The Event of Art
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Cinema-Engine
cinema as iterative, variable, composed, a format, arranged, sound playing picture, infinitely editable, variable, a tableau, DJ and programmer,

The age of cut copy paste is now an age of programmability variability. And programs, programming open up possibility spaces. They also give us pause as to what we might have thought a medium to be. Take the case of the cinema. With the emergence of electronic and digital media we can no longer take for granted what cinema as an object as medium is.

Here for example is a rule set for sound in multi-window or multi-screen films. With this simple instruction set we have the possibility of a radically different kind of *mise-en-scène* and new modes of narration. (1)
These rules for sound for a software film projector I wrote with a programmer in Max MSP for a project called Permutations and you can find some of the films at cinema-engine. Until recently the film projector was a hard coded machine, pulling down one film-frame at a time through the gate of a projector. As a result we’ve grown accustomed to viewing scenes in a film sequentially but what if we could view the shots that make up the scenes of a film all-at-once as a simultaneous tableau.

Traditional cinema is but one motor, one mode of seeing, one mode of presenting pictures and sounds. With video the once distinct modalities of film recording and projection collapse into a single instrument. Just as software in the phone, a phone with a lens makes it a camera, a programmable camera, the cinema or video projector in software becomes a unique computational instrument that refigures traditional mise-en-scène (shot following shot on a single screen) allowing for a new syntax for a “computational cinema” with very new kinds of montage, new kinds of durations, multiple screens, programmable iterations, giving forth new imaging and soundings.

Computation does more than remix cinema, it re-writes and deterritorializes cinema, making the once familiar, unfamiliar, taking us into new territory, much of which that has yet to be explored.

In the first release I wanted to look at cinema looking at itself. The works include clips from Weekend, Alphaville, THX-1138, 1984, The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, The Day of the Locust, They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?, American Psycho, Point Blank, The Tenant, Dawn of the Dead, Fight Club, A Woman Under the Influence.
early films by Edwin S. Porter and a few other clips.

The various clips of the films are re-presented placed side by side with another film, each screen reads the other, contrasting images, narratives, and the sound of one film re-scores the other, emphasizing that seeing is what we hear, seeing is hearing. Sometimes various shots of one scene rather than coming one after another, are also placed side by side so no more, shot, reverse shot, but this image next to this image. Sometimes the films shown are overdubbed with an off screen voice re-enacting the off screen actor reading their lines. The emphasis is film reading film, projection reading recording, all of producing a new relations and signification.

The Cinema Engine was used for much than composing new films with older films. New “films” are composed from files and the player can play and arrange up to 9 files at a time. The set in the player now is called “cinema” and is a small collection of 10 works composed from different films. They works are as much about the specific juxtaposition of image as they are having the sound of one film, recast the one adjacent to it. Other series in the Cinema Engine include computations, permutations and multi-screen narrative films.

The Cinema Engine extends work I have done with the moving image in the space of the network and computation. It started with Ambient Machines (1999) which allowed one to arrange a series of online video clips to compose, alter and recompose a finite number of sounds and images into any number of sequences and to save these composition for others to see. I then worked on using computation and algorithms to sequence montage with Variable Montage, 2001 and then for sound to find other sounds to create mise-en-scène in the four-screen installation, Sing to Me and Tell Me Your Story (2002).

In 2005 I started Permutations, by using a small Canon PowerShot camera I made at least one multi-screen film, once a day for over a year that were played and composed in a software environment created in Max MSP. Permutations concerned itself with sound-image and the instrumentation of playback in multiple screens and what could be articulated and continually re-articulated.
in the image-sound relationship through permutation. *Permutations* was set up to allow directly recorded sound to recast how we see image. It explores a wide variety of organizational and narrational tropes in the vein of Raymond Queneau and Georges Perec and Oulipo, a group formed in France in 1960 as a workshop for potential literature exploring strategies for constrained writing.

The *Cinema Engine* here emulates in Flash what was done using Max MSP and similarly uses direct recording of sound, discrete to each image track, to juxtapose that sound to another moving image sequence, thereby continually re-shifting our relation to sequence and narration. Though the *Permutations* and now *Cinema Engine* is a technical instrument—an instrument I wrote with the help of Luke DuBois to sound and see image in the new substrate of computation—it is conceived as a small and intimate project, as an immediate, verité and diaristic way to make small films through certain rules.

**Cinema Series**

The cinema series is an ongoing limited edition DVD series where clips from films are paired as “double features.” But in this case the films play side by side where the audio of each narrates the other, and the image tracks create a new sense of montage. Here is remix that reads, re-reads, aurally and pictorially both cinema and what it is to see the image as a file, in the context of the digital, as cinema reading itself.

In the first edition in the series *Irma Vep* was paired with *The Man Who Fell to Earth* to reveal a beautiful and uncanny relationship of otherness.

Cinema moves. Cinema is thought. Cinema is an encounter as are these brilliant films who speak to each other at odd and beautiful ways.

Cinema is a recording, an event of recording. There is a lot there to talk about but suffice it to say for now that the first clip in the series presents film as a recording, as a seeing that is extra-ordinary, that sees and thinks things we don’t. This is the beauty of all art. This seeing of what we may sense, feel or intuit and that art in its material instantiation gives us in an heighten sense.

The clips are from films I love, they are recordings. recording re-recorded and re-presented side by side with other recordings, each to give sense of the other. That’s the game, the instructions. One clip narrates the other and vice versa.

*(Utopia Dystopia)* was one release.

In these works clips of from recent Occupy movements, including incidents at UC Davis, NYC, Oakland, Rome, Egypt, and Tunisia, are paired with science fiction films including *The 10th Victim, Alphaville, Fahrenheit 451, Zardoz, El Topo* and *1984.*
You’re Seven Today, You’re a Man Now

The title comes from a line from Alejandro Jodorowsky’s film *El Topo* which translates as “the mole.” The mole digs underground to get to the light—but too much light makes you blind. “Too much perfection is failure.” This film is paired with Jean-Luc Godard’s *Alphaville*, a film on the tyranny of cybernetic control, too much perfection, too much reason, creates dystopia. The age old debate between poetry and reason.
You Ever Read The Books You Burn?
On the left a clip from Francois Truffaut’s *Fahrenheit 451*. Ray Bradbury’s novel presents a future American society where reading is outlawed and firemen start fires to burn books. On the right the New York police take away the library from the Occupy Wall Street library and then clean the park of everyone and every thing there that had been built up there over the months prior.

http://vimeo.com/32918395
Two montages: on the left, scenes from *Brave New World, Brazil, Zardoz*, recent riots in Rome, Aldous Huxley, and a group of vacationing teen girls skating and swimming; and on the right, students silently standing down the UC Davis Chancellor after she had them pepper-sprayed by police, a documentary on migrant populations in Shanghai, another documentary on technology and science of the 1920s and 1930s, and the post Arab Spring Egyptian police brutality. The audio is the Jesus And Mary Chain and then the silence of the students.

http://vimeo.com/33040286
On the left a scene of execution taking place at a swimming pool from the film *Alphaville* and on the right the University of California Davis Chancellor Linda Katehi, on whose orders the riot police were deployed. Katehi is both a member of the 1% and an overt supporter of police repression on campus. Here she walks out of her office to be seen by hundreds and hundreds of students shaming her in profound silence. The more I look at these clips of police and state violence and while thinking of the violence in the Jodorowsky films what makes it so chilling is that this state violence is icy cold and rational, it’s sadistic. You pay a cop to beat up someone who wants to dialogue, and you cut the cops health benefits so both feel themselves trapped while the beat of progress moves on, safely ensconcing the technocrats who have the answers.

http://vimeo.com/32913645
**Hunter Victim or Roma 2011**

*The 10th Victim* (1965), Elio Petri’s Italian satiric film based on the Robert Sheckley novel where in the near future anyone may enter a game called the Hunt. One player is designated Hunter, the other Victim. The Victim does not know who the Hunter is, merely that someone is trying to kill them, and they must kill that person first! A clip of Ursula Andress in the Maosch Club taking down her victim with a weaponized silver bra is paired with documentation of recent uprisings in Rome, the feriti tra i manifestanti e tra le forze dell’ordine, take to the hunt.

[http://vimeo.com/32939846](http://vimeo.com/32939846)
First rule of cinema, first love of cinema is to recognize a representation of yourself. I am here. This is me, this is cinema, you can see me here, on the screen. Loving the Alien who is us. From representation to pure lines of speed. Cinema moves. Cinema is thought.
American Psycho

This breaks the rules in the sense of not being a film paired with a film but a film, based on a novel paired with novels and a great pop track with lyric lines

Miss Jones taught me English
but I think I just shot her son . . .
Men and women, generations of American boys: The Social Network, Fight Club’s update, can already be seen here. It’s not plastics, nor anarchy, it’s billions, it’s all of these things. Note the very different camera and lighting styles here.
Day of the Locust They Shoot Horses Don’t They

http://vimeo.com/18287934

America. America. America. It will take the last bit of flesh and sweat from you. It wants your mind, your will. It has its rules to play. Two great novels, two classic films.

The Good The Bad The Ugly

http://vimeo.com/18286271

Sergio Leone’s brilliant *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.* Imagine if Abel Gance shot the film on three screens. Each, the Good, the Bad and the Ugly at their own speed, appetite, and sense.
The cosmos . . . what can we say, it’s unspeakably outrageous, genius. And then there’s us who simultaneously know it’s much too much and that we want that Hermès bag.
An absolute testament to love, language, poetry. A polemic against control society. A detest with consumer society. From the eyes, from touch to the cosmos. It is all a miracle, a poem. Then desire a fallen appetite to flesh itself. And what flamboyance, what the cinema demands, outrage and wit.

http://vimeo.com/18300849

**Aim Straight Ahead**

On the left a scene from *Alphaville* cut in with preceding frames from an Adam Curtis documentary and on the right a montage working within the framework of the opening montage of *Notre Musique*, part of my documentary on philosophic thought, Empires. I add additional footage of native Americans and music notes.
The Tenant Night of The Living Dead

http://vimeo.com/18295627

You're coming after me, aren't you. Something's wrong. I am so alive. I feel well. I might even be happy. Will you let me be!? Will you leave me alone? Who are you? This is going too far. Much much too far. Roman Polanski is brilliant in his night of the living dead. The Tenant’s music score gives a quieter, eerier quality to the Living Dead film.
One of my absolute favorite directors and influences. Julian Beck co-directed the Living Theatre until his death. The group’s primary influence was Antonin Artaud, who espoused the Theatre of Cruelty, which was supposed to shock the audience out of complacency. Beck’s philosophy of theatre carried over into his life. He once said “We insisted on experimentation that was an image for a changing society. If one can experiment in theatre, one can experiment in life.”