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Editorial NECSUS

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The Spring 2022 issue of NECSUS has come together in the shadow of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, ongoing since 24 February 2022 and with no clear end in sight at the time of writing. Described by Western media as an armed conflict on European soil on a scale and impact not seen since World War II (a momentous narrative that tends to omit the drawn-out Balkan wars of the 1990s and the precedent of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014), the story of the conflict, and its local and global impact are unfolding through a dense flow of video-linked images and incessant social media feeds. Once more, obfuscation and misinformation are part of an arsenal of rhetorical strategies of war, but informal networks of communication are likewise feeding resistance, and helping connect displaced individuals and communities in an ever-shifting situation. We at NECSUS want to express our solidarity with Ukraine, and particularly with the individuals and institutions who continue to work on the preservation of historical film and media and to support democratic media education and creativity in the wider region, in atrocious circumstances.

Initiated in a different context and mindset, the special section in this issue features contributions on the topic #Rumors, in which the guest editors Nicholas Baer and Maggie Hennefeld consider non-traditional sources of knowledge that have gained increasing currency in film and media studies. Starting from an understanding of rumors and gossip as a prolific yet contested form of media discourse, Baer and Hennefeld argue for the need to configure, in their words, an episteme of doxa or, a 'philosophy of rumors' equipped to disentangle forms of communication vital to disenfranchised groups, yet also liable to be co-opted by the increasingly normalized sphere of post-truth politics. The section is articulated along three axes: 'Feminist Whisper Networks' includes pieces by Kate Fortmueller and Bethany E. Qualls that consider the strategies and political reach of delegitimized forms of knowledge production wielded by women; 'Queer Fabulations' comprises articles by Mark Lynn Anderson, Mal Ahern and Benoît Loiseau that explore gossip, anecdotes and speculation as instruments for queer counter-histories in and around the work of Kenneth Anger, Andy Warhol and Gregg Bordowitz, respectively; 'Doxa Goes Viral' goes to the 'dark side' of rumors, with articles by Renée Pastel and Michael Dalebout addressing the challenges and pitfalls of documenting the conspiracy theories of

QAnon, by Scott Krzych on the rhetoric of colorblind racism in right-wing political media and, on a different and more hopeful note, Michelle Cho on the progressive potential of the rumor-based digital activism of K-pop fans, where anonymity acts as a source of solidarity. This special section concludes with a roundtable discussion with Mladen Dolar, Richard Dyer, Alexandra Juhasz, Tavia Nyong'o, Marc Siegel, and Patricia Turner exploring the potentials of a philosophy of rumors at a moment of crisis and is prefaced by a wide-ranging introduction to the issue's theme, including a detailed overview of the section, expertly conducted by Baer and Hennefeld.

In the Features section, we shift to new perspectives on sound, authorship, film performance and VR storytelling. Pauline Greenhill and Mai Nguyen examine the uncanny soundscapes in Christian Petzold's *Undine* (2020) in relation to natural and urban narrative spaces as sites of enchantment and wonder, layered with history as well as fairytale myths. Giuseppe Gatti investigates the construction of inhabited stories at the core of virtual reality storytelling, and the techniques developed to create immersion and presence from a multimodal, media-archeology perspective. Cáit Murphy theorizes the film director's Instagram profile as a creative extension of auteur agency. The article is rounded off by a case study of Claire Denis's Instagram posts which, inflected by an autobiographical edge (as opposed to merely promotional), are read by Murphy as intertextually interacting with Denis' films in tone and aesthetics. Last but not least, Doron Galili argues for a taxonomy of neo-classical acting practices in the silent era of Hollywood studio filmmaking, working from a critical revision of the Hollywood classicism originally proposed by Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson in tandem with acting manuals of the era and other archival materials.

The audiovisual essay section in this issue continues the focus on sound and music we started in our Autumn 2020_#Method issue. As the second segment in this two-part series, Liz Greene is bringing together five works by six scholars exploring the theory and practice of film sound and music in videographic criticism. The section comprises works by Greene, Johannes Binotto, Ian Garwood, John Gibbs and Douglas Pye, and Catherine Grant and is introduced by Greene's curatorial statement on the place of sound and image in screen media, as refracted by videographic criticism. Headphones are recommended, particularly for viewing the works by Greene and Gibbs and Pye.

The festival review section continues to explore the (re)invention of festivals following the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Siddarth Chadha reports on how AKS International Minorities Festival's re-discovery of its own format has helped navigate the challenges during the pandemic and to maintain its position as a key event within both the LGBTQ film festival circuit and the Human Rights film festival ecosystem in Europe and Asia, from its dual base in Pakistan and Denmark. In 'Film Festivals and Market Intelligence: From Audience Surveys to Data Analytics?', Roderik Smits interrogates how the hybridity of film festivals not only generates more knowledge about but also new forms of engaging with audiences. Continuing the

theme of shifting knowledge, Justine Pignato argues that the hybrid format of the *Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal (RIDM)* was not the real novelty in 2021. ‘RIDM 2021: Act Local, Think Global’ examines how the festival’s shift towards a collective of programmers may have influenced the film selection.

In the book review section, Asli Ozgen-Tuncer walks us through an increasing scholarly interest in walking with a particular focus on film studies. ‘Itineraries of Walking and Footwear on Film’ discusses two recent publications that approach walking – and the shoes used for walking – from a film-philosophical angle: *The Peripatetic Frame: Images of Walking in Film*, and the edited collection *Shoe Reels: The History and Philosophy of Footwear in Film*. Irina Trocan follows another recent surge in academic discussions: ‘The Form and Technology of Videographic Cinema’ brings the anthology *Beyond the Essay Film: Subjectivity, Textuality and Technology* and the monograph *Videographic Cinema: An Archaeology of Electronic Images and Imaginaries* into dialogue, highlighting the technological thread embedded in discussions of the essay film.

The exhibition review section features two exhibitions at the intersection between the past and the present – and what these mean for the future. ‘Enfin le cinéma! Arts, images et spectacles en France 1833-1907’ by Stéphanie Louis explores how the approach of the exhibition in the 19th century manages to create echoes with the present; the review includes a short interview with Vanessa Schwartz, contributor to the exhibition catalogue. ‘Monument Palimpsest: Excavating the visions of the empire’ by Madalena Miranda discusses the exhibition *Visions of Empire* through its dual questioning of colonial legacies and the possibilities of a decolonial present in Portugal.

With an eye on current developments, we hope to provide our audience with insightful and relevant readings as we will launch the current issue during the NECS 2022 conference in Bucharest, which marks a shift in, if not an end to, the Covid-19 pandemic as we come together in person again. This surely will provide food for thought also in view of the upcoming theme of #Materiality for our Autumn 2022 issue.