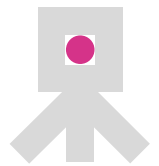


PhotoResearcher



ESHPh European Society for the History of Photography

Photography & Film

Guest Editor: Martin Reinhart

7 Noam M. Elcott
**The Cinematic Imaginary and
the Photographic Face: Media
as Models for 20th Century Art**

24 Katja Müller-Helle
Black Box Photography



34 Roland Fischer-Briand
Under A Certain Influence

48 Brian Pritchard
Sensitive Strips

62 Lydia Nsiah
Photofilmic Time Machines

74 Barnaby Dicker
**Stroboscopic Revelations
in Blade Runner**

The Cinematic Imaginary and the Photographic Fact: Media as Models for 20th Century Art

Noam M. Elcott

I. Dominant Art Forms, Artistic Confusion

Laocoön was in the air (fig. 1). Irving Babbitt had revisited Lessing’s 1766 text and introduced a New Laocoön in an eponymous book published 1910.¹ Not satisfied with Babbitt’s history, the critic Clement Greenberg endeavored to advance toward a *newer* Laocoön in a landmark essay published in 1940. He was unaware, it seems, that two years prior Rudolf Arnheim had published his own “New Laocoön” on “Artistic Composites and the Talking Film.”² Whatever their difference—and they are by no means inconsequential—Lessing, Babbitt, Arnheim, and Greenberg were animated by a common animus: the hatred of confusion. Babbitt’s book was subtitled “An Essay on the Confusion of the Arts.” And Greenberg, famously, championed Modernism as a purification of painting from the redoubled confusion of illusionism and literature. He boasted: “The arts, then, have been hunted back to their mediums, and there they have been isolated, concentrated and defined.”³ Nearly eighty years on, we can declare with confidence that the hunt is over and the prey are not only isolated, concentrated and defined, but also slaughtered, taxidermied, and mounted on walls where they can collect dust and dollars.

Figure 1
William Henry Fox Talbot, Statuette of
‘Laocoön and his Sons’, 1845, salted-paper
print and calotype negative, 8.9x9.5 cm.
National Science and Media Museum,
Bradford.



Let’s return instead to the productive confusion that was high modernism’s *bête noire*. For Greenberg, the present “confusion of the arts” emerged directly from the

1. Irving Babbitt, *The New Laokoön: An Essay on the Confusion of the Arts*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1910.

2. Rudolf Arnheim, ‘A New Laocoön: Artistic Composites and the Talking Film’, in: *Film as Art*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1957.

3. Clement Greenberg, ‘Towards a Newer Laocoön’, in: *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticisms, vol. 1*, John O’Brian (ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1986, 32.

dominance of literature as an art form. Although *dominant* did not necessarily imply *best*, according to Greenberg, other art forms attempted to imitate the dominant art form, and it, in turn, tried to absorb them, thus leading to confusion.⁴ The Greenbergian Laocoön narrative is so familiar—and now so ossified—it hardly warrants a revisit. And yet an additional Laocoön from the period provides the necessary impetus. In the late 1930s, Sergei Eisenstein drafted nearly one hundred pages on Laocoön and its relation to the arts, above all cinema, and to a range of techniques, above all montage. Of Lessing’s opposition between painting and poetry, Eisenstein writes: “I believe that this strict separation into incompatible opposites is explained by the fact that in Lessing’s day neither Edison nor Lumière had yet supplied him with that most perfect apparatus for research and assessment of the aesthetic principles of art: the cinematograph.”⁵ For Lessing, time belonged to the poets and space to the painters. Cinema, however, synthesized the two. What is more, Eisenstein asserted montage as the overarching technique across all art forms and periods—cinema being but one instance, albeit paradigmatic. Eisenstein, in short, invoked Laocoön to advance precisely the thesis Greenberg’s Laocoön came to overturn: dominant art forms and aesthetic confusion.

Neither painting nor literature had much truck with the avant-gardes of the twentieth century; at least not as dominant art forms. Instead, and here is the wager of this essay, the artistic confusion that reigned in the early and late twentieth century revolved respectively around the dominance of cinema and that of photography—what I will call the cinematic imaginary and the photographic fact. Members of the interwar avant-gardes were trained in painting but aspired to cinema. The post-World War II avant-gardes, by contrast, aspired to photography, but made paintings and films. This is the wild idea I hope to sketch in the pages ahead.

To begin: What are the cinematic imaginary and the photographic fact? If it is true, as German media theorists have taught us, that there are no media, only thoroughly heterogeneous ensembles consisting of discourses, institutions, and so forth, it is no less true that other, equally heterogeneous ensembles often constellated around single discursive figures or dominant art forms. In recognition of the imaginary media unearthed by media antiquarians⁶ and the imaginary cinematic subject interrogated by anthropologist, psychoanalysts, semioticians, and media theorists,⁷ I would like to introduce the term “cinematic

4. Greenberg 1986 [reference 3], 24.

5. Sergei Eisenstein, ‘Laocoön’, in: *Selected Works, vol. 2: Towards a Theory of Montage*, Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor (ed.), London: BFI 1991, 153-54.

6. Opposed to Foucault’s archaeology, Siegfried Zielinski and others have advanced media anachaeology: “this anachaeology of media is a collection of curiosities.” Siegfried Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means*, trans. Gloria Custance, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT 2006, 34. See also Eric Kluitenberg (ed.), *Book of Imaginary Media*, Rotterdam: NAI 2006; ‘On the Archaeology of Imaginary Media’, in: *Media Archaeology*, Erkki Huhtamo (ed.), Berkeley: University of California Press 2011, 48-69; Jussi Parikka, *What is Media Archaeology?*, Cambridge: Polity 2012, 41-62. Particularly apt is Grant Wythoff insistence that “What is at stake here is the feedback between technical interaction and speculation, between science

and fiction.” Grant Wythoff, ‘Pocket Wireless and the Shape of Media to Come, 1899-1922’, *Grey Room* 51 (2013), 51.

7. See Edgar Morin, *The Cinema, or, The Imaginary Man*, trans. Lorraine Mortimer, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2005, esp. 96-97; Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1982, esp. 43, 64, 96; Michel Frizot, ‘On a Cinema Imaginary of Photography (1928-1930)’, in: *Between Still and Moving Images*, Laurent Guido and Olivier Lugon (ed.), Herts, UK: John Libbey 2012, 177-96; Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1999, esp. 1-19. The obvious debt to Lacan is perhaps best read through Kittler’s parenthetical remark: “Lacan’s ‘methodological distinction’ among the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic is the theory (or merely a historical effect) of that differentiation” (15), that is, the differentiation of optical, acoustic, and written data flows in cinema, phonography, and typewriting.

imaginary” as a shorthand for vernacular and avant-garde engagements with cinema and its subjects, engagements that exceeded narrow definitions of the medium. The cinematic imaginary may be likened to the “virtual” at the millennial turn: constellations populated by competing and contradictory claims, aspirational and descriptive, critical and affirmative.⁸ Like *virtuality*, the reality of the *cinematic imaginary* was discursive, not technical. In its vernacular mode, the cinematic imaginary comprised everything that surrounded movies projected in cinemas, namely: architecture and advertising, fandom and merchandizing, magazines and media events, and a host of other coordinated and spontaneous forces that combined to place cinema among the largest leisure industries in Europe and America by the 1930s.⁹ Vernacular cinematic imaginaries—for there was never just one—were a crucial factor in the industrialization of cinematic experience, the automation and standardization that enabled its fungibility.¹⁰ The avant-garde cinematic imaginary, to the contrary, largely explored aspects of the cinematic experience that exceeded industrialized cinema. The avant-garde imagined forms of cinema that would not—often *could* not—be realized as actual movies and instead assumed as their primary forms precisely those aspects of industrialized cinema often relegated to secondary aspects: photographs, paintings, architecture, printed matter, artificial light or darkness, and so forth. These forms were hardly arbitrary. Rather the avant-garde cinematic imaginary cohered around specific attributes of the emergent dispositif. To adapt Rosalind Krauss’s theory of the medium, the avant-garde cinematic imaginary emerged as “a set of conventions derived from (but not identical with) the material conditions of a given technical support, conventions out of which to develop a form of expressiveness that can be both projective and mnemonic.”¹¹ For the interwar avant-garde, “cinema” comprised a range of technical supports, materials, and techniques, such as movement, rhythm, light, darkness, and montage. The avant-garde cinematic imaginary was not the sum total of these elements so much as the quality that made these disperse elements legible as “cinematic” in the first place.

The photographic fact is much more familiar to us. Trace, index, stillness, death. These are the tropes rehearsed ad nauseum in discussions of art, photography, and film in the post-WWII decades—though they were by no means dominant among the interwar avant-gardes. The ontological features ascribed to photography by post-WWII theorists, as I will argue presently, belong to the historically specific dominance of photography rather than to a timeless specificity of the medium.

8. The theoretical positions that map “the cinematic”—particularly, as a field between photography and film—are anthologized productively in: David Company (ed.), *The Cinematic*, Cambridge, MA: MIT 2007. Scholarship on virtuality has defined the term strategically and insisted on its internal contradictions. See, for example, N. Katherine Hayles, ‘The Condition of Virtuality’, in: *The Digital Dialectic*, Peter Lunenfeld (ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1999, 68-94.

9. In America, expenditure on movie-going as a percentage of total recreation expenditure peaked in the 1940s at roughly 25 percent. Today that figure is roughly 2 percent. See John Sedgwick and Michael Pokorny, ‘The Characteristics of Film as a Commodity’, in: *An Economic History of Film*, John Sedgwick and Michael Pokorny (ed.), London: Routledge 2005, 8. On cinema

and vernacular modernism, see Miriam Hansen, ‘The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism’, *Modernism/Modernity* 6, no. 2 (1999), 59-77.

10. See Gerben Bakker, *Entertainment Industrialised: The Emergence of the International Film Industry, 1890-1940*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008.

11. Rosalind Krauss, ‘Reinventing the Medium’, *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 2 (1999), 296. See also the import roles played by film and video in: *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, New York: Thames & Hudson 2000. Krauss attempts to theorize the medium and its reinvention. The imaginary, as defined here, may be likened to Krauss’s reinvented medium writ large, embedded in history, rather than in individual practice.



Figure 2
Man Ray, Untitled Rayograph
(Kiki and Filmstrips), 1922,
gelatin silver print 23.8 × 17.8 cm, reproduction
from Emmanuelle de l'Écotais (ed.),
Man Ray: Rayographies, Paris: Editions Léo
Scheer 2002, 77.

At their most basic, the cinematic imaginary and the photographic fact help explain how specific techniques or even individual artworks could be viewed as quintessentially cinematic in the interwar period and archetypally photographic after the War. I have in mind, for instance, Man Ray's cameraless photographs and films, whose changes in fortune I have addressed at length elsewhere but warrant brief rehearsal here.¹² In the 1920s, *Les Cahiers du mois* published photographs and rayographs (cameraless photographs, fig. 2) by Man Ray and claimed—I quote this representative text—that he “miraculously was able to provoke on photo-sensitive paper the illusions and revelations (close ups, deformations, blurriness, superimpositions; i.e., simultaneity, abstraction, synthesis) that evoke in us a type of emotion that one would be tempted to call ‘cinematic.’”¹³ By the 1970s, Paul Sharits helped revive interest in cameraless films with the structural-materialist assertion that “a film maker like Man Ray, in his RETURN TO REASON, directs attention to *the fact* of film's frame structure in his rayogram constructed passages where there is *discontinuity* from frame to frame.”¹⁴ In the 1920s, Man Ray's cameraless photographs embodied the cinematic imaginary; half-a-century later, his films drew attention to the fact of the photographic substrate.

An exhaustive elaboration of this thesis is impossible in the short space of an essay. So allow me a series of strategic notes that capture facets of the cinematic imaginary and the photographic fact. I'll open with an anecdote by Chris Marker. I will then trace the shudder in theories of photography and film, specifically those of Roland Barthes and Siegfried Kracauer. Thirdly, I will point to exemplary instances of the photographic fact in the post-WWII avant-gardes, above all, in

painting and film. Finally, I will outline the contours of the interwar cinematic imaginary. At the end of the essay, there is no denouement, let alone a grand finale. I will conclude where I began: the post-World War II avant-gardes aspired to photography, but made paintings and films; members of the interwar avant-gardes, by contrast, were trained in painting but aspired to cinema.

12. See Noam M. Elcott, 'Darkened Rooms: A Genealogy of Avant-Garde Filmstrips from Man Ray to the London Film-Makers' Co-op and Back Again', *Grey Room* 30, 2008.

13. 'Introduction to "Second étape"', *Les Cahiers du mois*, no. 16/17 (1925), 85.

14. Paul Sharits, 'Words Per Page', *Afterimage*, no. 4 (1972), 32. Emphasis originally through underline.

II. 'Movies are supposed to move, stupid'

Let's begin with a recent anecdote, one that captured the dominant art forms of the twentieth century while their memory was still fresh. First issued in the closing years of the millennium—widely quoted and anthologized since—a short text by Chris Marker recounts a childhood memory of an optical toy. I quote at length:

It was a funny-shaped object. A small tin box with irregularly rounded ends, a rectangular aperture in the middle and on the opposite side a small lens, the size of a nickel. You had to gently insert a piece of film—real film, with sprockets and all—in the upper part, then a tiny rubber wheel blocked it, and by turning the corresponding knob the film unrolled, frame by frame. To tell the truth, each frame represented a different shot, so the whole thing looked more like a slide show than a home cinema, yet the shots were beautifully printed stills out of celebrated pictures: Chaplin's, *Ben Hur*, Abel Gance's *Napoleon*. ... If you were rich, you could lock that small unit in a sort of magic lantern and project it on your wall (or screen, if you were very rich). I had to satisfy myself with the minimal version: pressing my eye against the lens, and watching. That forgotten contraption was called [a] Pathéorama. You could read it in golden letters on black, with the legendary Pathé rooster singing against a rising sun.¹⁵

The young Marker soon intuited that he could produce his own film reel to play inside the Pathéorama: “screen by screen, I began to draw a few poses of my cat (who else?) with captions in between. And all of a sudden, my cat belonged to the same universe as the characters in *Ben Hur* or *Napoleon*. I had gone through the looking glass.” Marker rushed to show off his movie to an esteemed classmate, Jonathan, who, as Marker recalls, sobered him up fast. “‘Movies are supposed to move, stupid’ he said. ‘Nobody can do a movie with still images.’” The last laugh and last line, however, belong to Marker. “Thirty years passed,” he writes, “Then I made *La Jetée*.”

La Jetée is a science-fiction, time-travel tale set in post-WWIII Paris (fig. 3); its narrative was enticing enough to be remade decades later by Terry Gilliam as traditional Hollywood fare (*Twelve Monkeys*, 1995). More famously and importantly, *La Jetée* is a film made exclusively of still images, save for a single, brief passage of motion pictures. The film figures centrally in old and renewed debates on the ontologies of photography and film and their mutual contamination. Critics, theorists, philosophers, and even historians have turned to *La Jetée* in quixotic attempts to locate the essence, nature, and ontology of the photographic or cinematic image. Marker's filmic memory, however, emphatically points away from

15. Chris Marker, 'Filmic Memories', *Film Quarterly* LII, no. 1 (1998), 66.

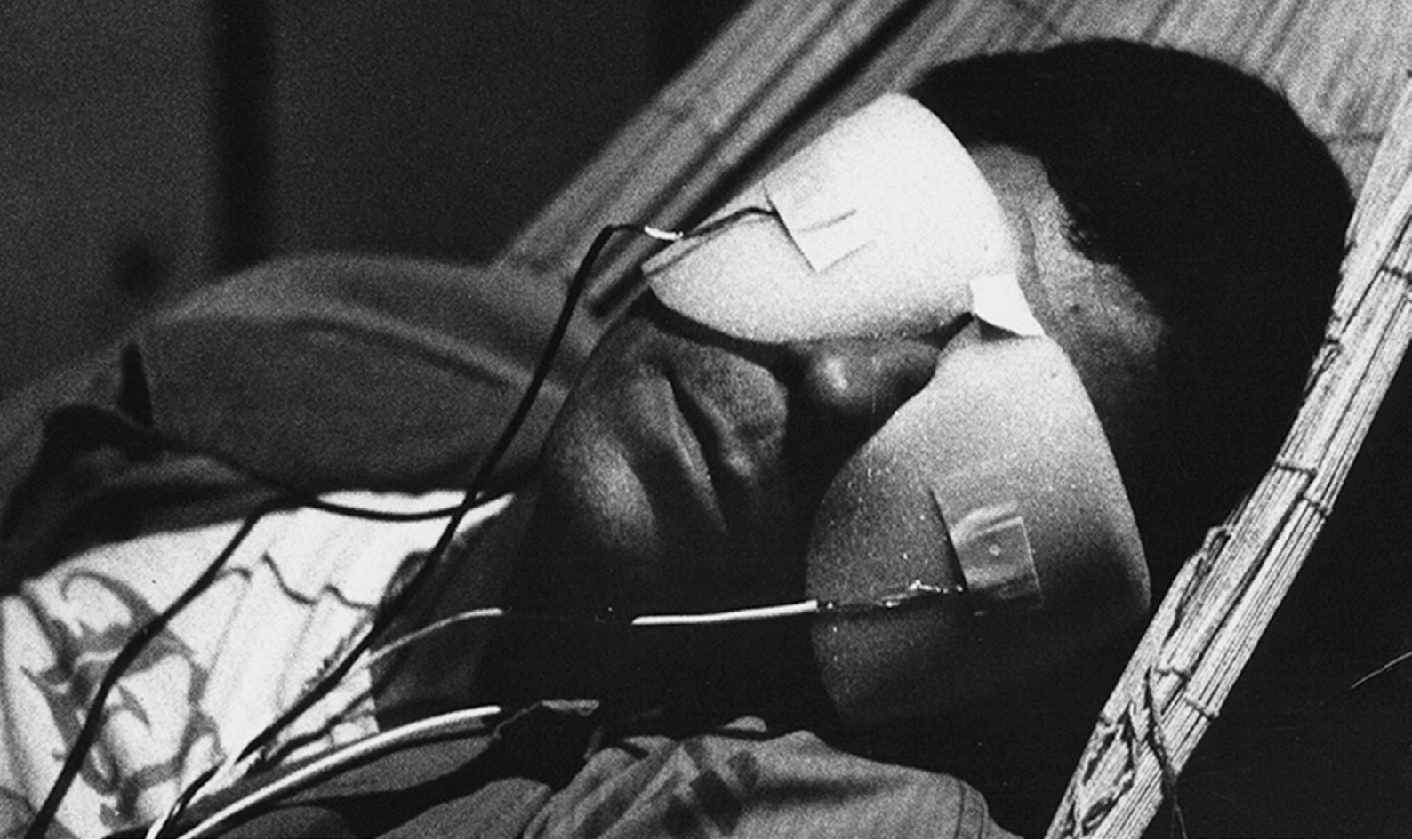


Figure 3
Film still from Chris Marker's *La Jetée*
(F 1962, 35mm, bw, sound, 27min).

ontology and toward historical variability. His two “Pathéorama” films—the scorned adolescent artifact and the aesthetic triumph of a mature, forty-year-old artist-filmmaker—stand in not only for Marker himself—for, as any media archaeologist knows, Marker and the Pathéorama were born the same year (1921)—but also for a much broader shift in the relationship between the avant-garde and modern media.¹⁶ Most remarkable in Marker’s story is not the premonition of a future masterpiece or the trope of childhood neglect and adulthood vindication—such rhetorical chestnuts, delightful and clichéd in equal measure, belong to the apocrypha produced around aged artists. Remarkable, instead, was the interwar milieu—today invisible because unthinkable, but then invisible because ubiquitous—in which a few drawings and words were enough to propel one’s cat into the same universe as the characters in *Ben Hur* or *Napoleon*. In the 1920s and ’30s, the Pathéorama was one of countless devices—augmented by ciné-romans, Buchkinema, fandom ephemera, flip books, film scrolls and film scores, photomontages, photograms, film stills, and a host of other forms and techniques to be addressed presently—that sought to instantiate cinema without the requisite triumvirate of movement, photography, and projection. Marker’s Pathéorama film, in fact, had none. He was too poor for the projection version, called the Cocorico and introduced in 1922. His images and captions were hand drawn, not photographed. And, as his classmate Jonathan mercilessly averred, his images did not move. Between the Wars, cinema could be envisioned, fantasized, even experienced in the absence of movement, photography, and projection. Marker’s Pathéorama was a quotidian instance of the interwar cinematic imaginary in its vernacular form. Lest this anecdote

16. On the Pathéorama, see Valérie Vignaux, ‘The Pathéorama Still Film (1921), Isolated Phenomenon or Paradigm?’, in: Guido, Lugon 2012 (reference 7), 113–23. Vignaux cites Marker’s filmic memory, but fails to connect the birth dates.

on the Pathéorama seems too obscure, we need only remember that *La Jetée* was subtitled a “photo-roman” or photo-novel. In the interwar period, a photo-roman referred to a printed story—books, magazines, whatever—told through photographs. The story could but needed not refer to an actual film. Until Zone Books published a true ciné-roman version of *La Jetée* in 1992, the film’s subtitle precisely inverted the meaning of the term: no longer printed photographs that implied a cinematic imaginary, *La Jetée* was a projected film that assumed the condition of printed photographs.

The vast majority of responses to *La Jetée*—and there have been very many—insist on the ontological proximity, if not identity, of the still photograph and death. Admittedly, Marker’s narrative makes the connection clear enough. The opening intertitle announces: “This is the story of a man marked by an image from childhood.” And the film’s dramatic conclusion reveals the image to be of his own death. From Susan Sontag’s passing reference to Garrett Stewart’s book-length study on photography in film—or, in his words, “cinema as photography”¹⁷—critics have insisted that “death haunts every interval” of *La Jetée* and, more generally, that “the isolated photo [...] is the still work of death.”¹⁸ The fundamental equivalence of photography and death—a constitutive core of photo-ontologies that emerge in the wake of *La Jetée*: not least, Thierry de Duve, Christian Metz, Philippe Dubois, and, above all, Roland Barthes¹⁹—this fundamental equivalence, as presented in *La Jetée*, is nothing more—but also, nothing less—than fiction. *La Jetée*, Marker’s quintessentially photographic film, was also his only work of fiction. If the cinematic imaginary of 1932 allowed, contrary to classmate Jonathan’s rebuke, anybody can do a movie with still images, by 1962, even avant-garde fiction films confirmed the photographic fact.²⁰

III. Shudders: ontology and contingency

Already in the inaugural media ontology of the post-WWII era—André Bazin’s 1945 “Ontology of the Photographic Image”²¹—we find all the hallmarks of later photo-theory: death masks, the Shroud of Turin, the “transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction,” the fingerprint, absence, lives halted, embalmed time. The inaugural and defining theory for postwar neo-realism and the nouvelle vague was founded, counterintuitively, on the photographic fact. Or, as Jean-Luc Godard would famously and complicatedly sum up the matter nearly twenty years later: “Photography is truth. The cinema is truth twenty-four times per second.”²² This vision of photography reached a certain apotheosis in Barthes’s all-too-famous reflection on the photograph of his dead mother. “In front of the photograph of my

17. Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1999, 38.

18. Susan Sontag, ‘Melancholy Objects’, in: *On Photography*, New York: Picador 1977, 70-71; Stewart, *Between Film and Screen*, 103, xi. In addition to *La Jetée*, Sontag addresses *Menschen am Sonntag* and Stewart addresses nearly every film to feature a photograph or freeze frame.

19. See Thierry de Duve, ‘Time Exposure and the Snapshot: The Photograph as Paradox’, *October* 5 (1978), 113,16; Christian Metz, ‘Photography and Fetish’, *ibid.* 34 (1985), 83-84. On Barthes, see reference 23.

20. See also Nora Alter’s contextualization of *La Jetée* in Marker’s larger oeuvre, especially in relation to his other two photo-based films. Nora M. Alter, *Chris Marker*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2006, 92-96.

21. André Bazin, ‘The Ontology of the Photographic Image’, in: *What is Cinema? Vol. 1*, Hugh Gray (ed.), Berkeley: University of California Press 1967. See also Dan Morgan’s compelling reading of Bazin’s ontology on the photographic image as deeply cinematic. Daniel Morgan, ‘Rethinking Bazin: Ontology and Realist Aesthetics’, *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 3 (2006), 443-81.

22. Jean-Luc Godard, *Petit Soldat* (1963).

mother as a child, I tell myself: she is going to die: I shudder, like Winnicott's psychotic patient, over a catastrophe which has already occurred."²³ According to Barthes, this anterior future marks every photography with death. So much so that he elevated that personal shudder to an ontology of photography—an ontology defined "*in opposition to the Cinema*"²⁴ and that has framed virtually every photo-ontology since.

Many critics have wondered whether the photographic shudder is not attainable in the cinema, whether the cinema cannot, on occasion, step outside of cinematic time. And it is here that the Barthesian approach collides with Marker's *La Jetée*. For Raymond Bellour and other scholars have identified the freeze frame or photo-pan—the introduction of a still photograph into a film²⁵—as the central site where the photographic intrudes into the cinematic. If photography gives us mortal cause to shudder, the sudden awareness of film's photographic substrate reignites the photograph's psychotic catastrophe. Postwar film and film theory were haunted by the photographic fact.

This was not the case earlier in the century. Critics like Siegfried Kracauer identified temporalities that cut across the two media: "Photography"—and here Kracauer has in mind the illustrated presses and cinema, that is, printed photographs and projected films—"is bound to time in precisely the same way as *fashion*. Since the latter has no significance other than as current human garb, it is translucent when modern and abandoned when old."²⁶ Kracauer opens his decisive essay on photography with descriptions of two photographs depicting, respectively, a film diva and a grandmother. The film twenty-four-year-old diva is featured on the cover of an illustrated magazine; she is composed of millions of little dots, the grain of the mechanically reproduced image; she is immediately recognizable "since everyone has already seen the original on the screen."²⁷ The second image also depicts a woman of twenty-four, namely, the grandmother in her youth. But because the photograph is more than sixty years old, the grandmother is not easily recognized; she is long dead; her clothing is historical, as is she; her irreverent grandchildren are amused:

They laugh, and at the same time they shudder. For through the ornamentation of the costume from which the grandmother has disappeared, they think they glimpse a moment of time past, a time that passes without return. Although time is not part of the photograph like the smile or the chignon, the photograph itself, so it seems to them, is a representation of time.²⁸

With brevity unavailable in English, Kracauer announces the temporalities of the two images in the first words of each descriptive paragraph of the film diva and of the grandmother:

23. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard, New York: Hill and Wang 1981, 96.

24. "I decided I liked Photography *in opposition to the Cinema*, from which I nonetheless failed to separate it. This question grew more insistent. I was overcome by an 'ontological' desire: I wanted to learn at all costs what Photography was 'in itself', by what essential feature it was to be distinguished from the community of images." Barthes 1981 (reference 23), 3. This opposition structures Barthes's central arguments, down to the final pages, and he revisits the clash between photography and cinema repeatedly. An incomplete register includes pages 3, 55, 78, 79, 89-90, 99, 117.

25. As its names suggests, a photo pan is a cinematic pan across a photograph; contrary to its designation, a freeze frame does not involve the cessation of movement but rather the repeated printing of a single frame to create the illusion of stillness.

26. Siegfried Kracauer, 'Photography', in: *The Mass Ornament*, Thomas Y. Levin (ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1995, 55.

27. Kracauer 1995 (reference 26), 47.

28. Kracauer 1995 (reference 26), 49.

“So sieht die *Filmdiva* aus [...] Sah so die *Großmutter* aus?": “this is what the *film diva* looks like... *Grandmother* looked like this?”²⁹ The photograph of the film diva belongs in the assertive present; the photograph of the grandmother is confined to the dubious past. The grandmother in Kracauer’s essay, we can infer from the text, was born in 1840 and grew up right alongside the photographic medium. Barthes’s mother, by contrast, dates to 1893 and matured arm in arm with cinema. But it is Kracauer’s 1927 theory of photography that proves much more adept at navigating the terrain between photography and film. Even when photographed, the film diva belongs to the present; indeed, “In the illustrated magazines the world has become a photographable present, and the photographed present has been entirely eternalized.”³⁰ The temporal signatures of photography and film are not ontological conditions but contingent historical realities—a question of both medium and discourse; in a word, of dispositifs. Whereas Barthes reads photographs in opposition to cinema, Kracauer compares a wide range of photographic production: from family portraits to the illustrated presses and feature films. Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that the shudder engendered by the photograph of grandma, according to Kracauer, is not unique to the still photograph:

Ghosts are simultaneously comical and terrifying. Laughter is not the only response provoked by antiquated photography. [...] The photograph becomes a ghost because the costumed mannequin was once alive. [...] This terrible association which persists in the photograph evokes a shudder. Such a shudder is evoked in drastic fashion by the pre-World War I films screened in the avant-garde ‘Studio des Ursulines’ in Paris—film images that show how the features stored in the memory image are embedded in a reality which has long since disappeared.³¹

So much for Barthes’s ontological shudder. In the 1920s, old films were no less ghostly than old photographs. What’s more, films and photographs partook of the cinematic imaginary.

IV. The photographic fact

The very ubiquity of the photographic fact in post-WWII art and film has rebuffed my attempts to theorize or historicize it adequately. Allow me, then, to run through a series of examples that perhaps point the way toward a more definitive claim.

Among non-photographic artists, post-minimalist like Robert Smithson (*A Nonsite, Franklin, New Jersey*, 1968), conceptual artists like Eleanor Antin (*100 Boots*, 1971-73) or Joseph Kosuth (*One and Three Chairs*, 1965), choreographers and performance artists like Yvonne Rainer (*Trio A*, 1966) and hosts of others from the 1960s onward engaged the photographic

29. ‘Die Photographie’, in: *Siegfried Kracauer: Schriften vol. 5.2*, Inka Müller-Bach (ed.), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1990, 83. Emphasis in the original.

30. Kracauer 1995 (reference 26), 59.

31. Kracauer 1995 (reference 26), 56. Mary Ann Doane offers a critique of Barthes very much along the lines of Kracauer’s 1927 photography essay in Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 2002, 143.



Figure 4
 Film still from Hollis Frampton's *Nostalgia* (US 1971, 16mm, bw, sound, 38min). The film is composed of black-and-white still photographs which are slowly burned on the element of a hot plate, while the soundtrack offers personal comments on the content of the images. Each story is heard in succession before the related photograph appears onscreen, thus causing the viewer to actively engage with the 'past' and 'present' moments as presented within the film.



fact without necessarily practicing photography.³² Among avant-garde filmmakers, the implicit or explicit recourse to photography as the ontological foundation for cinema—that is, the dominance of the photographic fact—is evident down the line. Consider Stan Brakhage's *Mothlight* (1963), Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967) and *One Second in Montreal* (1969), Hollis Frampton's *Nostalgia* (1971, fig 4), Paul Sharits's *Frozen Film Frames* (1971-76, fig. 5) or *Bad Burns* or *Third Degree* (1982), to cite just several of the most famous examples. The case of painters is more extreme still.

Consider Chuck Close's *Phil/Fingerprint* (1981, fig. 6), which embraces not only photorealism as a style, but also indexical marks such as fingerprints for its execution; that is, painting as the redoubled fact of photography. Similarly, the photographic fact is evidenced not only in Gerhard Richter's photorealist paintings like *Hanged* from the series *October 18, 1977* (1988), but also in his abstractions, which invariably retain the traces and patina of photography. Exemplary is *Blanket* (1988)—the painting famously excluded from the *October* series—on which Richter applied a layer of white paint to a second version of *Hanged*, as if the original were photocopied to the point of abstraction.

The paradigmatic painter-filmmaker of the photographic fact was also the most important artist of the second half of the twentieth century: Andy Warhol. At the height of his powers, roughly 1963-1967, Warhol's output was divided between the painterly and cinematic realization of the photographic fact. The canonical photo-silkscreens—the Marilyns, Jackies, the Most Wanted Men, and *Death and Disaster* series generally—are the century's most explicit attempt to transfer, literally and metaphorically, the



Figure 5
 Paul Sharits, *Frozen Film Frame*, Installation (1971-1976), mixed media 100 x 134 cm. Fridericianum, Kassel.

Figure 6
 Chuck Close, *Phil/Fingerprint*, stam-pad ink on paper, sheet size 236.2x175.3 cm, 1981. Reproduction from Christopher Finch, *Chuck Close. Work*, Munich: Prestel 2007, 117.

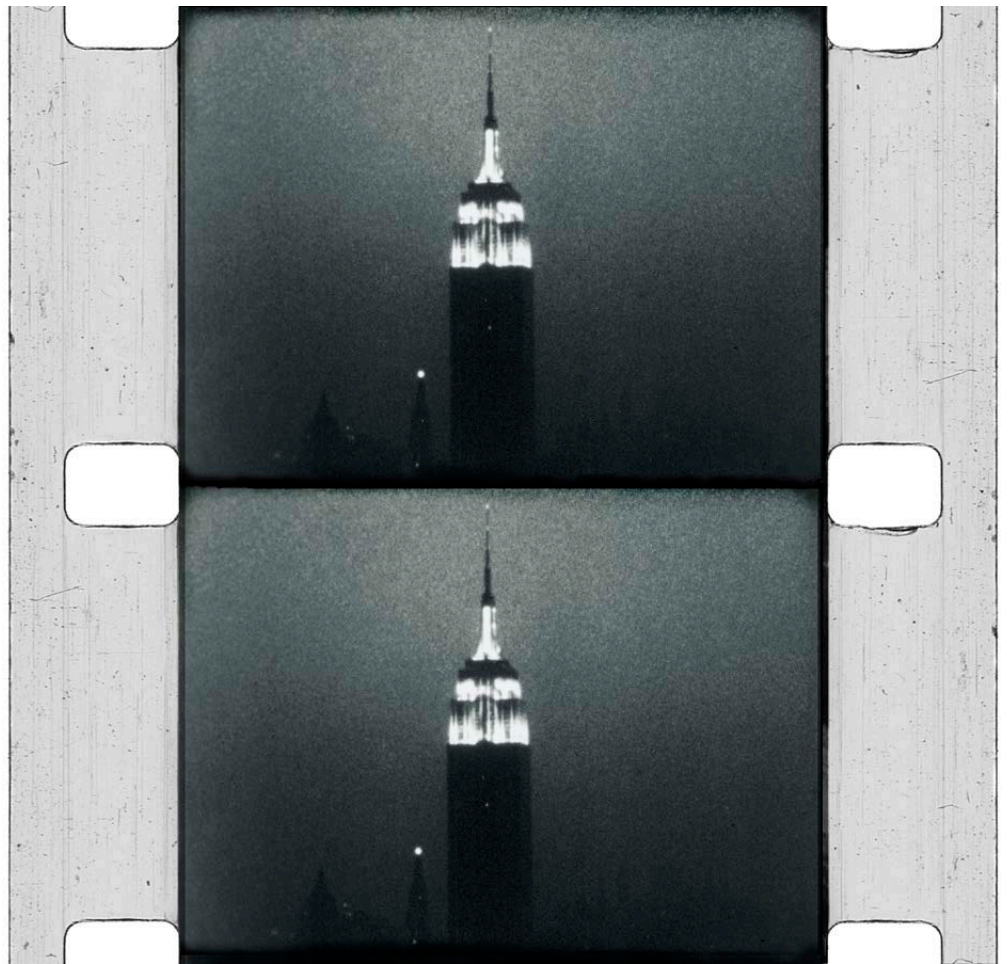


Figure 7
 Frames from Andy Warhol's *Empire*
 (US 1964, 16mm, bw, silent, 8h 5min).

traumatic realism of photography, to adopt Hal Foster's keen phrase, into the realm of painting.³³ Similarly, Warhol's early movies—which he called “stillies”—were inspired, as Callie Angell notes, by Warhol's discovery of a New York Police Department brochure that contained mug shots of the Thirteen Most Wanted criminals, the very quintessence of the photographic fact, both in their evidentiary quality and their proximity to death. For these portraits—Warhol eventually called them screen tests—subjects were required to remain motionless for the three-minute take; to petrify the subject further, the films were shot at 24fps but projected at 16fps, slowing down the stillness by a third of its original speed. No surprise that he eventually made a “stillie” of an inanimate object. *Empire* (1964, fig. 7), Warhol's notorious 8-hour film of the Empire State Building, takes as long to project as the very first photograph, made by Nicéphore Niepce in 1826, required for its exposure. Already in the first reel, the Empire State Building, as memorably described by Douglas Crimp, “becomes clearer and clearer, as if in a photograph slowly developing before your eyes in a darkroom.”³⁴ Photography was everywhere in Warhol's 1960s output except in actual photographs, which he frequently took but almost never exhibited.

V. The avant-garde cinematic imaginary

It would have been strange if in an epoch when the popular art *par excellence*, the cinema, is a book of pictures, the poets had not tried to compose

32. See Matthew S. Witkovsky (ed.), *Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photograph 1964-1977*, Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago 2011; Carrie Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s*, Cambridge: MIT Press 2008. The emphasis on the photographic fact did not, of course, preclude the use of film. In addition to the texts already cited, see Andrew V. Uroskie, 'La

Jetée en Spirale: Robert Smithson's Stratigraphic Cinema', *Grey Room*, no. 19 (2005), 54-79.

33. See Hal Foster, 'Death in America', *October* 75 (1996), 36-59.

34. Douglas Crimp, *"Our Kind of Movie": The Films of Andy Warhol*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2012, 137.

pictures for meditative and refined minds which are not content with the crude imaginings of the makers of films.³⁵

- Guillaume Apollinaire, "The New Spirit and the Poets" (1917)

The poets tried. As did the painters. But success was not necessarily measured in meters of film.³⁶ Futurists, Dada-Surrealists, Constructivists, and other avant-garde movements ardently, if ultimately futilely, embraced the potentialities of cinema. The Futurists experimented early in color synthesis, optical music, manipulated projectors, and reconfigured screens. They published manifestoes in which cinema was hailed as a model for avant-gardism *tout court*. But their experiments and words—like much of avant-garde film history—were plagued by incongruities and belatedness, magnificent declarations and unavailable means. Dada and Surrealist film in the 1920s, as Elsaesser has assuredly argued, is better understood as a cinema-going practice than as a coherent aesthetic.³⁷ "There are cinemas where it's irritating to watch even the most beautiful film," Robert Desnos avowed, "others where the atmosphere is seductive enough to make the silliest story bearable."³⁸ Breton famously developed a system, adopted by Man Ray, "which consists, before going into a movie theater, of never looking to see what's playing."³⁹ Finally, whatever the label—color music, visual music, absolute film, or pure cinema—abstract film flourished very briefly in the mid-1920s and then all but vanished from mainline avant-gardism. The "Absolute Film Matinee" (3 May 1925), among the first major, pan-European abstract film screenings, was also among the last.⁴⁰ By the end of the decade, Hans Richter eschewed his own early abstract films in the film program he organized for the monumental exhibition *Film und Fotografie* (Fifo, 1929). Indeed, by the time functional avant-garde film networks began to establish themselves across Europe in the late 1920s, the artistic and filmic avant-gardes had largely split.⁴¹ Interwar avant-garde cinema was forever untimely. But it was intoxicating all the same.

In 1927, Ernst Kállai initiated a months-long debate on *facture* with the ultimatum: "Painting or film: this is the fateful question of optical creation in our time."⁴² Kállai's dyadic polemic failed to capture the fluidity and complexity of the 1920s avant-garde. Cinema posed unique challenges to the avant-garde and precluded the exploitation of its more familiar venues, networks, strategies, and dispositions. Members of the avant-garde scripted and drafted, sculpted and drew, photographed and montaged much more often than they

35. Guillaume Apollinaire, 'The New Spirit and the Poets', in: *Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire*, New York: New Directions 1971, 228. Apollinaire had already addressed Cubism in terms of the "cinematic". See Natasha Staller, *A Sum of Destructions: Picasso's Cultures & the Creation of Cubism*, New Haven: Yale University Press 2001, 142.

36. For an overview, including a discussion of unrealized, lost, forgotten, or destroyed film projects, see Patrick de Haas, *Cinéma intégral*, Paris: Transédition 1985, esp. 249-54.

37. Thomas Elsaesser, 'Dada/Cinema?', in: *Dada and Surrealist Film*, Rudolf E. Kuenzli (ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1996, 14.

38. Robert Desnos, 'Picture Palaces', in: *The Shadow and its Shadow*, Paul Hammond (ed.), Edinburgh: Polygon 1991, 86.

39. André Breton, *Nadja*, trans. Richard Howard, New York: Grove Press 1994, 37.

40. See Holger Wilmesmeier, *Deutsche Avantgarde und Film: Die Absolute Filmmatinee 3. Mai 1925*, Münster: Lit Verlag 1994.

41. Cf. Malte Hagener, *Moving Forward, Looking Back: The European Avant-garde and the Invention of Film Culture 1919-1939*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2007). Hagener's emphasis on avant-garde film networks—rather than films—leads him to argue that 1930 was the beginning rather than the end of major avant-garde film activity. From the perspective of the historical avant-gardes, however, there can be no question that experimental—rather than documentary, political, and commercial—film production all but ceased around 1930.

42. Ernst Kállai, 'Painting and Photography', in: *Photography in the Modern Era*, Christopher Phillips (ed.), New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Aperture 1989; 'Malerei und Photographie', *i10* 1, no. 4 [1927], 157. Translation slightly modified.

shot films. Their “films” thus adopted novel forms and circulated along unusual avenues. Guillaume Apollinaire, Louis Delluc, Philippe Soupault, Antonin Artaud, Robert Desnos, Francis Picabia, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, and many other avant-garde poets wrote manifestos, reviews, and film scenarios—few of which were filmed. Indeed, many avant-garde film scenarios were, in the words of Benjamin Fondane, “unfilmable.”⁴³ Cine-novels (*ciné-romans*) or book cinema (*Buchkinema*) placed images from popular, avant-garde, and even imaginary films between covers.⁴⁴ At the end of the 1920s, Soviet director Vsevolod Meyerhold called for the “cinematization of theater” without the production of films: “let us realize on the stage a whole series of technical concepts associated with the screen (not in the sense of putting up a screen in the theater).”⁴⁵ Never-to-be-realized abstract scrolls and film scores by Viking Eggeling, Hans Richter, and others intimated new temporalities, movements, and rhythms for painting. These scrolls and scores adorned the ultimate pages—and marked the final frontier—of the inexorable march forward asserted in books like Ludwig Kassák and Moholy-Nagy’s *Book of New Artists* (1922) and El Lissitzky and Hans Arp’s *Isms of Art* (1925). The widespread circulation of “cinematic” images in books and magazines, as Olivier Lugon has argued, created an environment where “Works benefited from the imaginary potential of isolated photographs charged with all the mystery created by the absence of the film, but also, by contrast to a theatrical experience, from a theoretical base provide alongside the reproductions.”⁴⁶ The combination of isolated but pregnant images buttressed by elaborate theoretical texts was a hallmark of the interwar avant-garde.

The avant-garde cinematic imaginary comprised much more than films; a feature it shared with its vernacular big brother. For much of the twentieth century, cinema was not considered an autonomous medium. As Victor Burgin cogently argues:

The “classic” narrative film became the sole and unique object of film studies only through the elision of the *negative* of the film, the space beyond the frame—not the “off screen space” eloquently theorized in the past, but a space formed from all the many places of transition between cinema and other images in and of everyday life.⁴⁷

A ‘film,’ Burgin continues, “may be encountered through posters, ‘blurbs,’ and other advertisements [...] it may be encountered through newspaper reviews, reference work synopses and theoretical articles (with their ‘film-strip’ assemblages of still images); through production photographs, frame enlargements, memorabilia, and so on.”⁴⁸ Early in the century, much

43. See, for example, the “written cinema” addressed in Pavle Levi, *Cinema by Other Means*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012, 46-76; Richard Abel, ‘Exploring the Discursive Field of the Surrealist Film Scenario Text’, in: *Dada and Surrealist Film*, Rudolf E. Kuenzli (ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1996; Peter Christensen, ‘Benjamin Fondane’s “Scenarii intournables”’, *ibid.*

44. See, for example, François Albera, ‘From the Cinematic Book to the Film-Book’, in: Guido, Lugon 2012 [reference 7], 197-222; Pepper Stetler, ‘“The New Visual Literature”: László Moholy-Nagy’s “Painting, Photography, Film”’, *Grey Room* 32 [2008], 88-113; Andrea Nelson, ‘László Moholy-Nagy and “Painting Photography Film”: A Guide to Narrative Montage’, *History of Photography* 30, no. 3 [2006], 258-69; Iva Janáková, ‘Avant-Garde Photography and the Book’, in: *Czech Photographic Avant-Garde 1918-1948*, Vladmír Birgus (ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: MIT 2002, 263-68.

45. Vsevolod Meyerhold, ‘The Cinematization of Theatre’, in: *The Film Factory*, Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (ed.), London: Routledge 1994, 272.

46. Olivier Lugon in Guido, Lugon 2012 [reference 7], 141.

47. Victor Burgin, ‘Possessive, Pensive and Possessed’, in: *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image*, David Green and Joanna Lowry (ed.), Brighton: Photoforum and Photoworks 2006, 166.

48. *In/Different Spaces*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1996, 22-23. Burgin addresses the present “cinematic heterotopia,” which he distinguishes from the movie theater, where “the experience of film was once localized in space and time.” But this localization was an exception, rather than a rule, and was mightily compromised in the early decades of the twentieth century.



Figure 8
 John Heartfield, *Leben und Treiben in Universal-City 12 Uhr 5 mittags* (Hustle and Bustle in Universal City at 12:05 in the Afternoon), 1920. Original test print of photomontage with photo and text elements and a drawing by George Grosz (photomontage since lost). Reproduction from: Peter Pachnik and Klaus Klaus Honnef (Eds.). John Heartfield, Cologne: DuMont, 1991. Page: 3, Kat Nr. 72.

like today, cinema was a heterogeneous ensemble of technologies and venues, discourses and practices, objects and experiences, energies and desires. Where the vernacular cinematic imaginary helped industrialize and normalize the experience of film as it existed, the avant-garde cinematic imaginary pointed toward an experience of film that did not exist, or that survived only at the margins. Unlike industrialized cinema, where the imaginary played an important but auxiliary role, within the avant-garde, the cinematic imaginary was primary. The poverty of avant-garde films served as catalyst and symptom of an exuberant cinematic imaginary. Its subsequent invisibility was a product of its amorphous ubiquity.

However heterogeneous, the cinematic imaginary often constellated around a single attribute (especially, motion), a single material (predominantly, celluloid, paper, or light), a single practice (above all, montage), a single phenomenon (darkness), or some combination thereof. By far the most frequently cited gap between film and photography—and, therefore, the site of innumerable productive contaminations—was the division between motion and stillness.⁴⁹ Furthermore, film and photography shared material supports much more

49. The magnitude of this approach is registered in the titles of numerous recent publications. See Guido Lugini (reference 7), *Between Still and Moving Images*; Karen Beckman and Jean Ma (eds.), *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography*, Durham: Duke University Press 2008; David Green and Joanna Lowry (eds.), *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image*, Brighton: Photoforum and Photoworks 2006. Crucial earlier studies include Stewart

Between Film and Screen; Jan-Christopher Horak, *Making Images Move*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press 1997; Raymond Bellour, *L'Entre-images: Photo, Cinéma, Vidéo*, Paris: La Différence 2002. See also David Campany, *Photography and Cinema*, Exposures, London: Reaktion 2008, 22-59. Rather than oppose cinematic motion to photographic stillness, David Campany has thoughtfully argued that the historical avant-garde employed

often than is generally recognized: photographs and films were habitually shot on identical celluloid strips;⁵⁰ disseminated as closely related printed matter (that is, “the little paper cinema that is the magazine”);⁵¹ or projected as light and shadow through nearly identical magic lanterns.⁵² Rather than medium-specific, the cinematic was dispersed across multiple media and, ironically, was anchored more in photography than in film, at least in avant-garde ranks. In the complex, avant-garde exchange among painting, photography, and film, as Matthew Witkovsky argues, painting often constituted a training ground and film an ideal realm such that the primary field of operation was reserved for photography and its manipulation.⁵³ Most famously, this intermedial position was held by photomontage.

As announced in the titles and materials of works like Raoul Hausmann’s *Synthetic Cinema of Painting* (1918) and *Dada in Ordinary Life* (also known as *Dada Cinema*, 1920), painting and cinema marked the two conceptual foci around which much avant-garde photomontage developed. A photolithographic reproduction of John Heartfield’s elaborate photomontage *Hustle and Bustle in Universal City at 12:05 in the Afternoon* (1920, fig. 8) adorned the cover of the catalogue for the International Dada Fair, organized by Heartfield, Hausmann, and Georg Grosz, and held in the Summer of 1920 in Berlin. Amidst the media detritus montaged by Heartfield were headlines and other snippets from English-language newspapers, magazines, and theater programs; mass-produced photographic images of telephone receivers and automobile wheels, men in suits and disfigured faces; a drawing of a woman combing her hair, seen from the front and back, likely culled from a magazine advertisement; at the center, bitter caricatures by Grosz layered as densely as the newspapers. Further perusal divulges references to “photoplays”—an early term for films—as well as an actual filmstrip cut and folded in the form of an arrow pointing down along the right-hand side of the photomontage. If city films would soon become a staple of avant-garde cinema—advanced initially in elaborate typographic-photomontages such as Moholy-Nagy’s typophoto *Dynamic of a Metropolis* (1921/24, fig. 9)—Heartfield here condensed the chaos of city life into a single montage—one which not only featured cinema, but which was structured by it. Form coincided with content: the “universal city” of the title, as Andrés Zervigón observes, was the sprawling studio complex founded by German émigré film magnate Carl Laemmle in Los Angeles’s San Fernando Valley. (The title may also have recalled *Leben und Treiben am Alexanderplatz* [1896], an early actuality by German film pioneer Max Skladanowsky.)⁵⁴

both media under the aegis of *speed*, whereas post-WWII avant-gardes tended toward *slowness*. See ‘Introduction: When to be Fast? When to be Slow?’, in: *The Cinematic*, David Company (ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: MIT 2007, 10-12.

50. The Autocinephot (1919) or the Debrise Sept (1923) utilized the same 35 mm celluloid strip to produce films, photographs, or an intermediate setting comprised of rapid-fire succession of still images. See Oliver Lugon in: Guido, Lugon 2012 [reference7], 78.

51. Jean Selz (1937), cited in: Thierry Gervais, “The Little Paper Cinema”: The Transformations of Illustration in: *Belle Époque Periodicals*, in: Guido, Lugon 2012 [reference7] 162. Gervais demonstrates how magazines such as *Vu* and *Regards*, equated *mise en scène* (staging, here for film) and *mise en page* (page layout).

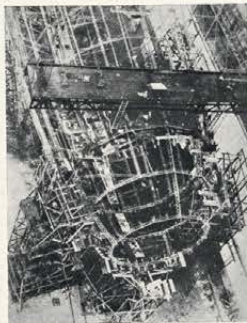
52. From a contemporary perspective, see the exhibitions and anthologies Stan Douglas and Christopher Eamon (eds.), *Art of Projection*, Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz 2009; Tanya Leighton (ed.), *Art and the Moving Image*, London: Tate Publishing 2008; Joachim Jäger, Gabriele Knapstein, and Anette Hüsch (eds.), *Beyond Cinema: The Art of Projection*, Ostfildern; Berlin: Hatje Cantz 2006; Chrissie Iles (ed.), *Into the Light*, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art 2001.

53. Matthew S. Witkovsky, *Foto: Modernity in Central Europe 1918-1945*, New York: Thames & Hudson 2007, 27 and passim. See also Matthew Teitelbaum (ed.), *Montage and Modern Life: 1919-1942*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1992.

54. Andrés Mario Zervigón, *John Heartfield and the Agitated Image*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2012, 127. Zervigón productively locates these experiments in photomontage as an extension of Heartfield’s (lost and little-known) work in propagandistic film animation.

**L. MOHOLY-NAGY:
DYNAMIK DER GROSS-STADT**

**SKIZZE ZU EINEM
FILMMANUSKRIPT**



Das Entstehen einer Eisenkonstruktion.

Alle Rechte, insbesondere das Recht der Verfilmung und Übersetzung, behalten Autor und Verlag sich vor.

Großaufnahme.
Die Bewegung setzt sich in einem Auto fort, das nach links saust. Man sieht ein und dasselbe Haus dem Auto gegenüber in der Bildmitte (das Haus wird immer von rechts in die Mitte zurückgezogen; dies ergibt eine starre, ruckartige Bewegung). Ein anderes Auto erscheint. Dieses fährt gleichzeitig entgegengesetzt, nach rechts.

Diese Stelle als brutale Einführung in das atemlose Rennen, das Tohuwabohu der Stadt.

Der hier starre Rhythmus lockert sich langsam im Laufe des Spiels.



Ein Tiger kreist wütend in seinem Käfig.

TEMPO TEMPO TEMPO

Häuserreihe auf der einen Seite der Straße, durchscheinend, rast rechts durch das erste Haus. Häuserreihe läuft rechts weg und kommt von rechts nach links wieder. Einander gegenüber liegende Häuserreihen, durchscheinend, in entgegengesetzter Richtung rasend, und die Autos immerrasher, so daß bald ein FLIMMERN entsteht.

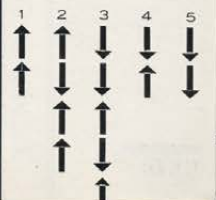
Der Tiger:
Kontrast des offenen, unbehinderten Rennens zur Bedrängung, Beengtheit. Um das Publikum schon anfangs an die Überraschungen und Alogik zu gewöhnen.

**TEMPO
TEMPO
TEMPO
TEMPO**



1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5

Rangierbahnhof, Ausweichstellen.



Kran bei Hausbau in Bewegung. Aufnahmen: von unten von oben

Erst Trickischaufnahme von sich bewegenden Punkten, Linien, welche in ihrer Gesamtheit in einen Zeppelinbau; (Naturaufnahme) übergehen.

Ganz klar – oben hoch – Bahnzeichen:



(Großaufnahme.)

Alle automatisch, au-to-ma-tisch in Bewegung

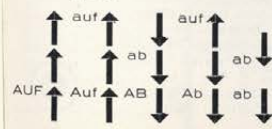


Figure 9

Laszlo Moholy Nagy, *Dynamik der Gross-Stadt* (Dynamic of the Metropolis), published in: *Bauhausbuch Nummer 8, Malerei Fotografie Film*, Munich: Albert Langen, 1927, 166-117.

An extended caption in the catalogue made the stakes clear: “This picture, for which the poet Wieland Herzfelde [the brother of Heartfield and author of the catalogue] proclaims his special fondness, describes *with the means of film* the life and activity in Universal City.”⁵⁵ With the phrase “the means of film,” Herzfelde no doubt implied montage: the fragmentation and juxtaposition available to photography no less than to film.⁵⁶ Throughout the 1920s, Sergei Eisenstein insisted that: “To determine the nature of montage is to solve the specific problem of cinema.”⁵⁷ But when he first formulated his thesis on the “montage of attractions,” Eisenstein analogized “attraction” to the photomontages of Alexander Rodchenko.⁵⁸ Heartfield, Herzfelde, and Rodchenko were not alone in the application of filmic means toward photographic ends. Nearly every movement had its own “pasted photographs,”

55. Wieland Herzfelde, ‘Introduction to the First International Dada Fair’, *October* 105 (2003), 104. Translated and introduced by Brigid Doherty. Emphasis added.

56. Matthew Witkovsky argues that these cinematic qualities applied equally well to the installation of the International Dada Fair, where “snatches of text read like intertitles in silent cinema, while the head shots sandwiches between them echo film stills.” Witkovsky 2007 (reference 53), 29.

57. Sergei Eisenstein, ‘A Dialectical Approach to Film Form’, in: *Film Form*, Jay Leyda (ed.), New York: Harcourt 1977, 48. Or, as he argued later, “all cinema is montage cinema, for the simple reason that the most fundamental cinematic phenomenon—the fact that the picture moves—is a montage phenomenon.” ‘Laocoön’ 1957 (reference 2), 109. Emphasis in original.

58. ‘Montage of Attractions’, in: *The Film Sense*, Jay Leyda (ed.), New York: Harcourt Brace 1947, 231.

“photomontaged pictures,” “picture poems,” “photo-plastics,” or “poeso-plastic,” to help bridge the gap between painting and film by way of photography.⁵⁹ Throughout the interwar period, luminaries like Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, as well as countless pedestrian critics, theorized the montage of film images in the cinema alongside the montage of photographs in the illustrated presses.⁶⁰ In Benjamin’s famous formulation: “*Dadaism attempted to produce with the means of painting (or literature) the effects which the public today seeks in film.*”⁶¹ Located between the newspaper and the movie screen, avant-garde photomontage waged a cinematic gamble in static images. But the avant-garde cinematic imaginary was hardly limited to montage. Indeed, just as the avant-garde employed “the means of film” to describe the conditions of modern life, so too did its members pursue “cinema by other means,” in Pavle Levi’s felicitous phrase, to explore and extend the possibilities of modern art and media.⁶²

By the 1970s, the center of gravity had turned away from cinema and toward photography, as evinced by the photorealist and abstract painter Gerhard Richter in a summation of his practice: “I’m not trying to imitate a photograph; I’m trying to make one. And if I disregard the assumption that a photograph is a piece of paper exposed to light, then I am practicing photography by other means.”⁶³ And so, the interwar and post-WWII avant-gardes were possessed by media whose direct products were virtually absent. The 1960s and ’70s avant-gardes marshaled photography everywhere and produced photographs (as such) nowhere; in the 1920s, avant-garde films were rarities even as the avant-garde cinematic imaginary reigned supreme.

59. See Witkovsky 2007 [reference 53], 27 and passim.

60. Kracauer 1995 [reference 26], esp. 47-48, 62-63.

61. Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility [Second Version]’, in: *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 3 1935-1938*, Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 2002, 118. Emphasis in original. As many scholars have noted, the lines of influence were more likely reversed.

62. By his own account, Levi’s gambit differs markedly from the one pursued here. Levi, 2012 [reference 43], 27. Levi delimits the concept “cinema by other means” as a tension between a medium’s material and conceptual components, roughly in line with Jonathan Walley’s argument on post-WWII avant-garde film. See Jonathan Walley, ‘The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting

Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-Garde Film’, *October* 103 (2003), 15-30. For other attempts to map something like the cinematic imaginary in the early twentieth century, see R. Bruce Elder, *Dada, Surrealism, and the Cinematic Effect*, Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press 2013; Jennifer Wild, *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema 1900-1923*, Berkeley: University of California Press 2015; Andreas Huyssen, *Miniature Metropolis: Literature in an Age of Photography and Film*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2015. 63. Gerhard Richter, ‘Interview with Rolf Schön 1972’, in: Gerhard Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting*, Hans-Ulrich Obrist (ed.), trans. David Britt, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1995, 72-73. See also Kaja Silverman, ‘Photography by Other Means’, in: *The Painting of Modern Life: 1960s to Now*, Ralph Rugoff (ed.), London: Hayward Publishing 2007, 18-25.