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Think Film! On Current Practices and Challenges in Film Culture: A Documentation of a Student Symposium

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THINK

Edited by Adriane Meusch and Bianka-Isabell Scharmann

FILM!

On Current Practices and
Challenges in Film Culture:
A Documentation of a
Student Symposium

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of a Student Symposium**

**Edited by Adriane Meusch
& Bianka-Isabell Scharmann**

Frankfurt am Main, 2020

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Michelle Rafaela Kamolz
Adriane Meusch
Bianka-Isabell Scharmann

This publication has its origin in the autumn of 2016. We, the three editors of this volume, are, at the time of completing this work in autumn of 2018, all of us MA students at Goethe-University Frankfurt's Institute for Theatre, Film and Media Studies. Over coffee, two of the three editors, Adriane Meusch and Michelle Rafaela Kamolz, introduced Bianka-Isabell Scharmann to a project called *ThinkFILM*. This was an ongoing Erasmus+ funded project to which Kamolz and Meusch were contributing research on the current state of film education in Germany. Yet, as all of us had, more or less, been involved in and were thinking about the current state of film culture, especially in Germany but also in Europe, the objective for the culmination of the research trajectory shifted. It soon became clear that we wanted to organize a symposium to discuss the pressing questions of film culture with a broader audience. So, the idea for a symposium held in July 2017 was born.

As a project, *ThinkFILM* was headed by the *NaFILM*-Group in the Czech Republic. This project's aim was to re-search film institutions' existing procedures for handling, communicating, and presenting cinematographic heritage. Student groups from four countries—the Czech Republic, Poland, Great Britain and Germany—participated in the project. All four groups were to conceive of and conduct an individual project. While our partners in Poland published work on film education, our partners in England and the Czech Republic worked on exhibiting film by founding their own film museum in Prague.

The goal of the symposium was to discuss problems in current film culture with a focus on filmic heritage and innovative projects in the field of film education. In the preparatory phase we made the decision to address only junior scientists, students, and recent graduates from the field of film and media studies across Germany and abroad, as the symposium was supposed to be a platform for young scholars in various stages of their studies. We asked them to submit their work, be it in progress or finished, from a wide range of genres and contexts: exam or seminar papers, workshop experiences, accounts of the active practice of film communication, as well as drafts of experiments. In the end were held eleven presentations on a diverse range of topics at our conference.

Three days in July 2017

The symposium opened Thursday evening, July 13, 2017, with a curated program of film clips and shorts that all addressed questions of (self-)reflexivity in film. Almost all of the films were treasures from the Institute for Theater, Film and Media Studies' private 16 mm film archive, supplemented by digital files and online videos. The program lasted about an hour and had been composed by Michelle Rafaela Kamolz and Bianka-Isabell Scharmann with the help of Bettina Schulte Strathaus, who oversees the University Filmarchive.

The first panel, "Film Culture in Poland," kicked off the symposium's presentations on the morning of Friday, July 14. First, Katarzyna Figat (University of Łódź) discussed current film digitization and restoration projects in Poland. Figat, a sound designer, focused here especially on sound restoration. It was a highly engaging talk and prompted a debate about restoration ethics that circled the much-discussed question of how far digitization should go in the removal of "defects." Artur Petz's (University of Łódź) presentation was concerned with Polish pre-war sound cinema of the 1930s and the practical aspects and problems of researching its history in terms of production, distribution and reception.

The second panel, "Cinemas, Film Festivals and Funding," started with a live-streamed video lecture from Vatsala Sharma, an independent film scholar based in New Delhi. In her talk, Sharma inquired into the role of European film festivals in the production of Indian independent films, especially at the level of funding and script development. She argued that this practice of early funding influences a film aesthetically by making it sensitive to western aesthetic expectations, which has various implications for both the home market and the broader international reception of these movies. Torgil Trumpler's (Goethe-University Frankfurt) presentation picked up the topic of film funding by investigating the involvement of the state in film archiving. Through an astute comparison of the history and practices of the U. S. Library of Congress and the Reichsfilmarchiv in Germany during the Nazi-regime, Trumpler highlighted the ways in which archival praxis can mirror political ideology. He then discussed the current situation in Germany regarding the preservation of national film heritage led by minister of state Monika Grütters and the Bundesarchiv. After this paper, three students from the University of Paderborn—Johanna Doyé, Alexander Schultz and

René Wessel—introduced their student film initiative *Lichtblick e.V.*, a student cinema that screens classical and experimental pictures in their original format on 35 mm film. Sadly, it faces tremendous problems of various kinds: their venue, a multiplex cinema, has instituted burdensome policies due to a change of ownership, one of which forces *Lichtblick e.V.* to ask for higher ticket prices; they are also facing higher fees for renting the archival prints upon which they heavily rely.

The third and final panel of the day, “Ethics of Restoration and Digitization,” started with Josephine Diecke’s (University of Zurich) presentation. She presented the core findings of her completed master’s thesis, in which she focuses on Robert Reinert’s film *Opium—Die Sensation der Nerven*. A considerable amount of her project was constituted by actual work on a 35 mm Nitro print, which was part of a cooperation between the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf and the film restoration lab OMNIMAGO. Her practical work was accompanied by theoretical reflections on basic principles and ethics modelled after the Bologna school of film restoration. Her project elucidated the persistent need of exchange between film studies (and their programs), archives and labs. Wilke Bitter (Goethe-University Frankfurt) closed the panel by talking about the impact of new media and digitization on the materiality of documentary forms in his comparison of the films *Zidane—A 21st Century Portrait* (Peter Snowdon) and *The Uprising* (Philippe Parreno). Bitter’s paper diverged from the more “hands-on” and practical topics of the previous speakers and contributed to some of the more theoretical questions of the symposium. At the center of his analysis are films whose trademark is their outspoken “low” quality, or low resolution. He pointed to the challenges archivists face when confronted with digital footage: How to preserve, handle or restore this kind of material?

The Saturday program began with a panel on “Communicating Film and its Questions of Audience.” It illustrated how film education in Poland and the Czech Republic are conducted and how museums can and should be involved. This is where our partners in the other *ThinkFiLM* groups, Łódź and Prague, showcased parts of their research. Katarzyna Figat, as the representative for the Polish group, also was able to present their findings on film education in Poland in the Journal *Panoptikum*. In fact, the whole issue is dedicated to film education in Poland (Ciszewska, Mostowska 2017).

The three guests from Prague—Jakub Jiříš, Adéla Mrázová and Terezie Křížkovská—then introduced the concept for their newly established film exhibition *NaFilm*. This exhibition explores new ways of presenting film history. For example, they have recreated pre-cinematic and cinematic technology, and they installed a virtual reality application in which the visitors can physically experience cinematic movement.

The final panel, “Criticism, Film and the Museum,” engaged the topic of the museum as an institution and its relationship to the moving image. Stephan Ahrens (Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf/*Zeughauskino*) presented a paper on the history of film museums and the question of their *raison d’être*. By referring back to Henry Langlois, he reflected on the criticism film museums have had and continue to face. His premise is that the film museum is confronted with the absence of the object being exhibited. The last paper was read by Bianka-Isabell Scharmann for the absent Nicolas Rossi (Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf). The presented research was part of Rossi’s ongoing scientific and artistic dissertation. In it, he reflected, on the one hand, on film essayism as a possible form of film criticism and, on the other, on which relation film essayism posits itself to film criticism. The artistic aspects of Rossi’s project are conceived as criticism in/as practice.

Finally, our theoretical excursion culminated in a podium discussion, in which we and our guests debated the state of film culture in Germany. The discussion centered on the “sorry” state of artistic films and their availability in cinemas and other screening spaces or venues, such as film festivals. We also asked our guests what the country’s film institutions—film museums, cinemas, festivals—can do to develop new strategies for bringing the underrepresented back on screen. Our guests work in the respective fields of concern for us here—arthouse cinemas, film festivals, film museums, archives, and cinema studies. We talked with Bettina Schulte Strathaus, the scientific coordinator of the MA program *Filmkultur* and archive supervisor at Goethe-University Frankfurt; Isabelle Bastian, who is an archivist for the Non-Film-Archive at the Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum; Ann-Christin Eikenbusch, research assistant at University of Mainz; Johanna Süß, the associate director of *LICHTER Filmfest Frankfurt International*; and Andreas Heidenreich, who is on the board of directors at *Bundesverband kommunale Filmarbeit e. V.*

Furthermore, the symposium was accompanied, and luckily so, by a cooperative evening program at the cinema of the Deutsches Filmmuseum. The program included film screenings with original IB Technicolor dye-transfer 35 mm prints as well as lectures from Céline Ruivo (La Cinémathèque française), Prof. Ulrich Rüdél (Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin) and Christoph Draxtra (*KommKino*) on the technique of Technicolor, early coloring methods, and significant questions of restoration.

A Publication as Documentation

This publication is a compilation of most of the talks given at the symposium. Sadly, not all of the presented papers will be found in the following pages. Our goal for this last step was and is to give our panelists a designated space to present their research and simultaneously to preserve it for other scholars. Far too often conferences are held without lasting documentation—be it in a visual, audio or text form. In the spirit of the symposium, we wanted to counter this.

In what follows, you will find a total of six papers, each evolving from the presentations at the symposium. These are not “just” transcriptions of the talks; they have been supplemented in length, content and imagery. Please note that the order of the papers here does not mirror the succession of the symposium.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support of numerous persons and institutions. First, we want to thank *NaFiLM* for the possibility to be part of this project and *Erasmus+* for their generous funding. Accordingly, we are thankful for having been able, through our participation, to get to know all these interesting, nice people who were involved and their respective projects.

We are grateful to Goethe-University Frankfurt, especially to the Institute for Theatre, Film and Media Studies, for letting us host the symposium on their premises. There are several people from the Institute in particular we would like to thank for their support of the conference. Especially we would like to express our gratitude to Jr. Prof. Sonia Campanini, who supported us throughout the project as well as Bettina Schulte Strathaus, who not only participated in our symposium, but who also opened up the university archive to

us and let the material come to light once again. We are also grateful to PD Marc Siegel, who helped us secure additional funding for the symposium. Last but not least, we would like to thank Prof. Vinzenz Hediger for making our Institute part of the Erasmus project in the first place.

Immense gratitude to Stefanie Schlüter, Beate Völker, Christine Kopf and Hannah Schreier, who gave their precious time to us, supported us in our research questions, and made us familiar with the current state of film education in Germany.

The project could not have happened the way it did, if it would not have been for our generous supporters of the Vereinigung von Freunden und Förderern der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität. We are deeply grateful for their support. Many thanks go out too to the people who made our symposium not just a place of theory but of experience: We would like to thank the Deutsche Filminstitut & Filmmuseum, namely Andreas Beilharz and Ines Bayer, for collaborating with us and for sharing their evening program with our guests.

Thank you to all of our participants, interested scholars and students and guest, who created such a great atmosphere throughout the three days. Furthermore, we would like to thank our chairs, Kerim Dogruel and Jan Peschel, who helped through their highly engaging moderations to foster fruitful discussions. A special thanks goes to all our speakers.

This publication would not have seen the light of day without the meticulous work of our copy editor Carly Crane and without the conception of the beautiful layout by Muriel Serf.

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WHY FUND CULTURAL HERITAGE?

Torgil
Trumpler

A FEW QUESTIONS
ON ITS ORIGINS, FILM
PRESERVATION, AND
THE ROLE OF THE STATE

The article recounts the origins of cultural heritage and its relation to the state, and briefly surveys current state funding for film digitization in Germany. It presents the thesis that cultural heritage policy is influenced by the ideological preoccupations of its government. Thus, cultural heritage is a discursive, rather than a fixed, concept. Beginning with the term's origins in the French Revolution, the paper continues with a comparison of the Library of Congress's film department with the Reichsfilmarchiv, showing how each expresses their particular state's conception of itself. This is followed by an example of the current situation in Germany. Finally, it presents five theses on the value of preservation from historian and former congressional librarian Abby Smith which may serve as arguments for publicly funding cultural preservation.

Why Fund Cultural Heritage? A Few Questions on Its Origins, Film Preservation, and the Role of the State
Torgil Trumpler



Fig. 1
Hubert Robert,
Projet d'aménagement de la Grande Galerie du Louvre
(Project for the Transformation of the Grande Galerie of the Louvre), 1796. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Public Domain

Introduction

In 1796 French painter Hubert Robert (1733–1808) painted “Project for the Transformation of the Grande Galerie of the Louvre.” which depicted his vision for the transformation of the Louvre palace into France’s *Musée Central des Arts* (Fig. 1). Although Robert was mostly known for his paintings of ruins and fictive landscapes, he was one of the national museum’s first directors and curators. Influenced by the Enlightenment and the values of the French Revolution, the museum was designed to be the first permanent public exhibition of art. It sought to represent art history in the context of

a liberal progress of citizenship, and to give the *citoyens* a new identity after being freed from the yoke of the *ancien régime*. Indeed, in Robert's painting, one can see the fascination of the painted visitors as they study the art works of the past or stroll through the gallery with their children. Although an exact definition of "cultural heritage" is difficult to pin down, one can sense a sort of cultural heritage in the visitors' admiring faces. The values of our ancestors are conveyed and passed on as they emanate from Robert's painting, itself now a part of that inheritance.

That the preservation of cultural heritage has been a task of the modern state likewise has its tradition in the convictions and self-understanding of the French Revolution and, as public governance is partially responsible for the tradition and selection of it, a discussion of preservation is inevitable when one wants to do research in the field of cultural heritage studies. Hence, as a student of film studies focusing on film's value as heritage, I often come in contact with the term "cultural heritage," its institutions, and the implicit value of its preservation. Such uncritical reiterations in papers and lectures started to give me the feeling that some of these aspects had slowly become myths, which I, at times, all too readily accepted. The wish to demystify cultural heritage and its attendant ideologies became the reason for this paper. However, this also led to a rather a broad collection of theses, supported by introductory research. This paper does not aim to be an in-depth study. As such, there are obvious elisions herein. For example, I have not included the history of international cultural heritage regimes like UNESCO, which have mainly developed since the second half of the 20th century, and which constitute a field of research of their own.

This paper explores cultural heritage on a national level. I will begin with a brief historical introduction to the modern sources of heritage, which includes its discursive definition and possible instrumentalization. This will be followed by a comparison of the film archival policies of two national archives: the film department of the American Library of Congress and the national-socialist Reichsfilmarchiv. Both are exemplary archives from the first half of the 20th century. Finally, I will survey the current state of affairs concerning the digitization of film heritage in Germany and revisit the debate over appropriate heritage conservation in a neoliberal-oriented 21st century environment. This final

section would not have been possible without the website of the initiative *Filmerbe in Gefahr* (“Film heritage in danger”), which contains nearly all important news on the digitization plans in the Federal Republic since late 2013.

A Few Origins and Meanings of and on Cultural Heritage

The origins of this concept can be found in the late 18th century in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Although rulers have long cared for the conservation of their and their ancestors’ monuments, such monuments were first recognized as public property after the revolutionaries promoted the *citoyen* as the principal ruler. After the takeover, the new government was puzzled: what to do with the public memories and the monuments of the *ancien régime*? There were two options: either destroy them, or reinterpret them in a historical narrative that would support the public’s legitimate claim of democratic rule. Although it seemed that the revolutionaries would take up the destruction of monuments, after Robespierre’s death in 1794, they chose to reinterpret the historical narrative to include them, changing their perception and treatment of time and history (Swenson 2013: 30). This was in part due to the intervention of French cleric Abbé de Grégoire, who “identified virtues of civilization, education, patriotism, freedom and the Revolution itself with the ‘conservation’ and ‘restoration’ of the ‘common heritage,’” which also included the remains of absolutism (Swenson 2013: 34). Subsequently, the revolutionaries declared important cultural goods “common heritage”, which led to the display of the most iconic paintings and sculptures in French possession at the new national museum in the Louvre palace. The curators developed strategies to educate the exhibitions’ visitors and to accustom them to the government’s ideas of identity and nation (Harten 1989: 17). Early exhibitions also aimed to showcase France as the home of liberty, democracy, and the arts (Swenson 2013: 38).

After the consolidation of the new government, the idea that cultural artifacts constituted a “common heritage” was brought to many parts of Europe after the territorial expansion of France through the “Coalition Wars” and Napoleon’s subsequent conquests. As these conquests also included the looting and repatriation of many countries’ cultural goods to the new “home of the arts” (France), the violence also shaped the perception of common goods in other countries in Europe. When Napoleon laid claim to antique

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statues in Greece and Italy, even the critics of this policy began to see a European dimension of culture. As German philosopher K. H. Heidenreich asked in 1799, if these statues were damaged in the process, “would not the whole of Europe be in the right to have complained about the barbarity of the French, who knew how to kidnap, but not to conserve works of art?” (ibid.: 39). This new consciousness ran so deep that it would remain amongst many other revolutionary achievements and develop even after the restoration efforts of 1815, when the European governments tried to reinstate their absolutistic reigns (ibid.: 46).

In the 19th century, an institutionalization of cultural heritage policies began. In the newly formed European countries, these policies were mainly instrumentalized and cultivated by nationalist movements (Tauschek 2013: 37f.). As part of a nationalist ideology, the concept of cultural heritage profited from emergent chauvinism, as it was increasingly perceived as a marker of national prestige (Swenson 2013: 333). As France’s example shows, cultural heritage was an important factor in the institution of national ideology as before in France (Tauschek 2013: 41ff.). The notion of a cultural heritage was furthermore bolstered by the rising importance of historic sciences, which altered the perception and importance of the past, and the Romantic movement. The Romantics, estranged by the industrial progress of the mid-to late 1800’s and the resulting transformation of people’s everyday experiences in their working and living environments, constructed acultural heritage—a form of a stable past—as an antipode to modernity (ibid.: 47ff.).

Although there are different terms in use like “monument,” “Denkmal,” “patrimoine national,” or the more contemporary “cultural memory,” the term “national heritage” has been in increasing frequent and common use since the days of the French Revolution (Swenson 2013: 32). To this day, as historian Astrid Swenson points out, the term is used especially when it addresses “preservation of the past as a moral duty” (ibid.: 332). This definition implies a commitment to safeguarding and preserving the past for future generations (Tauschek 2013: 25); it also prescribes putting the heirs in close connection to ancestors as a formative aspect of their identity. From this point of view, it is important to underline that this worthiness of protection as inheritance is not something inherent to the objects, but rather a worth that

is given by (public) discourse (Gornig 2011: 26), or as Markus Tauschek puts it:

Cultural heritage is a project of governmental and bureaucratic orders, but it is also central to historic-cultural intervention. Discourses and practices that transform culture into cultural heritage recall the necessity to pass on historic knowledge to future generations, which is understood as indispensable (2013: 73, trans. by author).¹

These discourses are thereby shaped by political systems which can influence the meaning of cultural heritage. It can change whether cultural heritage is understood in a more open sense, or in a more closed sense. My thesis is that these two poles depend on the general orientation of the governmental system. A liberal and pluralist democratic order might seek to emphasize a definition for “cultural heritage” that carries these values; a totalitarian regime might define and interpret heritage so as to support and/or legitimize its own claims to power and use it to indoctrinate its subjects accordingly; and a market-oriented neoliberal government will likely promote its cultural heritage as assets that carry the potential of profit. While most of these approaches will intertwine in some way, since all are defined by one or the other ideology, it seems that democratic orders naturally prefer open systems that let their citizens choose, while fascist ones tend to choose ones that aid them in their pursuit to control and manipulate their subjects. In either context, cultural heritage can be a strong factor for the identification and sometimes even control of a people (Smith 2007: 18). Hence, it is imperative for both kinds of governments to care for regional, national and international heritage. Either way, the use of heritage signifies the orientation of political systems. The potential for instrumentalization of cultural heritage has been a basic concept since the French revolution, and how this concept has manifested in the archival film work in the US and Nazi-Germany shall be discussed in the next section.

The Library of Congress and the Reichsfilmarchiv

The Library of Congress (LOC) was founded in 1800 and was originally designed to “serve the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, advising and responding to congressional requests for information” (Frick 2011: 40). The

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Torgil Trumpler

library hewed closely to this mission until 1814, when a fire destroyed most of its collection. (Since its restoration in 1815, the library has been open to the general public.) After the fire, President Thomas Jefferson offered the LOC his personal library for sale, which consisted of nearly 6,500 books and covered a diverse range of subjects from philosophy to the natural sciences to literature—a great expansion in both size and scope of the original collection. Jefferson believed that a congressman should be universally educated so that he may be a good servant for the public, and his generous offer evidences such a belief. Jefferson’s donation effectively expanded the LOC’s collection policy and eventually led to the establishment of the LOC’s copyright department, which would obtain a deposit copy of every registered book in the U.S. This policy was again expanded by the inclusion of other media, such as photography and (since 1893) film (Frick 2011: 40f.).

When Thomas Alva Edison’s cameraman and co-inventor, W. K. L. Dixon, was ordered to register a strip of the first Kinetoscope films at the Library of Congress, he had to find a proper form for a deposit copy. As no examples for moving images existed, he submitted a strip of contact printed photographic paper, a so-called paper print, which resembled the common procedure for photographs. In doing so, he established a practice at the LOC that would continue until 1912, although whole or fractured nitrate prints were accepted, as well. When the national library introduced moving pictures as its own category, they decided to accept only film-related material, like scripts and lobby cards, because they had reasonable reservations about nitrate materials’ high flammability (Loughney 2008: 6f.).

The reluctance to register film copies continued until 1942, when the LOC decided to accept film copies as deposit copies again. This was due to the efforts of librarian Archibald MacLeish, who recognized film’s cultural, sociological, and historical significance. Until 1960, the department’s collection policy was highly selective (Loughney 2008: 8). As the LOC’s main task was to curate a national archive, filmic documents produced by the state were collected without interruption. MacLeish was appointed by President Roosevelt and affected by the president’s liberal “new deal” policies, under which the government paid more regard, and also more money, to public offices. It must be said that Roosevelt supported

the LOC's film department because he had realized film's potential as a means of propaganda (Frick 2011: 42). It is also important to underline that MacLeish frequently stated that the establishment of a broad film collection would only be successful if the library sought the cooperation of the industry (Frick 2011: 50). The Hollywood Studios willingly cooperated, at least for the first few years, as they themselves were undertaking efforts to achieve an organized and funded film archive. Such an archive, they reckoned, would propel the status of film as a valued cultural good, which in turn would enhance their status as producers (Frick 2011: 32f.). A study undertaken in 1995 that evaluated the impact of the Film Preservation Act from 1988 on, validated the Hollywood producers' assumption. The study's authors emphasize the need for the cooperation of industry and archives, stating: "Whatever else happens, archivists will maintain relations with the film industry. [...] Archives and industry openly admit their past failures and talk about their recent successes" (Francis 1995: 31). Public-private partnerships are often positive developments for underfunded organizations; they are rather an Anglo-Saxon principle and hence more established in the US. European public institutions are traditionally funded by the states and the public (Houston 1994: 92); however, this situation seems to be changing as public-private partnerships develop across Europe. It would be worthwhile to observe this development in further studies.

The Reichsfilmarchiv

As Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP conceived of a *Third Reich* that would last for 1,000 years (it actually lasted only 12 years, 1933–1945), it should not come as a surprise that they had far-reaching plans for the conservation of their cultural memory. As stated in the first section, the treatment and safeguarding of cultural heritage can be instrumentalized to support a ruler's claim to power. As it was practiced in Germany during these years, for example, the ruler(s) construct a narrative of a nation's cultural heritage that then becomes a mythical justification easily accepted by their subjects (Tauschek 2013: 49; Bohn 2013: 107). One of the major players tasked with this myth-making was the *Kommission zur Bewahrung von Zeitdokumenten* (Commission for the Safeguarding of Contemporary Documents), which was founded on June 29, 1937 under the initiative of

Reichspropagandaminister Joseph Goebbels (Alt 2015: 55). The commission aimed to organize all major cultural archives under an umbrella organization in order to collect “every media and journalistic product of the past and present that the ruling power finds historically important” (Alt 2015: 55, trans. by author).² However, the commission was not very successful in its mission, not in the least because of the course of historic events (Alt 2015: 58).

One of these major cultural archives was the national film archive, the *Reichsfilmmarchiv* (RFA). Founded in 1934 and opened in 1935, the RFA was part of the *Reichsfilmmakammer*, which surveyed and partially controlled film production, distribution, and exhibition (Reichsministerium des Innern 14.07.1933, § 2: 82). The national film archive was tasked with collecting not only all productions of the state, but also all foreign and national films of “special interest,” or those films that, because they displayed technical innovations or contained propagandistic contents against the Third Reich, were considered objects worthy of study to the German film industry and government. Consequently, it was not designed as a public archive but as a clientele archive for the industry and for high-ranking military officers or politicians (Bohn 2013: 104; Barkhausen 1960: 3). In 1938, the RFA was subsumed under the propaganda ministry as part of Goebbels plans for the *Kommission zur Bewahrung von Zeitdokumenten* (Barkhausen 1960: 6). In its early days, the archive contained the film productions of the NSDAP, the imperial *Bild- und Filmamt* (BUFA), donations from German film pioneers Oskar Meßter, the Skladanowsky Brothers, and confiscated films from then-forbidden organizations (ibid.: 2f., 7). As the Nazis’ power expanded, so too did their archive; films of the newly nationalized German film production companies were added to the collection, as well as new sources from the annexed territories of Bohemia, Moravia, and Austria (Bohn 2013: 111). The archive was further expanded through the systematic looting of the Nazi-occupied countries during the Second World War; it expanded so quickly, in fact, that the archive soon faced “sheer irresolvable space problems” (Zöller 2015: 63, trans. by author).³ The RFA also had to fight with reductions in personnel the further the war progressed (Barkhausen 1960: 7). The archive was professionalized in 1938, when it enhanced its conservation and documentation standards and its collection policy (Zöller 2015: 62f.). Iris

Barry, director of the MoMA's film library at the time, remarked: "In our [MoMA's film department] experience, [the RFA] has met the problem of preserving films more adequately than any other European country" (Houston 1994: 20). The RFA was well-financed and secured "[a]t a time," as Penelope Houston puts it, "when the other archives were struggling to launch themselves on tiny budgets" (ibid.: 18).

With the end of the war and the defeat of the Third Reich, the collection of the Reichsfilmarchiv became loot for the allied nations. Much of the art was burned or lost, sometimes, ironically, in desperate attempts to save it from destruction (Zöller 2015: 65f.; Barkhausen 1960: 14). The Reichsfilmarchiv was then transformed into the *Staatliches Filmarchiv der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, the national filmarchive of the German Democratic Republic. While the ideology of the institution changed from fascism to communism, the high standard of archival organization remained (similar standards were not met in the Federal Republic of Germany until 1990 [Bohn 2013: 267]), the public was still excluded, the archive served the needs of the leading politicians, and its work was at all times connected to the instrumentalization of cultural heritage by national socialist policies. Hence, the RFA is not only an example of effective preservation policies, but also of the dangers heritage policy can bear for the identity of the people. As historian and former congressional librarian Abby Smith writes:

[A] people who do not own and control their own cultural heritage are a people who can be held captive by false histories, fabrications and lies. The genius of totalitarian societies is that the need for brute force to make subjects out of citizens is really quite modest. If the government controls what people know about their past and their present, they limit their scope of their imaginations and can control their expectations for the future (Smith 2007: 18).

I will now return to a comparison of the Library of Congress and the Reichsfilmarchiv to make my larger point. The LOC was founded according to a humanist ideal of universally educated politicians and citizens, and it is driven by a liberal acquisition policy that is nevertheless defined by current political trends. The RFA, on the other hand, was a well-organized institution that belonged officially to the propaganda

ministry, it was open only to a select privileged few who had connections to the government, and it acted as an instrument for the redefinition of history according to the fascist and racist conviction of the ruling power. This leads me to the following thesis: the treatment of cultural heritage does not only affect the identity of citizens or subjects but also signifies the political orientation and self-understanding of the state.

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“Digitalisierungsoffensive”

Up to this point in my paper, I have examined the historical development of the concept of cultural heritage in the 19th century, and compared two national archival institutions and their film preservation policies in the 20th century. I will now continue with an exemplary study of a cultural heritage agenda of the present. By the mid-2000’s in Europe, when digital screenings of film almost completely replaced analogue ones, it had become clear that the digitization of film should be considered a part of cultural heritage. The EU started an initiative to survey the possibilities and challenges of digitization as early as 2004 (Read 2004), and countries like France (Aubert/LeRoy 2007), Sweden (Wengström 2017), Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium developed sustainable strategies with adequate state funding. The Federal Republic of Germany, however, under the direction of *Kulturstaatsminister* Bernd Neumann, responded to the new trend only in 2012 and with rather reluctant funding (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 28.02.2012).

Only one year later Germany would declare itself a “digital culture country” (trans. by the author) that is dedicated to the digitization of its cultural heritage, including film, and federal counties and the film industry would have to contribute, as well (Bundesregierung 2013: 136). Neumann’s successor and current Commissioner for Culture and the Media Monika Grütters frequently and confidently underlines the value of culture as a “bridge builder” and an “important aspect of [German] national identity” (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 28.06.2017, trans. by author). She insists that the funding of culture and the arts would not be a “luxury” but rather a “noble duty” (Presse- und Informationsamt 14.11.2014, trans. by author) and the Federal Republic should not “dread a comparison” of the digitization policy for film “with other countries, even with France” (Kilb 2014, trans. by author). Eberhard Junkersdorff, chairman of

the German Film Funding Agency and head of the board of trustees of the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau Foundation, lamented in 2016 that if German politicians would constantly accentuate film heritage as an integral part of the national cultural heritage, and as comparable to works of art and literature, film's reality would look definitively different (Junkersdorff 2016). His comments reflect the divergence between the government's actions and their rhetoric. Furthermore, the government's budgeting has not caught up to reality. An independent study by accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (2015) calculated that the digitization of the complete German film heritage would cost 473 million euros (including 100 million euros for digital restoration). PwC's study proposed a budget of 100 million euros over a span of ten years for the digitization of 30,000 selected films (in addition to the 150,000 conserved films reported by the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv [PricewaterhouseCoopers 2015: 8]), which are chosen for their curatorial value, conservational need, and/or distribution potential (2015: 18; Rother 2016: 22).

That is not to say that the digitization of such an immense number of films would be an easy task, especially in a decentralized country like Germany wherein the cultural political sovereignty remains foremost with the various different federal counties, and that lacks a strong and autonomous film industry and the organ of a central national film archive. In Germany, instead of a national film archive there is the *Kinematheksverbund* (KV), an umbrella institution consisting of three (sometimes competing) steady members, six partners, and two guests. The question of whether or not every film must be digitized is indeed worthy of discussion (Houston 1994: 82; Hollmann 2016: 11), as long as digitization is not understood as a means of preservation but of access (Dillmann 2016: 78), and the possibility for future transfers remains—which still is often questioned (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2015: 18).

But let's take a look at numbers: since 2012 digitization is funded partly by the *Bundesministerium für Kultur* (BKM), the federal ministry of culture, and the Film Funding Agency (FFA). From 2013 to 2016, funds from the BKM address members of the KV and were split equally between the Deutsches Filminstitut (DIF), the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek (SDK), the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau (FWMS), and the DEFA Stiftung (DEFA). The FFA funds rights-holders

with a maximum of 15,000 euros per title, as long as the beneficiaries invest at least 20% of the final budget themselves.

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	BKM (Federal Ministry of Culture)	FFA (Film Funding Agency)
2012	430,000 EUR (230,000 for modernization of the facilities of the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, 100,000 for digitization to FWMS and DEFA each) ⁴	max. 15,000 EUR per film (beneficiaries have to invest at least 20%, funding can be gathered for up to 10 films per applicant) ⁵
2013	1,200,000 EUR (1,000,000 digitization + 200,000 national inventory of film heritage for SDK) ⁶	"
2014	1,200,000 EUR (1,000,000 digitization + 200,000 national inventory of film heritage for SDK) ⁷	"
2015	1,000,000 EUR (digitization) ⁸	"
2016	" ⁹	"
2017	2,000,000 EUR (up to 555,000 for digitization to DIF and SDK each, 400,000 for digitization to Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, 250,000 for digitization to FWMS and DEFA each) ¹⁰	"
2018	3,300,000 EUR (digitization, federal counties are called upon to fund the same amount, distribution unclear) ¹¹	" ¹²

Table 1
Comparison
BKM and FFA
(Film Funding)

Concerning the targeted funding of 3,300,00 euros for 2018, one would hope that progress has been made, but up to this point there has been only vague assent from the federal counties to meet these targets (Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin 02.06.2017). Only Saxony (Landesregierung Sachsen 2014: 9) and Berlin/Brandenburg have firm budgets and agreements in their coalition treaties to support the

digitization of film heritage (Brandenburg as part of the funding organ *Medienboard* together with the city of Berlin [Senatskanzlei Berlin 2016: 128]). North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) has stated that it wants to include digitization funding in its budget by a passage in their archival law, but as of today there is no evidence that the state has followed through (Landtag Nordrhein Westphalen 2016). Except for Bremen's announcement that the principal will deny the funding of federal institutions without its direct involvement in the concerned projects, which they claim to be the major attitude of counties and city states (Bremische Bürgerschaft 2016: 17), little more information could be found on this matter. Those counties without film culture or heritage institutions, i. e. archives or museums, do not see the point in funding projects that have no direct connection to them. As those counties and cities which have declared and cemented their support all host such organizations—like Berlin (SDK), Brandenburg (DEFA Foundation), Saxony (DIAF, the German Institute for animated film) and NRW (Filmmuseum Düsseldorf), it would be interesting to find information on the current state of affairs incomparable counties such as Hesse (DIF, FWMS), Hamburg (*Cinegraph*), or Bavaria (Filmmuseum Munich).

Nevertheless, without change and concrete decisions, the final budget for 2018 will be only slightly more than a third of the sum proposed by PwC, consisting of funding from the federal government and the one million euros from the FFA.

Aside from the question of funding, there remains the open question of the actual realization of the digitization plans. While the Federation International des Archives du Film's (FIAF) sees access as the “ultimate goal of the archive,” it also makes clear that this objective can only be achieved by responsible conservation and restoration, and that conservation also includes the preservation of the original materials used for the digital transfer (FIAF Technical Commission 2010: 34ff.). Unfortunately, we know that PwC sees here a possibility for cost saving (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2015:18). In the many press releases I've studied, little to none was said about the actual practice of digitization and the preservation of the originals. These practices are even an issue for more traditional media, like literature; the preservation of original literature after digitization has only recently been

understood as a mandatory practice, and counties have only recently been called on to collaborate with the federal government in preserving such media. In this context, the President of the Conference of Cultural Ministries Brunhild Kurth declared, “the union, counties and municipalities combine their effort to save the valuable cultural goods of our country,” and that all participants were unified in their belief that the digitization of media would not replace the autonomous value of the original. Hopefully, this attitude will extend to film heritage, as well (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 09.10.2015).

The government offered a forced statement when discussing a request from the German leftist party *DIE LINKE* titled “Nachhaltige Bewahrung, Sicherung und Zugänglichkeit des deutschen Filmerbes gewährleisten”¹³. It demanded sustainable digitization that would cost triple the government’s current budget, and which included the subsidized maintenance of analogue film labs. The party proposed additional financing might come from public broadcasting and a film heritage tax on every cinema ticket sold in Germany (Deutscher Bundestag 2016). *DIE LINKE*’s proposals and the federal government’s response to each proposal are briefly summarized in the following table (Deutscher Bundestag 2017):

Proposals of <i>DIE LINKE</i>	Reaction of the federal government
Funding of 30,000,000 EUR per annum initially for ten years	Too expensive
Universal digitization without selection	Too expensive
Subsidy of analogue labs in Germany	Too expensive
Preservations of the original materials	Is currently being discussed (Since preservation of film heritage is going to be significantly more expensive [trans. by the author])
Investment from public broadcast stations	Without comment
5ct heritage fee on sale of cinema tickets	Without comment

Table 2
Political Proposals and Reactions

The government's hesitation reveals the plan's daring, but from a film scientist's perspective such a proposal constitutes an appropriate policy for the conservation of film heritage. Indeed, *DIE LINKE's* proposal gained support from those in the film industry and film archives and museums, among them Rainer Rother (curatorial director of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek), Juliane Maria Lorenz (director of Rainer Werner Fassbinder Foundation), Alice Brauner (German film producer and daughter of longtime producer Artur Brauner), and Michael Hollmann (Deutscher Bundestag–Ausschuss für Kultur und Medien 2016). Unfortunately, and unsurprisingly, the back and forth between *DIE LINKE* and the federal government shows that even these ambitious plans for digitization will not be able to manifest a sustainable strategy in the near future; the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, for instance, is about to shut down its analogue lab, one of the last available 35 mm labs in Germany (Goergen 2017). If the federal government, the counties, and the film industry cannot come to an agreement, the plans for digitization will be delayed again and again. Compared with other nations in Europe, this policy lags behind good governance. “In the end,” Michael Hollmann, the director of the German Federal Archive, writes, “the success of all efforts depends on whether the German society as a whole is prepared to accept its heritage and to provide the involved institutions with the necessary resources” (2016: 13, trans. by author)⁴. Unfortunately, this has yet to be proven.

The Values of Preservation

It is perhaps obvious to conclude that the existing shortsighted policy is influenced by a general neoliberal trend in government which treats culture as an asset, rather than as a source of immaterial values. Indeed, we see similar policies in other countries. In an article titled “The Value of Preservation”, American historian and librarian Abby Smith comments on the situation of the archive in an age of neoliberalism and lays out an argument for long-term preservation in such an environment in five central theses (2007: 7f.):

- Preservation is the cost of access.
- Preservation is insurance against loss of value.

- Preservation protects against loss of business continuity in the event of disruptions and catastrophes.
- Preservation protects our critical information-based dependencies.
- Preservation adds value to content by maximizing its potential for reuse (ibid.: 17).

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These theses surely will not invent the wheel anew, but they might remind one to spin it sometime. The arguments quoted above do not critique this situation, but rather adapt to the prevailing rhetoric. When arguing with the neoliberals, it is best to speak their language.

While much has been said, it is little compared to this paper's possible scope. Even if this paper opened up many questions, it was a first step for me in demystifying key terms and concepts and clearing up key themes: the origins and meaning of cultural heritage, the organization of the Library of Congress and the Reichsfilmarchiv, and Germany's contemporary digitization strategy. Hopefully, the different veins of my argument and narrative emerged for the reader. First, I traced "cultural heritage" as a historical concept, chronicling its development through the lens of the national archive from the late 18th century to the first half of the 20th century. I pointed out how national film archives in particular are animated by ideological directives that were closely tied to the respective agendas of their governments. I focused on the idea that heritage policy is nothing fixed, but rather a discursive concept that is tied to a government's understanding of culture. I briefly surveyed the current state of film digitization policy in Germany as an example of this understanding. Concluding that this policy is constituted by a shortsighted perspective on film preservation as a whole that seems to be derived from a purely financial perspective, I finished with Abby Smith's five theses on the "value of preservation." Her arguments make the case for a sustainable approach in the current political environment, an argument that surpasses those I am familiar with, such as "cultural heritage has to be preserved as part of our common identities." It would not have been remiss to recount the debate over the application of the term "heritage" versus the concept of "memory," a favorite topic among heritage scholars (Tauschek 2013: 74)—the possibilities of its definition, whether or not to

include the role of international organizations, whether or not to take a broader European perspective or simply to deepen the treated themes—but this theoretical discussion was, ultimately, beyond the scope of this paper.

It is worthwhile to note that Hubert Robert, famous for his depictions of ruins both real and imaginary, painted in the same year two very different views of the Louvre's Grande Galerie: one of the gallery as a bustling museum ("Project for the Transformation of the Grande Galerie of the Louvre" (Fig 1)), and another of the gallery in ruins ("Imaginary View of the Grande Galerie of the Louvre in Ruins" (Fig 2)). What's interesting for this paper is that, in the painting depicting the gallery in ruins, there still are people in the ruins who embody the same spirit as those visitors in his painting of the lively gallery. Robert conveys in these two paintings that cultural policy is not only characterized by what is preserved, but also by what is neglected. Ruins are traces that will be received by later generations alongside objects of preserved heritage, and both the preserved and the neglected will illustrate the agenda of the responsible value system. Both the preservation and neglect of cultural heritage will leave their traces on history and, in turn, coin the image that future generations will depict of our present. Therefore, it is not a question of the tradition of memory but rather a question of how our period will be remembered.

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Fig. 2
Hubert Robert, *Vue imaginaire de la Grande Galerie du Louvre en ruines (Imaginary View of the Grande Galerie of the Louvre in ruins)*, 1796. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Public domain

- 1** Original quote: “Kulturerbe ist ein Projekt politischer und bürokratischer Ordnungen [...], doch es ist auch ein zentrales Instrument geschichtskultureller Interventionen. Diskurse und Praktiken, die Kultur in kulturelles Erbe transformieren, berufen sich dabei auf die als unumgänglich verstandene Notwendigkeit, Wissen über die Geschichte an nachfolgende Generationen weiterzugeben” (Tauschek 2013: 73).
- 2** Original quote: “Das im Detail bislang unerforschte Wirken der sogenannten Kommission zur Bewahrung von Zeitdokumenten (KzBvZ) und des ihr übergeordneten Generalreferats Archive und Zeitdokumente im Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda ist dem nationalsozialistischen Großversuch zuzuordnen, sämtliche aus der Perspektive der Machthaber historisch bedeutenden medialen und publizistischen Erzeugnisse sowohl der Gegenwart als auch der Vergangenheit zu erfassen und für die Zukunft zu sichern” (Alt 2015: 55).
- 3** Original quote: “Ein 1942 erlassener Befehl Hitlers, neben den deutschen auch alle ausländischen Dokumentarfilme im RFA unterzubringen, stellte das Archiv vor schier unlösbare Platzprobleme” (Zöllner 2015: 63).
- 4** Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 28.02.2012.
- 5** Filmförderungsanstalt 2012.
- 6** Deutsche Bundesregierung 01.02.2013; 08.08.2014 the author was unfortunately not able to find an exact sum in a single source, so that data had to be combined of the two listed ones.
- 7** Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 08.08.2014.
- 8** Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 23.01.2015.
- 9** Kinematheksverbund 2015.
- 10** Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 03.04.2017.
- 11** Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 28.06.2017.
- 12** Filmförderungsanstalt 2017, as conditions have not changed since 2012 no endnotes were added for the years in-between.
- 13** Translation by author: “Providing sustainable conservation, preservation and access to German film heritage”.
- 14** Original quote: “[L]etztlich hängt der Erfolg aller Bemühungen aber davon ab, ob die deutsche Gesellschaft als Ganzes bereit ist, das Erbe auch tatsächlich anzunehmen und die beteiligten Institutionen mit den notwendigen Ressourcen auszustatten” (Hollmann 2016: 13).

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FILMS FROM
INDIA AT FILM
FESTIVALS:
A NON-BOLLYWOOD
FORMULA?

Vatsala
Sharma

The paper discusses the role of film festivals in sustaining non-commercial and independent cinema in India, so as to make visible films which defeat the overwhelming economic, social and political presence of Bollywood. The focus will be on films that are made in India that are considered to be “art” films, that are made specifically for film festivals based in the global north, and that are produced through funding from a film festival. These films often have minimal chances of ever getting financed by a major, established Indian production house. Taking the example of *Court* (Chaitanya Tamhane, 2014), the author discusses how festival films from India, which are made to be screened at International film festivals, consequently overcome the hindrance posed by various domestic film institutions in the creation, screening and distribution of independent cinema. Furthermore, the author discusses that although festival films from India manage to evade the Bollywood caging, they do often get pigeonholed in another framework, that of a “festival film from India.” She explores the power dynamics that may come into a play in such a co-production space of filmmaking.

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In the past couple of years two non-mainstream Indian films did really well domestically in India. The films—*Masaan* (France, 2015), directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, and *Court* (Italy, 2014), directed by Chaitanya Tamhane—played in various multiplexes in India, and were met with widespread recognition. Both films are directorial debuts. *Masaan*, which premiered at Cannes in 2015, is a result of a co-production between Indian and French production companies, and was distributed by a French company, Pathe. Vivek Gomber independently produced *Court* with assistance and support from the Hubert Bals Fund of the International Film Festival Rotterdam. It too had an international film festival release; it was the opening film at the 71st Venice Film Festival in 2014, where it won the “Best Film” in the Horizons category, and where director Tamhane received the “Lion of the Future” award. *Court* is distributed by Artscope-Memento Films, which is based in France. Both of these compelling films reveal India’s position in global contemporary cinema.

Masaan is an interesting work to look at because it is backed and co-financed by various production houses, including Drishyam Films, Phantom Films, Sikhya Entertainment, and Macassar Productions. The first three are based in India, whereas Macassar is a production house based in France, and its prime activity seems to be co-production.

With regard to the films that Drishyam, Phantom and Sikhya have thus far produced, it is easy to recognize that they are consciously producing films that are characteristically non-mainstream—that is, “non-Bollywood.” In order to observe how these films are “non-Bollywood,” we must first recognize what makes a Bollywood film “Bollywood.” Defining what is “Bollywood” is difficult, as it is more of a phenomenon than a genre. Many Indian film academics have investigated and offered their own definition of the term in question. Indeed, as M. Madhava Prasad observes, “it is precisely the act of naming that is the most interesting aspect of Bollywood. It is a strange name, a hybrid, that seems to at once mock the thing it names and celebrate its difference” (2008: 41). For Prasad,

the term seems to serve different purposes for different people. Thus, academic conferences on Bollywood tend to use the term loosely to refer to Indian cinema in general, whereas European television shows which feature Indian films might restrict the meaning to the popular genre, and then only to the blockbusters. Bollywood also, like Hollywood, refers to everything to do with the Bombay film industry [...] The meaning of the term may also vary from user to user: some mean by it Hindi cinema of the globalized present alone, whereas others just substitute it for Indian popular cinema, Bombay/Hindi cinema and other previous employed terms (Prasad 2008: 41).

For Ashish Rajadhyaksha, “the term refers to a reasonably specific narrative and a mode of presentation” (2008: 23), and that

the term itself, Bollywood, has been around most notably in film trade journals [...] and came into circulation via literary speculations on film as mass culture by writers such as Shashi Tharoor or Farrukh Dhondy on Indian film to mean what it does today: an expression of the outsider’s fascination with a slightly surreal practice that nevertheless appears to possess the claim to be a genuine popular art form (Rajadhyaksha 2008: 24).

For the purposes of this paper, I will define “non-Bollywood” broadly, and use a definition that reaches beyond the typical

industry markers (i.e. produced independently/produced by a production house; based in or out of Mumbai; with or without a Bollywood star) to the film's stylistic and aesthetic markers. The narrative and tone of a non-Bollywood movie is mostly serious, sometimes dark, a "slice of life," slow and paced out. A non-Bollywood film's main distinction from a mainstream Indian film is that the majority of these abstain from including dance and song sequences, which is a staple of almost every Bollywood film. Indeed, there is an inherent desire in a non-Bollywood film to be recognized as something distinct from a Bollywood film, just, as Prasad argues, there is a certain reflexivity in Bollywood films that announce them to be properly "Bollywood":

[T]his reflexivity is as much a form of self-awareness as it is know-how that enables the Hindi film to reproduce itself for a market that demands its perpetuation as a source of cultural identity [...]. In some recent films we get a distinct feeling that the intelligences involved in their production had bought into the Bollywood theory about songs in films, rather than spontaneously making films with songs which might have been the situation in earlier times (Prasad 2008: 50).

As Bollywood films are products for mass consumption, they are synonymous with entertainment and, given their typically enormous production value and star casts, predominantly commercial in nature. Furthermore, as Prasad argues, "the desire for Bollywood is [...] a desire for the reproduction of the difference that it represents on a world platform" (2008: 50). The conscious decisions of certain filmmakers to exclude the very traits that mark this Bollywood difference, like song and dance sequences, are self-reflexive attempts to be associated with everything that is not Bollywood. Most of the non-mainstream films premiere at film festivals, which is nearly equivalent to an international release, and which allows them to overcome the hegemonic dominance of blockbuster Bollywood releases in the domestic and international markets. This makes me wonder: Could a domestically-released, non-mainstream film attain the same degree of outreach and distribution as a typical Bollywood film?

In their book *The Multiplex in India: A Cultural Economy of Urban Leisure* (2009) Adrian Athique and Douglas Hill work out that, although far more regional and

non-mainstream films are produced annually than Hindi Bollywood films, “it is the top end of the Hindi cinema that enjoys the largest domestic and international audiences [...]”. It is in this narrow slice of overall Indian film production where the budgets are highest and the profits greatest. For the multiplex operators, it is these films specifically that draw the biggest audiences” (2009: 194). Athique and Hill further argue that a new genre has been introduced in Indian cinema with the introduction of multiplexes, the “multiplex film.” While this new genre caters to a niche urban audience, it acquires a small screen in the “multi screener” multiplex and, thus, manages to do adequately well at the box office. Given Athique’s and Hill’s argument, it follows that an independent/non-mainstream film can be a multiplex film, but not every multiplex film is an independent/non-mainstream film. For instance, as Ashvin Immanuel Devasundaram observes, non-mainstream films rely on Bollywood-affiliated production houses for funding and opt for “hybrid ‘collaborations.’” He cites *Peepli Live* (Anisha Rizvi and Mahmood Farooqui, 2010) and *Dhobi Ghat* (Kiran Rao, 2011) as examples, terming such films “conceptually independent” (2016). These films fall in the category of the multiplex film.

What other avenues for funding and distribution are available to independent Indian filmmakers? The success of *Court* illustrates that international film festivals and international collaborations can help films and filmmakers reach a wider audience and achieve wider recognition. *Court* is largely in Marathi, a language that is spoken by roughly 7% of the total population in India. After it was showcased in various film festivals in 2014, winning 17 international awards, the film created quite a buzz in India, and in 2015 it had a limited release across selected cities. Unlike *Masaan*, in which the spoken language is Hindi, *Court* is independently produced, and the majority of its cast is comprised of newcomers. Director Tamhane spent two years on developing the script, casting, and pre-production. The film tried various avenues for financing. In 2012, Tamhane approached the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) for funding, but he was rejected. In the same year, he also tried his luck at the Film Bazaar, an annual bazaar run by the NFDC at the International Film Festival of India (Anon. 2018a). It is a networking event that connects Indian filmmakers with national and international producers, distributors, and critics. Here,

Tamhane again failed to convince any producer to come on board. Tamhane felt that he and his team came across as inexperienced, as they had no feature film in their portfolio to prove their credibility. However, they were granted a bit of financial assistance through the Hubert Bals Fund in 2012, receiving 10,000 euros for script and project development. It is a sad fact that the film found no supporters in India during its initial stages, and that it was only recognized and encouraged by institutions based outside of India. Paolo Bertolin, a programmer at the Venice International Film Festival, became aware of the project when he attended the Film Bazaar in 2012, and eventually pushed for its selection at the Venice International Film Festival. The story of *Court* illustrates the vital role international film festivals and the resultant collaboration plays in funding, exhibiting and distributing independent films, as well as in the promotion and recognition of upcoming film talent.

Was this reliance on international film festivals and labels always the case with non-mainstream/independent cinema in India, especially in the era before the multiplexes existed? During the 1950s, filmmakers frustrated with the dominant commercial Hindi cinema began producing their own films, which employed the aesthetics and norms of Realism, portrayed the actual landscape of India, and worked with narratives that dealt with the socio-political climate in India. From the 1960s onwards, the Indian government supported and backed several of these film projects, and they constituted a movement now known as “Parallel Cinema.” These films catered to urban, middle class audiences and were produced in various regional languages. They received financial assistance and support from the NFDC and state governments with the aim of promoting an authentic art genre in films. Filmmakers such as Mani Kaul, Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, and M.S. Sathyu were part of this movement. These filmmakers worked within a Realist style, but often brought their own individuality to it. They mostly refrained from including song and dance sequences in their films, which were a staple of the commercial cinema of the time (Devasundaram 2016: 18).

Near the end of the 1980s, it became clear that viewers preferred commercial cinema to parallel art films. By the 1990s, the government funding of these films was reduced, largely due to the increasing costs of production, the

unpredictable nature of investment returns in the film industry, and the introduction of televisions and piracy. The NFDC's failure to devise a well-thought-out distribution and exhibition plan for these films was the final nail in the coffin for Parallel Cinema. As movie theaters were not the most enthusiastic about screening Parallel films, these films depended on film societies and clubs for exhibition space, which had also seen their decline with the introduction of televisions. The low-budget independent films in the post-liberal India of the 1990s and early 2000s, according to Devasundaram, are "the vestigial remains of Indian Parallel cinema" (2016: 20). He cites *English August* (Dev Benegal, 1994; Jury prize, Torino International Film Festival) and *Mr and Mrs Iyer* (Aparna Sen, 2002; Best Film at the Hawaii International Film Festival) as examples of films that, "despite being moderately well received in a few Indian metropolitan centers and the overseas film festival circuit, were perceived as the preserve of the English-speaking Indian elite" (Roy quoted in Devasundaram 2016: 20).

However, in recent years, NFDC has made efforts to bring international producers in touch with Indian filmmakers and, through the Film Bazaar and Screenwriter's Lab, has been able to facilitate a proliferation of accessible transnational aesthetics. For Nina Gupta, the NFDC Managing Director, reworking scripts is essential to raising their standards for an "international point of view" (Gupta quoted in Kaur 2014: 5). Now, in my view, this is problematic. This implies that films are fashioned to fit a festival film mold. Imagine the festival film mold as a glove and an independent film as the palm of a human being. If the palm doesn't fit the glove, the palm has to look for another glove. This model demands the altering or tailoring of the film or script to suit international aesthetics—you can somehow manage to fit the palm in the glove, but maybe you had to chop off one of its fingers. After all of this chopping and cutting and tampering, it is still an ill-fitting glove, and the palm is far from perfect.

The effect of international financing or workshopping becomes evident in the resulting festival-funded films' form and style. Though most international film festivals, such as the Rotterdam Film Festival, look for films that are "rooted in the culture of the applicant's country" (Hubert Bals Fund application form quoted in Steinhart 2006: 10), most festival films from India tend to display similar aesthetics and forms

of storytelling to their international counterparts and often deal with universal themes. *Masaan* and *Court* have nothing in common with the aesthetics of films that are produced for and aimed at domestic consumption. Both address the prevalence of the practice of the caste system in contemporary modern India and the failure of its various protagonists to overcome it. The protagonists of these films accept and come to terms with it, see the events as personal losses, and go on with their lives, as there is no alternative. Furthermore, both the filmmakers use the trope of shifting subjectivities and employ an experimental form of storytelling—the intricate, arbitrary connection of various characters brought together by a single event. These festival films, just like many other films from South Asia, as Daniel Steinhart observes (though referring specifically to films supported by the Hubert Bals Fund), manage to “deliver culturally specific stories that address universal themes with an eclectic style that primarily draws from international art cinema” (Steinhart 2006: 11). This somewhat realistic, somewhat experimental, alternative style of form and content makes these films visibly distinct from regional and mainstream Bollywood films. When coupled with their premieres at film festivals, these films are elevated to “art” films.

When it comes to style and tone of storytelling and aesthetics, there is a huge gap that exists between Indian festival films and Bollywood films. Does this mean that the films that travel outside of India, especially for film festivals, are made keeping in mind that they have to cater to non-Indian viewers, and hence, consciously adopt certain traits and styles, which are more familiar and desirable to, say, a European audience? This is something which Cindy Hing Yuk Wong also recognizes when she discusses the film festivals financing films from various Asian countries in her book, *Film Festivals: Culture, People, and Power on the Global Screen*:

Is there a difference between films produced outside the West for Western audiences and others that are more ‘authentic’ or are aimed at national or culturally distinct audiences in content and form? One might think here, for example, of the often-uneasy relations of Bollywood and film festivals, which are uncertain how to analyze such a gigantic industry. Bollywood is an extremely successful national and diaspora

cinema, yet not recognized by many as serious enough for major festival prizes (Wong 2011: 17).

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This lack of recognition of certain credible Bollywood movies can be seen as a result of a stigma surrounding all Bollywood film, brought about by misplaced labels, or rather, a difficulty in labeling and understanding the structure of a Bollywood film. Films such as *Highway* (Imtiaz Ali 2014) and *Dhobi Ghat* (Kiran Rao 2010) are films produced by major Mumbai production houses (*Highway*, Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment and Window Seat Films; *Dhobi Ghat*, Aamir Khan Productions) and have certain Bollywood actors (*Highway*, Alia Bhatt and Randeep Hooda; *Dhobi Ghat*, Aamir Khan) as part of their casts. Yet neither of these films are considered Bollywood at first glance. Interestingly, both films premiered at prominent film festivals—*Highway* at the 2014 Berlinale, and *Dhobi Ghat* at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival. The most apparent distinction is that neither of these films have a song and dance sequence. Could these be the conspicuous choices of an established filmmaker carefully distancing his film from Bollywood as a marketing strategy (even though the film is produced by an established production house) in order for the film to be labeled as “art” or as a “festival film” domestically as well as internationally? If so, it implies that not only emerging filmmakers from India are dependent on international film festivals for validation in the international film circuit. Marijke de Valck points out how

[o]ften the national cinemas being discovered under the umbrella term of “wave” had been overlooked at home, either because they failed to appeal to popular taste or because of issues with censorship. Festivals in these cases offered international recognition that could lead to art house circulation (de Valck 2017: 396).

Anurag Kashyap’s career is a case in point. He is one of the most popular contemporary Indian directors, recognized for his work globally and a regular at Cannes. Kashyap is one of the few Indian directors considered an auteur in the Indian scholarly and critical circle. His presence in the film festival circuit began in 2004 when his film *Black Friday* (India, 2007)

was nominated for the Golden Leopard at the Locarno International Film Festival. This was followed by *No Smoking* (India, 2007), which was screened at the Rome Film Festival and soon become the global and domestic face of a new wave in Indian cinema. Now considered to be “presiding over the new Indie domain as patron to ‘aspiring filmmakers’” (Khanna quoted by Devasundaram 2013: 82), Kashyap is a co-founder of two production houses, Sikhya Entertainment and Phantom Films, the very production houses which co-financed *Masaan*. After producing a series of experimental, alternative, and non-mainstream films in the early phase of his career, Kashyap directed *Bombay Velvet* (India, 2015), a high-budget Bollywood film with elaborate song and dance sequences and a cast of multiple Bollywood stars, including Ranbir Kapoor and Anushka Sharma. Kashyap’s decision to produce and direct such a film late in his career implies the limitations as well as the freedom that comes with the recognition of oneself as an auteur and as an upholder of one’s nation’s “new wave” in cinema.

According to Kaushik Bhaumik, Kashyap’s “films find worldwide audiences by utilizing world genre cinema as well as other more experimental filmic conventions in vogue in global cinema today” (2016: 287). He further adds that the “films produced by the various production companies Kashyap helms had been regulars at Cannes and other international film festivals” (2016: 288). I would like to emphasize the terms employed by Bhaumik to describe Kashyap’s work. He believes that Kashyap’s work is more recognized and appreciated globally because he utilizes a “world genre” and “filmic conventions” that are fashionable in global cinema, and not specifically what is typically recognized as “Indian” or “Bollywood.” This implies that there is a certain idea of what a “world” film is like. Does this unwritten and unsaid expectation filter into what a film festival expects from a film submitted for selection? And if so, an important question follows: does this expectation and paradigm only apply to films from Asia, with the model being set by Western countries?

This concern has become more immediate as many film festivals themselves have begun to produce movies, supporting them in the pre-production stages. The Hubert Bals Fund in Rotterdam, for example, frequently plays a crucial role in shaping new films right from the early stages. Even though the intent is to cultivate critically-acclaimed

films, such a production process makes it difficult to see the work as something that is rooted in its local culture. Thomas Elsaesser, while discussing a “globalized auteur” who is born out of a film festival context, observes that

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[t]he extraordinary dependency of most of the world’s non-Hollywood filmmakers on festivals for validation, recognition, and cultural capital makes a mockery of the term “independence.” Yet it is a reminder that the festivals’ increase in power does not sit easily on them either, since it contradicts the very purpose of the festivals, namely to celebrate film as art and to acknowledge the filmmakers as artist and auteur—all notions supposedly synonymous with autonomy (Elsaesser 2016: 25).

Festival films from India have largely adopted a paradoxical style that seeks to fulfill the complex expectations that Western audiences might have of a film from/depicting a third world country. A festival film often avoids hyper localization or regionalisms in its style and form so that it might be more appealing to Western eyes, but at the same time there is an unwritten expectation that the film’s narrative be “self-exoticizing,” something that Elsaesser addresses as a

tendency to present to the world (of the festivals) a picture of the self, a narrative of one’s nation or community that reproduces or anticipates what one believes the other expects to see. It is the old trap of the colonial ethnographer, of the eager multiculturalist who welcomes the stranger and is open to otherness, but preferably on one’s own terms and within one’s own comfort zone (ibid.: 26).

Recently, there have been interesting developments domestically in India as well as internationally which have changed the ways in which people can now access independent cinema, as well as how filmmakers can make their films available to their viewers. As I discussed in the beginning of this essay, the multiplex film genre has led established film production houses to cater to the consumers of independent cinema, mainly the urban middle class, who prefer intelligent films over formula-ridden commercial melodramas, and who have pushed them to invest in film projects by emerging filmmakers.

In the past year another avenue has opened up for emerging filmmakers in India, which, even if it is not entirely autonomous, does allow Indian independent filmmakers to experiment with narratives, content, and forms that do not only cater to the film festival market. The introduction of subscription video on demand platforms, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hotstar, has helped to reduce the dependency of independent filmmakers on just international film festivals for release, exhibition, and access to a global audience. Additionally, and importantly, it has also made it possible for filmmakers to dodge certain problems posed by India's Central Board of Film Certification, which is the sole certifying body for a film to be released in cinemas across India.

Both Netflix and Amazon have been aggressively buying indie films and, in some cases, are ready to pay large sums for them. Independent films that would have been difficult to access due to their limited or non-theatrical release and distribution—such as Amit Masurkar's *Sulemani Keeda* (India and USA, 2013), Geetu Mohandas's *Liar's Dice* (India, 2013), Raam Reddy's *Thithi* (India and USA, 2015), among many other independent films—now exist on the same Netflix webpage as the latest Bollywood blockbusters, like *Mubarakan* (Anees Bazmee, 2017) and *Jab Harry Met Sejal* (Imiaz Ali, 2017). Furthermore, they can now reach a much wider audience not only within India but also outside of it, across the globe. Similarly, films in languages other than the dominant Hindi, such as films in Marathi, Telegu, Malyalam, Kanada and Urdu, are also now accessible on Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hotstar. Some of these films are Jayaprakash Radhakrishnan's *Lens* (India, 2015), Pawan Kumar's *U-Turn* (India, 2016), and Nagraj Manjule's *Fandry* (India, 2013). The wide array of Indian films available on Netflix that do not necessarily subscribe to either the festival film/art house mold or the mainstream Bollywood movie indicates that, with the availability of such platforms, filmmakers and producers will be encouraged in the future to produce films that represent the various diverse facets that make up contemporary India.

I started this paper by discussing the role of international film festivals in sustaining non-commercial and independent cinema in India, so as to make visible those films defeating the overwhelming economic, social and political presence of Bollywood. Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund is one

such source of support to filmmakers in India. By providing Indian filmmakers a space for international exhibition, international film festivals see to it that these filmmakers get recognized for their talent, globally as well as domestically. The story of *Court* illustrates the vital roles international film festivals and resultant collaboration play in the funding, exhibition and distribution of independent films, as well as in promoting and recognizing upcoming film talent.

However, given the postcolonial atmosphere in which the film festival's function and its funding operates, I have tried to highlight certain power dynamics that may play out and point to the obvious threats of neo-orientalism. That festival films and scripts from third world countries are tailored right from the start to fit a cultural paradigm set by Western countries is no secret. On the other side of things, critics and most importantly domestic audiences need to decolonize their minds and not seek confirmation of a film's credibility strictly based on the international accolades that a film has received. A non-mainstream film, once it has premiered at an international film festival, returns to the domestic screen as a "festival film." This often translates to its recognition as a work of art, winning its filmmaker(s) a sense of validation. This implies that to gain recognition and acceptance, non-commercial films have to take a roundabout turn, unlike Bollywood or mainstream films. They first have to be accepted and legitimized by non-Indian film associations and through institutions like an international film festival in order to be finally accepted domestically. This is the crucial role that a film festival fulfills. It sets the standards for the rest of us, filtering out and highlighting the best the world cinema has to offer. What this calls for is a need for both sides—the aspiring festival films from South Asia and the film festival institutions and international producers from Europe—to overcome their respective colonial hangovers.

- 1 In defining the genre of a multiplex film, Athique and Hill clarify that their method of classification is not following the classic sense of the term "genre": "it is the operating context of these films, rather than any set of cinematic features, that distinguishes them from other kinds of filmmaking" (2009: 208) According to them, multiplex films are "a set of films that occupies a certain operational possibility within the economics of cinema" (2009:

- 203) and that “what the multiplex films have in common is the pursuit of a small, high-value audience that is supportive of films that situate themselves beyond the sphere of both the Bollywood blockbuster and the traditional masala film” (2009: 204).
- 2 Bhatia, Uday (2015), ‘Made in India, courted abroad’, *LiveMint*, 10 April 2015, <http://www.livemint.com/Leisure/zUCenOjbfkd-DvWurhrfLJ/Made-in-India-courted-abroad.html>. Accessed 31 October 2018.
 - 3 The NFDC Screenwriters’ Lab is an annual program that offers screenwriters the opportunity to experiment with and explore their screenplays under the mentorship of acclaimed international script and industry experts. Held in collaboration with Film Bazaar, the lab also introduces participants to global industry norms and practices. Additionally, the lab trains the participants to pitch and present their projects to domestic and international producers and investors (Anon. 2018b).
 - 4 Steinhart takes the examples of Latin American films, such as *La perrera* (Manuel Nieto Zas, 2006), *Glue* (Alexis Dos Santos, 2006), and addresses their similarities with other Hubert Bals Fund films, pointing out that “the films exhibit similar aesthetic strategies, but they do not adhere to any kind of regional filmmaking style” (2006: 11).

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**Films from India
at Film Festivals:
A non-Bollywood
Formula?**
Vatsala Sharma

**ROBERT
REINERT'S**

OPPIUM—

Josephine Diecke

**INTERROGATING
A FILM PRINT**

In the framework of her master thesis, the author examined and documented a uniquely tinted and toned nitrate print of the early color film *Opium* (Robert Reinert, 1918/1919), and considered ethical, theoretical and practical aspects of today's film restoration practice. This paper presents some crucial results of the research and documentation process underlying the work. The study begins with a reflection upon concepts and notions commonly used in analogue and digital approaches to film preservation and restoration. It then explains the ongoing relevance of the vocabulary and collaborative practice of the so-called *Scuola Bolognese*. In the second section, these ideas and concepts are applied to a case study of Robert Reinert's *Opium* while offering insight into the fascinating engagement with film and non-film material and with the question of what film scholars and archivists can learn from a film (print)'s material history.

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From 2013 until 2016, I was part of the “International Master in Audiovisual and Cinema Studies” at Goethe-University Frankfurt. After finishing a semester abroad in Italy, I looked for a subject that could combine my newly gained hands-on experience in film restoration with an adequate academic approach. This led to a challenging search, which resulted in a collaboration with OMNIMAGO GmbH, a service provider based in Ingelheim (Germany). The experience as an intern, together with OMINMAGO's connections to various film archives such as the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf (Germany) provided me with the possibility to develop a case study: examining a unique film print, Robert Reinert's *Opium* (Germany, 1918/1919). The master thesis subsequently dealt with the examination of the colored nitrate print (Diecke 2016).

In Search of a Methodology for Film Restoration

While in the early stages of my master thesis, the question arose for me: *How should one approach the film print, in a theoretical as well as practical manner?* In search of an appropriate methodology for film restoration, one comes across multiple terminologies and definitions that strongly vary over time, such as the distinction between the concepts of restoration and reconstruction.¹ As a result of these changes and phases of transition, archivists and researchers face recurring demands for a standardized vocabulary as the basis for the required professional proceedings. The work of film restoration involves a persistent reevaluation of both theoretical and ethical concerns. For example, professionals must

carefully consider the selection of an appropriate film stock for the duplication process and the correct aspect ratio. The political, social and cultural realities of a particular time and place significantly shape the duties of archival institutions. Giovanna Fossati aptly summarizes this aspect as follows:

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It is in the everyday practice of film restoration that frameworks and concepts get mixed and combined. Film restorers are confronted with many choices, driven by both ethical questions and technicalities, and it is often difficult to interpret a restoration work from one theoretical perspective only. Furthermore, it would be artificial to do so. [...] In the restoration of a film, theory and practice should meet eventually and result in a new artifact, ready once again, to be (re)interpreted (Fossati 2011: 228).

The main objective of my master thesis was to summarize the concepts commonly used in film restoration, in order to afterwards choose a methodology that would suit the proceedings for this particular case study.

The cooperative network that was established in the 1980s in Bologna (Italy) between the representatives Michele Canosa of l'Università di Bologna, Gian Luca Farinelli of la Cineteca di Bologna and Nicola Mazzanti of the laboratory L'Immagine Ritrovata was an adequate role model for this task. The members of the so called *Scuola Bolognese* tried to standardize the workflow for analogue film restoration projects by making old films presentable and more accessible to a wider audiences. Marie Frappat characterizes the exchange between these institutions as “une sorte d'effet de contamination naturelle, étant donné la proximité entre les questionnements sur la restauration des films et ceux qui traversent l'histoire de l'art, en référence aux écoles italiennes de peinture (siennoise, florentine, bolognaise, etc.)” (Frappat 2013: 39).² One of the results of the *Scuola Bolognese* was the establishment of the film festival *Il Cinema Ritrovato*. It takes place in Bologna every year in June and focuses on the (re) circulation of films that were mainly produced and distributed in analogue form, as summarized by Frappat:

La programmation s'est étoffée, elle sert toujours de vitrine aux films restaurés et retrouvés, mais elle propose aussi désormais des rétrospectives plus thématiques. En plus

d'accueillir, dans les trois salles dont il dispose, des architectes et des historiens venus du monde entier, le festival s'ouvre sur la population locale bolonaise en proposant chaque soir des projections en plein air sur la place centrale de la ville (Frappat 2013: 41).³

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Based on the intertwining interests of the members of the *Scuola Bolognese*, fundamental notions and problems were defined and discussed on a regular basis. This includes the distinction between the concepts of preservation, restoration and reconstruction or the associated interventions. As Mazzanti clarifies:

Let us start from the obvious: cinematographic restoration has to do with film. But it deals with film in the double sense that we attribute to this term. Film as a concrete object (reel of film contained in a can) which constitutes the manifestation of a "film", this time considered as a work or text (Mazzanti 2001: 24).

Before Nicola Mazzanti, other scholars from disciplines such as literature and art history introduced their own definitions and interpretations for various terminologies such as conservation, reconstruction or the significance of the 'original'.⁴ One of the most important challenges was to distinguish film restoration as an individual practice apart from the other restoration practices often associated with the fine arts, such as painting, architecture and sculpture. In accordance with Nelson Goodman, one could classify these arts into two categories: those which can be falsified (autographic arts) and those that cannot be falsified (allographic arts) (Goodman 1968: 113–114). This distinction raises questions about the authenticity of a work and fosters discussion as to which category *film* belongs. A further point of discussion focuses on determining an original object as reference for film restoration. Since film is a reproducible medium, in some cases the process of searching for sources and afterwards selecting from the detected material can be very time consuming. In many cases, one has to go back to more than one negative or print because of partial losses or different versions. Additionally, one must consider how restoring a material entity affects aesthetic *and* narrative levels. Nicola Mazzanti addresses this unique connection:

But in doing so, we must not forget that film is highly “physical”, a technological aspect that cannot be ignored in favour of the “text” in the sense of a simple narrative structure. In other words, the text/film has a “formal” content which is much more relevant than that of a book, and the ways in which the cinema experience is perceived and works are clearly different. Variations on a text, such as footnotes, square brackets, etc., cannot be made in a film, otherwise the narrative structure instead of being enriched becomes fragmented, and thus destroyed (Mazzanti 2001: 23).

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The term ‘original’ is commonly used to indicate the hierarchy of film negatives or positives of the same work. However, it can also refer to the ‘so called’ source material for film duplications and restorations, as Paolo Cherchi Usai points out: “[t]he ‘original’ version of a film is a multiple object fragmented into a number of different entities equal to the number of surviving copies” (Cherchi Usai 2000: 160). This illustrates the vagueness that accompanies the term and its application.

Cherchi Usai is a central figure when it comes to setting rules for the handling of historic films. As the founder of the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation and Senior Curator of the Moving Image Department of the George Eastman House (Rochester, USA), he works as an intermediary between theory and practice in the field of film restoration. His book *Silent Cinema*, published in 2000, presents an essential theoretical and ethical framework for my master thesis because of its additional practical references. He refers constantly to the handling of different sorts of film materials during, for example, the steps of inspection or duplication of film prints. He even summarizes his remarks with especially enunciated short rules. While the *FIAF Code of Ethics* regulates the handling of film materials, it lacks precise guidelines for film restoration (FIAF 2008). Consequently, every institution has set its own workflow in terms of interventions on the film as text and artifact.

The film restorer herself plays an important role, and her decisions will impact the future life of a film. Film restoration and reconstruction demand a kind of decision-making that must be reflective and adaptable from case to case. In order to establish and continue a discourse about responsibilities and consequences of actions, one must understand

film restoration as a shared task rather than as an act of personal fulfilment.

Lately, the digital modes of intervention have generated more critical debates about the duplication and retouching processes. Some criticism is directed at the extensive use of these relatively new tools, seemingly without careful consideration. At the same time, however, there are so many new possibilities that stem from digital interventions, as Giovanna Fossati explains:

From my position as an archivist, I look at the question of formats from a different perspective [...]. I argue that maintaining the original film's look is more important than remaining true to the original format. For instance, if a digital copy of a film could reproduce (simulate) the original characteristics of an obsolete 35 mm color system better than a copy on contemporary 35 mm color film stock, I would opt for the digital copy. Indeed, if digital means can help restorers to better simulate the original film look, in my view they should be considered as suitable as photochemical ones, not only for restoration but also for showing the restored image on a screen. [...] In the last decade, digital technology has proven to be an effective new tool for film restoration. In case of damage to film that involves the loss of part of the image, for example scratches in the emulsion, while photochemical restoration is not effective, digital techniques can be used to replace the missing art. In such cases, digital technology enables restorers to do things that were impossible before (Fossati 2011: 72).

Giovanna Fossati is one of the key protagonists in the debate about the use of new methods of digital intervention, and she represents one of the aforementioned contemporary opinions towards theoretical and ethical concerns. Additionally, while it replaces the analogue methods of printing onto acetate or polyester supports, scanning processes and digital migration of a film print to data carriers poses new problems regarding suitable long-term storage solutions. Nevertheless, even in an age of these new digital approaches, restorers must still deal with the previously discussed terminology and definitions while making ethical decisions on suitable ways to handle film stock and, more recently, a growing amount of digital data.

The Case Study: Robert Reinert's Opium (1918/1919)

I have adapted these theoretical and methodological positions vis-à-vis film restoration to my own research on Robert Reinert's *Opium – Die Sensation der Nerven* (Germany, 1918/1919). The film was shot shortly after World War I and just before Robert Wiener's celebrated *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (Germany, 1920). The Filmmuseum Düsseldorf holds a tinted and toned nitrate print of *Opium* in their collection, which was inspected for this study according to its characteristics as a visual and narrative entity and as a material artifact. On the narrative level, the film is a rather complex and confusing drama about betrayal, fate and experiences with the titular drug opium. The story unfolds in China, England and India where Professor Gesellius—the English director of a sanatorium—and Nung-Tschang—the Chinese owner of an opium den—repeatedly come into conflict because of present and past events.⁵

The practical approach of this study meanwhile focused on a detailed examination and documentation of the 6 film reels which were being stored in OMNIMAGO's nitrate vault since the beginning of 2015. At the time, the staff at OMNIMAGO conducted first physical and visual examinations and a test scan of one single reel. When I was working there in autumn of the same year (2015), Korinna Barthel from OMNIMAGO and Andreas Thein from the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf informed me of their first assessment and its results, for instance the estimated length of all reels (2316m/24fps), damages of the material and the shrinkage rate (1,55%). They also expected necessary repairs of splices and perforations. I then decided to connect the interests of the film archive, the service provider and academia with my master thesis. In the spirit of the *Scuola Bolognese*, the specific knowledge and infrastructure of each institution were united, which included the analysis of the print's current state while ensuring a non-destructive proceeding. As Cherchi Usai indicates in the following statement as one of his important rules concerning a film restorer's responsibility towards a film:

Any decision taken in the preservation process must

- a) be reversible,
- b) prevent further deterioration or alteration of the original artefact, and
- c) be carefully documented (Cherchi Usai 2000: 67).

The whole team involved in the restoration of *Opium* followed this advice with great respect to ensure the survival of this delicate film print.

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Investigation and Identification Processes

A hermeneutical analysis⁶ of one specific film print presented a good approach for the case study of *Opium*'s tinted and toned nitrate print. Simone Venturini and Alessandro Bordina have collected helpful criteria regarding the identification process of an analogue artifact. The film print itself is valued as a testimony, before its contextualization with additional film and non-film sources. As Bordina and Venturini write:

The study of the physical characteristics of the materials includes the analysis of the production process, the technological systems involved, and the degree of systemic, technical and functional obsolescence with respect to the current standards. It allows for the identification of the film material typology and its origins. The method and instruments for analytical surveying also allow for the planning of the best ways for safeguarding and reproduction (Bordina/Venturini 2013: 254).

This paper's research process began with a physical examination of the 6 reels, accompanied by their photographic and written documentation. I tried to capture the visual as well as the material characteristics in an overview table and photographed damaged perforations, splices and frames. This documentation also includes descriptions of the narrative content of the scenes, respectively, the corresponding intertitles, the number and kind of splices (glue or tape), other interventions (repair of splices) and notes of the color schemes with the differentiation of tintings and tonings (**Table 1**).

To describe the film's history and provenance, as it is visible on the film print itself, the vocabulary of Mazzanti will be applied in the following (Mazzanti 2001). According to his theoretical analysis of art forms, one can distinguish between different sorts of *lacunae* (gaps) that interfered with the film's material history during production, distribution and/or exhibition over time. *Damages* and *errors* belong to the film's external history, whereas *defects* affect its internal history (Mazzanti 2001: 26-27). Mazzanti applies this differentiation as an ethical aspect to film restoration, by

Akt	Nr.	Bildnr.	Szene	Titel	Kabestelle nass	Kabestelle trocken	Tinting	Toning	Inhalt	Eingriffe/Material	Bemerkungen	
1	2.	16-23		1	I, E		rot		Hauptdarsteller/ise....	Band gewölbt Eingrissen/offene Perfo Kleberart	Rolltitel	
	3.	23-27		2	E		rot		Opium 1. Akt Robert Reinert Monumental-Filmwerke	Sehr porös Offene Perfo		
	4.	27-31		2	E		Magenta		Opium 1. Akt Robert Reinert Monumental-Filmwerke			
	5.	31-35		3	I, E		rot		Opium, Seltamstes aller Gifte, du Wohltäter der schmerzgeplagten Kranken –	Offene Perfo Eingrissenes Bild	Rolltitel Farbwechsel nach Klebestelle	
	6.	35-39		3	E		Rot (blass)	blau	Opium, Seltamstes aller Gifte, du Wohltäter der schmerzgeplagten Kranken –		Schichtseite innen	
	7.	38-45		3	II, E		rot		Opium, Seltamstes aller Gifte, du Wohltäter der schmerzgeplagten Kranken – götig und furchtbar zugleich! Wehe den Unglücklichen Die Deinen Lockungen erliegen....	Eingrissene Perfo Offene Perfo	Schicht außen	
									Mehr als ein Jahr hat e Professor Geisellus, der berühmte Arzt und Philantrop, in China, d er Heimat des Opiums, dieses geheimnisvolle Gift studiert.			
	10.	52-54		4	I, E		rot		Nun trifft Ali, sein treuer indischer Diener, die letzten Vorbereitungen zur Rückkehr in die Heimat.		Rolltitel	
	13.	58-61		5	E		rot		"Wenn Ihr Schrift nicht schon moegen gieng, hättet ich Sie noch zu Nung-Tschang gefahrt."	Offene Perfo	Rolltitel	
	15.	65-70		6	III, E		Rot		"Sein Opium löst infolge einer besonderen Beeilcherung Sensationen unerhörter Art aus - Freilich zerrütet es Geist, und Körper wie kein anderes."	Offene Perfo		
	18.	78/79		7	E		Rot		Die Lustenhöhle Nung-Tschangs	Offene Perfo		
	30.	105-107		8	E		rot		Professor Geisellus erkennt das Mädchen aus der Höhle Nung- Tschangs.	Offene Perfo	Rolltitel	

contrasting two historic examples of early films and their specific characteristics:

Once we have correctly identified and categorized the damages contained in the film, we can decide which ones have to be eliminated and corrected, and which are to be kept, so as not to incur in historical inaccuracy. Therefore, we must do something about the extreme unsteadiness of a badly duplicated copy of a Lumière film, while it is doubtful whether we should “improve” the steadiness of a Skladanowski film, known for having failed in the competition against other producers precisely because of the inability to produce steady images (Mazzanti 2001: 27).

Consequently, damages such as physical or chemical decay and errors, like shots or reels that have been inverted, are typical problems to be removed during (especially digital) film restoration, while defects such as unsteadiness or copied dust particles in the camera are mostly seen as integral parts of the film and its history and, therefore, are more likely to remain with it in the future. If not, this could be seen as an improvement rather than a restoration. Additionally, Cherchi Usai distinguishes between *synchronous* and *diachronic lacunae* to illustrate their temporal and perceptual effects (Cherchi Usai 2000: 57). For instance, the internal and external history of a film can provoke synchronous damages on the image area of a frame. These are recognizable as scratches, dust and dirt. The location of the damages on the film strip can strongly impact the visual qualities and the state of a print. If the damages are to be found on the side of the base, they can be removed rather easily, for example by cleaning the strip or passing it through a *wet gate* during the duplication or scanning process.⁷ However, if the information is missing in the emulsion it cannot be retrieved by analogue means. Damages on the perforation area, shrinkage of the film stock or broken splices can also affect the visual aspects of a film print and, in addition, its capacity to be projected. In many cases, *diachronic lacunae* have an impact on the temporal level. They are not only linked to aesthetic factors, but also predominantly to the film’s narrative. The closure of such gaps aims at restoring the inner logic and coherence of a film. Nevertheless, if we recall Cherchi Usai’s definition of the original as a unique entity, there may exist several such

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entities at the same time. The task of the restorer is to choose one or more references for the particular case.

Regarding *synchronous* and *diachronic lacunae*, the colored nitrate print of *Opium* presents a lot of evidence of its external history, for instance:

- Scratches on the sides of the emulsion and base (**Fig. 1 and Fig. 2**)
- Copied and damaged perforations (**Fig. 3 and Fig. 4**)
- Desiccation and curvature (**Fig. 5**)
- Partial stickiness (**Fig. 6**)
- Open or badly repaired splices (**Fig. 7 and Fig. 8**)
- Chemical reactions with the dyes used for tinting and toning (**Fig. 9 and Fig. 10**)

Several gaps in the chronological order of *Opium*'s narrative were clarified by comparing the nitrate print with a listing of intertitles which is part of the Filmmuseum München's collection and corresponds to their black and white copy. After concluding the examination and documentation of every reel, I created another table containing the intertitles from the nitrate print. This allowed for a detailed comparison of the two versions of intertitles, with a focus on their order, occurrence and color (**Table 1 above**).

These overview tables allowed me to recognize the running order of the reels, which did not correspond to the labels on the cans, as those were only inventory numbers. Compared to the list of intertitles from Munich, reels 2, 3, 4 and 5 show various *diachronic lacunae* or switched shots. The complexity of this drama requires a precise work in relation to the reconstruction of the chronological order of the scenes and reels. This explicitly demonstrates how material and textual, or narrative, aspects are connected through film restoration, and during the process of film reconstruction.



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Fig. 1
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the time
of its first release,
35 mm positive
print. Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



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Fig. 2
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



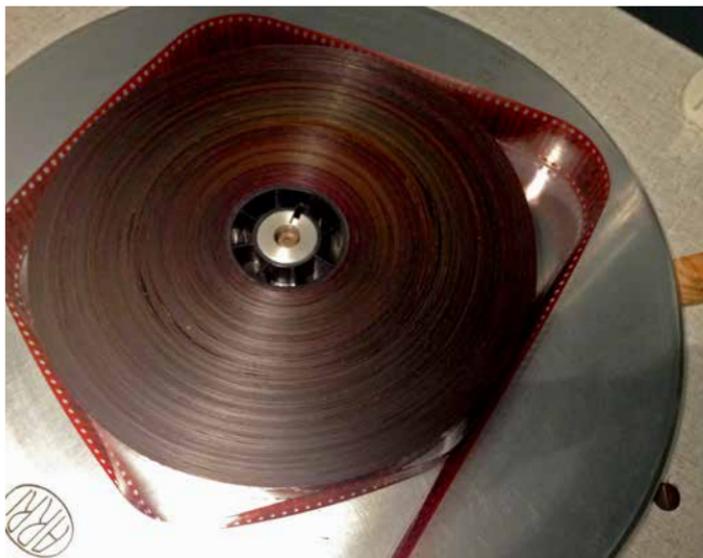
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Fig. 3
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



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Fig. 4
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



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Fig. 5
Robert Reinert, *Opium*, contemporary exhibition print from the time of its first release, 35 mm positive print. Filmmuseum Düsseldorf 2015. Photograph by Josephine Diecke



Fig. 6
Robert Reinert, *Opium*, contemporary exhibition print from the time of its first release, 35 mm positive print. Filmmuseum Düsseldorf 2015. Photograph by Josephine Diecke



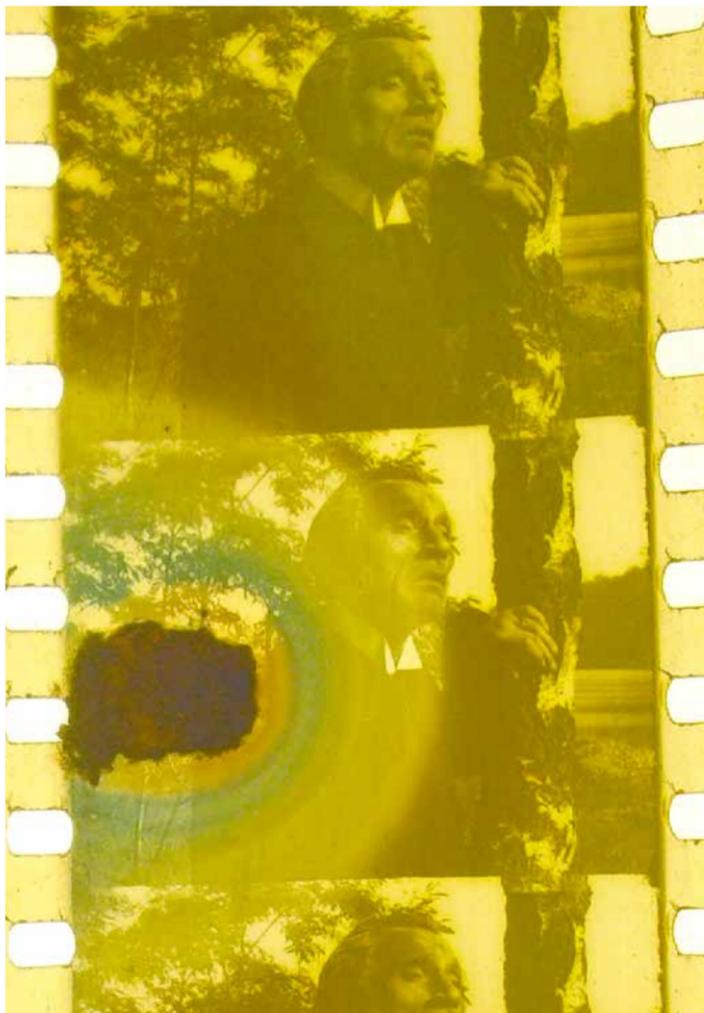
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Fig. 7
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



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Fig. 8
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



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Fig. 9
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



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Fig. 10
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke

Furthermore, the intertitles in themselves are good indicators of the film's history. In fact, the production team created different typographies to distinguish the setting or the handwriting of a character: The first act takes place in China. In order to illustrate the 'appropriate' environment, a font style resembling Chinese characters was used (Fig. 11). The relatively neutral Latin-script of the intertitles in acts 2, 3 and 6 indicates their British setting (Fig. 12). However, the intertitles are also additionally framed by two opium pipes. The intertitles of the fourth and fifth act, which are set in India, present a kind of arch or gateway (maybe the entrance of a cave), surrounding the imagined Indian font, whereas the inserted letters refer to italic handwritings (Fig. 13). Most of the intertitles are tinted red, except for one recurring Chinese title that seems to be tinted pink and toned blue. The handwritings stand out with their own yellow and reddish tints (Fig. 14 and Fig. 15).

Based on this information, the restoration team can return to the definitions of film restoration, specifically to the notion of the original source material. Mazzanti's concept of "'aura' of authenticity" (Mazzanti 2001: 24)⁸ provides one suitable approach which can be applied to *Opium's* tinted and toned nitrate print. In terms of its 'originality', one can argue that the coloring of this specific film print is also what makes it as unique as the idea of an 'original' proposes.



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Fig. 11
Robert Reinert, *Opium*, contemporary exhibition print from the time of its first release, 35 mm positive print. Filmmuseum Düsseldorf 2015. Photograph by Josephine Diecke



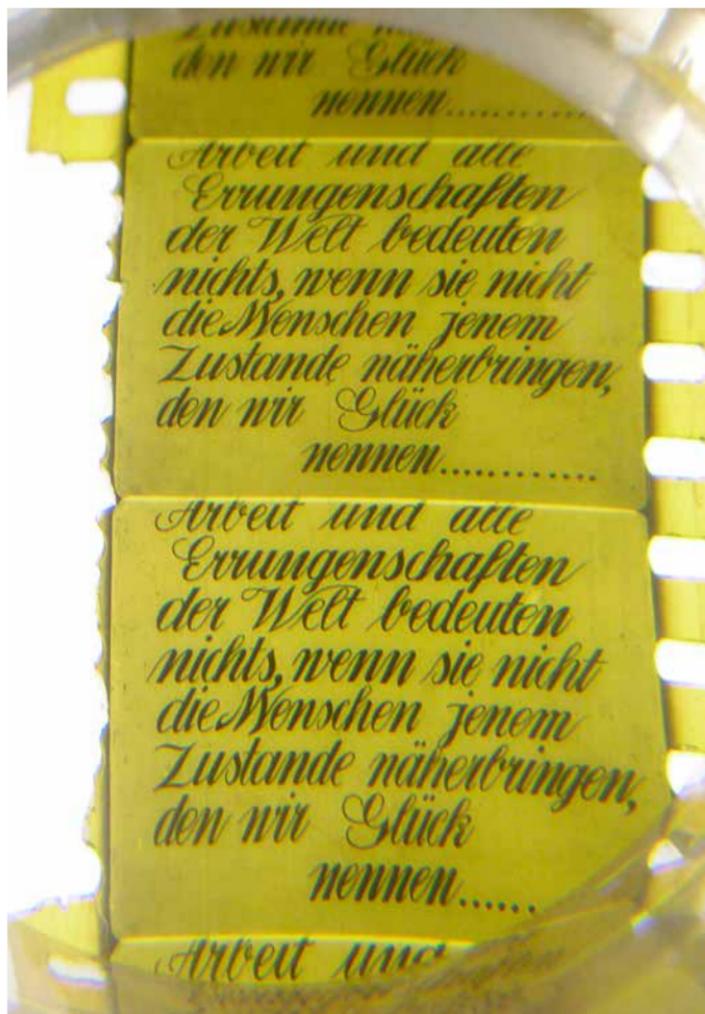
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Fig. 12
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



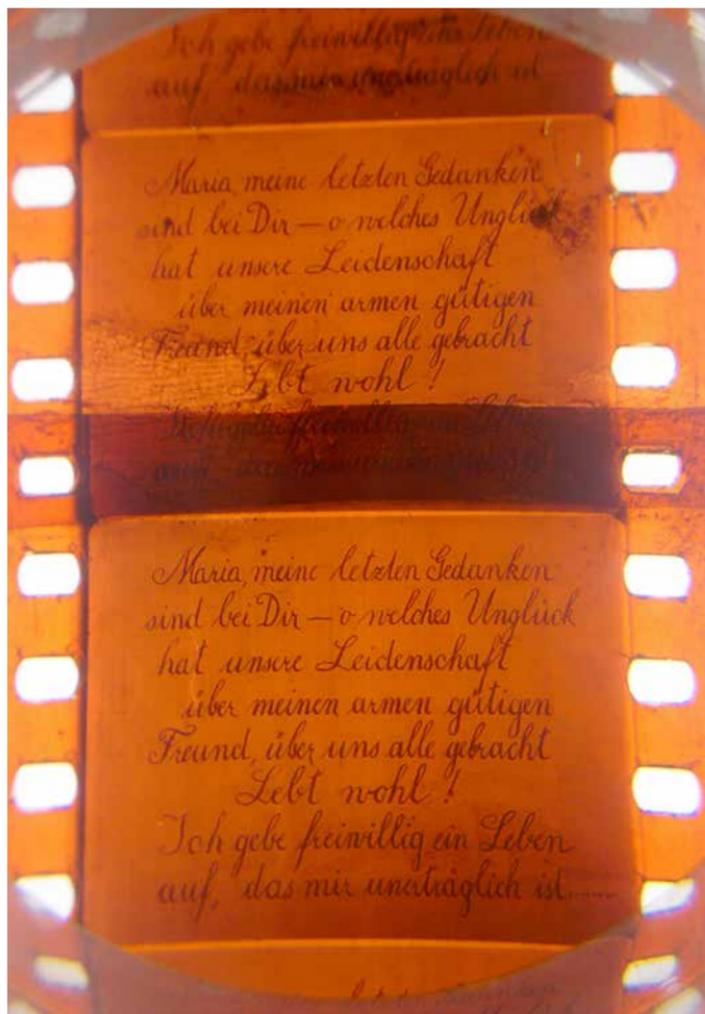
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Fig. 13
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
Josephine Diecke



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Fig. 14
Robert Reinert,
Opium, contem-
porary exhibition
print from the
time of its first
release, 35 mm
positive print.
Filmmuseum
Düsseldorf 2015.
Photograph by
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Fig. 15
Robert Reinert, *Opium*, contemporary exhibition print from the time of its first release, 35mm positive print. Filmmuseum Düsseldorf 2015. Photograph by Josephine Diecke

The color processes used were the most widespread at the time and belong to the applied color techniques. The black and white film positive was submerged individually in dye baths. The dyes were either absorbed by the gelatin and resulted in a uniform coloring of the highlights while the positive image remained black (which is the case for the tinting process), or the strip was immersed in a metallic salt solution, which wholly or partially replaced the black silver image with an inorganic colored compound. Highlights and non-image areas remain clear for the toning process.⁹ The second compiled table illustrates the color schemes of *Opium's* nitrate print (**Table 2**).

The documented colors correspond only to my own visual perception from when I examined the print on the bench. For further information about the applied dyes and their potential narrative or indexical function, more research needs to be done. The size and shape of the print's perforations are attributed to the Bell and Howell company standard. Harold Brown mentions the changes to film perforation standards at the beginning of the 1920s:

Perforations of this shape and size were then used for all films, both negative and positive until 1924. In 1924 Kodak introduced the familiar large rectangular perforation for positive projection prints, (Ill.P.4), commonly called the 'positive' perforation. This perforation is also known as the 'Kodak Standard' perforation (K.S.) (Brown 1990: 6).

This information, combined with the facts of the film's nitrate base and the applied color processes, lead to the conclusion that this particular positive was produced in the first five years after the official release in 1919.

Lastly, not only the film stock, but also the cans reveal traces of their past. The inscriptions and labels outside and inside of the cans can be attributed to the film stock manufacturers Kodak, Agfa and Gevaert. Some of the labels also display the film title. This was the case for one Agfa can. Moreover, the label of the AFIFA Kopierwerk Wiesbaden—a former film laboratory—was an indicator for the print's interim storage in Wiesbaden sometime between 1949 and 1956 (Bohrmann, Niebergall 2015). The labels and cans of differing film stock producers suggest that the film reels of *Opium's* nitrate print must have been moved to new containers since their first exhibition.

Further Research on Film and Non-Film Material

In addition to my own work with the nitrate print, I asked other archives if they have some film or non-film material related to *Opium* in their collections. With the exception of one other nitrate segment which was transferred from the Library of Congress (Washington, DC, USA) to the Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv (Berlin, Germany) in 1981, none of the other versions that could be found in 2016 were colored. As of this moment, at least as far as I was able to discover, the earliest and apparently most complete surviving black and white prints are from the 1960s and belong to the collections of the Deutsches Filminstitut (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), the Bundesarchiv and the Filmmuseum München (Germany) (Diecke 2016).

A study of written sources of its contemporary reception helped me to put Robert Reinert and his film in perspective. Three concluding examples shall demonstrate how the film was received at the moment of its premiere and almost 80 years later. The first source dates back to 1919, when the film was first released in Germany:

Es ist eine überaus reiche, vielverzweigte Handlung, die durch Phantasiegebilde der Opiumträume, die großen Schauszenen in China und Indien und durch die Schreckensbilder in den Dschungeln noch buntbewegter wird. Dennoch spinnt sich ein sicherer Faden durch die ganze Handlung und eine besondere Note dieses Filmwerkes ist es, daß (sic) überall die künstlerisch vornehme Linie mit Sorgfalt gewahrt wurde, was besonders bei den empfindsamen Bildern in den Opiumträumen in die Augen fällt (Schmid-Dimsch 1919).¹⁰

In this contemporary film review, the German film critic Heinz Schmid-Dimsch focuses on the exotic settings and Reinert's successful staging of the character's opium hallucinations. Nearly 80 years later, the former director of the Filmmuseum München, Jan-Christopher Horack underlines Reinert's intended monumental style:

Based on their titles and surviving contemporary reviews, Reinert's films were always ambitious and highly symbolic, although their metaphorical style seems to have been popular at the time (Horak 1997: 183).

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In an obituary notice, Joseph Aubinger reflects on the public's lack of awareness regarding Robert Reinert's role in German film history:

Reinert hat das Unglück gehabt, nicht wie Lubitsch und andere nach Amerika engagiert zu werden, sonst würden die Gazetten ihm heute statt Zeilen Spalten widmen und ihn verdienstermaßen als einen der Größten des Films feiern (Aubinger 1988: 89).¹¹

All three written sources focus mainly on narrative and aesthetic aspects of *Opium* and Robert Reinert's productions in general, without even mentioning the conditions of the film material itself provided at that time. Nevertheless, if someone would like to know more about Robert Reinert's work, or his cinematographer Helmar Lerski's style, one should do a classical film analysis themselves. Especially because certain characteristics, like the nitrate print's color scheme, do not show up in contemporary film reviews. Or as Cherchi Usai would say: "Always keep clear the distinction between evidence found in the print and information drawn from written sources" (Cherchi Usai 2000: 143).

Final Remarks

When I submitted my master thesis the restoration of *Opium* was not yet financed and consequently had not started, but at the beginning of 2017, the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf was eventually able to grant the project. During the writing of this article, all the steps that one can describe as part of the active preservation process have been undertaken, such as the reparation of splices and perforations, the addition of leaders to each reel and the cleaning of the print (Canosa 2004: 1072). Furthermore, the restoration team decided to scan the nitrate print at OMNIMAGO. These actions illustrate the role of the individuals involved in the restoration process, as all of their decisions and the steps that will be undertaken in order to bring *Opium* back to visibility and thus accessibility will be part of its future history. I am thankful to have been a part of it, and I very much hope that my documentation will stay with the film.

- 1 Simone Venturini compiled a historical overview of film restoration terminologies (Venturini 2006: 13).
- 2 Translation by author: “a sort of natural contamination due to the closeness between questions about the restoration of films and those touching on art history, as reference to the Italian schools of art (Siennease, Florentine, Bolognese, etc.).”
- 3 Translation by author: “The programming has expanded; it is always a platform for restored and recovered films, but it offers from now on more retrospectives on special subjects. In addition to the three venues for archivists and scholars from all over the world, the festival opens up to the local Bolognese population by organizing open air screenings every evening at the city’s central square.”
- 4 Katrin Janis reflects upon the role of ethics in the conservation and restoration practice by referring to historical figures that shaped the scientific discourse (Janis 2005); Cesare Brandi contributed to the debate on theory and practice of restoration in the realm of fine arts (Brandi 2009).
- 5 Since the film was made before the introduction of common optical sound tracks, it doesn’t contain any sound information. That is why the auditory aspect will not be addressed in what follows.
- 6 *Hermeneutical analysis* in this context refers to the analysis of a singular entity (film print) by contrast with the comparative analysis with other (film and non-film) materials.
- 7 During the scanning process with the help of a wet gate, the film strip passes an enclosed system, wherein it is submerged in liquid of a suitable refractive index that reduces the refractive effects of light hitting the scratches on the base and emulsion surfaces. The liquid has a good affinity with the film material and therefore it fills the scratches, wetting them completely. It results in a smooth appearance of the film base (see also Cherchi Usai 2000: 59).
- 8 Mazzanti transfers Walter Benjamin’s concept of *aura* to the film restoration terminology (see Benjamin 1936).
- 9 In the framework of our research projects *ERC Advanced Grant FilmColors* and *SNSF Film Colors. Technologies, Cultures, Institutions* at the University of Zurich, we analyze the links between specific material characteristics of color film processes and their aesthetic appearance as well as the political, social and cultural contexts that surround the numerous inventions and developments in that field (see Flückiger 2017).
- 10 Translation by author: “It is an extremely rich, complex story, rendered even more entertaining by the fantastic images of the Opium dreams, the elaborated sceneries in China and India and

by the frightening portrayal of the jungle. However, the central theme unfolds steadily through the plot and the special touch of this film is its ability to preserve the artistically elegant style which attracts particular attention with the sensitive images during the opium dreams.”

- 11** Translation by author: “Reinert was unlucky for not having been hired to work in Amerika like Lubitsch and others, otherwise the gazettes nowadays would dedicate whole columns rather than a few lines to him and would deservedly celebrate him as one of the greatest men in film business.”

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Josephine Diecke

NAFILM

Jakub
Jiříšťa

FILM MUSEUM

PROJECT:

UPGRADE FOR AN

INFORMAL FILM

EDUCATION

The text presents Prague-based project NaFiLM: National Film Museum, which aims to make a museum exhibition on film history an effective and integral part of visitors' informal film education. NaFiLM makes use of the communicative potential of museum space and principles of interactivity not only to enable visitors to participate in the process of making cognitions and their connections, but also to develop their own cognitive skills, including individual historical reflection through the film medium and its representation of reality. The text takes into account basic methodical directions and aims and introduces a model of constructive education that is based on stimuli from the experiential communicational interface through the description of thematic parts of two exhibitions realized up to now. These parts or "mini-narratives" are planning as constituents of the future permanent exhibition which is now developing and testing in the public sphere with participation of visitors and collaborating schools.

**NaFiLM Film
Museum Project:
Upgrade for an
Informal Film
Education**
Jakub Jiříšťa

Film Museum as a Form of Informal Film Education

In many countries with a developed film culture, including former Czechoslovakia,¹ a steady integration of film education and the use of film medium in other areas of the school curriculum date back to the 1960s.² While a varied application of film education has been developed in such countries during the last few decades, this education largely makes use of formal, conservative pedagogical methods. Not many attempts have been made to develop the potential of an informal film education, or a model of education that employs experiential, non-directive, non-lecture-based methods. Formal education is limited to formats that maintain a hierarchized dialogical relationship between the lecturer and the pupil, wherein the lecturer transfers knowledge to passive pupils. Informal film education, on the other hand, offers the potential of a larger range of experience with the film medium because it exchanges this lecture-based model for one of facilitation. In this model, the teacher is the facilitator³ of a two-sided learning process and the student is an active participant in the class's co-production of knowledge. In my view, this potential has not yet been fulfilled, and there is a lot of space in the field to move beyond those educational forms long-settled and minimally varied.

Often, film education programming that considers itself "non-formal" will still apply a formal relationship between the lecturer and the pupil, and will differ from formal

formats only in its varied focus on the creative process (for example, artistic accents in film animation, technical accents in the making of short movies, or the relationship between the film's perception and a more sensitive approach to social realities, as in rare projects like MyStreetFilms⁴). As new trends of education in film museums and expositions show, however, it is possible to realize an informal film education as an interactive activity without the need for a supervising lecturer and his instructions. In the Czech context, for example, the Free Cinema Project's Činéma Theater,⁵ a children's program originally supported by the National Film Archive, introduces pre-school children to film history with informal educational practices that avoid instruction and open up space for imagination and a lived experience of film history.⁶ The Činéma Theater's programming merges a theatrical performance with elements of new circus and interactive audience activities, and it makes use of pre-cinematic apparatuses.

The project NaFiLM: The National Film Museum is developing an informal model for film education. It is integrating into its framework cognitive and communicative processes that are still atypical for film exhibitions, despite the many innovations in interactive elements in recent years. Film history has been presented in museum displays for several decades, but, as far as the permanent exhibitions of film museums are concerned, displays with a clear educational agenda are often suppressed. Significantly, the presentation of objects from collections is seen as the primary function of museums, and this function is thought to be superior to the communicative and/or educational potential of an exhibition. Therefore, typical exhibitions do not fulfill the goals of an informal film education, which values the development of an individual's competencies, and which has a practical application that goes beyond the "ready-made" knowledge of film history.

A few contemporary film museums that incorporate displays into experiential scenography—Deutsche Kinemathek: Museum für Film und Fernsehen in Berlin, Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Torino, Film Museum Shanghai—are examples of an approach that overcomes those outdated practices which do not properly focus on visitor activity. However, I still find these museums' innovations in design lacking because they do not adequately guide visitors' attention. In addition, these museums' newfound designs do not

actively emphasize the connections—both contextual and narrative-making between exhibits and/or installations. Exhibits need not be the only bearers of meaning. At these museums, a visitor's experience is diffused, and cognitive engagement is minimal. These museums' exhibitions lack a formative approach to the transfer of knowledge to visitors, given that the interactions they encourage do not provide open incentives for a constructive (co-)creation of cognitions.

This paper thinks through the use of design in museum displays in a new way, seeking to enrich the film museum with real participation in educational processes and to make from the exhibition an innovative challenge to the stagnating limits of typical film education. In my critique, I draw out the differences between this educational approach to design and the nostalgic collective dreaming about traditional cinema at the Torino museum, the use of exposition as a promotion or overview of successes of the local cinematography at the Shanghai museum, and the limited cognitive stimuli of prevailing film excerpts in the Deutsche Kinemathek. Design, as museum designer Tiina Roppola (Roppola 2011) makes clear, can be an intersection of curatorial interests, visitor-oriented environments, and the constructive process of learning. Thus, such a design project can be approached as a communication structure of diverse, multi-sensory incentives, and as constituting an overarching narrative that has cognitive or conceptual goals.

This challenge organizes the conceptual and methodological foundations of the NaFiLM project, enabling its development directly in the public space. We, the NaFiLM development team, created two exhibitions, approaching them as laboratories. There we explored museum communication as a means for discovering various aspects of the film medium (and cinema as a social phenomenon), and throughout the process we encouraged and integrated feedback from visitors. This feedback was solicited in guided tours and in interactions between visitors and museum lecturers, who helped with interactive installations and observed visitors' reactions.

Informal film education primarily provides the opportunity to approach film from a wide range of perspectives and to engage multi-sensory perceptions and a rich variety of cognitive processes through the multimedia nature of museum installations. Such a film education is realized in a specific communicative mode that reflects the educational function

of the museum exhibition, rather than its acquisition/presentation function. An institution's values can be shifted by linking the previously divided interests of curators and educators at the level of museum design under a common concept. Such a cooperative concept of a museum's environment emphasizes the interpretative and narrative space between exhibits and installations, fostering a network of relationships that then, as a series of cognitive incentives, become catalysts for visitors' creative activities.

The limited terms of the NaFILM project as a student initiative developing without institutional cover (a non-profit association whose funding consists mainly of cultural grants, research grants, crowdfunding and contributions in kind) provide, paradoxically, space for a freer connection to these communicative aspects often neglected in film museums. NaFILM had to make do without the typical features of film museums, such as collection-based engagement and expensively conceptualized and designed spaces. The project's existence as a museum, therefore, was present in our use of the "invisible" space of communication links and relationships. These allowed us to hold minimalistic installations, which are nevertheless experiential, and offer them as part of a larger perspective. Museum space is not a static background for individual interactions; it is a co-creator of a constructive cognitive process, which begins with the visitor's active presence.

NaFILM's exhibitions took varying communication options into account and, in concert with their overarching mission, offered follow-up interactive installations that did not provide closed-end knowledge, but contributed to strategic attention. Our exhibitions represented various phases in the visitor's formation of knowledge, involving basic interpretative abilities—such as the formation of associative links—led by a clearly determined trajectory through space. Each exhibition was divided into several thematic parts and each had a structure that directed the visitor successively towards an unusual perspective on the very essence of the topic. This authoritative approach operated in the background, guaranteeing the direction of educational goals without an expository or interpretative mode limiting experience and learning. Outdated and repressive pedagogical modes were replaced by direct and open stimuli, which left a space for creating contexts, for shifting between and among perceptual levels, and, above all, for having an individual experience.

Educational Incentives of the 2015 NaFiLM Film Exhibition

NaFiLM's exhibitions did not hide the fact that they were development stages for a future permanent exhibition and testing sites for museum communication methods. Likewise, visitor feedback was and is integral to all areas of the permanent museum's development. In the future, we plan to integrate the temporary exhibitions in our "true" museum. This is why the exhibitions rather unusually covered three different themes, which primarily represented different curatorial and pedagogical approaches. Given the museum's small space (about 200 m²), it was necessary to work with significant shortcuts that could direct the visitor's attention directly to the essence of the chosen themes, rather than to their contextual conception and a detailed elaboration of information. The credo of the NaFiLM project is economy and minimalism, both of which are beneficial to a visitor's experience. When a visitor's attention is not scattered by excessive or unnecessary stimuli and details, she gains a deeper, more focused understanding of the work in front of her.

The first of the exhibitions was realized in 2015 at the premises of the Montanelli Museum in Prague. It occupied a three-level space that presented three themes, each of which displayed the curator's three differentiated approaches to their depiction. The first section of the exposition, which was subdivided into three rooms and set up like a series of workshops, interactively introduced visitors to the origins of the sound film, both the technical requirements of the transition to sound and the aesthetic impacts and challenges for the filmmakers themselves. For this aim, individual interactive stations were combined with historical artifacts from the period (lent by the National Technical Museum), which were accompanied by audiovisual material demonstrating their practical use and purpose.

Upon entering the exhibition, a visitor would first engage with the way movies were sounded, before the invention of sound cameras and projectors, directly in the cinema. The first room was filled with functional models of instruments like those that would have been used to create the sounds during the projection of early silent Czech films. The visitor could also compare the early amateur attempts of sounding films with the gradual introduction of the profession of a sound designer and foley artist, and of more professional tools (for example, a sound-making pavement). There was

also an installation that showed the continuities between the traditional foley cabinet and the contemporary sound library. Here, visitors had the opportunity to compare the creative process in contemporary digital technologies with that of the experimental nature and craftsmanship of the art of foley, which made a sound studio a truly creative laboratory.

In the following room in this section, visitors were introduced to the various types of sound tracks on the film, thanks to a real-time sound recording, and they could print the optical footprints projected on the wall on paper strips. A projection of the experimental film *The Rhythm* (Jiří Lehevec, 1941) was presented as an example of attempts made by filmmakers of the period to synchronize sound and image. Such a feat was not only a matter of technical difficulty, contingent on the mechanical connection of the sound and image tracks on the film, but also a creative challenge (to harmonize the rhythm of music with the captured human movements).

The third room of this section included three types of exhibition materials and mediums: period artifacts from the technical museum depository (all technology for basic sound-related filming techniques: a sound camera, an optical copier for the sound film, a microphone), reproductions of film posters promoting a sound film with diverse slogans, and two stations with film projections. In the first film projection station, original animated videos were intermingled with examples of early Czech sound films. The resulting collage, which was coupled with a commentary, linked the technological aspects of the media to the difficulties faced by filmmakers in the studio and in the editing room, as well as to the related aesthetic impacts. The videos also explained the room's artifacts' purpose and function. The second film projection station linked the technological principles of sound postproduction at that time with a reflection on the form of a film work. The interaction here consisted of the sounding of a silent film (in Czech cinematography, a fairly common practice), which allowed the visitor to observe the perceptual impacts caused by the mixing of individual sound tracks on the control panel.

The second thematic section of the exposition was devoted to the Czech pre-war avant-garde. In contrast to the sound installations, this section emphasized interacting with the visitor through his imagination and associative connections. The visitors' subliminal impulses were immediately

triggered by a perceptual shortcut involving the complexity of the theme: European avant-garde thinking about the film (*photogénie* and abstract cinema) and the specific inspirational sources that shaped it in the Czech context. This historical background was manifested on a purely perceptual level thanks to the integration of scenographic elements. The centerpiece of this section was an installation of a miniature dream world of the poets of the Czech avant-garde, in which life is transformed into poetry and new art. The installation featured a train on a track, much like a child's toy train, that visitors could control and thus use to discover the miniature world: Lunaparks, circus clowns and acrobats, ocean liners and lighthouses, Sunday promenades and the neon of the big city. The installation could be lit up and enlivened through the use of the panel, but it was above all the train itself that did this, because its headlights started a game of lights and shadows on the walls. The visitor was thus surrounded by a visual atmosphere that evoked the essence of film as a dynamic composition of forms (the Czech approach is not merely abstract but linked evocatively to concrete emotion), and, at the same time, she perceived changing motifs that made up a poetic whole.

The visitor could fully realize the cinematic dimension of these immediately perceived motifs in the following installation called the "imaginary cinema," which transformed the traditional collective experience of cinema into an individual one. Avant-garde "imaginary cinema" filmmakers preferred making use of the human imagination to limiting the realization of their bold film ideas to a two-dimensional screen. They had "film librettos" (or scripts and music) performed with no accompanying film image; these librettos sought the transformation of words into immediate, imagined visual stimuli, or a kind of "visual poetry." Thus, the visual "film" would be created in each individual audience member's mind. In the "imaginary cinema" of our exhibit, visitors were able to put this kind of avant-garde filmmaking to the test, experimenting with the power of their own imagination and the associative, interconnectedness of individual "cuts." With an empty screen in front of her, the visitor listened to sound recordings of film librettos from Czech avant-garde poets and creators, which enabled her to "project" film scenes onto the screen, or, if she had closed her eyes, onto the "inner screen" of her own mind. In these films

animated on their “inner screen,” visitors could identify the motifs they had encountered in the previous installation, perhaps appreciating these motifs’ inspirational poetic dimension and their relationship to the film medium. Here in this section, in an isolated space devoid of any literal visual stimuli, the visitor became a listener, spectator, projectionist and creator, all at the same time. The librettos featured in this section include: *For Ladies* (Jaroslav Seifert, 1924), a moving romance aboard an ocean liner; *Rocket* (Vítězslav Nezval, 1924), a crime story from an international express train; and *Nicotine* (Jiří Voskovec, 1925), an exotic travelogue that denies time and space.

This section also showed several avant-garde films in an old-fashioned projection room and presented the movies as counterparts to the librettos and an imaginary cinema. The films offered an overview of the diverse forms of Czech avant-garde cinema, including their specific link to functionalist theory in advertising films, which used then-experimental techniques. In the second NaFiLM exhibition (2016), in which the theme of the avant-garde was revisited, the film program was altered. We did this because we wanted to integrate a reflection on previous installations and to better express the essence of avant-garde cinema and its relation to transformed reality. This altered film program encouraged the visitor to understand a pivotal principle of avant-garde thinking: the search for a new, unusual and sharper vision of the common world. So as to clearly guide the visitor to the realization of this concept, we showed innovative science and educational movies, which contemporary historians like Lucie Česálková (2014) have placed within the broader framework of avant-garde impulses. For example, educational films like *Magic Eye* (Jiří Lehovc, 1939) captured everyday life and objects with a microscope lens, pioneered time-lapse shots of natural phenomena like plant growth, and manifested the visual exploration of the avant-garde’s “new world.” Discovering the remarkable beauty of abstract landscapes hidden beneath the skin of a familiar fact falls within contemporary attempts to cultivate the eyes of the youth. In this way, such avant-garde practices have joined the avant-garde librettos and found their practical purpose well-utilized for the multi-level educational activities of the exhibition. In addition to visual cultivation, however, the section of the exhibition devoted to avant-garde film also encouraged a widespread

perception of the medium, which may break away from its material form.

The final section of the 2015 exhibition was dedicated to the theme of exile in Czech film. It connected film history with the histories of several Czech film directors under the oppression of the communist regime, namely: Miloš Forman, a very successful filmmaker with a pragmatic approach to his art (although oft-criticized by the exile community for this very pragmatism); Vojtěch Jasný, who was gravely affected by his exile and dwelled on the experience in his work; and Pavel Juráček, a volunteer-exile, a choice that had dire consequences for both his personal life and career. Each director's life and works represent a unique experience of exile, although all were exiled as a result of the Soviet Union's invasion in 1968. In the exhibition, the directors' life stories were concealed by old doors that had been transformed into eccentric-looking cabinets (numerous little "secret" doors had been cut out of the original piece). The design of a closed door with hidden compartments symbolized the secretive, repressed nature of life in exile. In each cabinet, visitors found fragments of the person's life—original photos, diaries, and newspaper excerpts—which presented a life portrait with provocative ambiguity. Each personal biography was accompanied by sound recordings and film excerpts of the respective director's work. This section of our exhibition made use of a new kind of information-oriented exposition. Instead of attaching biographical labels to photographs, as would be typical for an exhibition with a theme like this one, we conveyed the historical, biographical information of the theme through a series of multi-sensory, interactive stimuli. With each director's portrait/collage/cabinet, visitors had the opportunity to critically, to sensorially confront the fate of these artists.

The multimedia installation as a whole created the opportunity to identify with the difficult, painful experience of leaving the country. This "transfer" of experience was mediated by unique audiovisual poems, each expressing a different way the filmmakers coped with the effects of the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. In this way, from a number of individual perspectives, a historical collective mood—the mood of a society paralyzed by occupation—was alluded to and made present for the exhibition's visitors. Visitors were able to experience how such a mood might influence the creators' decision about whether to stay or go abroad.

Educational Incentives of the 2016 NaFiLM Film Exhibition, “Locomotion”

The NaFiLM’s first exhibition project offered a number of unusual challenges for the visitor by surpassing merely a retelling of the selected chapters from the history of film. Nevertheless, as a matter of necessity, the exhibition was limited because it needed to adapt to the specific space and funding realities. (From the earliest stages of the project, it was planned that the project would only be a temporary presentation of concepts and plans for a future, permanent museum.) The follow-up second exhibition, opened in December 2016, found itself under more favorable conditions, and we were open to the possibility of using them for more comprehensive educational benefits. Thanks to the support of the Kolowrats family, the NaFiLM project found a home in the Palace of Chicago in the center of Prague, where it was possible to adapt an open office space on one floor into an exhibition space.

This longer-term exhibition in the Palace of Chicago was also a laboratory for museum communication and education. Its primary achievement was the institution of an overarching theme—the motif of movement, conveyed by its title “Locomotion”—that helped to guide the visitor’s attention in a constructive way and to strengthen the network of meanings between installations. (The title also emphasized a second theme in the exhibition: the *leitmotif* of the train.) This theme was returned to throughout the exhibition from several perspectives and with the use of diverse and interactive stimuli: the illusion and basic techniques of the motion of images, the motion and dynamics inside moving pictures linked with the era of modernity, and the possibilities of setting up images into motion (animating) without traditional projection techniques.

The second exhibition envisioned a stronger connection between the interactive stimuli and the visitor’s multi-sensory experience, so that knowledge could become accessible in a more direct way, and so that more emphasis could be placed on the meaningful, constructive space *between* the installations themselves. Rather than providing ready-made knowledge, the exhibition introduced incentives to learn; the visitor was guided through an associative formation of connections, which allowed her to see the subject from an unusual perspective. Each thematic part was a closed narrative unit.

NaFiLM Film
Museum Project:
Upgrade for an
Informal Film
Education
Jakub Jiríště

The introductory section of this exhibition was devoted to the origins of moving images; it created a complex picture of the origins of cinematography, covering those principles that often disappear in the typical technological overviews of pre-cinematographic apparatuses. The illusion of motion was presented through the example of the stroboscope. The stroboscope rotates a strip of stationary images while rapidly flickering light. The stroboscope's flickering effects an interruption of vision, causing the series of images, which would typically appear blurred when in motion, to cohere into a discernable animation. (The modern use of the stroboscope, referred to colloquially as the "strobe" or "strobe light," creates the effect of stillness or slow motion in moving objects. However, the early stroboscope was used to animate stationary images by making images in motion discernable to the eye.) The stroboscope was an effective educational tool, as its visual effects introduced visitors to a range of advancements significant to the early development of cinematography—such as the eye's physiological capacity to perceive and differentiate movement—in addition to the technical principles of the projector.

First, visitors were presented with Czech scientist Jan Evangelista Purkyně's experiment with optical illusions—wherein he made use of the stroboscope to explore the so-called "afterimages" in one's mind's eye, or the memory of the eye itself—which introduced them to basic physiological characteristics of the eye and how it perceives movement. Then, visitors encountered an interactive model of a three-dimensional zoetrope, a reconstructed and slightly modified version of the mid-19th-century optical toy. A zoetrope consists of a cylinder through which a spectator can view the strip of images placed inside. When the cylinder rotates it effects the same rapid flickering of light created by the stroboscope, thus creating a clear animation out of the image strip. Our zoetrope manifestly and interactively connected early experiments with the eye (like Purkyně's) with the conditions necessary for film projection.

In our exhibition's model of the zoetrope, the picture-belts on the periphery of this magical carousel were replaced by three-dimensional figures. This made it possible to watch the illusion of movement first through a cylinder with slits (mimicking the conditions from Purkyně's experiment with the stroboscope), and then to make from the zoetrope a

simple electric projector. Visitors made this transformation themselves: they could remove the cylinder from the zoetrope and change the light source from the “still” light of the classic zoetrope to the strobing, flickering light necessary to create the perception of movement without a cylinder. The effect evoked the well-known use of a stroboscope (or “strobe light”) today, as the figurines moved in front of the visitor’s eyes, and their shadows moved along the walls. The installation encouraged the visitor to recognize the connection between the function of the cylinder’s slits in early optical toys and the need to achieve a fast frequency of light and dark changes in electric projectors.

In the following installation, visitors learned more about the historical and technical development of the modern film projector as they interacted with two different models of early film projection that succeeded the zoetrope. One model, the magic lantern, presented an early type of image slide projection technology which used the projection of static images (pictures painted, printed, or produced photographically) to tell stories. The other was a functional copy of a projection praxinoscope, an animation device that, like the zoetrope, used a strip of pictures placed around the inner surface of a spinning cylinder. The praxinoscope could not quite narrate a whole story but did make it possible to create a continuity between individual slides.

Both exhibits found inspiration in the seances and Romantic/Gothic phantasmagorias (or horror shows) of the late 18th and 19th centuries, in which praxinoscopes and magic lanterns were first used as a medium of visual entertainment. An image of a skeleton (a popular motif of the phantasmagorias) was projected onto the wall by the praxinoscope and greeted visitors as they entered the room. The visitor was then invited to become the narrator of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Oval Portrait” via a magic lantern, and to consider the story as an analogy for the origins of the projection. Poe’s frightening story, in which a painter “drains” his wife’s life in a harsh effort to imitate her beauty, could be read as a commentary on the period’s artists’ overwhelming desire to perfectly, exactly imitate the world—an undeniable ideal of early filmmakers. The magic lantern exhibit, then, explored both the technical and aesthetic precursors of the invention of cinema.

In the next section, visitors completed their journey through the principles of projection: they were presented with an old, crank-operated projector, thus arriving at the invention of modern cinema. We adapted the projector to our exhibit's educational goals by replacing one of its opaque sides with a pane of glass. This way the visitor could watch the running mechanisms of the projection, specifically the work of the rotation shutter, which demonstrates the application of the stroboscopic effect in the modern film projector.

In what may have felt unexpected to visitors, we chose not to use this machine to introduce visitors to early films. Instead, we made use of virtual reality headsets (Samsung Gear VR connected to mobile phones) to not only display classic Czech films but also to evoke the *experience* of early film screenings. The VR enabled us to offer a more complex reconstruction of the experience of the first film spectators, even allowing for a physical identification with their perceptions. With the VR gear on, the visitor experienced the Saint Louis 1904 World Exhibition, and, after examining an environment reconstructed by period plans, photographs, and catalogs, he found himself in a cinema where one of the early film screenings took place. However, the theater was in the form of a train's wagon, and the screened film was an example of one of the most successful early film genres: the so-called phantom rides, wherein the scenery was shot from the front of a train, creating the impression that one is freely wandering through the landscape.⁷ Thus, the topic of the film is here linked to the leitmotif of the train, which had become a source of visual energy for early film images that often lacked their own dynamism, and, at the same time, to the context of visual attractions into which the serious technical novelty of the film had just entered.

The symbiosis between film and train influenced the static and pure-recording style of early films, and it attracted and interested the audience. The next room evoked this meaningful relationship by juxtaposing projections of early films that make use of the so-called "aesthetics of shock"—i. e. Edison's train arriving with workers on the track, the simulation of the experience of being hit by car, the sensational execution of Topsy the elephant—with the modern technology of the 3D holographic image.⁸ A 3D hologram of a period film lector provided commentary (a script based on historical sources) on these early movies. (In this room, there were

two projection zones, each displaying a different film or scenes, and the hologram.) The simulated film lector pointed out to the visitor the principles of thrilling escalation of audience expectations and the fleeting moments of visual shock in the films.

In the second projection zone, in which scenes from European avant-garde filmmakers were shown, the exhibition pointed to the first films' dependence on the train motifs and on the external creation of tension and attraction. In the 1920s railroad motifs were employed by progressive filmmakers to convince audiences of the inherent power of film images. Thus, the train became a metaphor in "film language" for the historical head-to-head contest between the film medium and the steam engine. These films were self-consciously drawing their cinematic energy from the rhythm of images, and from the possibility of using the train's motion for gradation.⁹ The final movie excerpt shown offered a satisfying culmination of the entire theme of the beginnings of moving images, a thrilling scene of a runaway train from the movie *La Roue* (Abel Gance, 1923). The scene, by various means, intensifies the movement of the train, giving the impression of a dizzying and dangerous speed on the threshold of perception. The film ran through the imaginary finish line, and the puffing train left the spectators far behind. From the technical foundations of film and the simple movement of a series of images, the exhibition here came to film's capacity to itself create motion: the film as a moving medium, a new symbol of the dynamics of modern times.

Upon exiting this first section of the exhibition, visitors had the sense of coming to a "happy end" and to the opening of a new chapter: the Czech prewar avant-garde and the ways in which it connected the dynamism of cinema with the mobility of the modern era. Much like the avant-garde installation from NaFILM's 2015 exhibition, here the visitor was again led on an exploratory mission through a poetically transformed modern world by a locomotive. The avant-garde movement related a new, deeper perception of the world to the expanded mobility of modern times. Avant-garde filmmakers represented an increasingly accessible world and appealed to spectators' perceptual adventures. They set film librettos in a night express train, on the deck of a transatlantic board, and staged journeys around the world; for them, visual experiences were the fastest means of transport.

The final theme, dedicated to animated film, was chosen primarily to show how the content of film workshops can be enriched by historical dimensions. It contextualized the creative process itself, such as basic aesthetic questions related to this type of creation. The exposition within the workshop introduced visitors to two basic traditions of animated work—the art of condensed, visual storytelling and symbolic, non-literal expression—and their juxtaposition encouraged visitors to appreciate the different expressive means of animated film.

This section on the animated film was connected to the overarching theme of motion; in particular, the installation revealed the painstaking efforts involved in depicting movement that is plausible, yet non-naturalistic. Here, the visitor was introduced to the basic Disney principles of cartoon animation and to the studio's camera techniques, such as the use of rotoscoping and the application of multiplane cameras to create the illusion of camera motion in two-dimensional images. (A multiplane camera is a static camera that makes individual frames; motion is created by drawing the divided layers of images nearer to or further from the lens. In this way, the illusion of camera motion is created by tracking shots or zooming—it is an illusion of the depth of the image and a paradoxical effect, as the camera physically does not move). In addition, several of Disney's approaches to animation were introduced to visitors via a few different ways of viewing animation, like flipbooks and lenticular prints, which enabled the visitor to animate individual phases of cartoons.

In the gallery, through which they were guided before entering the workshop room, lenticular images are used to show visitors the basic principles of animation at work. A lenticular image is a kind of 2D hologram that creates in the printed image the illusion of depth. When viewed from different angles, the image appears to move. We might consider lenticular images a kind of animation: several phases of motion are “coded” into the images and “played” by the movement of a spectator's body. We printed different animations as lenticular images and placed them on two levels, for easy comparison. The first animation followed Disney's basic rules for studio animators, and the second violated such rules. Because these animations were shown side by side, visitors could compare the “realistic” effects of Disney's rules as well as the “unnatural” effects that result from breaking them.

Once visitors had acquainted themselves with the realistic line of animated work, they were given the opportunity to try to create their own work on an animation table, but by means of a different tradition, the Czech tradition. The creative work itself introduced the technique of the Czech school of film animation, which is distinguished by its unique stylizations, formal conciseness, and unlimited creative freedom. Integral to the installation's discourse between the two approaches to film animation was a small cinema, which was not a black box but a single room separated only by a transparent curtain, with chairs and a wall projection. The program of animated movies showed the different approaches to animation in Czech film; it allowed the visitor to study the effects that the complete deviation of the animated film from the realistic prescription brings, and for him to consider the expressive power of the author's animation.¹⁰

Towards the Critical Competencies of the Visitor

First and foremost, NaFILM's exhibitions sought to overcome the purely expository and directive pedagogical mode on which both informal film education and typical film and film history museum presentations still depend. We as NaFILM's curators wanted to transfer the responsibility for the acquisition of knowledge to the visitor and to distribute the production of knowledge in a space full of stimuli, while avoiding random, non-targeted connections—and we took these as our methodological starting points. The visitors—the target group—were mainly students from elementary and secondary schools—were encouraged to have individual cognitive and interpretative responses.

In order to illicit these kinds of visitor responses, we depended on a fully-defined thematic space—or a given narrative trajectory upon which each theme is constructed as a closed unit with an ultimate conceptual point or idea. Visitors, then, were not offered ready-made knowledge but instigated by the given trajectory to follow intuitively the hints in the design of the exhibition; they followed the indicated connecting lines between individual perceptions and created a simple network of associations upon which they built the narrative line. Our goal was to channel visitors' attention through this trajectory, but to also allow for each visitor to make her own way through the narrative, to make her own conceptual leaps and thematic connections, so that, ultimately,

it would be the curators and the visitors *both* who created a “complete” knowledge or understanding of the exhibit.

Secondly, the NaFiLM project sought new ways of communicating that further deepen the possibilities of individual interpretation, which would be based on the disposition of the film medium itself and its communicative functions. It will be important to emphasize cinematic history’s inextricable ties to social history in the next phases of the project, and to continue to integrate this interwoven historical perspective into a visitor’s educational experience of the exhibition. Film, as a medium of communication, is a significant means by which to instill a generally critical attitude in visitors. In particular, the NaFiLM project seeks to use film to instigate critical thinking about historical topics, and to approach film as a narrative filter in relation to history. That is, we intend not to make use of film as merely, directly illustrative of historical reality (which is a common use of movies in history classes), but to interrogate the complex representative relationship between film and reality.

Thus, in the future permanent NaFiLM museum, the narrative frame of modern history will not be mediated by a predetermined and in many respects authoritative interpretation, but by socially and historically specific film images whose clear or concealed intentions address the spectator as an active agent of societal change. Such an approach to film images engenders an understanding of their social function and historical contingency, encouraging visitors to identify film’s many historical and social codes and conventions, and, in turn, to reflect on the constructed nature of film.¹² The primary objective of a film and media education is to present film as an instrument, rather than merely a depiction of historical events or background. In this way, the educational goals of the NaFiLM project diverge from those implied by the methods of The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (Prague), which makes use of didactic materials and multimedia projects. Ultimately, the aim of the Institute’s method is to encourage its students to critically interpret history through a comparison of film images of the same events from different periods with primary sources.¹²

The NaFiLM project takes issue with and problematizes an objective view of history by approaching historical narrative as a series of representations and constructs. This perspective brings to the story of the 20th century a

meta-narrative dimension—a most effective starting point for engaging a film museum visitor. This way of connecting film history to the history of the 20th century, linked through the dispositions of film medium, would enrich the visitor's existing educational engagement with a threefold goal:

1. By providing a constructive way of understanding the history of film as a primarily social phenomenon;
2. By allowing the visitor to discover the mediating and meaning-making role of the media and to develop the impulses necessary for critical interpretation;
3. By putting the visitor in a position in which given historical explanations are transformed by individual reflection, a reflection facilitated by the adaptation of an unmediated, more open, and short-term museum communication.

This final point is the ideal competence that the future film museum should offer to the visitor, and it should be adapted to the design and communication strategies of individual chapters in the history of Czech film. For the NaFiLM project, it remains an important curatorial principle to point briefly to specific historical uses and manifestations of the film medium, which, due to the specific situation of cinematography in historical Czechoslovakia, are situated in the sociopolitical sphere. This is why this essay reaches beyond the methods and frameworks of film studies and is engaged in an interdisciplinary discourse with the fields of contemporary history and historical didactics, which in the Czech context have effectively involved film media in recent years. The current challenge is to find space for this engagement not only in school education but also in the informal setting of historical film exposition, which, given a consistent, unified application of such a methodology presented herein, could become a unique and effective educational use of multimedia with an important participatory dimension.

This output was created within the project “Literature and Performativity,” subproject “Methods of constructive communication with visitor in film history exposition,” realized at Charles University, Faculty of Arts with financial support from the Specific University Research in 2017.

- 1 Two methodological manuals were issued for needs of teachers in Czechoslovakia in this decade: *Filmová estetická výchova (Film aesthetical education)* by Boris Jachnin in 1968 and *Materiály o filmové výuce ve školách (Materials on film education in schools)* by Marie Benešová, Dalibor Pícka and Jaroslav Vedral. Pedagogical Faculty in Prague also provided preparation courses for teachers and in 1969 the Conception of film education for elementary and secondary schools, with involvement of film clubs of youth and groups of amateur filmmakers, was published. However, in the two following decades only the unsystematic collaboration between schools and film clubs was achieved (Dvořáková, 2006). Dvořáková, Tereza. 2006. „Film jako předmět výuky a výchovy dětí a mládeže před rokem 1989“. *Cinepur* 14 (49): 20f.
- 2 Nowadays, the Framework for Film Education in Europe launched in 2015 guarantees the common background for activities in the field of formal education in EU member states. Some countries also have their own nationwide program or strategy for film education (e.g. United Kingdom, France) operated by national film institutes and focused on schools. However, in these countries several independent platforms that support schools' lessons and provide their own materials and resources also exist. <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/%20bfi-a-framework-for-film-education-brochure-2015-06-12.pdf>.
- 3 Facilitator is an inherent part of the experiential pedagogy. It leads the process of cognition and problem solving by involving various techniques so that participants, by engaging their own experience, can reach the desired outcome. The effect of the facilitator brings the dimension of interactivity into the learning process and, above all, its stimulating function can also be transferred to the effective functioning of interactive expositions.
- 4 The results of the MyStreetFilms project is an online film map of Visegrad countries. The map's content is created by amateur and professional filmmakers who joined forces to make 10-minute movies. They present many European cities from the perspective of their citizens rather than that of the tourist guides. Official website of the project: <http://mystreetfilms.cz/en>.
- 5 Official Website of the project: <http://www.freecinema.cz/> As an innovative format, it is worth mentioning the Spanish La Claqueta project, which offers film workshops for school classes aimed at developing social participation and prevention.
- 6 In this way, the permanent exhibition at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York or the entire floor dedicated to the interactive production workshops at the Shanghai Film Museum is held.

- 7 The content for the VR was developed in collaboration with two students from Middlesex University in London as part of their research linking film practice and the education of youth—the results of their work was one of the outputs of the international project *ThinkFilm* supported by Erasmus+.
- 8 *Black Diamond Express* (Thomas Edison Company, 1896), *How it feels to be run over* (Cecil Hepworth, 1900), *Electrocuting an Elephant* (Edison Manufacturing Company, 1903).
- 9 It was a reconstruction of the “Hale’s Tours of the World” with the incorporation of a film designed for its purpose (*The Hold-Up of the Rocky Mountain Express* 1906).
- 10 The projection program consists of four movies, each from one of the four traditional Czechoslovak animation film studios: *Dárek* (*The Gift*, Jiří Trnka, 1946), a cartoon movie which signified the radical deviation from descriptive use of film animation; *Uzel na kapesníku* (*The Knot in the Handkerchief*, Hermína Týrlová, 1958), an example of a puppet movie using simple objects and demanding active role of spectators’ fantasy; *Lev a písnička* (*The Lion and the Song*, Břetislav Pojar, 1959), which displays the expressive and metaphorical use of classical film puppets; and *O místo na slunci* (*A Place in the Sun*, 1959), which is an extremely concise animation and condensed depiction of a rather abstract idea.
- 11 Czechoslovak history provided a number of roles for the film medium, which could be simulated in the communication concept of the exhibition: the film helped ideologically consolidate the identity of the young and artificially created state, served the needs of totalitarian regimes and their explicit (circa 1950s) and the implicit (circa 1970s–’80s) social engineering, and actively participated in social liberalization and political revision (1960s).
- 12 These materials are freely accessible at website platform D21–Dějepis v 21. Století (D21–History in 21st Century): <http://www.dejepis21.cz/eng>. At this website, there is also available the methodical guide for teachers “Dějiny ve filmu: Film ve výuce dějepisu” (“History in Film: Film in History Classes”) from Kamil Činátl and Jaroslav Pinkas.

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**SYMBIOSIS OR
PARASITISM?
FLOATING ALONGSIDE
BIGGER FISH:
PROGRAMMKINO
LICHTBLICK E. V.**

Johanna Doyé
Alexander Schultz
René Wessel

A presentation by Programmokino Lichtblick e.V., a students' film society from the University of Paderborn that regularly curates film programs at one of the local multiplex theatres. Short introductions of the group's purpose and its 14-year history are followed by a discussion of both past and current difficulties arising from this unusual collaboration. In an ongoing negotiation of commercialism versus cultural value, the terms of the partnership are constantly being re-defined; financial as well as creative autonomy often hang in the balance. An emphasis is laid on the importance of preserving the acquisition and projection of 35 mm film prints, as well as the challenge to remaining largely independent and uncensored while also having to answer for poor ticket sales. Concluding the talk is a snapshot of Lichtblick's self-image and a renewed mission statement for the future.

Symbiosis or
Parasitism?
Floating Alongside
Bigger Fish:
Programmokino
Lichtblick e. V.
Johanna Doyé
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René Wessel

Student movie theatres with an affinity for film history and art cinema became a fixture in German culture in the 1960s but have become nearly extinct in recent decades. Owed in no small part to the monetization efforts by companies like Unifilm, which offer a preselected catalogue of home media for easily digestible, unsophisticated programming, many newer and long-established film societies now resemble second-rate theaters for lightweight arthouse fare and mainstream blockbusters, which is often coupled with a questionable projection ethos. To counter these and other issues, like deficient funding and the lack of available University resources, Paderborn's Programmokino Lichtblick e.V. established an alliance with an inner-city multiplex theatre. The following text provides a first-hand perspective on this unique cooperation, its opportunities, rewards and complications.

Introducing Lichtblick—Trying to Keep It Analogue

Programmokino Lichtblick was founded in 2003 as a registered association by students of the University of Paderborn under the guidance of the chair of film studies, Prof. Dr. Annette Brauerhoch. By the time of Lichtblick's inception, only two multiplex theatres were left in an already shrinking cinema landscape all too content with primarily screening profitable blockbusters and mainstream arthouse films. Disappointed by this narrow perspective on cinema, we at Lichtblick strived to enrich the city's film culture by presenting older classics and those films which had been mostly forgotten and were ripe for rediscovery. Following in the footsteps of traditional Programmokino culture, Lichtblick began

curating original, thematically cohesive programs, drawing on all the wealth of film history from its very beginnings until today. Another defining aspect of Lichtblick's work, besides high-conceptual and content-related standards, is the emphasis we put on the specific materiality of film; we aim to present original 35 mm material whenever possible—a principle that has both gained relevance and become increasingly difficult to uphold in the face of rapid digitization. The cultural practice of screening and experiencing films in their original format and in the historical cinema *dispositif* is an aspect of film culture we seek to preserve—even more so since most of the films we show far predate the advent of digital filmmaking.

Sadly, throughout the last decade analogue projection in regular cinemas has progressively turned into an almost extinct practice, and it has been relegated to a museum-like status. As a result of these recent developments, it has become increasingly difficult to rent 35 mm prints. Many distributors have outright destroyed their entire physical film catalogues (Beilharz 2016). This also poses huge restrictions on the range of available films, because only a small number of older films—those deemed lucrative enough or culturally important—have been digitized for cinema distribution via the DCP formats (Kothenschulte 2018). As home media like DVDs, Blu-rays and streaming services are still of much lesser quality, an overwhelming amount of film history currently gets lost to digital distribution. As a positive by-product of this, the ongoing search for 35 mm prints has created a community of private archives and collectors. This community, in addition to official archives and some remaining distributors, has kept Lichtblick's programs alive until now.

However, even if we eventually manage to locate a print that is both screen-able and shippable, we must also undergo the daunting legal task of obtaining its screening rights. The legal situations of older films tend to be messy and opaque, often forcing us to undertake extensive research. Sometimes this process leads to foreign rights holders who demand exorbitant fees, and who possess little information regarding the origin and validity of their claims to ownership. That large parts of our programs consist of relatively obscure films only magnifies these problems, which, unfortunately, have scarcely improved over time. Only through patience

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and an increased spending that borders on wastefulness are we able to acquire licenses in an official manner.

In the course of Lichtblick's existence, 34 programs have been presented so far. These approached a wide variety of themes, including Skin, Blaxploitation, Sexuality on Film, Cinemascope, Action Films, Psychoanalysis and Film, Work, Time, Comedy, Music, Paranoia, Men and Nature, Doppelgänger, and Media in the Public Sphere. In addition to its regular programs, Lichtblick hosts silent film events with live music and established the annual Student Film Night, which gives students an opportunity to present their own short films. For Lichtblick's 10th anniversary, we organized a symposium about *Programmkinoarbeit*, in general, and our particular contribution to the cinema culture in Paderborn.

Climbing the Big Fish—Cooperating with a Multiplex Theatre

From the very beginning, Lichtblick has been working together with the local multiplex theater formerly known as Cineplex Paderborn and recently rebranded as Pollux. On our end, the main reason for that cooperation was their ability to provide the technical prerequisites for an ideal screening situation. While Lichtblick is able to show home media and even 16 mm film in a well-equipped screening room at the university (a venture commissioned and overseen by Prof. Dr. Brauerhoch), the projection of 35 mm film remains a challenge. In addition to the cost of the projector itself, this would require an extensive—and very expensive—refitting of the projection booth and was therefore never deemed a realistic option.

Even so, Lichtblick wanted to open up its passion for film culture to the whole city. The willingness of the local Cineplex's late Hans Werner Renecke to kindly welcome and support us thus came as a double blessing, as it both provided us with the equipment and know-how to screen 35 mm prints (which still were the norm in 2003) and brought our curated programs to the heart of the city, right between the shopping mile and central station. Renecke, who came from a family of cinema owners and had done a lot of arthouse programming in Paderborn, really embraced the concept and gave Lichtblick complete creative control from the get-go. Our part in the cooperation was to create a film program, search for the film prints, and advertise the program through our own

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channels and means. The Cineplex provided the venue, equipment, staff, sold the tickets for us, and helped with advertising. They also paid for all films from major and independent distributors while we covered the costs of archival prints ourselves, receiving 40% of the revenue from these films as compensation.¹ In the beginning, this was a fair deal, but, over the years, we unfortunately had to screen more and more prints from archives due to the fact that the major distributors had reduced their catalogues. This resulted in an immense increase of costs on our end—but more on that later.

Always having had free rein over the themes and films for our programs gave birth to some interesting scenarios at the Cineplex, such as our nightly 35 mm screening of an infamous Italian cannibal epic running parallel to the newest superhero flick. Other controversial titles, like Ken Russel's *The Devils* (1971) and even a pairing of 1970s hardcore porn films, had been duly accepted. If a film was dismissed, it was always due to scheduling difficulties. In spite of the many obstacles we faced, we fulfilled our ambitions of revitalizing the cinema culture in Paderborn. At best, we were even able to share our vision with more than a handful of fellow film enthusiasts and, sporadically, with invited guests, including filmmakers Claudia Richarz and Jonas Rothlaender and film journalist Martin Beine.

Since 2003, we have played one program per semester, one film per week, which resulted in about 12–15 films per program. In the beginning, our films were screened on both Mondays and Tuesdays at 8 p.m., but after subpar audience turnouts, the Tuesday screening was cut. In 2016/2017, the Cineplex was renovated and became the Pollux, and we were forced to completely re-negotiate our terms. These now include an added financial guarantee for the films booked by the theatre, which requires us to pay the difference between the prints' price and ticket sales.

Lichtblick has always been financially dependent on external sponsors. Currently, we receive regular funding from the University of Paderborn, the AStA (a student government organization), and the City of Paderborn. However, what little we earn from screenings comes nowhere close to covering the costs of our programs. The financial situation is looking increasingly dire, especially when attendance rates are dwindling.

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We feel that our struggles reflect an ongoing conflict between commercialism and cultural value. On the one hand, we are still allowed to present daring and unusual programs in the polished Pollux venue, but, on the other hand, these are expected to sell just as well as the latest blockbuster or the newest life-affirming French culture-clash comedy. Our idea of compromise has been to present a popular classic or a cult film every now and then. For example, we have established one specific *Wunschfilm* screening per year that allows the audience to vote for the film to be shown several weeks in advance. Naturally, this method privileges films like *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, 1994) or *The Big Lebowski* (Joel and Ethan Coen, 1998), which indeed tend to generate quite a few ticket sales. On the technical side, we are also facing new challenges. As a result of the recent renovations, only one of previously three 35 mm projectors remains at the Pollux. The process of re-installing and re-fitting the projector to the new cinema hall was slow and arduous. Important utensils like lenses and masks necessary for appropriate projection were missing, and only minimal efforts were made to provide them in time. During the summer term of 2017 we had to show films with the regular aspect ratio of 1.85:1 in their full aperture of 1.37:1, a process that destroyed the composition of the images and greatly impeded the quality of the viewing experience.

Adding to the conflict between cultural and monetary motives, the revamped Pollux has increased ticket prices to reflect their investment in luxurious seats, extensive food menus, and other attractive features.² This may completely change the theatre's customer profile, which was formerly dominated by students and an overall younger demographic. While Lichtblick traditionally tends to draw older audiences as well, the current drift towards an event-oriented, premium enterprise is much less compatible with our own self-image.

To conclude this brief history, one might say that we have been spoiled by an impeccable 14-year cooperation, but are now finally facing the consequences of corporate standardization and a drastically changing business model. All things considered, it is difficult to try and determine whom the cooperation benefits more. For one, it sometimes feels as though our efforts are gauged primarily on the basis of economically-sustainable results, and that there is a waning appreciation for the cultural value Lichtblick provides to both

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the theater and to Paderborn, as a whole. We are aware that this rationalization may eventually end our cooperation with the Pollux, effectively demoting us to the status of a parasite abusing the cinema's infrastructure and draining its finances. Conversely, it is just as difficult to determine the impact of our programs for the Pollux's visibility and prestige, i. e. the laurels of preserving film culture. Who would be the actual parasite in this constellation?

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Floating Onwards—Self-Image and Outlook

The aim is to keep our idea of Programmokino alive. This seems even more vital and urgent to us in an age where there is an ever-increasing metastatic spread of so-called “arthouse” programming within fully-commercial business ventures.³ Benefiting from an outward appearance of high-brow cinematic pleasure, these screenings neither care for the whole breadth and depth of film history, nor do they ever risk burning themselves with any films beyond the mild-mannered status quo of middle-class complacency.

On the other end of the spectrum, most serious cinematic adventures seem to have drifted towards the festival circuit. While on its own this is a welcome development, the loss of a constant and regular flow of film curation beyond the museum and the festival circuit is felt deeply by us, and we would love to keep it going in a more accessible public sphere.

While it is clear to us that we will probably never bring our own radical concept of movie-going back to the masses, we are still hoping that new avenues might open up. Our placement within the multiplex structure remains an important part of the mission and we are fighting hard to keep it a reality, not unlike Alexander Kluge's independent cultural programmes that have managed to persist for 30 years as contrasting heterotopias embedded in German private television, creating oases in improbable places.⁴ After all, the future also holds many possibilities: as the rekindled usage of film stock and the increased interest in analogue film events like 70 mm screenings prevail, we hope to win over some of the uninitiated.

- 1 Usually, about half of our programs consist of prints gathered from local and foreign film archives, while the rest is derived from commercial distributors.
- 2 In 2016 the cinema had two price categories. A regular ticket was EUR 6.50 (EUR 5.70 for students) and a ticket for the higher price category Loge was EUR 7.50. Now they have three categories: Parkett (EUR 9.00/8.00 for students), Loge (EUR 10.50/9.50 for students) and Lux-Loge (EUR 13.00/no reduction). For screenings in cooperation like ours prices are as follows: Parkett EUR 7.00, Loge EUR 9.00, Lux-Loge EUR 13.00. So, for students who buy the lowest price category for one of our screenings the price increased by nearly 19 percent.
- 3 Looking, for instance, at the massive revenue of films like *Intouchables* (Olivier Nakache, Éric Toledano, 2011) and *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au Bon Dieu?* (Philippe de Chauveron, 2014), it seems logical that multiplex theatres would try to co-opt the arthouse marketplace.
- 4 Kluge has produced over 3000 programmes between 1988 and 2018 via the *dctp* (Development Company for Television Program), occupying legally obligated slots for independent cultural programmes in some of the biggest private German TV stations, most notably *RTL* and *Sat. 1*. The licence has not been renewed in 2018, but the *dctp* maintains an active online presence, providing many of the interviews originally broadcasted on television: <https://www.dctp.tv>. Accessed 31 October 2018. For further information: Schulte, Christian and Siebers, Winfried (eds.) (2002), *Kluges Fernsehen. Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag (Edition Suhrkamp 2244).

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BETWEEN HAPTICS AND INTERFERENCE:

Wilke
Bitter

THE CHALLENGING STATE OF DOCUMENTARIES

Alongside recent political revolutions, distinct media revolutions have taken place: digital imagery as a means of communication played a leading role in the political turmoil of the Arab Spring. This essay examines a documentary about the political movements present in the Arab Spring, Peter Snowden's *The Uprising*, in order to prove that digital infrastructures, their intrinsic logic of capacity management, and their frequent use by social media users, alter the haptic dimensions of perceptions. I will contrast this film with an analysis of Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's *Zidane, un portrait du 21e siècle (Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait)*, in which I outline its true haptic visuality and the telling characteristics of film materiality. So that I might analyze the materialist impact on the two films' imagery and messages based on their distinctive traits between analogue and digital, the theoretical perspectives of Laura Marks and Maurice Merleau-Ponty on perception and phenomenology are applied.

Introduction

Encountering moving images that are not digital—nowadays, a rare experience. Whenever we see the lure of moving images' flickering lights on a pixelated screen, it is most likely transported to our receiving end via a digital infrastructure. But as Friedrich Kittler has pointed out, data passing any semantic signifier bottleneck is filtered and rendered altered, adjusting its very materiality (Kittler 1986: 12). So what role does the cataclysmic infrastructural changes of digitization play for the documentary film, the one film genre that is most readily associated with the special faculty of portraying reality?

While the differences between analogue and digital materialities and their sensuous characteristics have not been entirely uncharted, this essay will draw on the fresh relevance raised by the quickly expanding ubiquity of digital moving imagery. Digital film has reached every societal niche. It is part of communication, vital for social engagements and movements. These contemporary functions of moving images will be of empirical interest for the later portion of this work. Firstly, however, this essay will outline its analytical equipment for interrogating documentary materialities, borrowed from three authors: Bill Nichols, Laura Marks, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I will begin by briefly sketching Nichols's history of documentary films, which locates them in the avant-garde scene as "late" as the 1920s. In his narrative, he notes very specific characteristics of the genre that only then spawned filmmaking practices such as fragmentation and

juxtapositioning. Then, I will outline the thoughts of Laura Marks and Maurice Merleau-Ponty on, respectively, haptic visualities of moving images and phenomenological reception. The latter will provide me with a theoretical foundation from which to draw conclusions on the empirical portion of this essay. To this end, I will contrast Peter Snowdon's documentary *Uprising* (Belgium and UK, 2013), a haunting set of abstracted digital sequences, with Douglas Gordon's and Philippe Parreno's documentary *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* (France, 2006, originally titled *Zidane, un portrait du 21e siècle*) a film that induces intense bodily experiences with the use of haptic dimensions. These two documentaries, which I consider avant-garde given Nichols's understanding (elaborated below), exemplify digital image infrastructures' effects on, and at times drastic alteration of, the films' possible viewing experiences.

Nichols questions the typical film historian's narrative of the documentary tradition, which would trace it all the way back to the Lumière brothers' 1895 film pioneering ventures (Nichols 2001: 581), and instead argues that the advent and the rise of the documentary film genre's radical potential can be located in a movement of avant-garde filmmakers in the 1920s and 1930s. This movement, according to Nichols, already possessed traits of sophisticated filmmaking traditions like photographic realism and narrative structures (ibid. 2001: 586). What was new was the invention of new methods that emerged from the modernist consciousness of the film form and social intent—which were apparent in the films' immanent rhetorical strategies (ibid.: 591, 596). These narrative novelties, then, Nichols argues, became of prime interest for both nation-state policymakers and their opponents in the early 1930s, as they both utilized the radical persuasive power of the documentary for political gains (ibid.: 582, 602; Nichols 2001a: 87). As Nichols argues, to this day documentary authors (un)consciously rely on disregarded avant-garde filmmaking staples by, for example, using imagery as part of the narrative core of documentary. Furthermore, devices such as alienation (or “*Verfremdung*” in German, “*ostranenie*” in Russian), fragmentation and abstraction renegotiate dimensions of a shared reality (Nichols 2001: 594; Nichols 2001a: 89). These narrative novelties, according to Nichols, empower documentary films, allowing them to manipulate space

and time via poetical juxtapositioning and to draw on the realities represented (Nichols 2001: 595; Nichols 2001a: 88).

Marks's Haptics and Merleau-Ponty's Quality

More recently, Laura Marks utilizes the simple concept of indexicality as a material-based means for viewing films and defines haptic experience as “the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies” (Marks 2002: 2). Reinventing the thoughts of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Marks's concept of haptics comprises visual, tactile, and auditory recognition of the world, but without leaving out the notion of optical perception, the sight of objects from a distance (ibid.: xii). Marks argues that haptic visuality forms a critical approach by enabling viewers to analyze ideas of disembodied vision, namely digital representations (ibid.: xiii). She herself uses this toolset of visualities to analyze works of analogue video artists. Largely in agreement with Nichols about the origins of documenting images, Laura Marks furthermore adds that the early day cinema of “attractions” (Gunning 2006: 382) was very much a haptic one, evoking bodily reactions fitting to the context of fairs and amusement parks (Marks 2002: 7). Subsequently, I will try and update Marks's notion of haptics in the context of an ever-present moving-image media due to the contemporary ubiquity of digital video—a ubiquity that has become a political force, as portrayed in Snowdon's *Uprising*. Thus, this essay will critically examine Marks's notion that symbolization as one of the aforementioned outcomes of digital film procedures and distribution, “which includes language, is not a rupture with sensuous perception but exists on a continuum with it” (ibid.: x).

For this essay, combining Marks's approach with a discrete set of phenomenological insights from Maurice Merleau-Ponty about the perceptibility of objects' qualities will enable me to examine the interference and wear specific to digitally compressed imagery, which is inflicted on the moving image via a digital infrastructure that uses compression. Haptic visuality, Marks elaborates, stands on the forefront of her epistemology of “embodied vision.” It involves consciously moving along on a surface of the perceived object without penetrating it nor readily applying an interpretation, aiming to defy the common notion of a “mastering” gaze (Marks 2002: xiii, xvii).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theorems on the perception of "quality" join Marks's thoughts, adding further insights to the notion of indexical sensation, and empowering sensing subjects to understand meanings in social or material configurations. Although it is fundamentally never able to fully grasp an object's being and *quality*, human perception, Merleau-Ponty argues, can to a certain extent perceive its qualities *on display*, establishing ephemeral contact with the object in question (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 5). Hailing from his phenomenological approach to perception, Merleau-Ponty assumes the impossibility of a thorough, reality-representing pure sensation: an undifferentiated, punctual and impact-like sensing of a phenomenon by a human being due to his situatedness in the same "spatiotemporal constellation," or the same world (ibid.: 4). Our perception, in Merleau-Ponty's terms, is nevertheless open to perceiving rich meanings from the outside world. However, these are narrowed down to delimitations, or perceptual borders, due to our socialized perception channels. Focusing on differences or contrasting colors, for example, are processes that simplify, of course, for no sensation could in general be isolated from the surrounding constellation (ibid.: 4). Differentiating and drawing lines, then, already means applying meaning, bringing the sensing entity no closer to the actual quality of an object (ibid.: 7). Meaning in this context is a perceived quality of significance to the perceiving subject, and it has to be understood in contrast to Marks's deferral of interpretation when perceiving surface qualities.

As to what images would further bodily response through haptics, Marks outlines the requirements for a situation where "embodied vision" is conceivable. Her work opposes the paradigm of a subjectively-detached perspectivity and abstraction present in the optical representation techniques of Western Art, which date back to the Enlightenment Era. Rather, she draws on the example of video artists' work and how their haptic imagery intentionally shows imperfection, like low-contrast ratios, decay, movement that is too quick, and a focus that is too undetermined to deliver discernible images (Marks 2002: 9). But rather than dismissing the optical perception as inferior for its symbolizing, categorizing impetus, Marks argues that only a corresponding perception of both optical and haptic, an embodied

perception rich in experience, is a satisfying perception (Marks 2002: 10).

Problems for Digital Haptics: Loss of Indexicality?

Marks argues that film and its electro-magnetic successor video provide a direct, phenomena-representing, indexical link to the outer world. Whether it be the photoreactive material of film or wavelengths of light that alter the state of electrons on the video tape, their representation of the outer world shows a directly-translated analogy to the constitution of light that is presented to it. This light is, of course, more or less obstructed or narrowed by the specificities of the device itself, like lens, aperture and focal length (Marks 2002: 148). Considering the specificities of the image-taking processes of digital cameras, Marks detects an element of indirectness: the chip-based symbolization of the outer world turns objects reflecting light into a binary code to be stored in a database. This “deactualizes” photographic images into information items (ibid.: 149). Merleau-Ponty’s terms respond to this: the symbolization of outer-world impressions, in the same way that they are represented through language, necessarily render the entity’s representation ambivalent, even confusing (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 3). Accordingly, digital cameras seek to capture a factual perception because they are taught by engineering processes to create object representations most fitting for (human) viewers. Their goal, capturing actuality, is something that in the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty is virtually impossible, due to the aforementioned problem that only the apparent *qualities* of a spatiotemporal configuration offer themselves to perception, avoiding the *pure* sensation (ibid.: 4).

To Marks, the symbolizing, mathematically rule-driven perception of a digital camera opposes the analogous correspondence with the world of film and video (Marks 2002: 149). A digital camera’s perceptual “thoughtfulness,” Marks argues, being limited to this symbolizing viewing of the outer world of light, *precedes* its recording processes (ibid.). Digital vision thus falls for, as Merleau-Ponty would put it, the “experience error”; with its perceptual prejudice, which is due to the generalizing range-restriction of its perception, digital vision amounts to a faulty digital *a priori* (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 5).

Despite these problems, Marks refuses to deny digital imagery a haptic dimension, since, although it does not respond analogously to outer-world objects in an indexical way, “the digital image relies for its existence on analog processes and on the fundamental interconnectedness of subatomic particles” (Marks 2002: 174). Drawing on her experience of temporary digital-imagery art, Marks argues that—parallel to globalizing, diffuse social developments—digital images lost their bodies, but gained new, ever-changing ones. Devoid of a functionality that represents the outer world directly, such images can no longer be indexical in a direct way but become flexible and relevant due to their mutability. This endows digital imagery with a socially performative quality: its intrinsic immediacy and flexibility constitute a link to actual social dynamics and responsibilities in the world (Marks 2002: 156, 152). Nevertheless, and despite the efforts of artists to incorporate digital specificities, like live “interchangeability” experiments and intentionally-produced interference, Marks admits that the loss of indexicality is felt severely vis-à-vis the individual quality perception of tactile, haptic images (Marks 2002: 158).

In an attempt to restore digital media’s theoretical indexicality, Marks argues for the materialistic traceability of electrons on a subatomic level, or the binary information that the images are themselves comprised of in the database storages (Marks 2002: 163): “Although it no longer bears an analog relationship to its initial object, the digital image relies for its existence on analog processes and on the fundamental interconnectedness of subatomic particles” (ibid.: 174). In the following chapter, by pointing out specific problems of digital image interferences, I will contest Marks’s notion that digital imagery retain their haptic visuality through their specific immediacy. Marks’s own words deliver my vantage point here: digitization “breaks the analogical relationship between object and image, henceforth rendered as information” (ibid.: 171).

Interferences, Shattering

When considering digital interferences, the effects of digital image rendering and compression are among the prime aspects of examination. Despite present days’ rapid technological leaps to ubiquitous high-definition video and more efficient and less *lossy* compression standards, digital imagery’s

internal logic of database-bound records of information that represent outer-world phenomena—such as light reflecting objects in a symbolized, translated and detached way—still applies. Aligning with the aforementioned function of optical representations, it seems as though, due to the mathematical origin of digital imagery, everything perceivable is predetermined by the control and rules of the compression algorithms. Broadly speaking, these algorithms work in two ways: whilst the reduction of *redundant* visual information only eliminates repeated or unnecessary image components and only slightly alters the capacity needed for the images, *lossy* compression techniques delete *irrelevant* information. The choices of compression profiles are most likely based on presumptions about the conditions of reception and the capacities of the digital infrastructure ahead (Chao 2016: 16). In the most common situation, in which this infrastructure is limited due to physical storage capacities or network restrictions, the algorithms working in *lossy* compression methods decide more or less which image components are most crucial for the reception on the receiving end (ibid.).

In the context of digital compression, prevailing decisions concern movement, a key aspect for film or video work in the virtual sphere. In *lossy* compression, if a movement in the image takes place in front of an unmoving or just slightly moving background, the components of the background are transported just once and recycled in the moments following (Barni 2006: 317). This “freezing” of the background—part of the *lossy* compression algorithm mode known as “two-dimensional shape coding”—mostly goes unnoticed and serves its purpose, but sometimes not, especially given closer examination. The ghostly stillness of the background is sometimes visibly reluctant to receive new movement. It vivisects image layers from each other, framing the already framed, distancing movement and stillness. This distancing removes the imagery further away from the viewers’ perception, creating a chasm not easily transgressed for the haptic visuality using the media’s materiality of surface, as Marks envisioned. By freezing background images, these algorithms mechanically prevent connected moving images from intermingling and inducing haptic visuality.

Interestingly, what the compression process hereby achieves is the opposite of its mission of representing reality for human perceptions in capacity-reduced circumstances

and really symbolizes a kind of “[...] abstraction of communication into information, [which] is an attempt to hold mortality at bay” (Marks 2002: xi). This is not unlike the problems of human perception in general, which is unable to perceive the *pure* impression as the sum of fore- and background; following Merleau-Ponty, this furthers the inconceivability of an impression delivered by digital imagery (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 4).

Another visible effect of digital compression is that it causes the loss of smoothness, particularly affecting dark image components. While it preserves most of the outlining features on the images’ most delineating shapes, digital compression reduces the count of colors in an image—another key method for reducing capacity consumption in digital infrastructures. But, by reducing color information, it expands the range of image characteristics the remaining colors need. This renders image areas of little contrast a blunt compilation of approximated, enlarged color squares, which remotely resemble posterization or the “banding” effects known from Pop Art. This effect of the so-called “blocking artefacts” assemblages invading digital imagery can be subsumed under the term “visible compression artefacts,” which vary in their visible manifestations greatly due to capacity restrictions (Dinh/Patry 2006). The reduction of color adds to the aforementioned distancing effects of the “two-dimensional shape coding” and renders further components of the imagery symbolized, cool to the perceptual touch. The combined effect resembles mosaic floor tiles.

In contrast is the so called “mosquito artefact” of *lossy* compression techniques, which affect well-lit, high-contrast image components: hovering around sharp contrasting transitions—for example, a dark shape in front of a plain, light colored background—a “peppering” appears. Whenever the foreground shape then commences movement, the “mosquitos,” superimposed on the background, haunt the foreground shape (Dinh/Patry 2006). Sometimes, as in the case with human bodies, the “mosquitos” can also appear inside of shapes that are sharply outlined, giving to the shape a hazy effect. The following assessments of two avant-garde documentaries, *The Uprising* and *Zidane*, show just what devastating effects digital interference has.

Uprising: Fragments of Change

Peter Snowden's 2013 documentary *The Uprising* follows several protest movements around the insurrections of the so-called Arab Spring, showing short episodes devoid of spoken narratives. His film comprises footage almost entirely found on social media sites like YouTube and Facebook, as the list of references in the movie's credit roll shows. The documentary's footage and the materiality spawning from it thus is in close connection to the events themselves: the movements roughly subsumed under the term "Arab Spring" were highly dependent on the infrastructure of social media sites and their digital media documenting functions (Beaumont 2011). The documentary begins with an ominous title card, which reads: "The revolution that this movie imagines is based on several real revolutions." It uses no narrative devices except for title cards that count down from "7 days ago" to "yesterday" and audio-visual editing, which intermingles the sequences and adds a subtle musical ambiance.

Throughout the film it becomes apparent that, in the vast range of footage, the most pivotal and/or graphic scenes have been subject to substantial deterioration in their digital materiality. Each item of footage was altered every time the video shorts were sent, received, uploaded, downloaded, and, finally, incorporated in Snowden's feature-length film. Thus, the effects of the compression algorithms mentioned above and, we might reasonably assume, numerous other sources of interference weighed on the images—and they affected most those sequences that presumably added the highest amount of political energy to the insurgencies. For instance, in the first third of the film—in the "5 days ago" collection of sequences—as a resident in Homs, Syria awaits the inevitable first bomb blast, he films a gay blue sky, commenting on the good weather. But in the film, the colorfulness of the scenery is shattered in the fashion of the "banding" effects of color reduction, rendering the images abstracted. Also, in the following "4 days ago" collection of sequences, a recording of a man in soldiers' clothing satirically ranting (as the subtitles suggest) is even more visually fragmented, presumably because his words have been shared over manifold digital distributions. Speaking out must have, once again, been the key ingredient in people's motivation to repeatedly distribute recordings like that one. The same must have been the case for my following example from sequence collection "3 days

ago”: an equally distorted sequence (**Fig. 1**) shows a man in an empty Tunisian square at night, standing alone, shouting out to the residents. While his voice and the hushed comments of the inhabitants filming from above are still clearly audible, the outlines of the big housing blocks in front of the darkness scatter fragments into the nighttime street and the dark trees, creating an unworldly image.

Due to the loss of detail and color accuracy, a crowd of thousands of protesters merge with the background in one of the last sequences of *Uprising* (**Fig. 2**), showing the overwhelmed capacities of digital recording and harsh renderings of compression algorithms. Most likely related to the “two-dimensional shape coding” effect, which dissects foreground from background, many of the sequences in *Uprising* also appear to be choppy, consisting of a low frame rate. This renders movements incomplete and sometimes hauntingly incoherent. In one scene from the “5 days ago” sequence, for instance, a rushing outburst of people are running across a square when a heavily armed guard suddenly appears in full sight, without frames in which he or she is seen entering. Likewise, in the “3 days ago” assemblage, young men enter a deserted mansion in a scene that has very clear imagery and crisp colors, but very choppy movement representation. This choppy movement may not be caused solely by the repeated compression processes, but also by the recording device’s particular type of selective information databasing, as mentioned by Marks (Marks 2002: 148).

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Fig. 1
Peter Snowdon,
The Uprising,
2013. Screenshot
from DVD.
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Fig. 2
Peter Snowdon,
The Uprising,
2013. Screenshot
from DVD.
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Zidane: A Melancholic Pitch

Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's 2006 documentary *Zidane—A 21st Century Portrait* follows famous football player Zinedine Zidane through the entire duration of one of his most prolific matches, but without attempting to show the actions that motivate the other players. The viewer will not be able to make any game-related sense out of what can be seen in the film due to the fact that the documentary almost relentlessly singles out Zidane and his every move. Besides this, the materiality of the documentary also surprises, since the bulk of its footage is shot on 35 mm film, giving the movements, due to the lower framerate, an uncommon, almost inanimate, cinematic look. The color grading in these analogue shots (**Fig. 3**) is anemic. Together with the mostly minor-key music, the audio-visual editing creates a bleakness that starkly opposes a handful of intercut sequences of digital TV-broadcasting footage with the common TV overview angle (**Fig. 4**). This familiar-looking TV footage is often abruptly cropped and blown up, altered in speed, replayed with heightened color saturation, and includes excited, live commentary.

As the film progresses, there is less shifting between the two origins of footage. This is accompanied by the score continuing to outline a specific emotional tone of melancholy. The lingering gaze on Zidane becomes increasingly conspicuous as it traces him from different angles and distances and focuses on different body parts, as if slowly finding out what to look for (Marks 2002: 7). The openness of these shots renders the viewer impressionable, providing

open space to receive thoughts; except for a few indistinct mutterings, Zidane's statements frequently enter the images as subtitles, their content set to the subtle sounds of children playing football. In his muttered remarks, Zidane reflects on time, the game, and life. This alternating of distance and closeness creates in the viewer a dynamism of physical relatedness; in Marks's terms, the emerging intimacy here takes turns with the tension of distance (ibid.: 3).

Another kind of shot affects the viewer in a similar way: a clear sight of Zidane's body and his every move in clear focus, sometimes accompanied by a deep focus on the whole stadium, is interchanged with motion blur, an imperfect focus and visible grain caused by darkness. Following the haptic theory of Marks, this changing imagery of optical perfection and imperfection—both types being interdependent

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Fig. 3
Douglas Gordon,
Philippe Parreno,
*Zidane: A 21st
Century Portrait*,
2006. Screenshot
from DVD.
© Universal
International



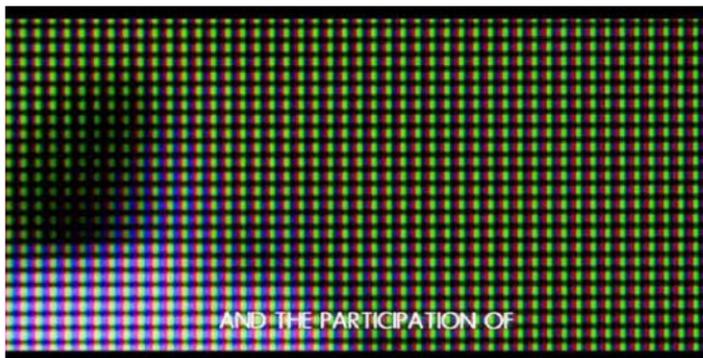
Fig. 4
Douglas Gordon,
Philippe Parreno,
*Zidane: A 21st
Century Portrait*,
2006. Screenshot
from DVD.
© Universal
International

and interconnected—haptically draws in the viewer with their animate unrest (Ibid.: xvi, 14). A sequence that begins by showing Zidane's game-related movements and then turns to focusing on his head and his gaze establishes a personal contact with the player. When this contact is again cut off by the intercut digital overview images, the viewer realizes Zidane's untouchable position. The sometimes unbearably heavy digital interference that the TV broadcast images reveal corroborates this notion of materiality-induced distancing. By haptically approaching the player while optically creating distance from him, the film engenders in the viewer the emotions of unrest and worry. The film's materiality traces an immersive psychogram of deep personal trouble, encapsulated in the impenetrable imagery of the documentary's intro and ending (Fig. 5), a psychedelically hypnotizing magnification on the red, yellow and blue pixels of a screen, most likely showing football game interactions.

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Materialities of Uprising and Zidane, Compared

The following chapter will compare the roles the materialities play in both Snowdon's *Uprising* and Gordon and Parreno's *Zidane*, considering their special genre-typical characteristics as documentaries, and frequently regarded as avant-garde. The filmmakers' decisions regarding the production schematics, especially their choices of footage for these two films, could not have been more different. *Zidane* consists mostly of meticulously-planned shots on film from 17 film cameras positioned around the football pitch, creating an almost homogenic audio-visual experience. This initially creates an emotional response within the viewer, which then is crushed by the intercut digital imagery. *Uprising*, on the other hand, is comprised of entirely found clips from social media sites like YouTube, which are homogenic only in their presumed civilian authors' intentions. These could be to document political upheavals as they were happening and to record them as civilians who themselves are more or less actively situated in these events. As is evident from his feature-length film, Snowdon was not afraid of exposing the viewer to short and messy imageries. The film's images show infrastructural damage; they were subjected to *lossy* compression techniques when copied, shared, uploaded and downloaded numerous times. As shown above, *Uprising's* materiality no longer functions in the form of haptic visuality,



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Fig. 5

Douglas Gordon,
Philippe Parreno,
*Zidane: A 21st
Century Portrait*,
2006. Screenshot
from DVD.

© Universal
International

as envisioned by Marks. The fracturing, coloring and disfiguring manipulations of compression's symbolizing algorithms have created a barrier of distance between viewer and material, rendering the surface of the moving images inaccessible. While this mode of indexicality no longer works, it seems to have generated quite a different, narratively-informed one, which I will soon outline.

First, however, let us return to *Zidane*. *Zidane* serves as a prime example for the immersive haptic visuality (as outlined by Marks) as there is no escaping the film's intense, intimacy-inducing montage of distance and closeness, sharp focus and blur. This is largely due to the film's indexical quality, which was created by the analogue footage's direct imprint by light reflecting the real world. Creating the aforementioned interruption of immersion, this directness is regularly interrupted by the intercut scenes of traditional TV broadcasting. By juxtapositioning very different sets of materialities, *Zidane* thus also displays one of the characteristics outlined by Nichols of an avant-garde film and documentary. In this regard, *Zidane* is similar to Snowdon's *Uprising*: by *not* creating a poetic relation to a distinct common background, Snowdon places distant localities next to each other, melting them into one via their mutual vibrant social energies. Akin to Nichols's findings, these juxtapositioning stylistic devices in the two avant-garde documentaries seek to immerse the viewer, a process which is reinforced in *Zidane* by its fragmented appearance (Nichols 2001: 593). For example, in the football player's haptically-gripping presence severed from its usual context and in his movements devoid of the familiar meaning of football game and rules, the starring

football player serves as an ideal canvas of the viewer's emotional projection.

The immersion of *Uprising*, however, is challenged due to its absent haptic visuality. Its surface quality literally fragmented by the symbolizations of compression algorithms, the only mode of immersion in *Uprising* is nevertheless a persuasive one. Symbolized as sequences of a seemingly infinite source, the *apparent* quality (in Merleau-Ponty's terms) is its bearing of socially relevant information. Due to the aforementioned damage that the most decisive sequences in *Uprising* had to endure, their superficial indexicality is lost—in spite of Marks' arguments that it immortally exists on the subatomic level (Marks 2002: 163). In other words, the footage's relation to reality is severed because it is, in an ongoing way, *becoming severed*; its enduring entanglement in sharing processes continues to abstract its imagery. These most shared, most important sequences lose their haptic indexicality but gain a new significance, a new, purely-narrative quality, through their usedness and wear—a patina (Tsivian 1994: 105).

This notion of a narratively-active *wear* on materialities has been explored by film historian Yuri Tsivian, who examined the reception of early Russian cinema (early 1900s to 1920s) with regards to a "semiotics of interference." Mechanical interference then was an everyday phenomenon to be received by audiences in the pioneering era of film in Russia, even understood widely by the viewers as an ingredient of the cinema. Films' fragile materiality and the soviet centrifugal distribution system, Tsivian argues, rendered the image qualities characteristically altered, with a patina. Referring to scratches and the entire breaking down of a film as perceivable "metacinematic elements," Tsivian argues that materiality is critically important for the reception process. In certain cases, even, these "metacinematic elements" are thought to expand the diegetic world by adding another dimension of meaning. Recurring, side and altitude-shifting scratches, for example, led the viewers of one film to believe that scenes were struck by rain, an unintentional effect that was later incorporated actively by a few experimentalist filmmakers (Tsivian 1994: 105, 113).

Uprising's footage could only exist in its apparent state because of its political salience and its repeated transmission via digitized communication infrastructures. These

infrastructures' limitations—their symbolizing characteristics that appear in digital wear of *lossy* compression artifacts—may in fact prove to be a narrating device unanticipated by its creators. That is, the videos serve the complex function of a communication arena that establishes (semi)publicity, and their digital interference now operates as a code of radical messages, a set of distorting but meaningful reverberations. The imagery's arrangement in Snowdon's work, now reminiscent of a video essay, emancipated it from this materialistic aspect of avant-garde characteristics (as listed by Nichols)—its loss of haptics proving to be irrelevant for the radical potential of documentaries.

Conclusion

Haptic visuality, as conceptualized by Laura Marks, is a unique component of perceptive quality that is, according to her, possible to encounter in the reception of film, regardless of its materiality. However, as I've shown in my analysis of Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's 2006 documentary *Zidane—A 21st Century Portrait* and, as a contrasting canvas on which to outline the effects of digital interference, Peter Snowdon's 2013 documentary *Uprising*, digital infrastructures, their intrinsic logic of capacity management, and their frequent use by social media users render haptic dimensions of perceptions damaged and reduced. Interestingly, this damage, in its specificity, may well be a telling one. Aesthetically frozen, haptically-diminished imageries would be an acceptable downside of a democratized mobility and availability of image recording through thorough diffusion of digital image recording devices like mobile phones. In the process, critical political messages are rendered even more harrowing.

The value and authoritative position of a footage's origin vanishes (Marks 2002: 151), making recording situations exponentially more flexible, and altering human experience of the moving image altogether. Such a phenomenon, in my view, demands further research with regards to digital infrastructure such as YouTube and Facebook. As Peter Snowdon's 2013 documentary *Uprising* shows, digital footage and its materiality-spawning form can only be seen in close connection to the events themselves, as the movements subsumed under the term Arab Spring were highly dependent on the infrastructure of social media sites (Beaumont 2011). His stylistic approach to rearranging and editing multilocality-based

events mirrors the 1970s new documentarists' movement, wherein the avant-garde heritage of differentiating subjectivities resurfaced (Nichols 2001: 608).

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BIOGRAPHIES

Wilke Bitter graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Media Sciences, Sociology and Political Studies from the University of Trier in 2014. Since then, he has worked in a media pedagogical initiative and as a freelance journalist in Frankfurt, Hessen, covering culture and education, and studied abroad for one term at Aberystwyth University in Wales, UK. He is currently writing his master's thesis in Theatre, Film and Media Studies at Goethe-University Frankfurt, focusing on and dissecting the ethical problems of media infrastructure theory and cultures.

Josephine Diecke, Bachelor of Arts in Film Studies and French Philology from the Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz (2013), “International Master of Arts in Audiovisual and Cinema Studies” at Goethe-University Frankfurt (2016), graduated with a master's thesis on the theoretical, practical and ethical aspects of film restoration. Her current research in the SNSF Project FilmColors. Technologies, Cultures, Institutions at the University of Zurich focuses on the contextualization of historical film color processes in selected cultural and socio-political frameworks from the 1940s onwards. The research work is integrated regularly in Prof. Barbara Flückiger's Timeline of Historical Film Colors. She is also a member of the editorial staff of the CINEMA Jahrbuch.

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Programmokino Lichtblick e.V. is an association founded in 2003 by students of the University of Paderborn. Its goal is to promote cinema and film culture in Paderborn by curating original programs of independent films, cult films, and classics that are typically neglected by the city's two big multiplex cinemas. One of these, the “Cineplex”, has been *Lichtblick's* cooperative partner right from the project's start, allowing film history to be brought back to the big screen. Over the years, multiple generations of students have gathered practical experiences in various fields pertaining to cinema, their collective efforts so far resulting in 34 programs covering all kinds of topics and films.

Adriane Meusch is a MA student in “Filmkultur–Archiving, Programming, Presenting” at Goethe-University Frankfurt and has studied in Bayreuth, Delhi and Brno. Her thesis is dedicated to the history of municipal cinemas and their way of programming. She has organized analogue film workshops and is an active member of a mobile cinema club in Nuremberg.

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