POST-CINEMA

**Dominique Chateau
and José Moure (eds.)**

Post-cinema

The Key Debates

Mutations and Appropriations in European Film Studies

Series Editors
Ian Christie, Dominique Chateau, José Moure, Annie van den Oever

Post-cinema

Cinema in the Post-art Era

Edited by
Dominique Chateau
and José Moure

Cover illustration: Shot 14 of BEACHES OF AGNÈS (Agnès Varda, 2006)

Cover design: Sabine Mannel
Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

Amsterdam
University
Press

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Editorial

The *Key Debates* series has reached its tenth birthday with this eighth volume, which addresses a concern that has far-reaching implications for the entire field of screen media studies. The original aim of the series was to revisit the concepts and indeed controversies that have shaped the field of film studies. Our intention was twofold: to clarify what was initially at stake in the founding texts and also to clarify lines of transmission and reinterpretation in what remains a hybrid field of study, which has "appropriated" and thus modified much of what it uses.

The seven volumes published to date have taken different approaches to this central mission. They have reviewed how early film theory adopted and developed literary theories of "strangeness" (*ostrannennie*); shifting concepts of subjectivity engendered by film; the variety of ways that film's audiences have been conceived; the persistence of debate around film as a technology; the continuing proliferation of screens; the foundational link between modern feminism and film theory; and most recently the centrality of "stories" to modern media discourse.

All of these have retained a commitment to *debate*, bringing together scholars who belong to different traditions and schools of thought, and indeed language communities. With the support of our institutions in three countries (the Netherlands, France and Britain), and our enterprising publisher Amsterdam University Press, we provide a platform to air differences, while also demonstrating that film and media studies – transnational and transmedial – occupy a central position in contemporary intellectual and cultural life. Coincidentally, at the time of this present volume's preparation, a public health emergency occurred that has affected all our countries and communities and which has dramatically drawn attention once more to the role that "domesticated" screen media play in all our lives.

The recent shut-down of communal cultural activity may also have created a new appreciation of the place of film and cinema in the contemporary media environment. It therefore seems timely that our latest volume should address what would be called in vernacular English discourse "the elephant in the room." Have we indeed entered a "post-cinema" era; and what are the implications for concepts and theories shaped by more than a century of film and cinema seeming synonymous?

As the series enters its second decade, with future volumes under discussion, we are confident that there has never been greater need for a

shared international space of debate, enabling and encouraging construc-
tive engagement with the major issues affecting how we think about the
dominant media of our era.

Paris / Amsterdam / Groningen / London
Dominique Chateau, José Moure, Annie van den Oever, Ian Christie

Acknowledgments

Post-cinema is the eighth volume in the series *The Key Debates*. As with previous books (*Ostrannenie* 2010; *Subjectivity* 2011; *Audiences* 2012; *Technē/Technology* 2014; *Feminisms* 2015; *Screens* 2016; *Stories* 2018), it is organized around a key topic that crosses and shapes the field of film studies. We are very grateful to Amsterdam University Press for offering us the opportunity to enter into a debate that is at the heart of questions about the changes that the cinema is undergoing after more than a century of existence. The concept of "Post-cinema" asks us not only to think of moving images in terms of media theory and transformations of film and cinema but also to focus on the relationship between cinema and art, especially contemporary art.

This volume explores new ways of considering, experiencing and making films in a time of technological transition. It brings together an international group of scholars and artists from a variety of countries, who speak different languages and come from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds. This book is dedicated to the memory of our colleague and friend Céline Scemama and Agnès Varda. For their generous contributions, we sincerely thank Dudley Andrew, Wang Bing, Victor Burgin, Francesco Casetti, Richard Conte, Gérard Courant, Miriam De Rosa, Giovanna Fossati, André Gaudreault, Christophe Génin, Malte Hagener, François Jost, Philippe Marion, Andrea Pinotti, Gabriela Rivadaneira Crespo, Annie van den Oever, Christophe Viart, and Eugénie Zvonkine. Additionally, we wish to thank the translators and in particular Naòmi Morgan for her translations from the French.

The project has depended vitally on generous funding from the Research Institute ACTE (Arts, Création,Théorie, Esthétique) – Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, and the University of Groningen, without which it would not have been possible. Special acknowledgment and warm thanks are due to the Senior Commissioning Editor, Film Media and Communication of AUP, Maryse Elliott, who provided us with extremely generous support.

We also thank heartily the editorial board of the *Key Debates* series, in particular Annie van den Oever and Ian Christie who have offered us invaluable and friendly help and advice. Finally, we would like to pay tribute to copyeditors Wendy Stone and Viola ten Hoorn, whose ceaseless efforts and professionalism have made the process of piecing the essays together

so much easier for both of us, and to acknowledge the continuing support of Chantal Nicolaes, Head of Desk Editing and Production at AUP.

Dominique Chateau and José Moure
Paris, summer 2020.

1.   Introduction

Dominique Chateau and José Moure

For some time now, in newspapers and books, a series of words keep appearing that begin with the prefix "post-." As for these new words, the key to understanding seems to be a semantics of ambiguity. Post does not indicate something absolutely different but something in-between: postcapitalism would be a new phase of capitalism; postmodernism, a new figure of modernism; and post-history, history again. In all these cases, to the same question – does "post-" mean a clear break or the more or less identifiable result of an evolution? – the same answer arises: "post-" is a "problematic prefix" that "debates over postmodernism and postmodernity taught us to treat not as a marker of definitive beginnings and ends, but as indicative of a more subtle shift or transformation in the realm of culturally dominant aesthetic and experiential forms" (Denson and Leyda 2016, 6).

This astute remark can be found in Shane Denson and Julia Leyda's introduction to *Post-cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film*, a high-quality collection of texts published in 2016. In addition to the editors, the contributors include Lev Manovich, Steven Shaviro, Vivian Sobchack and Francesco Casetti. Considering this title and ours, it is obvious that the two projects look very similar. Apart from our call for new contributors and the fact that most of the texts in this volume are newly published or translated into American English (in Denson and Leyda's book all the texts are republished in a more or less revised form), we can clarify the different points or nuances that specify our approach of the hypothetical notion of post-cinema.

Not surprisingly, this differentiation is particularly notable in the subtitles (that are, in fact, most often used for this purpose): Denson and Leyda's *Theorizing 21st-Century Film* becomes our *Cinema in the Post-art Era*. Two crucial points can be made here: in the subtitle to this volume "cinema" seems to be rid of the embarrassing "post-" (which is, admittedly, contradicted in advance by the title); a second "post-" emerges at the same time as a new partner is introduced, art. Despite its sophisticated appearance, it means something very simple: we have chosen to focus the attention on the relationship between

cinema and art, especially contemporary art and on the current transforma-
tions of films and cinema that attest to such a relationship. At present, it seems
the practice of art is also seen through the same lens, pointing us in similar
directions: art is supposed to have metamorphosed into post-art and thus is
simultaneously non-art, or a kind of almost-art, quasi-art, may-be-art, and
so on – at any rate, it is ambiguously identifiable as art. *It so happens that
cinema is part of this change and the resulting state of ambiguity …*

Interpreting "Post-cinema"

However, to begin with, ambiguity is also a characteristic of post-cinema.
Considering the different ways in which this word can be interpreted,
we also observe the same kind of ambiguity that affects words such as
postmodernism. Whatever the interpretation, post-cinema is not seen as
encompassing an absolute change in terms of film form and, correspondingly,
the emergence of a new medium, nor an absolute change of cinema *dispositif*
and, accordingly, the end of theater, projection and cinemagoing. Post-cinema
is in a state of unstable equilibrium between the original, persistent cinema
dispositif and new ways of making and considering the film, as well as its
mode of working in the postmodern cultural context. As Denson and Leyda
write, "post-cinema asks us to think about new media not only in terms of
novelty but in terms of an ongoing, uneven, and indeterminate historical
transition" (2016, 2). This reflects the prevalent state of mind in this book
and anticipates some subsequent research tracks.

To be more precise, as soon as we consider the ways of interpreting
post-cinema, we are led to thinking about key issues, not only in terms
of media theory but also in terms of art practice. When measuring the
scope of post-cinema, we find a scale of radicality from "cinema death"
to intermediality, through decay or metamorphosis. The cinema death
theme, at the height of radicality, cannot be discussed without considering
three aspects of media definition: the medium, as such; the *dispositif*; and
spectatorship. The question then arises as to whether the death of cinema
can be decreed on the basis of one of these criteria or whether the theme
involves all of them. Transposed into the media theory question, it means: is
cinema defined by film, theater, cinemagoing, or any combination of these
characteristics? It seems that the scale of radicality is established according
to the degree of requirement we impose on our response.

If we require that the three criteria be met, we must consider that the
film watched on a smartphone screen is not cinema. But if this film is a

Hollywood classic with famous stars, how can we refuse to associate with it the memory of cinema? Post-cinema presupposes the imaginary aspect of cinema. It is not only an "after" of the cinema that would replace it, that would have absorbed or liquidated it. Firstly, it was born before term since this kind of word is always fixed after the fact. There has already been a post-cinema at the time of cinema, from its birth until the present, but it was not yet clearly distinguished as such. In a way, behind the scenes, it is the more or less noticeable introduction of various kinds of film practices and conceptions in relation to its form or the ways of receiving it. Similarly, considering the current state of affairs which is of primary interest to us in this book, many present experiences deviating from mainstream cinema do not seem to have cut the umbilical cord; quite the contrary, they are haunted by the cinema from which they are supposed to differ.

Some texts at the beginning of the present book return to the lasting debate around the radical question of cinema death. By this point, this debate is beginning to take on GROUNDHOG DAY-like characteristics – the 1993 film by Harold Ramis was renamed UN JOUR SANS FIN (AN ENDLESS DAY) in French release – with its constant narrative restarts; that said, it does lead to a fundamental question about cinema as an anthropological and aesthetic phenomenon. But it does not lead to a definite answer; moreover, it is during this discussion that a doubt arises about the relevance of radicality. It does not mean that we should give up. On the contrary, it means that film- and media theory require subtlety in a dialectic sense. Cinema has not lost itself in its metamorphosis into post-cinema because, while it has lost some of its characteristics and prerogatives, it has gained others. After all, the possibility of watching a Hollywood classic on a mobile phone in public transport, even if the result is obviously less desirable than a theater screening – at least a good one under technically impeccable conditions (which is not always the case today) – is a privilege in the same way that using this mobile phone to communicate with friends or call for help is an advantage.

If it is a mere fact that the production-distribution-reception of many films, however artistic they may be, still have the form of a work in the "traditional" sense, it is just as relevant to speculate that their form is shifting as these "regular" films are affected by the post-art culture. Among other changes, these films that remain works can be displaced in conditions more or less remote from the *dispositif* of the theater, such as the "relocation," as Francesco Casetti calls it, using devices of all kinds that change the films. This suggests, instead of repeating what is now well-known about this topic, an interest in measuring the feedback of the new modes of audiovisual

practice on films, more precisely, how they are designed, structured and manufactured. Parallel to the integration of contemporary art in "regular" cinema, we need to think of the integration of cinema into contemporary art in all kinds of forms of creation and exhibition.

Since we have chosen to open up the field of research by integrating the post-cinema question *within* the post-art question, let us recall that it would be simplistic to imagine a state of culture where art would have disappeared entirely (just as cinema death is only metaphorically, not literally, physically acquired). We are rather in a place envisioned by postmodern artists who claim an art that is at the same time non-art, or vice versa. Facing the introduction in various art fields of things or acts that differ from the work of art that is fully recognizable as such, cinema seems both to resist and to collaborate. It still produces works in the "old" format but is simultaneously immersed in many aspects of art in its current state.

The study of this subject from any angle shows that sooner or later any problem relating to post-cinema ends up looking like Russian dolls. Moreover, we can consider the series of dolls from the point of view of their decreasing size or from the opposite direction. In decreasing order, we go from the global context of the cultural industry to the form of the film, including the *dispositifs*. In increasing order, the perspective seems to be broadened. However, at the same time, we seem to lose the accuracy that film analysis promises. This book will, undoubtedly, give the impression of broadening the scope in terms of a comparison of texts focusing strictly on the movie arena. Nevertheless, our wish to reformulate the question of post-cinema through the topic of the relationship between the cinema and contemporary art also signifies the assumption that the objects of this transaction must not be left on the sidelines in favor of too many theoretical generalities.

About the Book

The first part of the book begins with a tribute to "Influential French New Wave Filmmaker" (*The New York Times*) Agnès Varda, who passed away March 29, 2019 at the age of 90 – we don't know what conclusion to draw from the repetition of the number 9! Her death was announced by various newspapers and websites, whose headlines – "Beloved French New Wave Director" (*The Guardian*), "Legendary French New Wave Director" (*The Local.fr*) – all seemed to include the New Wave label, providing a convenient location, both justified and lazy. When considering the career of such a great artist, we are inevitably referred to a glorious past. Paying tribute to

Agnès Varda by analyzing Beaches of Agnès, her 2006 autobiographical film, José Moure draws attention to the fact that the film itself intermixed with its "making of" has the singular form of a *narrated puzzle* from which a new kind of documentary emerges. (Further on, in chapter 14, Dominique Chateau completes the tribute by considering Varda's forays into the world of contemporary art.) Through her most recent films, as well as her exhibitions, Agnès Varda can be considered a major figure in post-cinema.

PART II of the book – *The End of Cinema?* – revolves around the question of the fate of cinema which, according to disparate hypotheses, goes from end to rebirth. In what at first appears a book review of Francesco Casetti's *The Lumière Galaxy: Seven Key Words for the Cinema to Come*, Dudley Andrew's text provides an overview of the most general and crucial discussion that the post-cinema theme has called attention to. First released in *Cultural Critique* in 2017, it highly deserves to be included in this volume because of the synoptic view it offers. Dudley Andrew not only brings together several theorists who participate in the debate throughout the globalized world – Laura Mulvey, Jacques Aumont, Raymond Bellour, Philippe Dubois, André Gaudreault, Philippe Marion, David N. Rodowick, Francesco Casetti – but also reignites this debate that could be considered a scholastic quarrel about a process whose outcome is still uncertain – the end of cinema! – if it were not a historical mutation, the practical consequences of which we experience every day. Some partners in the dialogue initiated by Andrew appear in this book with new questions.

In their text, André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion give a new formulation to the end of cinema issue: "What remains of cinema?" Arguing from a mainly nominalist perspective, they find their answer in cinema's "resilience": cinema is "*hanging tough.*" This resilience of cinema depends on what we are talking about in terms of technological evolution (digitalization) and cultural differences (are we talking about cinephilia or the ordinary practice of cinema?). They examine the different hypotheses arising from the point of view of the range of words it mobilizes (cinema, movie, moving images, and so on). Referring to a, rather comical yet telling, Bogdanovitch-Welles dialogue and the recent Netflix controversy during the Cannes or Venice festivals, Gaudreault and Marion iterate that differences in naming are "highly significant." Finally, the authors consider the question: is it more important to define cinema (whatever the name!) or to produce "interesting film stories" as Guillermo del Toro suggests?

The next contribution by Céline Scemama is of special value to us. A Godard specialist, Céline scrupulously deciphered the multiple artistic references contained in Godard's masterpiece Histoire(s) du cinema (that

can be understood here in the sense of the companion-worker's tour de force). For her arduous work she received a brilliant doctorate from the Panthéon-Sorbonne University, Paris 1, which was followed by a book that is now a standard reference work: HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA de Jean-Luc Godard – La force faible d'un art. She beamed forth affection but, disappointed by life, took her own in 2017. The present text, which constitutes the introduction to her book, is a double tribute: to Céline, a very dear friend, and to JLG who, from the start of his oeuvre to LIVRE D'IMAGES (2018), sought in the obstinate invention of a post-cinema the very essence of this art. Halfway between Montaigne's essay and Rembrandt's self-portrait, HISTOIRE(S) DU CINEMA is also halfway between the origin of cinema and its destiny as post-art.

PART III examines various *Technological Transformations* due to digitalization. We are very happy to welcome in this part, Victor Burgin who, as a renowned artist[1] could just as easily have been included in the last section *Post-cinema, an Artists' Affair*. But instead opens this part of the book with his proposal of a theoretical reflection on the technological transformations of what he calls the "field of 'photofilmic' practices." He postulates that "cinema" directs our minds to "technological mutation," while "art" evokes the "ideologico-economic appropriation." Using as a framework of reasoning themes that gave rise to the publications of the *Key Debates* series – screen and stories – and adding the idea of the virtual object as resulting from the convergence of the digital with the contemporary, he highlights the advent of new "photofilmic narrative forms" which, characterized by the combination of complexity and affectivity, "offer alternatives to the mass-produced verisimilitude of hegemonic mass culture."

Dedicated to Thomas Elsaesser, "a leading figure in film criticism" (*The New York Times*, December 19, 2019) and a friend who died on December 4 in Beijing at the age of 76, Giovanna Fossati and Annie van den Oever's dialogue reflects on the "death of cinema" topic but from the perspective of film archival practice and national film institutes. Their starting point is both the fact that some of these institutes remain – an index of the cinema persistence – and Giovanna Fossati's reflection on processes of digitalization which raises the question as to whether the notion of film is still relevant in this new technological context. Analogous to the way in which Walter Benjamin treated the new phenomenon of mechanical reproduction, digitalization concerns both reproduction and creation. Today, the digital creation

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1   For example, we recently watched his "digital looping video" THE LITTLE HOUSE (2005, 17') inside the Carmelites Chapel at Saint-Denis Museum of Art and History (France) as part of the exhibition *Enfermement* (*Confinement*), April-October 2019.

aspect is discussed frequently; whereas, it is less common to consider the problems of the archival practice in the digital age. Thus, the exchange of views between Fossati and Van den Oever in this volume provides a useful perspective on the issue of digital archiving. It also deeply enriches the idea of post-cinema, more precisely, the idea of "a new post-cinematic ecology."

Despite a series of material changes to the medium throughout its history, cinema has remained a "common immersive experience" insofar as it was based on the illusion of reality. However, the most important change is that this is no longer true: post-cinema, writes Christophe Génin, can be considered a defection of the original experience of watching movies. This situation has to do with social and economic transformations, implying the conversion of the cultural industry to service to the person and a deep variation in the aesthetic experience, which Génin proposes to understand through an analysis of the experience of individual screens in aircraft. A confined space such as an aircraft seat isolates the individual to whom it is offered in a moment of "solipsism of caprice."

At the beginning of PART IV – *New Dispositif, New Conditions* – François Jost asks: "What kind of art is the cinema of interactions?" With this question, he promotes the concept of interaction, but his intention is not to extend the current theory that defines by interaction the use of cinema, both in the early stages of its history and in the post-cinema situation. Rather, it is to analyze "a work that presents itself as openly interactive: BANDERSNATCH" (2018), a part of the science-fiction anthology series BLACK MIRROR. He proposes to carry out this analysis with the help of Goodman and Genette, especially the two major concepts previously coined by the former: autography and allography. This duality helps to answer the question as to whether the opposition between film and TV series has to do with differences in artistic quality; a debate exacerbated by Netflix's candidacy at film festivals. Additionally, using a comparison with music partitions (Pierre Boulez's third piano sonata in relation to Netflix!), he wonders whether the viewer of the interactive work may be called an operator, a performer or a player ... or, more likely, an interpreter. His/her status has to do both with the model of the musician who has the choice to structure parts of the work and the hermeneut who gives meaning to it.

Designing his text according to the model "Engführung," a musical technique of the fugue where a new theme overlaps with the previous one, Malte Hagener considers two dimensions of the changes in the audiovisual field: the first is exemplified by the Netflix platform on the economic and logistical level; the second concerns the aesthetic consequences of this new model of production and distribution. Characterized by a high level of autonomy and

self-consciousness of this status, Netflix's system is transforming the practice of film and the notion we have of it. A striking aspect of the strong link that is thus established between the production system and the film form can be observed in the fact that Netflix's productions are self-allegorizations of Netflix's system. Referencing Bird Box (2018), the "post-apocalyptic thriller" (Wikipedia) directed by Susanne Bier and starring Sandra Bullock, Hagener exemplifies that a post-cinema movie may be positioned between cinema, television and new media, appearing as a "self-allegory of its own position in a new media environment, especially concerning its production logic."

With Francesco Casetti and Andrea Pinotti's point of view in their "Post-cinema Ecology," we return to Christophe Génin's issue, albeit from a different perspective more similar to Jost's. Instead of developing the general theme of the immersive experience, they exemplify it by way of a special focus on Alejandro G. Iñárritu's Carne y arena, an interactive virtual reality installation presented at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, insofar as it testifies to the formal and spectatorial transformations that are rightly referred to as post-cinema. More generally, emphasizing the characteristics of "unframedness, presentness, and immediateness," this kind of work draws our attention to the phenomenology of the film experience. Drawing from Charles Peirce, Adolfo Bioy Casares's *La invención de Morel* and the zoologist Adolf Portmann's theories of animal perception, they propose going beyond phenomenology (and ontology) with the project of an iconic ecology based on the concept of *phaneron*, the appearance as it is perceived for itself.

PART V, *Transformations in Film Form*, deals with the idea of identifying among the vast field of film production those that can be considered "part of a contemporary way of thinking and making art in a postmodern era" as Gabriela Rivadeneira Crespo writes. It means that some filmmakers or artists decide to put art at the heart of their creation, that this relationship between cinema and art may be applied to its concept, as well as to various aspects of the process of creation. One way in which to consider this kind of "art contemporary turn" is to examine the different incursions of cinema from the point of view of the contemporary art space. But, instead of following this track, instead of asking how cinema participates in this contemporary art experience, Miriam De Rosa asks "how the contemporary experience of moving images is articulated when it enters art spaces." This topic deals not only with the hypothesis of a change in film form and medium from the moment the film is destined for an unusual space but also with the reverse movement of the presence of film transforming the foreign space into a different and personalized place. From this point of view, Miriam De Rosa analyzes a series of exhibitions: Sleepwalkers (2007), Aitken's five

video pieces projected on MoMA's external walls; Marta Minujín's *Mesunda Reloaded* (2019) at the New Museum in New York; and the work of the Milan-based collective Studio Azzurro, especially their S*ensitive Environments* exhibition which reflects the space-image in an artistic context.

For her part, Gabriela Rivadeneira Crespo analyzes a Mariano Llinás film, Extraordinary Stories (Historias Extraordinarias) because, with this 2008 movie by the Argentinean filmmaker, the "productivity of cinema devices" is brought into question so that it fully exemplifies the type of postmodern film where cinema and contemporary art collaborate. Paradoxically, this kind of film, given the radical choices that govern it, places it in an expanded film, but marginalizes it in relation to the cinema industry. The locations and modes of reception of such films are also part of the definition of post-cinema in the post-art era.

For Dominique Chateau, post-art can, essentially, be characterized by the formula: *art, otherwise than art.* It means that in the institutional context presently governing art, the artworks or what serves as such, including objects or acts claiming non-art, are explicitly exhibited as art while different kinds of physical or mental attitudes are allowed toward them that have nothing to do with art in the first place. It is in this *art, otherwise than art* context that cinema and contemporary art are mutually challenging. This is quite obvious when we consider the meeting of cinema with the *dispositifs* of exhibition spaces; the intrusion of cinema into art or post-art places. More generally, this possibility opens news paths for creation: new filmic form (which is well exemplified by the race to make the longest film); changes in creators' status (as we can see with the examples of the Japanese film-maker, Hamaguchi Ryusuke;[2] the French artist, Pierre Huyghe; or the French filmmaker, Michel Gondry); and the advent of exhibitions of a new kind (Agnès Varda and David Lynch). The text concludes with the symptomatic example of Agnès Varda and JR's Visages, Villages, a collaboration that has produced a singular *documentary road movie …*

To remain with a somewhat outdated division of labor, post-cinema in the post-art era can arise from the meeting of filmmakers and artists, but also from the collaboration of two artists, as in the case of Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait (2006), a film created and directed by Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno. Cameras placed around the Bernabéu stadium in Madrid where a match is taking place follow the well-known football (or soccer as the Americans have it) player, Zinédine Zidane, from the beginning

2   Asian names – Japanese, Korean, Chinese – are written in this book in their traditional form: surname first.

of the game until his dismissal. In this volume, Richard Conte examines this special portrait paying particular attention to how the film focuses primarily on Zidane, that is, on somebody who is in a state of what Diderot calls absorption in his task – in this case, playing a football match – in the kind of dance that a football game resembles. Conte also focuses on details that could only be captured by the artistic filmic device. By providing an in-depth analysis of this new device and its astonishing filmic result, Conte is able to call attention to a social aspect of post-cinema that deserves to be mentioned: mere artistic influence can elevate just about anything to the rank of art and thus in ZIDANE "elitist contemporary art meets the most popular sport of the world and one of its most emblematic figures."

PART VI of the book, *Post-cinema, an Artists' Affair*, is devoted to artists and their work. Previously considered, Godard and Burgin could as easily have been involved here, as much as, for example, Llinás and Huyghe, even if their ways of investing in the field of creation differ. In this part, we consider a kind of filmmaker whose behavior or works can be considered from the viewpoint of the artist's contemporary standard. However, we start with the opposite movement: an artist making films. It could well have been Marcel Duchamp, insofar as the avant-garde of the 1920s foreshadowed post-cinema and, moreover, post-cinema integrated within the (post-)art issue. Among the most interesting and humorous artists that Duchamp has inspired, Christophe Viart proposes considering another of Marcel's incursions into film: Marcel Broodthaers was a Belgian contemporary artist whose range of activities covered poetry and (post-)cinema. A single film can have considerable theoretical power. This is the case with LA PLUIE (PROJET POUR UN TEXTE) [THE RAIN (PROJECT FOR A TEXT)], a 1969 two-minute 16mm black-and-white film, which portrays Broodthaers attempting to write on a paper in the rain. Is it a film? Is it cinema? This the material of a regular film, but not the spirit. We are definitely in the post-art era …

Next up is Russian film director Ilya Khrzhanovsky, whose film adaptation of Kora Landau-Drobantseva's book *The Academician Landau: How we Lived* (1999) resulted in an immense project, entitled DAU, spanning several years, encompassing cinema and art among other things. In her text about DAU, Eugénie Zvonkine delves deeper into Khrzhanovsky's ambitious project. Because what is DAU exactly? Is it Ilya Khrzhanovsky's project as a whole or his films or the main character? In order to clarify this complexity, Zvonkine proposes "write[ing] DAU for the whole project, DAU for the films and Dau to designate the main character." On the face of it, it seems to resemble Aesop's *The Frog and the Ox* whose moral is: "Do not attempt the impossible." Yet, that's exactly what the young filmmaker did, who at that time was merely

known for "a single, although much remarked, feature film, FOUR (2004)."
DAU tells the story of Kora Landau-Drobantseva's husband, Lev Landau,
a remarkable man, known by the nickname Dau, who professed freedom
in private life in stark contrast to the political USSR Stalinist regime of
fear and terror under which he lived. Not only did Khrzhanovsky make
thirteen feature films of a duration from 1.5 to 6 hours but he also decided
to include the screenings in huge installations, investing, in particular, in
the Parisian Théâtre du Chatelet and the Théâtre de la Ville which were in
reconstruction at the time, giving the whole DAU project the fascinating
scale of a total artwork.

Independent filmmaker Gérard Courant is a fan of *early post-cinema*.
Since the mid-1970s, he has been one of those pioneers who seeks to test its
limits (from the very beginning of cinema), from within and without, from
the center of the medium to its peripheries. This does not mean that he
belongs to the past. On the contrary, he continues his quest, never ceasing
to accumulate a considerable number of films and, in particular, one film
or series of films, which continues to grow, the CINÉMATON(S), which is at
the heart of our dialogue. Courant was kind enough to receive us in his
apartment at Montreuil (Paris suburb), a place full of films and books – not
only books on cinema but also on cycling since Courant is a big fan of the
Tour de France. No matter the field, he has the mentality of a collector. As
regards cinema, it would be more accurate to say: an encyclopedic mentality.
His work, an accumulation of numerous filmic portraits of personalities as
well as filmed street inventories, is of considerable extension. It is in this
very principle of infinite proliferation of films of varying lengths that we
find a kind of Mnemosyne cinema challenging the "de-definition" (Harold
Rosenberg) of cinema that transforms it into post-art.

Born in 1967 in Xi'an in the Shaanxi Province, Wang Bing is one of the
greatest representatives of contemporary Chinese cinema (along with Jia
Zhangke). After studying photography at Luxun Arts University in Shenyang
and film at Beijing Film Academy, he directed WEST OF THE TRACKS (2003),
FENGMING, A CHINESE MEMOIR (2007), COAL MONEY (2008), MAN WITH NO
NAME (2009), THE DITCH (2010), THREE SISTERS (2012), TILL MADNESS DO
US PART (2013), TA'ANG (2016), MRS. FANG (2017), BEAUTY LIVES IN FREEDOM
(2018) and DEAD SOULS (2018). We were fortunate to meet him when he
came to the Bachelard Amphitheater at the Sorbonne for a Master Class
on April 27, 2019 (at the invitation of Richard Conte and Jacinto Lageira, as
part of a series of Interface meetings at the Panthéon-Sorbonne University,
Paris I). In the final dialogue of this book Wang (whose films are off the
beaten track in many ways) clarifies his connection to various issues raised

by post-cinema, in particular, the consequences of technological changes with regard to film creation and distribution, and evolution in the aesthetic conception of cinema.

References and Further Reading

Denson, Shane, and Julia Leyda, eds. 2016. *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film*. Falmer: Reframe Books.

About the Authors

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