Edited by Julia Vassilieva and Deane Williams

Beyond the Essay Film

Subjectivity, Textuality and Technology

In the wake of the explosion in the production of essay films over the last 25 years and its subsequent theorization in scholarly literature, this volume seeks to historicize these intertwined developments within the 'long durée' of the 20th century and into the 21st. By raising the issue of 'beyond the essay film', this collection seeks not only to acknowledge the influential predecessors of this – in the view of many critics, the most interesting type of contemporary filmmaking – but also to speculate about its possible transformation as we move forward into the uncharted waters of the 21st – digital – century. Beyond the Essay Film focusses on three specific axes that underpin and shape the articulation of the essay film as a specific cultural form – subjectivity, textuality, and technology – to explore how changes along and across these dimensions affect historical shifts within the essay-film practice and its relation to other types of cinema and neighbouring art forms.

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