Real Bodies in (Un)real Spaces: Space, Movement, and the Installation Sensibility in Lech Majewski's *The Mill and the Cross*

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Abstract. Live-action bodies traverse digitally-constructed and digitized spaces in Lech Majewski's *The Mill and the Cross* (*Młyn i krzyż*, 2011). Majewski, a Polish artist who has worked across media, imagines his film as an animation of the world represented in Pieter Bruegel's painting, *The Procession to Calvary*. His unprecedented blending of real and painted bodies, spaces, and worlds in *The Mill and the Cross* draws attention to the necessity of acknowledging space and movement in contemporary approaches to embodied spectatorial experience. This essay considers how the film imagines and treats its space(s) and the relations it establishes between the film-as-text, painting-as-text, and the museal space that traditionally contains painting—but also, with increasing frequency, cinema. It proposes a reframing of the terms of discussion in intermediality, shifting from *painting/cinema* to *installation/cinema*. Finally, it explores a long-neglected notion of art and its space (and the possibility of inhabiting that space) as they (re-)emerge in contemporary expanded cinema.

Keywords: expanded cinema, painting, installation, space, spectatorship.

> "*In the cinema the impression of reality is also the reality of the impression, the real presence of motion*" (Metz 1974, 9).

> "*The world of a painting is not continuous with the world of its frame; at its frame, a world finds its limits. We might say: a painting* is *a world; a photograph is* of *the world*" (Cavell 1979, 24).

From its inception until very recently, cinema has existed in the condition of pastness. This admittedly rather general claim is, I should think, also a fairly uncontroversial one. Academic film studies has, at least since Bazin, viewed cinema's claims to realism as emerging out of an indexical argument, which in turn derives from the ontology of the photographic image.[1] The cinema available

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1   English-speaking audiences encountered this most famously via the Hugh Gray translations of

to theoreticians at the time was, after all, little more than the photograph blurring past twenty-four frames per second. Most of the ontological and epistemological claims about this form of cinema accordingly emphasized its distinction from the other arts: painting, sculpture, performance. The fracturing of the familiar cinematic dispositive around the middle of the twentieth century, followed by the rapid and successive ascents of television, video, and "new media" (which for the purposes of this essay I will use to refer to digital technologies, techniques, and the moving-image works produced by them) posed fundamental challenges to most of these claims, thereby destabilizing long-held attitudes toward cinematic realism.

I do not intend in this paper to rehearse those familiar debates, nor to comment on them. Rather, I want to consider how a recent film, made by an artist known for his work in the expanded field of cinema and video art, allows us to move from thinking about the problem of cinema's relation to the other arts to considering the cinematic artwork's shifting position today – when the moving image has been incorporated into the institution of art – within what the art historian David Joselit has characterized as "heterogeneous configurations of relationships or links" (2013, 2). *The Mill and the Cross* (Lech Majewski, 2011) is a feature-length animation[2] of Pieter Bruegel's famous painting of 1564, *The Procession to Calvary*. Majewski, a Polish artist born in 1953, has been widely recognized for his work across media. A mid-career retrospective held at the Museum of Modern Art (New York) in 2006 introduced his work to a North American audience with his experimental film, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (2004), playing across theatres in New York the same year. Subsequent releases of many of his earlier moving-image works have by now ensured his status in the commercial art world, even if critical opinion remains more guarded (something that may have to do with the fact that Majewski does not seem to espouse any coherent philosophy concerning his art, which can at times hew close to music-video aesthetics).

What is so fascinating about *The Mill and the Cross* is its blending of painted space with "real" space, digitized bodies with live-action figures, in order to construct a world that is at once utterly artificial and yet undeniably real in the

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André Bazin's essays. In recent years, successive reassessments of Bazin's original works have shown how his meaning was in many instances lost in translation. Timothy Barnard's invaluable new translations of some of Bazin's best-known essays (2009), the edited volume by Dudley Andrew and Hervé Joubert-Laurencin (2011), and Daniel Morgan's forceful re-reading of the *Ontology* essay via Cavell (2006) are all worth noting. Morgan's essay, in particular, clarifies several points in Bazin's essay that for a long time remained confusing or contradictory, while also offering a convincing argument for how better to understand Bazin's sense(s) of realism in cinema.

2   I don't intend this term in its common usage within film and media studies, as will be evident later.

Bazinian sense. What is the question to which this striking artistic decision is a response? Majewski's technique in this film is, as far as I know, unique in the history of cinema. It deviates sharply from standard rear-projection practices as well as other notable efforts at commingling painting and cinema (as, for instance, in Eric Rohmer's 2001 film, *The Lady and the Duke* [*L'Anglaise et le Duc*]). In fact, as I suggest later in this essay, *The Mill and the Cross* recalls in certain ways the spatial relations articulated in some of Georges Méliès's films.

   This essay argues, following some recent claims by Tom Gunning, that cinema under the sign of new media compels us to pay closer attention to space and movement even as it discourages a fetishization of the index. Examining the way in which *The Mill and the Cross* builds space and figures movement within that space, this essay considers the historicity of the (digital) cinematic image. History, as Didier Maleuvre has suggested in his remarkable *Museum Memories*, "is not a discourse about the present, but rather a way of conceiving one's alienation from time, a way of suffering the disjointedness of consciousness in time" (1999, 271). Developing Maleuvre's logic, I conclude by suggesting that the film's figurative closing movement out of the space of painting and into the space of the museum needs to be read in terms of an expanding discourse that acknowledges, without nostalgia, the passing of a certain (idea of) cinema and turns instead toward its afterlife "with curiosity and lack of alarm" (Hansen 2012, 279).

In/Out: The World of a Painting and the World of its Frame

Two camera movements, their vectors opposed, bookend *The Mill and the Cross*. One, at the beginning of the film, figures our entry into the space – the *world* – of the painting we know as *The Procession to Calvary*. The other, at the end of the film, figures our exit from that world – from the painting – and entry into the world of which that painting forms a part. And, as I will argue, this concluding movement itself figures an opening-onto, a passage into art's circulation within a larger space of media relations.

   In the opening shot of the film, the camera tracks right slowly, smoothly, letting us glimpse what appears to be an animated *tableau vivant*. [Fig. 1.] In the foreground, people shift positions, fix their dresses, or simply maintain their assigned poses with the faintest hints of movement. Having reached the far end of this composition, the camera lingers on an artist describing the plan and progress of his work to his patron, who looks over his shoulder. Then, the

camera reverses its motion, tracking left almost all the way back. The artist walks toward the left while remaining in front of the camera before he moves to adjust a stray dress on the ground. A quick cut moves the camera backward, and an impossible image is revealed.

The artist now appears diminutive, moving along the very bottom of the screen's edge, in front of what at first appears to be an immense painted canvas. [Fig. 2.] It is *The Procession to Calvary*, by Pieter Bruegel, completed in 1564. [Fig. 3.] The painting depicts Christ carrying the cross to Golgotha. Bruegel famously included some five hundred human figures within the painting, placing Christ roughly in the centre of the canvas and making him all but insignificant. Across this complex painting, intricate narratives suggest themselves as we scan it visually. The artist, evidently, is Bruegel himself (played by Rutger Hauer). This is a film about a painting. More specifically, this is a film about how a painting came into the world (our world), and it takes up this question by constructing an imaginative journey through the world of the painting.

The attraction of this shot does not lie in the visual plenitude of the painting's content, but rather in the seamless way in which what originally appears to be an ordinary live-action scene in a "real" setting (whether studio or on-location) turns out, instead, to belong literally within the world of a painted canvas. Off in the distance, we see Bruegel's figures, digitally animated, moving about; in the far left, a group of three children engage in play while horses shift back and forth toward the centre middle ground. Tiny figures – it is impossible to tell if they are real actors or digitally animated figures from Bruegel's painting – move to and fro, closer to the circle at Golgotha. It is likewise impossible to discern where real ground ends and painted ground begins. Conventional relations of figure and ground do not apply to this space, for real bodies are here imagined – and represented – as one with the digitally scanned bodies and the world of Bruegel's painting.

Over the course of the film, we will follow disparate narratives that take up the (imagined) activities of various individuals from the painting through that momentous day. We will repeatedly see a seamless blending of real and painted spaces. At the end of the film, a second camera movement, as though in response to the one that marks the start of the film, calls attention to itself. Following a fade-out at the end of the previous scene, we begin with the camera focused closely on the mourning figure of Mary – but this time, it is clearly focused on the material surface of the painting called *The Procession to Calvary*. The camera then zooms smoothly backward, gradually revealing the whole painting, in its frame, hung in its gallery at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The camera's movement

continues, emphatically positioning *this* painting as one amongst numerous *other* paintings within a museum, before we fade to black.

We might read these two movements of the camera as performative utterances, after J. L. Austin.[3] The opening movement declares a certain set of relations by mapping out the spatial relations between us spectators, the material artwork we know as *The Procession to Calvary*, the world represented within its frame, the film we know as *The Mill and the Cross*, the film-world of *The Mill and the Cross*, and the sets of figures common to both the painting and Majewski's film. That is to say, we are spectators figuratively immersed within the imagined world of a painting even as we accompany the process of the creation of that very painting, which will subsequently be extruded from this fiction and into the reality to which we belong.

The scanning movement of the camera roughly emulates our typical response when we encounter a painting in the gallery. We approach it, we try to take it all in at once, and then we move closer to the painting to scan it for details. As far as the discursive space of *The Mill and the Cross* is concerned, the camera's opening movement – our first glimpse of the film – makes evident the ambition of this film when it reveals, in a single cut, the entirety of *The Procession to Calvary* and allows us to leisurely observe the various moving parts of this painting (that is, once we overcome our initial visceral response to the visual attraction this striking image offers). When the credits sequence ends, we are drawn into the world of the painting – that is now also the world of the film – as indicated by the absence of a self-conscious mixing of painted space and real space.

It is logical, therefore, that the concluding movement of the camera declares a different set of relations by withdrawing from the world of the painting and into the world of which the painting is a part. We had just spent an hour and a half immersed in an imaginative journey through the possible world of a painting, inhabiting its spaces, moving amongst its people. But now we are returned to a different spatial system in which *The Procession to Calvary* is a two-dimensional painting, framed and hung on a wall with many other artworks like it in a museum space. The status of this film has changed, and so has its implied relation to history. I will return to the question of the (cinematic) artwork's relation to history, but for now I want to linger with the spaces and bodies of *The Mill and the Cross*.

If, for Stanley Cavell, the world of a painting finds its limits at the frame, how might we account for the film's figurative journey into that world? I want to think

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3   Austin's formulation of the concept of performative utterance appears in *How to Do Things with Words* (1975).

about this by way of a brief excursus on an installation by the Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, titled *The Paradise Institute* (2001). In its typical setting, the work comprises a large wooden chamber, split in two levels, with stairs and doors that allow for entry and exit. [Fig. 4.] Installed within the clean, minimal white cube of the gallery space, it looks distinctly out of place. It is not reminiscent of Minimalist sculpture, nor does it recall the discourse of Minimalism (inflected as it was with the echoes of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology). In this sense, at least, we cannot seek recourse to modernist critiques of Minimalist art to help us make sense of this work.

Entering this chamber, we see theatre seats and headphones placed on them. Donning them and seating ourselves, the soundscape of the gallery is silenced as the chamber doors close. At the same time, a new soundscape begins in the darkness: Cardiff and Miller's binaural soundtrack recorded specifically for the installation. This soundtrack, as Andrew Uroskie's discussion of the installation notes, includes the noises of "conversations of people who seem to surround us […] people rustling in their seats, taking off items of clothing, and whispering to one another" (2014, 2). Binaural audio, Uroskie points out, makes for an emphatically *locational* soundscape, which overlaps with natural ambient sounds of our fellow spectators inside this work, leading to a confused (dis-) location of our auditory faculty.

Now a screen lights up, illuminating a "miniature diorama of seats, a proscenium, and a balcony, at the far edge of which we might understand ourselves to be seated. Cardiff and Miller have here constructed an alternate universe, a heterotopia in miniature" (Uroskie 2014, 2). The nature of this installation becomes clearer. As visitors to a gallery, we have walked into a recreation of the classic "black box" of cinema. And as Uroskie suggests, "we can give ourselves over to the spectacle because we are secure in the knowledge that it *is* a spectacle and that we are situated on the outside of that spectacle, looking in" (2014, 3). *The Paradise Institute* is an artwork that encourages the spectator to literally enter the space of its art. In this sense, it shares its address with numerous recent media installations which similarly encourage visitors, spectators, and users to leave behind "their" world and to travel, literally and imaginatively, within the artwork's space – which is to say, an *othered* space.[4]

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4   I borrow the concept of an "othered" space from Erika Balsom, who adapts Raymond Bellour's notion of an "other cinema." Balsom means, by the concept, a "site where cinema has become other to itself […] the cinematic *dispositif* […] has shattered into its aggregate parts, which are now free to enter into new constellations with elements once foreign to it" (Balsom 2013, 16). For Raymond Bellour's development of the idea of an "other cinema" see Bellour (2003, 41).

The movement of my discussion from painting and its discursive space to that of installation art is intended to signal a conceptual reorientation that I believe might more fully account for Majewski's film, which in my view belongs to a certain late-twentieth century sensibility that seems to repurpose the historical archive of images without any great attention to medium-specific concerns. (This, by the way, seems to me one reason why contemporary art criticism often becomes confused when speaking of expanded screen practices such as those seen in the recent works of Douglas Gordon, Peter Greenaway, Jane and Louise Wilson, and Philippe Parreno, among others. More often than not, accounts of their works try to invoke a critical genealogy indebted to Minimalist art theory and criticism, or else an even more familiar framework of immersion and spectacle.[5] Neither of these modes seems adequate, precisely because their work moves freely across forms of media without remaining bound either to medium-specific criticism or the attractions of immersion.)

Let us consider, then, the conceptual space of *The Mill and the Cross* not as that of a digitized painting but rather as that of an installation, which is what it appears if we attempt a more embodied, haptic engagement. Let us treat its space as one that can be entered, traversed, and experienced at a level beyond the purely visual.

The Mill and the Cross rejects standard rear-projection practice (which pre-dates digital cinema anyway) as well as most compositing techniques common to digital cinema nowadays. For instance, whereas the average film that relies significantly on digital imagery (let's say, Joss Whedon's *The Avengers*, 2012) completes most of its principal photography in front of a green screen and then incorporates environmental reconstruction in post-production with digital techniques, *The Mill and the Cross* showcases a tripartite approach.

Not only was a green screen involved, physical locations as well as a highly detailed, large-scale reproduction of *The Procession to Calvary* were used. This process is at the heart of the distinctive look of the film, particularly the seamless nature of its mixed-media world. Rear projection in a Hitchcock film, for instance, marks itself off as separate from the rest of the action which proceeds before it. Painted backdrops, generally speaking, remain backdrops: their spaces

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5   The press release for Philippe Parreno's forthcoming exhibit in New York's Park Avenue Armory underscores my point. Consider the title and first paragraph, for instance: "Artist Philippe Parreno Orchestrates Monumental Multi-Sensory Installation At Park Avenue Armory This June." See *Park Avenue Armory*, March 5, 2015. *http://resnicowschroeder.com/rsa/upload/Headline/_Filename_Parreno%20at%20Park%20Avenue%20Armory_FINAL.pdf*. Last accessed 28. 05. 2015.

cannot be traversed. However, it is common in *The Mill and the Cross* to see real bodies make their way over painted hills and through painted valleys. Likewise, live action and physical landscapes in the foreground might yield without self-conscious artifice to painted landscapes and a mix of live and digitally-animated figures in the background. It is in this sense that the world of *The Mill and the Cross* is also the animation of the frozen space of *The Procession to Calvary*, even as that painting is itself in the process of being produced within that world.

In a recent discussion of Martin Scorsese's use of Hitchcockian rear projection in *Shutter Island* (2010), Elisabeth Bronfen makes an intriguing claim. She suggests that the "visual instability produced by rear projection indicates that something in excess of the cinematic representation of the otherwise unrepresentable is at play: foregrounding the artificiality of the film image also makes for its effect" (2015, 24). Rear-projected backdrops remain at a remove from the real bodies that move before them; in this sense, Bronfen's claim is justified, for it is clear when watching a rear-projected scene that there is more at work in the scene than what is represented.

However, the difference between spatial construction in *The Mill and the Cross* and classical rear projection lies not precisely in the theatrical division between evident artifice and real space, but rather the impossible intersection between the two.

Artifice and reality are inseparably entwined (while remaining clearly perceptible in their difference) in *The Mill and the Cross*. Real bodies exist in (un)real spaces, and within their relations emerges an aesthetic play. This film's artifice is more than just its effect; it is its *raison d'être*. Unlike the most typical usage of rear projection, the spaces of *The Mill and the Cross* are conceived as being both painted *and* volumetric. It thus reworks a centuries-old tradition of endowing the two-dimensional image with volume and movement, something we find in pre-cinematic screen practices like the shadow play and early cinema's fascination with *projection par transparence*, but also – and more spectacularly – in the "looming" movement of images produced by the Phantasmagoria.[6] In short, this aesthetic play creates a sustained tension between flatness and depth, between painting and volume, and ultimately between its world and ours. The tension extends to the spectator a particular proposal: you may enter this (aesthetic) space.

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6   See the fascinating discussion of transparent projection in cinema's first decades in Jennifer Wild: *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema, 1900–1923* (2015, 11). Although Wild does not reach back as far as the Phantasmagoria of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the dialectic between flatness and depth, two-dimensionality and volume in projected images must begin with the Phantasmagoria – the first projection technology that allowed for such an illusory effect.

I am arguing that *The Mill and the Cross* articulates an emergent sensibility concerning the spaces of cinema. I understand this sensibility to come into self-awareness generally in the late twentieth century, perhaps principally in the workings of post-1989 expanded screen practices and the architectures they generate. Although a nuanced historiography of this sensibility – call it the *spatialization of cinema* – needs to be theorized at length, it lies outside the immediate scope of this essay.[7] Instead of recalling the traditional model of cinema's genealogy, which generally tracks through the camera obscura, the magic lantern, and then the cinematic image as a window onto the world, we might instead position *The Mill and the Cross* in the realm of what Antonia Lant has called "haptical space," thereby reinforcing my proposed shift in the terms of discussion of the film's intermediality from *painting/cinema* to *installation/cinema.*

Lant's account of haptical space in early cinema is grounded upon a Riegl-inflected theorization of the "haptical and optical properties of art" and the "role of Egyptian art in making this distinction" (1995, 50). I am concerned here with the first part of Lant's article, particularly her discussion of certain early films. In *The Palace of the Arabian Nights* (George Méliès, 1905), Lant discerns an "engagement with the novel spatiality of cinema, an utterly flat medium of presentation, insubstantial, without texture or material, and yet evoking, in a wafer, a fuller illusion of physicality and exactness of human beings than any prior art" (1995, 45). Lant finds in some other Méliès films "motifs that probed or highlighted the alluring yet illusory depths of the cinema, the impossible compressions and expansions of far and near, the unclear identities of figure and ground" (1995, 46). Méliès achieves these effects by "interleaving painted flats with moving actors, by animating or constituting paintings through trick effects of stop motion, splicing, and double exposure, [and] by creating a giant magic lantern that produces both still and animated projections" (Lant 1995, 46). Such explorations, Lant argues, show that "the spatial properties of representation and

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7   Very recently, Thomas Elsaesser has proposed that we view the 18th-century Phantasmagoria as "conceptually [the] most challenging precursor of cinema" (Elsaesser 2015, 69). Such a move would contest practically the entire history of cinema, which has tended to privilege the magic lantern. Elsaesser's argument is that "the lineage of the Phantasmagoria […] initiates a form of cinema that does not project itself as a window on the world, nor requires fixed boundaries of space like a frame. Rather, it functions as an ambient form of spectacle and event, where no clear spatial divisions between inside and outside pertain" (Elsaesser 2015, 69–70). Thus, he would position the Phantasmagoria as "the dispositive that […] most closely approximates the genealogical ancestor of […] installation art" (Elsaesser 2015, 70). In fact, the ambience and architecture of the Phantasmagoria have long been overlooked, despite being quite crucial to structuring the phenomenological experience of visitors – a logic of spatiality that recent media installations recover and rework in different ways. See Elsaesser 2015, 45–74.

their relation to an observer, indeed as defined by the observer's perception, was a formulation of art theory coincident with cinema's appearance" (1995, 47).

As the relatively historically-stable categories of cinema and painting shift in order to negotiate new formations at the turn of another century, it makes sense to me to try and account for *The Mill and the Cross*, a film about painting and cinema, created by a media artist (and thus not, in the traditional sense, a filmmaker), in an expanded context. Space and the visitor's embodied experience of it seems to matter in art as never before. It is perhaps most obvious in the rapid proliferation and near-ubiquity of screen-based architectures and installations in galleries and museums. Moreover, and at a more foundational level, we can also recall recent discussions concerning art's *relocation* and *circulation* made by Francesco Casetti (2015) and David Joselit (2013).

Both appear convinced that what is at stake in contemporary art is not temporality – which had been a driving concern for both cinema and the other arts for much of the twentieth century – but rather *spatiality*. In other words, we must consider not so much what (the specificity of) a given artwork is, but rather *where* it is – in terms of its address to the spectator as well as the forms of experience it enables. *The Mill and the Cross* offers cinematic spectatorship that works like *The Paradise Institute* and many other media installations offer the visitor to a gallery or museum today: an invitation to be part of the space of the artwork. In this sense, it joins recent efforts across expanded cinema to once again investigate "the spatial properties of representation and their relation to an observer […] as defined by the observer's perception" (Lant 1995, 47) a century after Méliès.

Ductus: The Space(s) of Art

It makes a certain kind of sense to read *The Mill and the Cross* not within the conceptual framework of painting and cinema but rather that of installation and cinema because of the way the film imagines space and movement. By foregrounding the obvious artifice of real bodies traversing (un)real spaces within the imagined world of a painting that comprises this moving-image artwork, *The Mill and the Cross* resembles an installation space that we may traverse and from which we may, eventually, depart. Within this space, a form of spectatorship emerges that emphasizes movement and affect over critical distantiation; this is an aesthetic space that promotes affective, embodied responses. We enter this space in order to move, and in turn to be moved.

This moving aesthetic calls to mind Tom Gunning's recent comments on the need for a renewed attention to cinema's relationship to motion. Gunning argues that "spectatorship of cinematic motion" (2007, 39) can raise interesting concerns that sidestep the either-or impasse that is the almost inevitable conclusion of any account of cinema that grounds itself upon photographic indexicality. Gunning wants to emphasize the obvious but much-neglected fact that "film spectators are embodied beings rather than simply eyes and minds somehow suspended before the screen" (2007, 39),[8] and he mobilizes one of Metz's earlier essays to support his polemic. Metz, in *On the Impression of Reality in Cinema*, tries to acknowledge the titular "impression of reality" that cinema produces by approaching it phenomenologically. "Participation" constitutes a key concept for Metz in this essay, for it turns out to be "affective and perceptual" (Metz 1974, 4), and relates to film's "*appeal* of a presence and proximity" (Metz 1974, 5). But how to achieve this sense of participation? As Gunning notes, Metz identified movement as instrumental toward this participatory spectatorship. It is our ability to perceive motion and the effects that has on our sensorium that, for Metz, forms the basis of spectatorial participation.[9]

Whereas Gunning discusses Metz's ideas in relation to Henri Bergson's writings on motion, I want to look at the points he raises from a different perspective. There is another, older history that addresses the profound connection between movement and the art of viewing, especially as they pertain to the embodied experience of visual art. Giuliana Bruno has addressed this directly in her efforts to (re)locate the emergence of cinema within heterogeneous cultural practices of image collection designed to provoke affective recollection. In her account, the practice of exhibiting cinema coalesced around various "sites of public viewing" such as "cabinets of curiosity, wax museums, panoramic and dioramic stages […] and view painting" (Bruno 2007, 17). She claims that "what turned into cinema was an imaginative trajectory requiring physical habitation and liminal traversal of the sites of display" (Bruno 2007, 18). Cinema is thus reconceived as a cartographic practice that not only figures a physical and metaphorical journey in order to construct affect, but one that was always already marked by an attention to space and movement.[10]

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8   This is something Brigitte Peucker has argued for and theorized across two books: *Incorporating Images: Film and the Rival Arts* (1995) and *The Material Image: Art and the Real in Film* (2007).
9   All quotes from Gunning 2007, 29–52.
10   This is developed in greater depth in Giuliana Bruno's *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (2002).

Well before Bruno, Sergei Eisenstein had likewise characterized cinematic spectatorship in his day as an "imaginary path followed by the eye and the varying perceptions of an object that depend on how it appears to the eye" (Eisenstein 1989, 116). He subsequently reminds us that "in the past […] the opposite was the case: the spectator moved between […] carefully disposed phenomena that he observed sequentially with his visual sense" (Eisenstein 1989, 116). Eisenstein adduces two examples: the Acropolis at Athens and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, where the eight reliefs of Urban VIII's coat of arms by Bernini are set in a specific sequence such that their significance only accretes and articulates itself when the sequence is "activated" by a physical traversal of the architected space.

I want to claim that Metz's conception of spectatorial participation can be extended to intersect both with Bruno's media archaeological effort to position cinema as a practice of emotional mapping, as well as Eisenstein's identification of a link between architectural space and spectatorship. Crucially, all three accounts consider *motion* as somehow key to the embodied experience of art. And in their reliance on motion, they unconsciously point back to the concept of *ductus* that was fundamental to medieval attitudes toward making and experiencing art.

In medieval art historiography, as Mary Carruthers clarifies, *ductus* "analyze[s] the experience of artistic form as an on-going, dynamic process rather than the examination of a static or completed artwork. *Ductus* is the way by which a work leads someone through itself: that quality in a work's formal patterns which engages the audience and then sets a viewer or auditor or performer in motion within its structures, an experience more like traveling through stages along a route than like perceiving a whole object" (2010, 190). In short, the medieval conception of an artwork was that one would "travel through [its] composition […] led on by the stylistic qualities of its parts and their formally arranged relationships" (Carruthers 2010, 190). It is a quality of the artwork, but also something more: it is the very performance and process of one's (imaginative but possibly also literal) traversal. The address of the artwork, and the affect it induces, is developed in the course of this moving art of viewing. Thus, Carruthers concludes, "through its formal disposition *the work* in and of itself 'directs' movement […] The work does not transparently 'express the author's intentions.' Its formal arrangements themselves are agents, which cause movements, mental and sensory and – as in the case of architecture – physical" (2010, 201).

By way of an example, the art historian Paul Crossley's discussion of the architecture of the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres in France provides a wonderful glimpse of how medieval art and architecture mobilized *ductus*.

Crossley emphasizes in his account an intertwining of movement and affect, each playing off the other. He excavates the "cognitive map" of Chartres, which in its architected space achieved effects we (re-)discover in recent moving-image installations. His comment concerning the "sacred topography" of Chartres, "its altars, chapels, shrines, screens, miraculous images, between which its laity and clergy moved, sometimes informally, at other times in a more or less prescribed order" (Crossley 2010, 216) is especially worth noting. The full discussion (which I will not rehearse further here) demonstrates convincingly the ways in which the figures of martyrs, apostles, confessors, and saints were strategically positioned throughout the cathedral, such that they articulated a particular rhetoric – one that is activated precisely by means of recollection in motion, in the process of one's "con*duct*" through the cathedral's interior space. *Ductus*, in the medieval context, is "essentially about performance, or […] 'performativity'" (Crossley 2010, 215).

The "installation sensibility" – if I may call it that – of *The Mill and the Cross* recalls the architected spaces common to recent expanded screen practices. Its skillful weaving-together of the flatness of painted space with the voluptuousness of real bodies, layering them in ways that simultaneously hint at illusionistic space without ever disguising their artifice, consistently displaying a paradoxical spatial construction, ultimately resists being subsumed to immersive spectacle. This film boldly wears its *architexture* on its sleeve.[11] It articulates a discourse on motion on two levels. First, there are specific camera movements that call attention to themselves; two of these coincide with displays of *tableaux vivant*.[12] One of these, as I have argued, serves as a figurative passage between the spaces of painting and cinema, and thus also tells us something of how this film conceives of space, movement and spectatorship. The third, which makes for a figurative movement out of the space of *The Mill and the Cross* and into that of the museum containing *The Procession to Calvary*, consists of a cut and a lengthy

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11   The term comes from Giuliana Bruno, who develops it across *Atlas of Emotion* (2002) and the recent *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (2014). Somewhat frustratingly, she does not provide a clear definition of the term (it is developed instead as a neologism grounded on poetics). However, as far as I can tell, she intends the term to combine the senses of an architected, aesthetic space that is also profoundly a *haptic* space, eliciting an embodied engagement that operates along touch as much as, or perhaps more than, sight. In the case of *The Mill and the Cross*, I have in mind the distinctive painted "skin" of the image as opposed to the standard, volumetric illusion proffered by the more conventionally "cinematic" image.

12   The second appears at the moment of narrative climax, when Bruegel, challenged by his patron to explain how he hopes to capture the enormous complexity of the painting's subject, signals to the miller high up on the tor. As the miller brings the mill blades to a grinding stop, narrative time itself slows and then stops. The camera then slowly tracks through this scene. It is a spectacular reiteration of a very similar effect at the beginning of the film.

zoom backward from the surface of Bruegel's painting. It mirrors the cut that had placed us within the world of the painting at the start of the film, and introduces the second aspect of the film's conception of the spaces of art.

In the final scene of the film, we observe a group of townspeople at a communal dance. They cavort upon real grass, while the painted blades of the painted mill, high up on the painted tor, turn slowly as painted clouds move across a painted sky. Real bodies move seamlessly within (un)real spaces. With the final cut to black that ends this scene, what was a single film effectively becomes two. If, until this point, we had been part of the world of *The Procession to Calvary*, if the film we knew as *The Mill and the Cross* existed within the boundaries of that world (which, after Cavell, we should consider as being identical to the boundaries of the frame of that painting), we are now part of a different space, one which exists not within the world of the painting, but rather the world in which that painting is simply one of many paintings adorning a museum wall.

With the cut, we are ejected from the world of Bruegel's painting, for the next shot shows a close-up of the figures around Mary. But it is clear that we are looking at a flat, two-dimensional painting that is most definitely not animated. Gradually the camera pulls back, revealing the entirety of the painting. It continues to retreat, revealing part of the layout of the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Slowly, it withdraws down a corridor as the film fades to black. [Fig. 5.] This prolonged withdrawal at the conclusion of the film is striking in its deliberate intensity, and demands to be considered carefully. How might we read Majewski's choice to delineate the spaces of his two central texts – Bruegel's *Procession to Calvary* and his own film *The Mill and the Cross* – while carefully elaborating their relation to each other, all within a work that itself unfolds a sustained play of spatiality and spectatorship?

Of Museums, Memory, and Media

The museum, writes Didier Maleuvre, is "*essentially* historical" because it "participate[s] in a historical production of history" through its acts of "putting forward an image of the past and managing the handing on of tradition through artworks and artifacts" (1999, 9). The artwork in the museum, therefore, is not ahistorical. In fact, it is the outcome of a specific set of ideological operations that imbue those works to be found within museum walls with political agency. The great trick of the museum, however, is that it obscures these operations, "neutraliz[ing]" art by containing it within itself while also "[reifying] collective identity by confining it to a set of seemingly eternal traits, thus neutralizing conflicting or errant

tendencies" (Maleuvre 1999, 10–11). The museum as a site of political operations of memory thus reveals itself as "representing the progress of history through diversity, yet doing it from the standpoint of a supra-historical, transcendental notion of what this history is" (Maleuvre 1999, 11). Such is the environment within which we encounter *The Procession to Calvary*. But the museum, which has been home to painting and other arts for more than two centuries, now has a new resident of more recent vintage. Within the museum, we also encounter with increasing regularity that "invention without a future" – the cinema.

Cinema within the museum, much like the museum itself, "owes its existence to modern consciousness's sense of acute separation from the past" (Maleuvre 1999, 270), perhaps even in a unique sense. Cinema is – and has been for a while – in the process of being memorialized in the museum, which as Theodor Adorno for one has remarked, exhibits a discomfiting proximity to mausoleums and death.[13] Indeed as Maleuvre claims, it is the "deadness of the past" that "shines through the museum piece." When Majewski's camera leaves behind the world of *The Mill and the Cross* and enters (returns to) the world of *The Procession to Calvary*, a rhetorical act of doubling occurs. If, until this point, the film was content to trouble spaces of representation by emphasizing its distinctive architexture, it now asks us to consider the film that was always an animation of a painting that is itself held within a museum. This reorientation puts the film-as-text in relation to the painting as another text, both existing in a specific relation to each other within those larger "heterogeneous configurations of relationships or links" that for David Joselit are now incorporated within art itself.

Maleuvre has argued that "history [disconnects] itself from time" within the space of the museum. In fact, it is precisely the emplacement of an artwork within the museum that wrests it outside time itself, he thus argues that "history [...] is a way of conceiving one's alienation from time, a way of suffering the disjointedness of consciousness in time" (1999, 271). In the museum, confronting the artwork we also confront its remoteness from us – a remoteness felt not just temporally, but also, I would argue, spatially. The museum object is other to us. And yet, it is exactly the operation of the museum – its "act of wresting" – that simultaneously reinforces the concept of pastness. Or, in Maleuvre's words, "the historical past does not precede its transplantation in the present: history is precisely the recognition that the past does not exist outside of the reminiscing present" (1999,

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13   Adorno discusses the German word "museal," which for him has "unpleasant overtones." He proceeds to discuss museums alongside mausoleums and the general conditions of death and dying. See Theodor Adorno (1988, 175).

271). *Reminiscence* is precisely what might be an appropriate mode of relating the discursive space of cinema to that of the other arts as they negotiate the museum space that today contains them all. Cinema's entry into the space of the museum itself reinscribes the historicity of the cinematic image. Cinema cannot exist in the museum without having itself passed through modernity and into history (a process that is by no means completed yet). It therefore constitutes a particularly vibrant site of resistance to what Maleuvre criticizes as the museum's will toward supra-historicism and the neutralization of art.

In the preface to *Cinema and Experience*, Miriam Hansen discusses the origins of the Committee for Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Chicago, noting that the name "was meant to designate a broad diversity of media; to encourage critical inquiry into cinema's interactions with other forms and institutions, artistic and vernacular, traditional and experimental; and thus to apprehend cinema in its intersections with (or disjuncture among) different histories, aesthetic and technological, social and political" (Hansen 2012, xvi). It is this openness of cinema to other media, to other images, spaces and technologies that distinguishes its address to the spectator. My claim is that in recent years, an "installation sensibility" has become evident across numerous films made, coincidentally, by artist-filmmakers who routinely work within an expanded field of cinema. In their vision, cinema is more than an historical artefact to be exhibited in the museum; it is rather the beginning of a reimagining of spatial relations between cinema and the other arts. Thus, for instance, the *mise-en-scène* of Peter Greenaway's *Nightwatching* (2007) often recalls photographs or mini-walkthroughs of gallery, museum and other installation set-pieces.[14] [Fig. 6.] And, as I've argued through this essay, the spatial configuration that is evoked when watching *The Mill and the Cross*, the viewing positions that are figured by distinctive camera movements at crucial moments, and the unusual blending and animation of real and (un)real spaces variously recall the spaces and practices of media installation rather than, and indeed beyond, the familiar binaries of painting and film.

What recent developments in expanded screen practices and intermedial filmmaking share is a keen interest in movement. In the architected spaces of expanded screen practice, this movement is often literalized. It is always a

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14   As Brigitte Peucker has noted, Peter Greenaway, although trained early on in painting, is "primarily a curator of exhibitions, an installation artist, a filmmaker whose films exhibit paintings; feature painters as well as writers; juxtapose time-based arts with spatial arts and analog with digital images; and create intermedial palimpsests that layer painting, literature, photography, architecture, landscape architecture, and dance." (See her *Foreword*, in Angela Dalle Vacche, ed. 2012, x).

double movement, for in such contexts our physical traversal is designed to stimulate an affective response. In the case of recent intermedial cinema, as I hope to have shown in my discussion of *The Mill and the Cross*, it is camera movement and compositing technique that figures our journey into and out of the spaces of artwork(s). In these spaces, we visitors enact a performance common to the medieval spectator: we traverse the spaces of the artwork. As the jarring shift in spatial relations at the end of *The Mill and the Cross* suggests, this traversal must account not only for the space within the artwork, but also the spaces that contain that artwork in the real world. Only by considering this other, larger space can we hope to continue to – despite the politics of the museum – account for cinema's encounters with "different histories, aesthetic and technological, social and political." Perhaps most poignantly, it is within the space of the museum that we discover a true compass to guide our movement in thought: a reminiscence that is also the inscription of cinema's own historicity.

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List of Figures

Figure 1. Opening animated *tableau vivant* of Majewski's *The Mill and the Cross* (2011).

Figure 2. Bruegel (Rutger Hauer) is dwarfed – he is to the left, in profile – by the scale of the painting. Although most of the figures in immediate foreground are those of real actors, the shot also shows moving figures – animated or otherwise – in the distant background.

Figure 3. *The Procession to Calvary* (Pieter Bruegel, 1564).

Figure 4. Installation view, *The Paradise Institute* (Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, 2001).

Figure 5. *The Mill and the Cross* (2011). Moving from within the space of the painting to the space of the museum.

Figures 6. Installation sensibility in Peter Greenaway's *Nightwatching* (2007). Note the improbable presence of *spotlights* in a period film (their beams clearly frame the central table).