why these two kinematic forms - that surely exist through each other - develop and act with, despite, and even against each other. This topic will be developed further in the second part of the conference, which will take place at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia on September 21-22, 2012.

Short bio: *Erna Fiorentini teaches Art History at the Kunsthistorisches Institut of Freie Universität Berlin and the Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte of Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, where she is currently based as a Heisenberg Fellow of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG. Trained as a scientist as well as a historian of art, she has focused her research interests on the history and theory of vision as a fundament of imaging processes and on the theory and history of the relationship of aesthetics and knowledge in processes of image production. With her current book project, "Induction of Visibility: An Attempt at the Notion of Aesthetic-epistemic Action / Induktion von Sichtbarkeit. Ein Versuch zum Begriff der ästhetisch-epistemischen Aktion", she intends to disturb and specify the concept of visualisation, that is mostly used for visual processes and products likewise, with a notion of "Visibility induction" that more specifically refers to the aesthetic and epistemology of image production processes. <http://www.kunstgeschichte.hu-berlin.de/mitarbeiterinnen/heisenberg-fellowship>.*

Oliver Gaycken: Telescoping Time: Evolution as Moving Image.

Chronophotography, with its capacity to slow down rapid movements, stands as one of the most significant imaging practices from which cinema emerged. Less well known is the inversely related form of temporal manipulation, namely, the ability to accelerate movements too slow to be perceived. In this imaging tradition, which is usually referred to as "time lapse" in English, the motion picture "telescopes" time, collapsing the duration of a long event into a much briefer period. Among the first scientists to discuss and investigate this type of temporal manipulation was Ernst Mach, who understood time lapse as providing not only practical but also philosophical insights. Time lapse animated hitherto unseen processes, and Mach specifically mentioned Darwinian evolution as a likely domain for time lapse to provide new forms of understanding. Indeed, evolution's emphasis on unfamiliar time scales constituted a basic affinity with the cinema's capacity for temporal manipulation. In this sense, time-lapse indicates an alternate and underappreciated path in the history of cinema where the medium is primarily understood as a method to model and simulate as opposed to narrate.

Short Bio: *Oliver Gaycken received his BA in English from Princeton University and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He previously has taught at York University (Toronto) and Temple University. Currently he is teaching at University of Maryland, College Park. His teaching interests include silent-era cinema history, the history of popular science, and the links between scientific and experimental cinema. He has published on the discovery of the ophthalmoscope, the flourishing of the popular science film in France at the turn of the 1910s, the figure of the supercriminal in Louis Feuillade's serial films, and the surrealist fascination with popular scientific images. His book project, which is under contract with Oxford University Press, is entitled *Devices of Curiosity: Early Cinema and Popular Science*. (Source: <http://www.english.umd.edu/profiles/ogaycken>)*

Frank Geßner: Alias Yederbeck - Expanded Animation Cinema.

ALIAS YEDERBECK is a hybrid »Aut(h)o(r) Construction« whose goal is to make it possible to sensually experience the conceptual and processual structures of the genesis of an artistic work. According to the postmodern theory of the »death of the subject«, there is nothing but objective structures with mutual dependencies and/or networked systems of meaning. To transform these nonlinear contexts into a cinematographic installation is the rigorous logical conclusion of the project TOWARDS THE IMAGE: 1. Satz_TESTE SANS FIN by Frank Geßner.

ALIAS YEDERBECK is an inter-media interface project for »built attempts to connect what is separate«. In the autobiographically motivated investigation of high and low culture in the broad history-of-pictures context, the traditional media are transformed into something digital in order to subject them to a productive artistic »bastardization«. This not only reactivates the principle of the panorama as one of the most popular manifestations of pre-cinema; it also further develops the supposedly obsolete media for a hybrid »Future Cinema«. This experimental exploration of the potential of motion, time, and sound serves to expand cinematographic experience and questions the basic cinematic building blocks under new conditions.

ALIAS YEDERBECK thematized what Theodor W. Adorno called the pleasurable »efforts of the subject to penetrate into what conceals itself as objectivity behind the façade« and is, not least, an artistic research attempt to conduct a »discourse mediating between view and concept, picture and sign«.

But with its multiplicity, the Expanded Animation experiment ALIAS YEDERBECK resists unambiguous explanations and poses the ever-current questions: What is film? What is cinema? – »Qu'est-ce le cinéma?«

Short Bio: Frank Geßner is an artist and university teacher. He was born in Würzburg and studied Fine Arts and History of Art in Stuttgart and Berlin, Germany. Since 2004 he holds the professorial chair of theory and practice for the Art of the Image at the University of Film and Television „Konrad Wolf“ Potsdam-Babelsberg, Germany. Current Project Alias Yederbeck: Entertainer (video, painting animation + 2D/3D computer animation) – Flaneur (Super 8 / 16mm, video + 2D computer animation), Zuschauer (video, drawing animation + 2D computer animation) – Schauspieler (photo/video, + 2D computer animation) – Auflösung (photo/video + 2D computer animation) – Projektion (Super 8 / 16mm + 2D computer animation) – Anima Techne (2D/3D computer animation) – Transzendente Animation (2D/3D computer animation) – Happy End (35mm + direct film + 2D computer animation) – Doppelgänger (video + 2D computer animation) – Reminder (analog video/video + 2D computer animation) – The End (video + 2D computer animation), 12 x 12-channel video and Qu'est-ce que Monsieur Teste? (found footage + video + Super 8 + puppet animation + 2D/3D computer animation), 1-channel video, 2006–2011 (Source: mail by Frank Geßner)

Vinzenz Hediger: Morphology in Action: The Lives of Animation.

Genealogies of the animation film proposed by art historians and film scholars typically describe technological and stylistical advances and trace animation to models and sources from art history such as medieval painting. Expanding on an observation by film theorists Sean Cubitt this contribution argues that animation as an art form is related to the emergence of the modern, biological and evolutionary conception of life and may be understood as "morphology in action". Examples will include scientific uses of cinematography, classical animation and digital animation, including computer-based techniques of morphing.

Short Bio: Vinzenz Hediger is professor of film at Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main. His publications include "Films that Work. Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media" (Amsterdam University Press 2009) and "Nostalgia for the Coming Attraction" (Columbia University Press 2012). He is the co-editor of the book series, "Film Theory in Media History", and of the journal "Montage AV" (www.montage-av.de). He is one of the co-founders and a long-time member of the executive board of NECS - European Network of Cinema and Media Studies (www.necs-initiative.org), as well as the past president of the Gesellschaft für Medienwissenschaft (www.gfmedienwissenschaft.de), in which capacity he served as the founding editor of the Zeitschrift für Medienwissenschaft (www.zfmedienwissenschaft.de). (Source: Mail by Vizenz Hediger)

Inge Hinterwaldner: Iconic peripeties. Preliminaries for an aesthetic of animation.

A basic feature of animation seems to be movement. Often, a lot of different kinds of events can be detected in a single animation film. In a first step it is necessary to differentiate between the different intersecting moments of motion and to analyze their interplay. When looking for the more subtle movements, we can ask ourselves: How can we detect and describe changes happening 'en passant' within 'moving pictures' (film, video) other than the ostentatiously shown occurrences? There are several phenomena and concepts we can refer to. All of them point to some features, but they need to be adapted:

a) Surely, the montage technique introduces its own movement and rhythm, but is it a specific characteristic for animation? If cutting is to be avoided for what we are looking for, it is obvious to think about morphing techniques. In our context, it could be a possibility, however often this implies a marginally interesting transient phase between two elaborated frames.

b) As another path, we could follow William Rubin who presented the concept of the 'relocation of forms'. Here we could try to adopt this term from the side of the production to that of perception.

c) Finally, the mechanism of flip images – traditionally discussed in gestalt psychology and philosophy – could be mentioned. Especially the figure/ground-reversal, the shifting of the attention to contour lines (Rudolf Arnheim) and the 'aspect seeing' (Ludwig Wittgenstein) seem to play a crucial role. However, up until now, these features are examined in 'static' pictures. We would like to study them in 'moving pictures'.

The following examples are discussed: "Heufieber" (2006) by Roman Signer; "Destino" (1946/2003) by Salvador Dalí and Walt Disney; visuals of the "flow motion"-series (since 2002), as well as this year's Biennial contribution of Japan in Venice (Tabaimo: "teleco-soup", 2011). From these findings, is it possible to provide evidence that herein lies a specificity of an aesthetic of animation?

Short Bio: Inge Hinterwaldner studied art history at the University of Innsbruck from 1995-2000. She completed her master degree with a thesis on "The commercials of Humanic done by Goeschl 1970-1973 – between art and advertisement". From 2001-2002 she worked in the Institute for Net Development at the Center for Art and Media (ZKM), Karlsruhe. Her PhD project was funded by the graduate schools "Image. Body. Medium. An Anthropological Perspective" (2003-2006) at the State Academy of Art and Design in Karlsruhe and "Image and Knowledge" (2006-2008) within the NCCR "Iconic criticism"/eikones at the University of Basel. The doctoral thesis was published in 2010 with the title "The systemic image. Iconicity within interactive real time simulations". Since 2008 she teaches as a scientific assistant at the Institute of Art History (Gottfried Boehm, Ralph Ubl) at University of Basel. Since 2009 she is leader of the interdisciplinary research group "Image and Model" at eikones together with the sociologist Martina Merz and the computer scientist Thomas Vetter. (Source: Mail by Inge Hinterwaldner)

Paul Wells: 'The Genie in the Lamp': Animated Theories, Animated Practices.

Drawing upon my own practices as a screenwriter and a range of theoretical approaches that have emerged within the field of Animation Studies in recent times, this paper will look at the relationship between theories and practices of animation narrative, addressing modes of construction, core thematics, and approaches to interpretation and analysis.

It will attempt to assess how animation narratives may be understood as 'systems' responsive to a range of authorial interventions aligning text, technique and technology. This will take into account 'micro-narratives' as the core aspect of animation screenwriting, and as models by which certain (con)textual and conceptual apparatus may be identified for analysis.

A further aspect of this critical framework, are notions of the 'poli-vocal' and the 'multi-register' to suggest a plural and holistic address of the form, noting among others the work of Pritt Parn, Pixar Animation and PES, and the rise of animated documentary, here paying some attention to the role of archives.

Simply, the paper will seek to look at theories of practice as practices of theory, and hope to define the animation practitioner within cross-over areas of academic and professional experience.

Short Bio: *Professor Paul Wells is Professor at the Animation Academy, Loughborough University. He is Director of the Animation Academy Research Group, whose work was judged to be 'world leading' in the recent Research Assessment Exercise in 2008. He has published widely in the field of Animation Studies, including 'Understanding Animation' (Routledge 1998), 'Animation and America' (Rutgers University Press 2002), 'Animation : Genre and Authorship' (Wallflower Press 2002), 'Halas & Batchelor Cartoons : An Animated History' (with Vivien Halas, Southbank Publishing, 2006), 'Fundamentals of Animation' (AVA Academia, 2006), 'Scriptwriting' (AVA Academia, 2007), 'Drawing for Animation' (with Joanna Quinn, 2008), 'Re-Imagining Animation' (with Johnny Hardstaff, AVA Academia, 2008) and 'The Animated Bestiary' (Rutgers University Press, 2009). Wells is also an established scriptwriter, director and broadcaster in radio, television and theatre, winning a Sony Award for his six part radio history of the horror film, 'Spinechillers', and a New York Festival of Radio Award for his series on American film and cultural history, 'America the Movie'. His series, 'Britannia – the Film', also became an Open University set text. (Source: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/sota/staff/paul-wells.html>)*