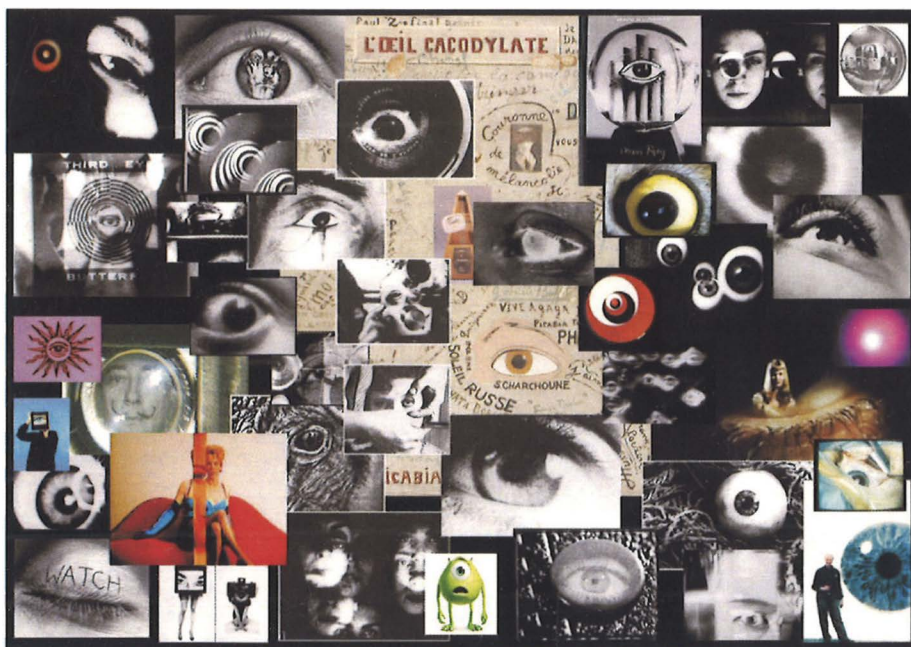


Jacques Coelho

# The Vision of the Cyclops

From Painting to Video  
Ways of Seeing in the 20th Century  
and Through the Eyes of  
Man Ray



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UNIVERSITY OF  JYVÄSKYLÄ

JYVÄSKYLÄ 2008

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JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN HUMANITIES 102

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## ABSTRACT

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Diss.

Within a period of roughly a century, perception and creative vision of the *moving image in time* have been involved in three main massmedia: cinema, television and the Internet, each representing its own era. None of the leading visions in cinema and television — experimental cinema and video — was born by chance but all were connected with the general spirit that ran through the other visual arts of their time and the search taken up by their most avant-garde wings. This study aims to clarify and understand the different visions of avant-garde cinema and video and at the same time to question the current definition of avant-garde facing the developing digital culture. If many previous works have focussed in their analyses on the evolution of avant-garde vision in cinema or video art, and more recently some have been done this rather tentatively in the digital domain, very few have paid much attention to the wider contemporary social and cultural environments, either historically or in the large empirical perspective of artistic activity. The perspective of this work is the creative point of view of the artist, involved in a double mechanism of perception and creation, and catalysed by his original vision. This work gives to the specific eye of the camera a mythological association with the *vision of the Cyclops*, showing that this vision also has connections with an inherited classical perspective and with modern dynamism. **Man Ray** (1890–1976), painter, photographer, filmmaker, object creator, inventor and writer, was a key figure in New York Dada, French Dada and Surrealism. To his work he brought his personal vision and creative innovation. Man Ray was also an outsider without dogmatic tendencies; he was in constant contact with the main personalities of the avant-garde but also followed his own creative intuition. Man Ray can be considered to be a much more paradoxical artist than **Marcel Duchamp**, and probably also more prophetic, especially considering avant-garde cinema and the recent development in video art. With his eyewitness account of the turning-point represented by Dada, and also of the whole process of conversion to modernism and the critical-individualistic attitude that he developed in his autobiography, he can be considered, with **Hans Richter**, to be one of the most significant pioneers in independent and non-narrative cinema. An incursion into the contradictions of the *Bauhaus* at that time will help us to understand some fundamental and philosophical perspectives in artistic activity. By its juxtaposition of radically divergent points of view on cinematic realities, from **Dziga Vertov** to **Stan Brakhage** or recent video artists, the present study questions what are these basic cinematographic concepts. More specifically it compares rational and intuitive processes. It concentrates on the evolution of Man Ray from his avant-garde painting to his personal vision in film. As basic discussion material, a complete visual and rhythm analysis of the short film *Emak Bakia* is used. This study traces the historical tendencies of marginal cinema, evaluates its relatively recent output in the fields of video art and digital culture and elaborates a tentative theory including the concept of anti-art, modern ways of seeing and the individualistic vision of Man Ray. The understanding of vision as a complex mental process will help to investigate the spirit of contemporary video art and its educational possibilities in the new digital era.

Keywords: Man Ray, experimental cinema, video art, Dada, Surrealism, avant-garde, Emak Bakia.

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## ANTI-ART

The iconoclastic attitude can always be reduced to a vulgar gesture of protest or a brutal act of vandalism. Its more profound root is sometimes the quasi-religious aspiration toward an absolute emotional and mental freedom, the desire to reacquire an ingenuousness and innocence of vision which modern man seems forever to have lost, the anxious will to discover the eternal laws of ideal or perfect form

Renato Poggioli

## VISION

L'histoire de la vision se présente comme le terreau expérientiel de la philosophie de l'image. Le visionnaire voit ce que les autres ne voient pas, ou le voit avec d'autres yeux que ceux des hommes du quotidien

Philippe Sers

## PHOTOGRAPHY

I do not photograph nature, I photograph my vision

Man Ray

## CINEMA

Si le cinéma ne nous donne pas la présence du corps et ne peut pas nous la donner, c'est peut-être aussi parce qu'il se propose un autre objectif: il étend sur nous une nuit expérimentale ou un espace blanc, il opère avec des grains dansants et une poussière lumineuse, il affecte le visible d'un trouble fondamental, et le monde d'un suspens, qui contredisent toute perception

naturelle  
Gilles Deleuze

## VIDEO

Video represents a progression from movement to the movement of movement

Paul Virilio

## Κύκλωψ

The eye is being re-attached to the brain

Bill Viola



cyclops- nullus peremit me  
chorus- ergo nulla iniuria  
cyclops- nullus oculum auffert  
chorus- ergo tu non caecus es?  
cyclops- ita sis tu

Euripides - The Cyclops



### **Sleeve Illustration**

The Cacodylic Eye by Jacques Coelho (collage, 2006)  
—from

- Kenneth Anger: Invocation of My Demon Brother, 1969 and Rabbit's Moon, 1950;  
Jordan Belson: Allures, 1961 and Infinity, 1980;  
Bill Brand: Circles of Confusion, 1974;  
Luis Buñuel: Un Chien andalou, 1928;  
Alberto Calvacanti: Rien que les heures, 1926;  
Jean Cocteau: Le Sang d'un poète, 1930;  
Salvador Dalí in the objective of a camera;  
Storm De Hirsch: Third Eye Butterfly, 1968;  
Maya Deren: Meshes of the afternoon, 1943;  
Marcel Duchamp: Rotorelief, 1926;  
Germaine Dulac: La coquille et le clergyman, 1927;  
Lynn Hershman Leeson: Phantom Limb, 1988;  
Lynn Hershman Leeson: Desire Inc., 1990;  
Marie-Jo Lafontaine: photograph, 1991;  
Willard Maas and Marie Menken: Geography of the Body, 1943;  
Man Ray: Emak Bakia, 1926, Self Portrait, 1944, Boule sans neige, 1927, Objet indestructible, 1975;  
From the Bauhaus book of L. Moholy-Nagy Painting Photography Film, 1925;  
Andrew Noren: The Adventures of the Exquisite Corpse part I, Huge Pupils 1968;  
Francis Picabia: L'Œil cacodylate, 1921;  
Hans Richter: Filmstudie, 1926 and Dreams that Money Can Buy, 1945-47;  
Michael Snow: Conception of Light, 1992;  
Sidney Peterson: The Cage, 1947;  
Dziga Vertov: The Man With a Movie Camera, 1929;  
Bill Viola: Anthem, 1983 and I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like, 1986;  
Peter Weibel: The Panoptic Society or Immortally in Love with Death, 2001 and Panoptic Society, 2001;  
Monsters, Inc. (PIXAR dir. Pete Docter, 2001)

### **Other Illustrations**

Man Ray —from Emak Bakia (1926)  
Blinding of Polyphemus (c.550 BC) —Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, cabinet des Médailles

### **Head of Chapters**

- Solar Eclipse —photographer unknown  
1. Polyphemus —Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein (1802)  
2. Marcel Duchamp —Rotorelief Disk from Anémic Cinéma (1925)  
3. Dziga Vertov —from Man With a Movie Camera (1929)  
4. Philip Taaffe —Big Iris (1986) in negative  
5. Jordan Belson —from Allures (1950)  
6. Man Ray —Boule sans neige (1927)  
7. Man Ray —from Emak Bakia (1926)  
8. Man Ray —from Emak Bakia (1926)  
9. Kenneth Anger —from Rabbit's Moon (1950)  
Lee Miller's Eye in Man Ray's Object of Destruction (1932)

# Foreword

My first contact with film material was in the sixties. I had received some lost footage of unknown features, and I remember how I enjoyed looking at the pictures against the light. Some years later the overexposed or underexposed transparencies made accidentally with an «instamatic» particularly interested me for *scratching* and *drawing* UFOs straight on to the surface of the film. Ten years later, after much hesitation, and after learning to print photographs, I turned seriously to cinema. My interest in this field grew and grew. My studies in film-making at the *Institut des Arts de Diffusion* in Brussels were not properly connected with visual arts in general, or even with photography. However we had lectures entitled *Structure du monde contemporain* and *Phénomène plastique* given by a genial philosopher-semiologist, Henri Van Lier. Each of his lectures were new experiences for me. I did not enjoy the film school atmosphere but I acknowledge the influence of Van Lier and a few others in the new way of seeing the world of arts that I acquired. A jump of ten years again found me in Finland at the end of the 1980s and teaching photography and video. I was also preparing my first personal exhibition and was completing my studies in cinema at the *University of Art and Design* of Helsinki. I would like, at this point, to thank some at least of the people who gave me the opportunity to continue studying cinema and finally graduate: Prof. Jukka Pellinen, Prof. Ywe Jalander and Director Juha Rosma, then Head of the *Department of Cinema Art*. My final work in the *University of Art and Design* consisted of two distinct entities. In the first I proposed an analysis of the stages I had gone through when directing a short commercial video, in this case, the analysis of a totally non-artistic compromise. The second, on the other hand, was a totally free topic, remote from the rigid structure of film-making in general: an anthology of experimental videos. The extremes represented by these topics symbolised quite well my situation as a teacher in audiovisual communication: teaching cinema is not only teaching a visual and social language, but also a chronicle of individual visions. Though I mostly made experimental films

or videos and no fiction —I long ago lost interest in that— nonetheless my accidental involvement in teaching cinema kept me in close contact with the nature of narrative cinema and, paradoxically, I still love it as a spectator. With time, I became more and more interested in the essence of photography, cinema, video and even music and sound, which explains my collaboration with musicians in my exhibitions. In 1999, the chairman of *The Center of Creative Photography* in Jyväskylä, Lecturer Kimmo Lehtonen, put me in contact with Dr. Jarmo Valkola who suggested that I should start some research for a licentiate degree in the *Department of Art Education* of the *University of Jyväskylä*. I thank both of them for that opportunity. The topic of the research was obvious to me: Man Ray. Why Man Ray? In a nutshell —if I may strike a very personal note here— I felt that he was *a kindred spirit*; and I realised at the same time that though I had known his films for a long time, he was, as an artist, a total mystery to me. The relation Man Ray had to cinema as a photographer really intrigued me and I understood early on that it was the lack of spontaneity, improvisation, independence and freedom that made us suspicious of narrative cinema. On the suggestion of Dr. Valkola, I extended the study to include experimental film and video. Interest in Man Ray's time and of course in Dada substantially increased the range of my topic, and Dada in turn took me into the dialectic of all the arts. At this critical stage in my research there was a professional break of about three years during which this study progressed little. Meanwhile the head of the department had changed and Dr. Valkola had departed.

I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Pauline von Bonsdorff for having spontaneously offered to direct my research from the point it had by then reached, and for her suggestion that I should raise it to the level of a doctoral thesis; she helped me greatly by giving a philosophic resonance to my thinking, by suggesting many books, and by her constructively critical attitude. I would like to thank the *Department of Art and Culture Studies* (Taiku) for financial supporting; Prof. Tom Sandqvist for the reviewing of the study; my *cinema-loving* mother for her patience with the staff when researching material for me in the *Cinémathèque de Belgique*; and the *Finnish Film Archives* for their more exemplary service and kindness; Lecturer Roger Noël Smith for his language checking and his creative attitude; Anu; and finally I would like to thank all the other people whom I regret I am unable to mention here who have contributed in their various ways to the *Vision of the Cyclops*.

Savonlinna, July 10, 2008

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# Introduction



## Perspectives

The absence of a study of Man Ray as a visionary filmmaker has to date been a major gap in studies of 20<sup>th</sup> Century experimental cinema. The first complete study on Man Ray's cinema was a publication by the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, as late as 1997: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*. That publication, which became one of my principal sources on Man Ray's films, does not, however, handle his vision in photography or painting at all, and provides only few connections to the so-called marginal cinema, and none with video. The study was edited under the direction of Jean-Michel Bouhours and Patrick de Haas after the discovery of new film material in 1985, in the loft of Man Ray's atelier Rue Férou, and in 1995 in the archives of Ady Fidelin.

I personally became interested in doing research into the films of Man Ray in 1999, completely ignorant of those recent discoveries, and remembering mostly the impression that *le Retour à la raison* had made on me when studying the cinema in Brussels, in the late seventies. I rediscovered the art of Man Ray through photography more than ten years later when I became involved in teaching photography, a discipline in which I was self taught. The discovery of Man Ray's painting and objects came as a totally new world in addition to his camera work. I quickly understood that I could not study the cinema of Man Ray as a «director of movies», nor as «*directeur du mauvais movies*»: I needed to understand his vision, his art, his life, his century.

In my research I proceeded from the general to the particular, from history to the man and the artist, from visual arts to cinematography, from cinematography to vision.

This study adopts three principal approaches. The first examines artistic vision in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the second, the eye behind the eye of the camera; the third, the development of audiovisual techniques linked with art-education problems at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In order to shape the general developments of the arts during the modern century (1900–2000) I have used not only several encyclopedias and general works on modern art such as *Art in Theory 1900–2000*, Read's *A Concise History of Modern Painting* (1968) and Ferrier's *Art of Our Century* (1988) but also more specialized works centred on each local topic of my research, like Hulthen's massive *Futurismo & Futurismi* and Droste's unique work *Bauhaus*. I have read many works on Dada and Surrealism<sup>1</sup> but the strongest impression was given by the testimonies of artists themselves. For instance, after reading Man Ray's *Self Portrait, 1963*, Hans Richter became an important source through his own book *Dada, Art and Anti-art* (1964), especially when it is combined with his interview (in French) by Philippe Sers in 1971 that was published in 1997 under the title *Sur Dada*. It was indeed one of the early aims of this study to privilege testimonies of artists as research material in analysing the phenomenon of artistic vision, with the subsequent idea that what seems sometimes a loss in accuracy often has a compensating gain in authenticity. Here I would like to emphasize new current trends in the scientific fields that provide a kind of balance to the rational-scientific with their focus on chance, the spontaneous and the intuitive. I shall at once be remarking that some pioneer-artists in filmmaking were *naturally* the pioneers in film theory, a fact that is not even raised in academic discussion today. Similarly the dilemma in research methods can be observed in the discussions engaged within the discrete fields of scientific knowledge and artistic research and also between them. For instance «scientific research in arts is today a stabilised process of paradigms and discursive methods such as art history, aesthetics and semiotics»<sup>2</sup> which tend to be only descriptive and «neutral» —to avoid the word «objective». The problem with these «normal» methods is that «this kind of knowledge does not much help the artists to create new works»<sup>3</sup>, so from the perspective of art-education these «normal» methods lack practical value.

If *descriptive* analyses of art do not help much in producing new works, «they can be useful in the way they help to clarify and explain the structures and strategies hidden in the works»<sup>4</sup>, in other words the «visions».

This kind of research readily provides therefore «directing model theories» and can be «useful in the education of new generations of artists»<sup>5</sup>. A lot of research traditionally has been purely historical, gestalt-psychological or socially inductive. A new approach, «artistic research», occasionally can be used: it «adapts to traditional scientific methods, some of the methods used by the arts»<sup>6</sup>, a perspective

which recognises some common cultural ground between the arts and sciences. It should be recognised that the arts and sciences have the common need to explore new matters and offer prospective visions.

As I have used both theoretical facts and empirical artistic views and both lead to my suggestion of a need for a theory in video art education, I claim my study to be prospective in both fields.

Avant-garde cinema or experimental film, as it has been the custom to call it, was studied through a large number of very specialized works since the 70s (Sitney (1979), Curtis (1971), Gidal (1976–89), Noguez (1982–85), etc.) that today have classic status. Most of them are in English, and one of the challenges I have faced to obtain a vision that is not restrictively *anglo-saxophile*. For that reason, I analysed some quite localised views too that might seem a curious choice for my purposes, but which in my opinion broaden the perspective on this cinema, the origin of which was essentially French. I shall therefore be making appropriate references to some filmmakers of particular countries like Finland, Poland or Austria who have given rich local color to the well known and documented experimental cinema of the leading countries in this field.

My study does not aim at exhaustive research in this domain, but rather to show the diversity of visions. A large number of experimental films were screened, a «work» that started before this study in the *Musée du cinéma* in Brussels and diverse *ciné-clubs* and festivals thirty years ago. Today I have mostly concentrated my research on short films available on CD-rom or DVD or that are accessible directly on the internet. The *Tampere Short Film Festival* was another place where I could see some retrospectives, such as a complete retrospective of the films of Eino Ruutsalo in 1991 which impressed me greatly. One of the problems with experimental cinema is its ephemerality in the public forum, an inconvenience that the internet reduces today. All possible material on Man Ray was collected —except for original T-shirts!— and most of the works mentioned in the accompanying bibliography have been examined. I retained in the source literature only the works quoted in the text.

The third dimension of my research, the «future», was an investigation into recent writings on video and digital art. For instance the work of Florence de Mèredieu (2005) had the advantage of being concise, varied and questioning. I was fortunate to find very interesting books of the pioneer times such *Video Art Anthology* by Ira

Schneider and Beryl Korot (1976) in which the early visions on video became essential for my writings. In this domain the internet was also a great opportunity because it «shows the future» —in so far as anyone can imagine it in the present— or as the veteran experimental filmmaker Jonas Mekas has remarked, it instantly brings the eye of the camera to the whole world in a few clicks.

The purpose of this study is to provide a general view of the principal visions that have inspired marginal cinema during the last century and to question the development of this cinema today. It gives some warnings, which, against expectations, are not concerned with the danger of new audiovisual techniques, but rather with human resources in art and the teaching of art. The study includes a great number of diverse philosophical quotations that provide a variety of viewpoints. Though this study appeals for a dialogue between the state of marginal cinema and art theory, and also questions from this specific angle the state of art, it does not however aim to provide critical answers on the state of art itself. Instead, *it offers through the diversity of visions in cinema and video art some practical possibilities in art education*. This is not therefore a philosophical work and it has no pretensions in that domain. By being at the junction of art history and art education I had been wondering myself in which discipline this study ought to belong. I believe that I now offer the reader an unusual perspective on Man Ray through a considerable number of new statements, analysis (art history), a re-reading of his work in the plurality of its faces and a projection of his vision into the present and to the future (art education). The analysis of the work of Man Ray could be considered as a sub-thesis in which his work, coupled with the vision of other artists, provides a momentum for the main thesis in this study which deals mainly with artistic vision and video. I have thus favoured in addition to Man Ray the viewpoints of artists such as Stan Brakhage, Luis Buñuel, Maya Deren, Germaine Dulac, Jonas Mekas, Francis Picabia, Hans Richter, Dziga Vertov, and Tristan Tzara among others. I have researched concepts of vision and ways of seeing in the visual arts, in cinema and art theory (Arnheim, Bürger, Calinescu, Crary, Deleuze, Foster, Poggioli, etc.) in order to establish common ground between them and also with my own approach. However my final perspective, unlike that of critics and theorists, is not purely theoretical, but deals rather with the vision of the artists analysed by themselves: I am trying to understand their viewpoints on the world and specifically through the eye of the camera and in the light of current theories. For similar reasons I have



concentrated my quotations only around a few appropriate works of theory. For instance I noticed that Bürger's as a classical argument of neo-avant-garde did not cast any more light on my research which focuses principally on Man Ray and his time —that is to say the modernist period. Moreover I agree with Hal Foster when he says that Bürger «fails to recognize the ambitious art of his time»<sup>7</sup>. It should be said here that the apparent scope in my title of covering one complete century of art history must be informed by the more restricted intention to analyse the development of video up to today and so *my concern with postmodern painting decreases as video art around the 70s establishes itself as an independent discipline, a perspective reflected in the full title of the study and also by the «chronology» that I provide in the end of the study.*

In spite of that, I am as concerned with the discussion of Hal Foster as with the «historicity of all art, including the contemporary», because video is not one of the less important arts. And I am involved with the «critique of the institution of art» that «the neo-avant-garde has worked to extend» and that «has produced new aesthetic experiences, cognitive connections, and political interventions»<sup>8</sup> because it recalls in turn an important aspect of art education.

What then is my main thesis? I define it as the discussion of the main visions of avant-garde cinema during roughly a century of its existence, and of its providing the potential basis for understanding, teaching, and making video art today. I show that Man Ray can be considered as a key figure and that his vision is constantly re-actualised in the new media. His cinematic vision is much larger than a dadaist one. I have worked in a kind of global, spatial and temporal puzzle that Hal Foster would call «a model of deferred action, a relay of anticipation and reconstruction»<sup>9</sup> observing that «each epoch dreams the next» and so doing «it revises the one before it»<sup>10</sup> :

Each theory speaks of changes in its present, but only indirectly, in reconstruction of past moments when these changes are said to have begun, and in anticipation of future moments when these changes are projected to be complete: thus the deferred action, the double movement, of modern and postmodern times.<sup>11</sup>

The analysis of a few photographic works by Man Ray in addition to the analysis of *Emak Bakia* is a relevant part of the study for the same specific purpose. My own experience in art is also pertinent in this connection, since, though I have not

brought my own artistic production into direct consideration, I nonetheless want the reader to be aware of the fact that I have also developed my own vision—which theorist has not?— that combines intuitive and rational thinking and that, to some extent, my critical attachment to or apparent detachment from some topics—*concerned but not indifferent*— must be informed by my own actual experience in the field; and therefore *like any other artistic or even scientific work*, it is, of course, *subjective*.

The general method of this work can therefore be described as both global and specific, sometimes examining the linear sequence of history and sometimes examining only one particular time. It proceeds by juxtapositions of the empirical artist's views as discussion material, historical facts, philosophical visions and finally personal choices.

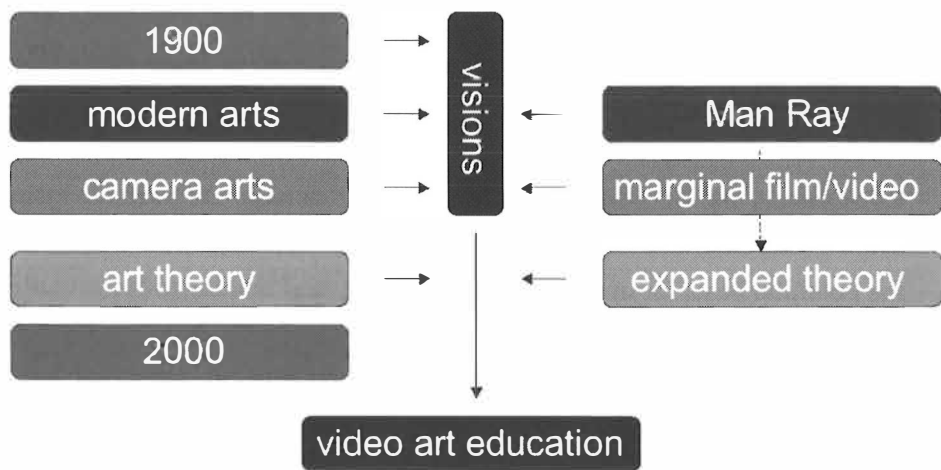


Fig. 1: Structure of the Study

### [biographical notes on man ray]

Man Ray (1890–1976), painter, illustrator, typographer, designer, photographer, filmmaker, object creator, inventor and writer, always described himself as being first and foremost a painter. Perhaps, in the last resort, he did not fully fit into any of these professions. In each field he investigated he brought his personal vision and creative innovation.

Man Ray is a key figure in New York Dada, in French Dada and in Surrealism. During the brief life of New York Dada (1918–20), which basically depended upon the trio Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray and Katherine Dreier<sup>12</sup>, Man Ray corresponded with Tristan Tzara (1896–1963), the main figure in French Dada, who first left Romania for Zurich (where Dada was founded in 1916) and then went to Paris. At that time, in New York, Man Ray developed much of the talent of inventiveness and singularity of vision he needed in his long career. Each choice, not only in art, was a new challenge. Another special aspect in his art was the position he gave to intuition, risk and chance: in fact, the most important «tricks» he invented were the result of pure coincidences. The criterion of improvisation certainly differs from the Italian Futurist vision at that time, which had developed an important system of dynamic rules in visual arts and had, paradoxically, quite an influence, at the beginning, on dada graphic art —and from Apollinaire, who, in *Calligrammes* (1918), wrote poetry under the same dynamic rules. Where the Italian Futurists were orientated toward scientific progress, with a new role for art and a strong political faith, the Dadaists wanted to mix all the arts (Gesamtkunstwerk) but also to bring politics into anarchy. Both however had in common a hatred of Classicism, and both had debts to Cubism.

The roots of Man Ray's unconventionality are certainly linked with his relatively poor social background on the one hand and nearby anarchistic social movements on the other. Tom Sandqvist has remarked that «American anarchism has a double tradition: the locally dominant individualism and the revolutionary spirit of German socialists who emigrated to the country».<sup>13</sup> Hundreds of anarchistic figures at that time like Emma Goldman, the author of the journal *Mother Earth*, were seized and expelled from the country. Most of the radical left was centred on the East Side Jewish ghetto and Greenwich Village, which became a community «compared to Montparnasse or Montmartre in its atmosphere and its significance in the cultural aspect»<sup>14</sup> and from which «it is said that the physical limits are missing, because in question is rather more the general spirit, mentalities, character and temperament than the simple geographic delimitation».<sup>15</sup> While loosely defined, this area was nonetheless full of intense life, with its independent and bohemian spirit, its intellectual fusion of liberalism, feminism, socialism, anarchism, equality and democracy and importantly it was also the nest of activist schools and galleries which had an influence on Man Ray.

Having emigrated to Paris in 1921 and rejoined Dada, Man Ray was thus fully involved in the revolutionary art stream of 1911–23. Although he had great admiration for the Classics, Ingres especially, he also admired modern exhibitions in galleries such as the Daniel Gallery or Stieglitz's 291. And in particular he was greatly influenced by the Armory Show of 1913.

Man Ray was, however, an outsider without dogmatic views. He succeeded in being in constant contact with the main personalities of the French and German avant-garde and occasionally with important American artists, but still had the opportunity to follow his own creative intuition. He was very critical of other photographers in general (Stieglitz, Atget, Moholy-Nagy and Lee Miller, for instance) but permitted himself all kinds of improvisation, indiscipline and spontaneity as long as that did not put creativity—and pleasure—in danger. Though Man Ray is generally recognized as one of the most inventive artists of our time, his output is considered to be definitive of the spirit of New-Realism (or French Neodadaism). His close friend Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) who was important for conceptual arts in general, was both radical and obsessional, while Man Ray was critical and *bricoleur*. Both had affinities with kinetic experiences. Man Ray's importance grew in the fields of portrait and fashion photography rather than in painting. However, his principal visionary output, undoubtedly, was in creative photography and experimental film; his objects, as we shall see, differ greatly from the ready-mades of Duchamp, but are visionary too.

Man Ray died at the age of 86, at the time when the first videotape recorders appeared as possible tools for performance artists—originally meant to record happenings. Structural experimental film was also then at its peak. During the nineties, about twenty years after the death of Man Ray and the definitive decline of experimental film, a new art medium had progressively grown in importance: video art. In various clips, many of the contemporary artists and critics have revealed a special familiarity with Man Ray's vision. The modernity of that vision has produced a new type of images, for instance, commonly used by publicity and television graphics today. The new media have not yet fundamentally transformed the modern iconography, and the opposite is the case, as they have strengthened it. For instance interactive arts have reinforced the dadaist ideal of blending all the arts. With the dawn of this new century, the future of the art of motion is delineated mainly by digital cinema and global communication, in which speech, sound,

pictures and writing will be undifferentiated. One could ask how it can be that, despite such enormous technical progress, the image has been so little transformed. Why, for instance, does the digital image infallibly imitate its earlier modern precursor.

Man Ray had small means but they gave him great creative power. When Man Ray moved to Paris in 1921, Dadaism was already in decline. Hans Richter has noted that in fact the ultimate goal of Dadaism, as a nihilist art movement, was finally to destroy itself. Thus in art history Dada appears to be the necessary step which has prepared the ground for Surrealism. The influence and verve of Tristan Tzara was progressively replaced by the determination of a French writer: André Breton. The change did not, however, affect Man Ray. It is interesting to observe that some of Man Ray's visions were typically already surrealist before 1923, when Surrealism started.

Through the golden years of Surrealism his success as a painter was moderate, and, in point of fact, almost non-existent. Photography in the thirties was for him the basis of his existence, and it is also as a photographer, especially a portraitist, that he has reached the public today. Man Ray was, however, much more than a portraitist, even more than a simple surrealist photographer. He came to photography by accident, as he came to cinema by accident. To question the dadaist or surrealist attitude of Man Ray is to question the relationship between these movements, and it will be the center of this debate when analysing *Emak Bakia*. Are these movements «attached» or «demarked» to or from each other? One can determine a movement by its means as well as its goals. It is even more interesting to question how Man Ray is «attached» to or «demarked» from these movements. When Man Ray wrote to Tristan Tzara, in June 1921, that «dada cannot live in New York. All New York is dada»,<sup>16</sup> it is like a «self-manifesto» representing a blend of desire to belong and a desire to conserve freedom and autonomy: Man Ray *is* New York and «will not tolerate a rival»<sup>17</sup>. We are going to see that instead of the usual opinion that Dada extends to New York, Dada met Dada in New York, through diverse personalities admirably described by Tom Sandqvist as pre-dadaist or *borderline people*.<sup>18</sup> Since the neodada period, there has been a revival and re-reading of Man Ray's art. The more visual arts reach new creative gates, like recently in the development of digital techniques, the more artists rediscover the basic concepts of Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray. Both lived fully, both turned to Surrealism but in a way both overreached

its goals. Both had an internal fire, a vision à l'état sauvage<sup>19</sup>, an eye cacodylate<sup>20</sup>, the proper eye for a «surrealist». Sandqvist defines this type of character as a «border-person»<sup>21</sup>; as an «outsider and unrecognizable, for-ever and un-problematically somewhat involved».<sup>22</sup> For the border-person «truth is turbid and dark [...], the experience of truth is in the no-man's land between knowledge and ignorance [...] a refuge against the traumatic experience»<sup>23</sup>; «her relationship to the others is by nature dominantly narcissistic»<sup>24</sup>; «characterized with an interest in self erotic excitation and sexual ambivalence»<sup>25</sup>, a border-person can experience herself as free of dependence on others, and her language is rather audiovisual: the border-person reaches an exterior reality mostly by dialogue with pictures or being especially exposed to compromises between audio and visual stimuli.»<sup>26</sup>

Video art, performances, objects and interactive installations have their roots in the early twenties avant-garde, and more particularly in experimental film and video, Man Ray's heritage is undoubtedly important and its importance grows with time—and the citation of his work via commercial means. Man Ray said in a late interview: «What seem to be the tricks of today will be the truth of tomorrow». Further, ironically, he continued: «They said that I am ahead of the times too. No! ...I am of my time; it's the others: they are behind the times!»<sup>27</sup> ...and standing before the borderline.

### [on perception and vision in expanded cinema and video making]

This study provides an analysis of the transformation of vision in the visual arts and specifically in avant-garde cinema and video through the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its avant-garde. The understanding of mechanisms of artistic vision as a complex mental and psychic process through perception, conscious and also unconscious, helps to investigate the spirit of contemporary video art and its educational possibilities.

Because it acts in a direct manner upon the spectator in presenting to him concrete people and objects, because it isolates him by virtue of the silence and darkness from what might be called his *psychic habitat*, the cinema is capable of putting him into a state of ecstasy more effectively than any other mode of human expression. But more effectively than any other, it is capable of brutalising him. And unhappily, the great part of present-day cinema production seems to have no other mission: the screens rejoice in the moral and intellectual emptiness in which the cinema prospers; in effect, it limits itself to imitating the novel or the theatre with the difference that its means are less rich to express psychology: it repeats to

satiety the same stories which the nineteenth century was already tired of telling and which still continue in contemporary fiction.<sup>28</sup>

Luis Buñuel (1900–1983), the only filmmaker whose production remained at all times more or less surrealist and true to its original roots, tells us that cinema could have been a much more specific art, more independent and free from its current narrative function, an art close to our dreams (in a large sense).

Sometimes the essence of cinema spurts unexpectedly from an anodine film, from a farce or a crude novelette.<sup>29</sup>

What is not narrative cinema or documentary and what is not Buñuel's cinema is therefore «something else», probably what is called the other cinema, the meta-cinema, the expanded cinema, the marginal cinema or the experimental cinema. Man Ray, for his part, said he did not accept the word «experimental»; for him the cinema, as art, is only *experienced* by the filmmaker or the spectator:

The worst films which I have seen, those which send me into a deep sleep, always contain five marvellous minutes, while the best films, the most praised, have scarcely more than five worthwhile minutes.<sup>30</sup>

Francisco Aranda notes that this means that «in all films, good or bad, beyond and despite the intentions of the makers, cinema poetry struggles to come to the surface and manifest itself. The cinema is a magnificent and perilous weapon when wielded by a free spirit. It is the best instrument to express the world of dreams, of emotions, of instinct.»<sup>31</sup>

About *Emak Bakia*, the film we propose to analyse completely, Man Ray also mentions: «this was not an experimental film —I never showed my experiments— what I offered to the public was final, the result of a way of thinking as well as of seeing.»<sup>32</sup> Dreams cannot be experimented with, only experienced.

The concepts of vision, perception, way of seeing, point of view, perspective, visualization etc. are at the same time precise and vague. Many works use them abusively in ambiguous purposes and contextual orientations. Dictionaries give to the word vision —coming from Latin *videre* (to see)— several meanings, three of which directly concern my field: vision as ability, as mental image and as a view of the future. These are the virtues of artistic vision.

The Oxford Dictionary<sup>33</sup> identifies six meanings all of which could ultimately also fit into my analysis:

- 1° the faculty or state of being able to see
- 2° the ability to think about the future with imagination or wisdom
- 3° a mental image of what the future will or could be like
- 4° an experience of seeing something in a dream or trance, or as a supernatural apparition
- 5° the images seen on a television screen
- 6° a person or sight of unusual beauty

The Cambridge dictionary<sup>34</sup> is more succinct and gives to vision as mental image the force of an *idea* and as experience of seeing, something *which does not exist physically*; this last faculty can be provoked by *drugs* or *mental illness*; as a projection in the future, a faculty to plan *in a suitable way*. The origin of the word *vision* common with *video* is of course to the fore in this study.

The word «perception» —from Latin *percipere*— is above all connected to all of the senses —not only visual— and emphasizes an intuitive process of understanding<sup>35</sup>:

- 1° the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses
- 2° the process of perceiving
- 3° a way of understanding or interpreting something
- 4° intuitive understanding and insight

It should be remarked that from a cognitive science perspective, words (written or spoken) are largely processed by the brain's left hemisphere, while pictures (moving or still) are largely the province of the right. Therefore it should be important to differentiate between contexts of perception, as in this case when speaking of art and media. The case of cinema and video is very interesting from the point of view that cinema or video are experiences which involve *more* than only sight —sight and sound. But does not every medium —poetry for instance— involve more than one sense?

William C. Wees writes:

For the recurring relationships between image making and visual perception, I have coined the expression «visualization of sight» and applied it in two different but clearly related senses. In its primary sense it refers to pictures («still» or «moving,» drawn or painted or



photographed) that are intended to be equivalents of our actual experience of seeing.»  
[...] In its secondary sense, visualization of sight refers to diagrams, models, and instruments of various sorts that reveal something about how sight occurs, whether or not they were originally intended for that purpose. In one way or another they give visible form to some aspect of the processes that produce sight.<sup>36</sup>

The point Wees reveals is also that image perceiving and image making are different operations which obviously do bring into play different faculties of cognition. In the first chapter I will try to differentiate between the concepts of perception and vision, not with the purpose of redefining one or the other, but to show that despite the fact that they are often employed confusedly as synonyms, they *could* describe slightly different operations —though in practice in common parlance they do not. The importance for me is therefore more to differentiate between operations than to play the role of a linguist. Briefly, my position will be that perception is a general faculty, while vision will be restricted in this study to the perceptive and cognitive action of the *artist* —which will be supposed to happen in both hemispheres of the brain. In the text, I will use both *vision* and *artistic vision*: the first being the perceptive visual ability and cognitive interpretation, and the anticipative originality of the artistic as well, the second *artistic vision* emphasizing the creative mode. By contrast with general usage, I thus link perception to understanding and vision to the action of creating, the differentiation between vision and artistic vision being more a question of form than intention. For instance saying «the artistic vision of Man Ray» could sound like a pleonasm. The reader who does not yet make the difference will probably accept the pragmatic fact that nobody can «perceive» in the dark or in the future, but anybody can have «visions» in the same conditions. The restrictive way of using one or the other does not therefore contradict their general definitions; but their more narrow use in this study will help to differentiate the stage of creative process. When perceiving one is an observer, when «visualizing» one becomes a creator. The artistic visualization, visualization of sight, or vision are *experienced perpetuations* and *creative transformations* of sight, a point particularly well understood by Sandqvist:

A force which creates and perpetuates the universe is embodied by the artist;  
The artist reveals [universal] truth and transforms it into a singularity by a particular work of art. He fashions a vision of the soul of life which is that singularity in perpetual transformation: it is not the image of a static perception of a durable virtue, but permanence itself.<sup>37</sup>

This is also the same idea supported by the poet Antonio Porchia when he says that «the virtues of a thing do not come from it: they go to it» or «what words say does not last. The words last. Because words are always the same, and what they say is never the same.» Between experience and experimentation is the same distance, and it is partly for the same reason that Bergson gives priority to intuition and Sartre to freedom: existentialism expresses «the prevailing sense of onerous opportunity, of the pressure to act individually upon whatever possibilities presented themselves. Sartre's theme of human existence as an inescapable burden of self-definition chimed with the Action Painters' perception of their work as a demonstration of freedom and the very nature of taking action. *We are freedom which chooses, but we do not choose to be free. We are condemned to freedom.*»<sup>38</sup>

Cinema poetry is a concept different from experimental film. An idea of a critical approach or a well-planned study that is a rational, scientific type of process, is linked to experimental film. The kinetic and cinema pioneers (Muybridge, Marey, Bragaglia, Survage, Duchamp, Eggeling, Richter, Ruttmann and Vertov) all had different motivations, different approaches. Edward Muybridge was not properly interested in producing movement, but rather in decomposing it: he was motivated by scientific exactitude: *Animals in Motion* was presented more as an encyclopaedia than an artistic topic. If today the result seems to us to be «highly artistic», it is for another reason. Jules Marey's first attempt was to record movement. He recorded movement with the idea that movement should be recorded as concretely as insects are collected in a box by the entomologist. Because it questions the real nature of movement his work, published in *La Nature*, had strongly impressed the Italian futurists. Obviously, Muybridge and Marey were not actually concerned with cinema but with chronophotography (plate 6).

Leopold Survage was interested mostly in colours and rhythms as a consequence of developments in painting, photodynamics and vortography (plate 6). Thus, he perfected his *Rythmes colorés pour le cinéma* — a paint for the cinema. Survage still deserves credit for being the first artist to come to the conclusion that the spectacle of a cadenced development of lines and volumes — associated with colours — possessed the same power to move the spectator as the auditory properties of a musical work. It is relevant to compare this kind of cinema to music streams reaching colour-sound equivalent properties (chromatic music). The process is

empirical: *experienced*; it works or it does not work. As an artistic method it is reflecting the global trend toward machines and a constructivist approach. Vertov uses the camera as an eyewitness, but his poetry was particular, almost mechanical, poetry of the machine and steam through speed. Around 1920, the way was open for Viking Eggeling and the painters Walther Ruttmann and Hans Richter to what could be called the *experimental Bauhaus-constructivist school* or according to Richter himself, the *absolute film*, abstract cinema.

Poetry can be therefore be a real goal for pure cinema, but like poetry, this cinema is also a reflection of its time. After 1920 Man Ray and Duchamp were improvising different photographic and kinetic systems. Duchamp was working on his first famous optical constructions: *Opticeries*, a pre-figuration of his famous *Rotoreliefs* (plate 6). This time kinetic poetry expanded to space, far from conventional poetry. In fact, for them, poetry was *everywhere*, in doing, in seeing, in thinking. It was the poetry of Lautréamont and Apollinaire, a poetry of words in motion: Man Ray had discovered that kind of poetry through Adon Lacroix, his companion in the Ridgefield period (plate 32). It seems that we are far from cinema. As far as poetry is from mainstream literature.

It is said that photography catches the poetry of light. The cinema transforms that poetry into movement and time through the chemical process of photography and the mechanism of the projector. «There is no *Art of Movement* without shadow and light, the raw material of the process.»<sup>39</sup>

With Eggeling and Ruttmann comes the importance of time. Time is considered also as raw material: it brings the rhythm. With the «other» cinema there appears the concept of visual music, linked to the forms, their movement and their rhythm. For André Breton, cinema is a direct path to the imaginary probably because «the lens of the camera dissolves the objectivity of the real world.»<sup>40</sup>

«L'œil existe à l'état sauvage» said André Breton and so believed Stan Brakhage (1933 2003) with his «innocent eye», a theory that I shall discuss separately.

The first critical argument on the *perspectiva artificialis* appears in Leonardo da Vinci's *Painting Treatise*, in which perception is reduced to a *Cyclops vision* where the eye is assimilated to a fixed and indivisible point.<sup>41</sup> This is what I should call our *first Cyclops* and it will be seen as associated with Western perspective and the eye of the camera.

Marcel Duchamp and the cubists were concerned with these concepts: the search for a new dimension, a fourth dimension. The *rotoreliefs* were kinetic illusions; in *Anemic cinema* an impression of depth is given by the *monocularité* (one-eye reading) of the image: the construction of the effect is based on the principle that *normal* vision is polymorphic and stereo, and thus logically refers to our familiar world. All these illusions of perspective are alternatives to what André Bazin has called «*the original sin of Western painting*»<sup>42</sup>. Wees also quotes Bazin and writes that «The Renaissance theory and practice of pictorial perspective encouraged an implicit equation between seeing and picture making based on the presumption that vision operates according to the same rules that artists follow in producing pictorial perspective.»<sup>43</sup> In other terms it meant that perception and vision were completely blended, a mistake that is still perpetrated in today's various analyses. The principal consequence of that practice was the inability of the artist (and some people today) to disregard perspective and imagine «patches of colour and light». For Bazin, perspective is however only an illusion because «the artist's and the camera's representations of the retinal image cannot be the equivalent of what we actually see.» Wees remarks that «because photography automatically incorporates geometrical perspective, it has confirmed perspective in the public mind, made it «true» and «clamped» it on our vision.»<sup>44</sup>

When Man Ray animates objects in *Le Retour à la raison* and *Emak Bakia* he also uses this «clamped vision» as the starting-point, but the logic of perception —so-called «reason»— is transgressed by an abnormal perspective. Even some painters of the Middle Ages had noticed the possibility of dislocating reality in the same plane, using both linear and diverse «clamped» or abnormal perspectives. Here now another Cyclops is introduced, one that is the eye behind the camera<sup>45</sup>, the vision of the artist through the cyclopean eye of the camera itself and depending on «normal» perception (two-eyed/depth vision), cognitive perception and of a creative moment —as Bill Viola said, obviously extending the allegory of the «blinded» Cyclops of Euripides, an eye «being re-attached to the brain».

With this new allegorical «definition» of the Cyclops I shall thus assimilate not *only* the vision of the Cyclops with the *perspectiva artificialis* (or cyclopean vision), but with the concept of vision itself through the lens of the camera (ways of seeing). Wees makes another comment on the relationship between perspective and the individuality of perception, a relationship that I will also put in relation to the one-eyed vision of the camera and the bourgeois ideology of individualism:

Perspective has enhanced bourgeois concepts of individualism by placing the individual's eye at the apex of the pyramid of rays intercepting the picture plane. «This makes the single eye the centre of the visible world» Thus individual consciousness, the eye-ego, believes itself to be the maker of what it sees. Everything seems to fall into place according to the individual's point of view.<sup>46</sup>

What our «eye» sees and understands —our perception— and what our «brain» looks at and re-constructs —our vision— is not restricted to a technical or a physiological particularity or even to semantic analysis. The power of dreaming, the imagination, the emotional state, the social and the psychological contexts are the elements which contribute to modulate our vision.

There is thus a contradiction inherent to the Cyclops, for while representing the classical perspective and bourgeois individualism, it also represent the modern exaltation of the machine (the camera) to the service of irrational creativity.

Nobody can of course separate «eye(s)» and «brain» just as nobody can separate space and time when describing movement. It is necessary to apprehend total vision —in its constant transformation— like the nature of movement described by Deleuze to operate and proceed by temporal «cuts»: precisely what cinema does,<sup>47</sup> taking instant views of a drifting reality.

The central topic of my study, Man Ray's film *Emak Bakia* (1926) suggests that this film especially must be defined as dadaist-surrealist breaking point.

In particular the film must be seen as a challenging allusion to the common belief that the camera is an objective eye on reality, where the classic «step-thinking» of the genesis of an image —perceiving, dreaming and imagining— are completely disturbed, and where surreality transcends the conventional eye of the camera.

### **[art history, art criticism, art education, art making]**

In considering the personality of Man Ray and the visionary role of the avant-garde, a third perspective will be taken into account: the philosophy of art. The platform of the arts is defined by four corners : art history, art criticism, art education, and art making. Most of the writings on visual arts are understandably by critics and historians. A third type of writing is made from an art education perspective. The common particularity of these three levels of observation is to be theoretical, and

through their means sometimes political. The pictures and sounds created by the artists lie instead in a totally different mode of communication to which I claim to belong. Yet artists can occasionally write too. More often, however, their sources in thinking are not abstract ideas, but concrete facts and intentions (acts).

These levels of observations —what I have just called the «corners»— are what we can also keep as basic perspectives. Other additional perspectives can be found however, such as commercial, ideological, etc. I will state at this point that the principal aims of this study are not political. Yet, because the study is a consideration of the avant-garde, and particularly of independent cinema, it does have some relevance to the evaluation of the position of the artist in relation to society and to his potential capacity to challenge values through his art.

Since the eighteenth century, the problems inherited from [these] older world-views could be arranged so as to fall under specific aspects of validity: truth, normative rightness, authenticity and beauty. They could be handled as questions of knowledge, or of justice and morality, or of taste. Scientific discourse, theories of morality, jurisprudence, and the production and criticism of art could in turn be institutionalized. [...]. This professionalized treatment of the cultural tradition brings to the fore the intrinsic structures of each of the three dimensions of culture. There appear the structures of cognitive-instrumental, of moral-practical and of aesthetic-expressive rationality, each of these under the control of specialists who seem more adept at being logical in these particular ways than other people are. [...] With cultural rationalization of this sort, the threat increases that the life-world, whose traditional substance has already been devalued, will become more and more impoverished.<sup>48</sup>

In Montparnasse at Man Ray's resting place the laconic sentence «*not concerned, but not indifferent*» is engraved, a text with an enigmatic quality that resists attempts at any final definition. Direct traces in Man Ray of any concern with politics, society and even his own Jewish origins are almost non-existent. *Self Portrait* describes succinctly a very critical period of Man Ray's life (WWII), mostly as a disconnected «evasion», an escape to... Hollywood. This unconcern contrasts greatly with the new inquisition at that time by the Nazis of people and of art. Neil Baldwin too has insisted that «Man Ray professed no political ideology» and «became known for his decided absence of political credos» or «social conscience».<sup>49</sup> An absence can also reveal an inhibition and silence, an auto- or self-repression, it does not mean necessarily *indifference*. Anyway, for a Dadaist, it looks like a paradoxical but interesting attitude. The dialectic of the arts and the concepts of art and anti-art,

which were the focus of dadaist controversy, has an important position as a link to art-censorship. For a large part of the public the «green skies» and «blue pastures» of «degenerate art»<sup>50</sup> are still considered as a more serious menace for society than daily violence on screen, especially in Hollywood cinema. Beyond the cult of violence in narrative cinema there is also a certain concept of beauty inherited by classic culture. Anita Seppä<sup>51</sup> commenting on a popular Nazi argument on degenerate art, emphasizes that «expression and creativity» are the two important poles which link art to «real life, its pleasures and values» and by restricting art to «an expressive means which does not allow the unusual, the different or the contradictory» these virtues vanish. Paradoxically, the individualization of expression has currently brought «a reaction against the dispersion of contemporary art and the lack of value criteria» she remarks and thereby she expresses a basic dilemma in art. She underlines the diversification of visions. On top of perception and artistic vision the problem of observation and education is now superimposed, and with it the problem of evaluation. Furthermore there comes the problem of defining the function of art in society and in the same way the problem of the artist's personal freedom. Suzi Gablik, who considers the future (or sometimes the «present conditional») —I do analyse the «past» and «future perfect» in this study— believes that «there is a new, evolving relationship between personal creativity and social responsibility.»<sup>52</sup> She writes recognizing that «some artists have taken offense because it doesn't appear to validate what they are doing»<sup>53</sup>:

Exalted individualism, for example, is hardly a creative response to the needs of the planet at this time [...]. Individualism, freedom and self-expression are the great modernist buzz words. To highly individualistic artists, trained to think in this way, the idea that creative activity might be directed toward answering a collective cultural need rather than a personal desire for self-expression is likely to appear irrelevant, or even presumptuous.<sup>54</sup>

When considering the perspective of art education and elite art in general, personal freedom is a quite relative concept. The overall system of national subsidies and distribution—especially in cinema— is supporting a whole system of categorization and self-censorship which is in effect not far from the idea that «art must be the handmaiden of sublimity and beauty» and that «if art does not do this, then any money spent on it is squandered —the artist cannot stand aloof from his people.»<sup>55</sup> Following the slogan of the «social artist» could come the speech of the «politician»: «art is free and art should remain free, but it must get used to certain norms [...]

People have attempted to recommend modern art by saying that it is the expression of a new age but art does not create a new age, it is the general life of peoples that fashions itself anew and often looks for a new expression... A new epoch is not created by *littérateurs* but by warriors, those who really fashion and lead the peoples and thus make history...». <sup>56</sup> The function of the arts in society is not a simple question, but it is generally accepted today that art is intrinsic to society and has a certain inductive power, which, in an historical way, transcends society: this explains to a great extent the interest toward the arts of politicians and their interest in censorship. <sup>57</sup> In other words it means that, whether one wishes it or not, art is also *act* —as is ironically suggested by the preceding citation which gives the «warrior» a «useful» role in progress. Gablik mythically wants to «reenchant» the whole culture, «stepping beyond the modern traditions of mechanism, positivism, empiricism, rationalism, materialism, secularism and scientism in a way that allows for a return of soul, [...] a release from the affliction of nihilism.» <sup>58</sup> Breton, and with conviction, finds positivist rationalism to be responsible for attempting the submission of the arts to the rational ideals of «civilisation»:

La puissance d'émotion et le don d'expression demandent à être réunis chez l'homme pour qu'on puisse attendre de lui l'oeuvre d'art... Le rationalisme positiviste a eu tôt fait de donner à croire que le second tendait à se mettre directement au service du premier... <sup>59</sup>

The «problem» with Dada was that it gave no answer; the problem with politicians, theoreticians, and most of the critics is that they *always* give alternatives that nobody wants to follow. Recently, some art critics <sup>60</sup> have even been suggesting that Nazism could be seen as a movement shaped by Hitler's «aesthetic sensibility of embittered drifter», a program to remodel the world according to a certain «taste», which believes that «it is not the function of art to retreat backwards from the development of a people: its sole function must be to symbolise that living development». <sup>61</sup> In the same way, one could argue that it is for the same reason that we can today admire the pyramids.

Instead of being only a «new taste» or a «new mannerism», modern art must be seen above all as a rebellion against the glorification of classic taste. Surrealism was the antipodes of Nazism, but with the strange consequence that it functioned too as the action of a funnel and Breton made it the glorification of revolution.



L'art authentique d'aujourd'hui a partie liée avec l'activité sociale révolutionnaire: il tend comme elle à la confusion et à la destruction de la société capitaliste.<sup>62</sup>

The Bauhaus, as an art school, was totally plunged into the political and aesthetic dilemma of art education. It is probably the best example of the conflict between «soul» and «reason». I shall also be considering that institution: it was an important nest of the avant-garde contemporary to Man Ray, but towards which Man Ray probably sometimes had a critical attitude.<sup>63</sup>

My method in the political domain will be orthodox: it will quite evidently be superficial, but intentionally so —not concerned but not indifferent Man Ray himself would say. After this Introduction I will ignore this perspective, which will reappear as the background to Dadaism, the Bauhaus and political Surrealism. In my conclusions I will briefly develop a bridge between «degenerate art» and video art education. I shall consider video as a means of opening new social and artistic (idealistic) horizons, rejoining, partly at least, Gablik's idea of «creative participation»<sup>64</sup> but without necessarily suppressing what she calls the «confrontation mode» and a «form of aggression» of modern art. I will suggest also a *critical participation*.

The confusing of act and fiction is already the orientation of art today. It is seen for example in performances by Santiago Sierra, in which «aggression works as an *oppositional* element to peaceful art conception»,<sup>65</sup> or in videos by Tamás Komoróczy in which a man spends a lonely new year evening in front of the television. There are all «*stories happening as much inside the brain as in social reality*».<sup>66</sup> In videos by the Argentinians Fabiana Barreda and Gabriela Fernandez there is also heavy social criticism: such confusing of act and fiction has brought art to what I am tempted to call a *blend of social abstractionism and conceptual aesthetics*. The problem is large and complex, and it is not the scope of this study to give a wide philosophical or definitive answer but to concentrate on discrete restricted aspects: perception, ways of seeing, and vision with a possible educative output in video art education. The three articulations of this study comprise a whole, and should not be read as independent of one another. Each of them indeed draws energy and argumentation from the others. Man Ray was intentionally positioned in the middle of this study, as he is both one of the chief protagonists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the «hero of a cinematic adventure».

Most of the studies on modern art start with Impressionism as it is a recognised starting-point for modern painting. My study takes a slightly different and earlier starting-point because it concentrates on a rather more visionary aspect of sight, not only the representation of the world, but its *conception* in the imagination (*l'imaginaire*) of the artist. The historical scope looks back beyond the Renaissance as far as Ancient Greece, but it will however be succinct and subjective, with a homage to the artists on the «borderline» including Lucretius, Hieronymus Bosch, François Villon, Arthur Rimbaud and Hans Holbein. As Jonathan Crary has shown, the late Middle Ages also have their importance concerning the eye of the camera.

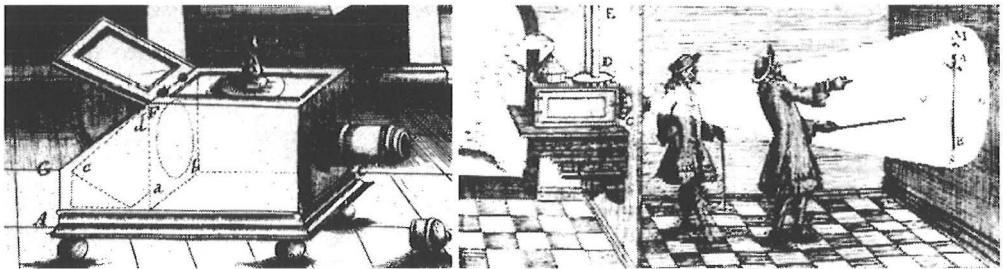


Fig. 2 and 3: *Camera Obscura* and *Laterna Magica*  
from Johannes Zahn's *Oculus Artificialis Teledioptricus Sive Telescopium* of 1685

The *camera obscura* originated as an instrument for observation or representation and brings to the Renaissance man a rational aspect of sight, while the *laterna magica* has represented for long the world of *fantasmagoria* and the imaginary (figures 2 and 3). I will separate photography and cinematography for a similar reason, arguing that cinematography should never be mixed with photography, a confusion—in addition of the *confusion* with painting—for which Man Ray may be reproached and of which I have had my own personal artistic experience.

Because modern visions were born out of violent artistic reactions against a certain humanist heritage and a society at a certain point of development I will examine first the evolution of that transformation. Secondly I will retrace the underlying motives behind each modern art innovation. Through the avant-garde and the art of Man Ray I will analyse the mechanisms of transformation of vision as a complex mental process and will investigate the spirit of contemporary video art. I will show that the opposition of intuitive and rational thinking is the basic dynamic in the art

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and I will propose the use of a new concept of *arrière-garde*<sup>67</sup> to arrive at a better understanding of the transformation of the avant-garde into established, but diffuse art values that seem to perpetuate themselves again and again, like a kind of new academicism.

I now wish to formulate a question. From the time of classical academic values, if something has changed in the ways of seeing today, what has changed? And from that follows another: what function could be given to the visual arts today, and to criticism, art education and, in particular, to video art education? Instead of giving a *solution* —which could be one more sound to that cause— I will concentrate principally rather on the role of video as providing a link to the future, the digital era and internet art.

Concerning the sequencing, in the first chapter I shall summarise the bases of historical, humanist and aesthetic evolution up to Cubism. The second chapter will describe the times in which the young Man Ray was living. In chapter 3 I shall summarize the development of avant-garde thinking in photography and cinema. Chapter 4 discusses the impacts of Dadaism and rationalism on modern art, providing the framework of chapter 5, an historical analysis of experimental cinema and video. Chapters 6 to 8 are confined to Man Ray, his art, his cinema and a close study of his film *Emak Bakia*. In chapter 9, in reference to the preceding chapters, I shall examine the most typical visions of avant-garde cinema during the century, including their sources and beliefs. The conclusions will be focused mostly on the digital future of video art education, with some consideration also of the teaching of art.

I have added to the study an Appendix with avant-garde filmmakers in the 1920s, a Chronology, and a Bibliography. The compilation of the chronology and the bibliography was made originally as an independent project before I began the research for this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> In confronting the variety of ways of employing initial capital letters or lower case I have elected the following conventions for my own text: I give to the movements Surrealism, Dada and Dadaism an initial capital letter, and also to Surrealist and Dadaist as persons, but when used as adjectives I use lower case. In my quotations I have of course conserved the original texts as they were.

<sup>2</sup> Pentti Routio at: [http://www.uiah.fi/virtu/materiaalit/tuotetiede/html\\_files/154\\_ohjaava.html](http://www.uiah.fi/virtu/materiaalit/tuotetiede/html_files/154_ohjaava.html) - science

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 11

<sup>8</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 14

<sup>9</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. xii, p.207 and p. 225, *deferred action* is a term borrowed from Freud 1996 partly reproduced at:

[http://books.google.fi/books?id=Y19oCT0fTVQC&vq=%22The+return+of+the+real%22&source=gbs\\_summary\\_s&cad=0](http://books.google.fi/books?id=Y19oCT0fTVQC&vq=%22The+return+of+the+real%22&source=gbs_summary_s&cad=0)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 207, quoting Benjamin

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 209

<sup>12</sup> The *Société Anonyme* was in fact only one of the many short associations that can be set under the label *New York Dada*.

<sup>13</sup> Tom Sandqvist: *Rajamailla*, 1990, p. 22, transl. JC

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 27

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> In a letter of Man Ray to Tzara, June, 1921

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Or «borderline» person/people, transl. JC from Finnish *rajaihminen*

<sup>19</sup> After André Breton «L'œil à l'état sauvage» (in *Le surréalisme et la peinture*, 1928)

<sup>20</sup> After Francis Picabia (born «Francis Martinez de Picabia») (French, 1879-1953), *L'Oeil Cacodylate*, 1921, oil on canvas, with collaged photographs, postcards and other papers, 148.6 x 117.4 cm, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris The *Cacodylic Fye* became a symbolic and mythic painting for the Surrealists close to Picabia, who was himself hostile to the political inclinations of Breton. It has several meanings that I will develop in my conclusions. For the moment it can be understood as a synonym for «poison»:

Sodium cacodylate: Substance Characteristics: Pure Forms - Colorless or white to light yellow crystals or powder. Odor - none. Uses - herbicide, veterinary medicine. Caution: avoid sources of extreme heat including fire. Sodium cacodylate will liberate toxic arsenic fumes when heated to decomposition. Acute exposure to sodium cacodylate may be fatal. Headache, red-stained eyes, and a garlicky odor of the breath may be the first effects noticed. Other signs and symptoms include generalized weakness, intense thirst, muscle cramping, seizures, toxic delirium, and shock. Nausea, vomiting, anorexia, abdominal pain, and diarrhea may occur. Hypotension (low blood pressure), tachycardia (rapid heart rate), pulmonary edema, ventricular fibrillation, and other cardiac abnormalities are usually found following severe exposure. Sodium cacodylate is corrosive to the skin, eyes, and mucous membranes. See for instance: <http://www.itbaker.com/msds/englishhtml/c0022.htm>

<sup>21</sup> Cf. note 6

<sup>22</sup> Tom Sandqvist: *Rajamailla*, 1990, p. 70 transl. JC

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 162

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 163

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 126

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 164

<sup>27</sup> In *Man Ray, American Artist* film directed by Mel Stuart, written by Neil Baldwin, 1997

<sup>28</sup> Luis Buñuel op. cit. in Francisco Aranda: *Luis Buñuel: A critical biography*, 1975 also at: [http://www.artofcinema.com/Luis\\_Bunuel\\_on\\_surrealist\\_cinema.cfm?pt=2&vid=1170187413\\_1X04X510911802&rpt=1&kt=2](http://www.artofcinema.com/Luis_Bunuel_on_surrealist_cinema.cfm?pt=2&vid=1170187413_1X04X510911802&rpt=1&kt=2)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Man Ray quoted by Francisco Aranda in *Luis Buñuel: A Critical Biography*, 1975 (see also in the article of Aranda: also published in French (originally in *L'âge du cinéma*, special issue on Surrealism n°4-5, 1951 pp. 15-16 (pp. 24-25) reproduced also in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 163

<sup>31</sup> Francisco Aranda: *Luis Buñuel: A Critical Biography*, 1975

<sup>32</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 221

<sup>33</sup> Definition at: [http://www.askoxford.com/concise\\_oed/vision?view=uk](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/vision?view=uk)

<sup>34</sup> Definition at: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/results.asp?searchword=vision&x=0&y=0&=>

<sup>35</sup> Definition at: [http://www.askoxford.com/concise\\_oed/perception?view=uk](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/perception?view=uk)

<sup>36</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 32 also at: <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft438nb2fr/>

<sup>37</sup> Tom Sandqvist: *Rajamailla*, 1990, pp. 42-43 transl. JC, I have translated «idea» by «virtue» as I interpret the intention.

<sup>38</sup> Jean Louis Ferrier: *Art of Our Century*, 1988 p. 27 in which he also quotes Sartre.

<sup>39</sup> Jean-Michel Bouhours: *L'art du mouvement*, 1996, in preface; op. cit. transl. JC

<sup>40</sup> Henry Van Lier: *Les opérateurs*, 1978 feuillet I.2 op. cit. transl. JC

<sup>41</sup> Hubert Damish: *L'origine de la perspective*, 1987 quoted by Bouhours *L'art du mouvement*, 1996, in the Preface

<sup>42</sup> Quoted by William C. Wees in *Light Moving in Time*, 1992, p. 42

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 44, William Ivins quoted by Wees

<sup>45</sup> Obviously one never say «the eyes behind the camera» the eye behind the camera (therefore *another* Cyclops, meaning the «human brain» or what I shall call the *total vision*)

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 46

<sup>47</sup> The real nature of movement and the «false movement» recorded by the cinematograph is discussed by Deleuze in *L'Image-mouvement*, for instance pp. 36-39

<sup>48</sup> Jürgen Habermas: *Modernity - An Incomplete Project*, 1980, reproduced in *Art in Theory*, p.1127

<sup>49</sup> Neil Baldwin, *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 187

<sup>50</sup> *Mein Kampf* p. 35, for the complete reference to Hitler's speech see at: <http://members.tripod.com/~jackbowman/> As «degenerate art» understand futurism, cubism and dadaism. see also the speeches on «degenerate art» compiled by Richard Taylor, (Univ. of Swansea) at <http://www.swan.ac.uk/history/staff/pritchard/propaganda.html>

<sup>51</sup> Anita Seppä: *Taiteen sensuurin uudet vaatteen* Helsingin Sanomat Jan. 1, 2001

<sup>52</sup> Suzi Gablik *The Reenchantment of Art*, 1991, p. 6

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 8

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 6

<sup>55</sup> Attributed also to Hitler

<sup>56</sup> Goebbels, 28 March 1933.: First speech to German filmmakers since the Nazi takeover and the establishment of Propaganda Ministry. The full text was not published until 1936 but a censored version appeared in the NSDAP newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, shortly after Goebbels had delivered it. transl. at: <http://www.swan.ac.uk/history/staff/pritchard/propaganda.html>

<sup>57</sup> The cases of Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein in the 20s are typical

<sup>58</sup> Suzi Gablik *The Reenchantment of Art*, 1991, p. 11

<sup>59</sup> André Breton: *Position politique du surréalisme*, 1935 edition 1991 (Livre de Poche) p. 26

<sup>60</sup> For instance, Timothy Cahill (Albany Times Union), Martin Knellman (Toronto Star) and Peter Schjeldahl (The New Yorker's) for details see the article of Lee Rosenbaum: *The Fine Art of Genocide?* Aug. 15, 2002 in Opinion Journal (Wall Street Journal) read at [www.opinionjournal.com](http://www.opinionjournal.com)

<sup>61</sup> In speech 18 July 1937 at Opening ceremony for the House of German Art in Munich

<sup>62</sup> André Breton: *Position politique du surréalisme*, 1935 ed. 1991 (Livre de Poche), p. 47

<sup>63</sup> For instance: «Kandinski, whose theories did not seem to be reflected in his painting» (Self Portrait, p. 205)

<sup>64</sup> Suzi Gablik *The Reenchantment of Art*, 1991, pp. 60-68, Gablik borrows the words of Octavio Paz.

<sup>65</sup> Helsingin Sanomat Sep. 25, 2001

<sup>66</sup> Helsingin Sanomat Sep. 12, 2002

<sup>67</sup> The concept of *rearguard* (opposite to vanguard) or post-avant-garde has been quoted by Suzi Gablik in *The Reenchantment of Art*, 1991 (p. 18). She has borrowed the term from Peter Halley who calls it *rear guard*. My use of the term *arrière-garde* refers quite similarly to the idea of «hovering». The term in army parlance means a formation of soldiers that close a march —forbidding a retreat. The term is actually used commonly to describe something which comes late (as *les carabiniers d'Offenbach*). Peter Bürger uses the term of neo-avant-garde.

# 1. The Fall of Classic Times



## Vision in Transformation

Woe is me! My once bright eye is burnt to a cinder! —Euripides, *The Cyclops*<sup>1</sup>

«Classical perspective presupposes an imperiously fixed vanishing point and an optimum distance. It reduces the depth of the real world to the illusion of a flat surface. It presupposes as well the fixed viewer. It is a monstrous, artificial, and, finally, a mythic vision, with something of Cyclops and the Medusa in its nature, flattening the world and turning it to stone.»<sup>2</sup>

The times for classical academic values in art seem to be over. My question «*if something has changed today in the ways of seeing, what has changed, and what function could be given to the visual arts and particularly video today?*» does not necessarily find a direct answer in the modernist attitude, as used to be supposed. The postmodern period and the recent *Fin de siècle* have shown that a new stagnation was menacing the world of arts. Perhaps also nothing has changed, and the light of the Cyclops' eye is an eternal fire, an eternal enchantment. The first marks of Modernism curiously precede the Renaissance; perhaps also both were only two faces of the same transformation, a reaction to ignorance. The first was «not concerned but not indifferent», the second probably concerned but cruelly indifferent.

### 1. 1. Humanism

At the end of the Middle Ages, war and social violence were more usual than peace and prosperity; war and conquest was required for bringing the benefits of aristocracy and the power of the church:

*Frères humains qui après nous vivez,  
N'ayez les cœurs contre nous endurcis.  
Car si pitié de nous pauvres avez,  
Dieu en aura plus tôt de vous merci.*

In these words lies the beginning of François Villon's *La Ballade des Pendus*<sup>3</sup> (France, 1462). He wrote it in jail where he was waiting to be hanged. He sees in his own personal destiny the destiny of all humanity, that is to say to be at God's mercy. Villon describes poverty and death with lyricism, but also with irony, fatalism and cynicism, in a way that is almost surrealistic, close to the vision of Hieronymus Bosch (c.1450–1516) and Man Ray's *Portrait imaginaire of D.A.F. de Sade* (1938) (plate 10). Further Villon writes about the hanging :

*Puis çà, puis là, comme le vent varie,  
A son plaisir sans cesser nous charrie,  
Plus becquetés d'oiseaux que dés à coudre.*

## [renaissance]

During the Renaissance,<sup>4</sup> explorations of distant worlds give a more exact sense of western culture, and the progress of printing provides possibilities for publishing faster both new and old texts, in turn providing new impetus for the development of philosophy and the sciences.

The new order doesn't yet create an intellectual revolution in values but brings activities that awaken society. Ancient values are regarded again as the original model. The new humanism is to become the humanism of new religious reforms. For instance Calvin brings reforms to the church, which however provoke religious wars. In France doubts concerning the monarchical system increase.

There is rebellion in the institutions. Protestants are hostile to monarchies whereas Catholics tend to assimilate the person of the king with divinity.

The discovery of the New World that is associated with the sciences and techniques in a general «universalism» subjects all of nature and the universe to examination: Plato is published again and interest in human sciences grows. In 1509, for instance, Erasmus publishes in Paris *Eloge de la folie* (*Encomium moriae, In Praise of Folly*) and a significant event for the arts is the *painting treatise* of Leonardo da Vinci.

Renaissance man is a fine artist not only sensitive to pictures, but also to sounds, perfumes and taste; he admires the human body, loves beautiful houses, furniture,

rich clothes, gardens and, above all, music. He also loves speaking and writing. And he is elegant.

If by the term humanism is meant all theory or doctrine which has at its centre the the human being and his flowering<sup>5</sup>, the humanism of the Renaissance can be considered as positive progress. It nonetheless has also had another durable effect: art became a science or even a technical discipline, a process assisted by publications. Little by little spontaneity lessens and even the importing of exotic art provides less of an impetus for fusion with existing approaches to art. It is the time for a decorative period in painting and architecture, as is strongly seen in France in the school of Fontainebleau. Through high culture, then, at the end of the Renaissance this fine civilisation arises that was certainly far from the spontaneity of the end of the Middle Ages or the High Renaissance with their painters such as Brueghel, Dürer or Bosch.

Besides the virtuosity, refinement and fluency of mannerism there is a cold and fixed academicism which soon becomes pure classicism. Some artists of course find ways to bypass it with symbolic or hidden «messages»: *The Ambassadors* (1533) of Hans Holbein (1497–1543) is a classic example. Thus, we see that besides a very strong humanism a sterile classical art is in vogue, a phenomenon that I would call here the *academic paradox*. This type of *academic vision* has repercussions up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the famous *Crystal Palace* (plate 1) Great Exhibition (1851), through a succession of «waves» named Baroque, Naturalism, Rococo, True Style or Neoclassicism, Romanticism and Realism.

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Auguste Comte and his *positivism* will strongly influence ideas in philosophy and literature. Science develops its own philosophy, its own political and dogmatic principles. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is also an era of fast developing urban demography, with railroads and industry continuing to develop under the influence of that strong positivism. There is the general belief that science and technical progress will bring material and even spiritual happiness. The static *academic vision* has evolved into a dynamic *positivist vision*.

The prodigious developments of science and techniques by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are still today the bases of social progress and its economic dynamics, and



still complement one another, with laboratories and experiments preceding new industrial applications.

After 1850 came the time of energy with steam machines, steamboats, but, above all, railroads with in France alone over 12000 locomotives and half a million railroad workers. From 1860 the engine announces the *Belle Époque* as well as heralding the advent of the motor car. The hydraulic turbine will focus energy to propel dirigible machines into the air. The railroads are however at the centre of the social and economic revolution which generates a huge demand for workers and for capital. It is also the indispensable tool for the mineral and metallurgical industries. The horse is soon to be replaced by the *bête humaine* as Zola called it. Everything is becoming mechanical, including men.

The human eye follows the same development with the rediscovery of stroboscopy (Plateau, 1829) and animated pictures (Horner, 1867, Muybrigde, 1873, Marey, 1882, Edison, 1892, and Lumière, 1895). Jonathan Crary has well depicted the revolutionary impact on the general vision in the 19<sup>th</sup> century of the new mechanical world:

The break with classical models of vision, in the early nineteenth century was far more than simply a shift in the appearance of images and art works, or in systems of representational conventions. Instead, it was inseparable from a massive reorganization of knowledge and social practices that modified in myriad ways the productive, cognitive, and desiring capacities of the human subject.<sup>6</sup>

The fast growth of the urban centres during this industrial revolution also means a growth of consumers and it also brings a significant transformation in the concept of living itself. The shopping centres in towns (in France called *Grands magasins*) reflect this demand. The big boulevards, fashionable coffee houses, and luxury shops are the centre of daily life in the cities; theatres and operas fill the evening time. Society is nevertheless a three level culture: in towns the cultivated bourgeois or middle class with elegant tastes and plenty of leisure time; at the other end, the industrial workers with no leisure time at all; and, in the country, a mass of farmers. The intellectual revolution taking place with Impressionism, partly owing to the industrial revolution, but also as the result of the scientific and positivist movement, was rapidly overtaken by a very decorative style that used all the possible benefits

of the new techniques: the New Style or Art nouveau (plate 1). The *formalist vision* of New Style comes to superimpose itself on the *positivist vision* of Impressionism. (figure 4). In fact, the *Belle Époque* (around 1900) appears to be a blend of academic, positivist and formalist visions with their principles and intrinsic tensions resulting in the transformation of the original humanist attitude inherited from the Renaissance.

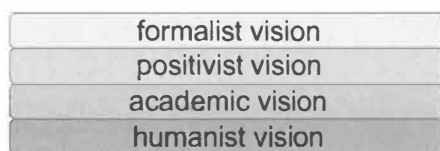


Fig. 4: Vision Stratum around 1900

## [rimbaud]

Alluding to Villon's *La Ballade des Pendus*, Rimbaud's *Le Bal des Pendus* (1870) announces the arrival of modern art. It is no coincidence he would later be the object of a surrealist cult:

*Messire Belzébuth tire par la cravate  
Ses petits pantins noirs grimaçant sur le ciel,  
Et, leur claquant au front un revers de savate,  
Les fait danser, danser aux sons d'un vieux Noël!*<sup>7</sup>

Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891), was the quintessential man in revolt.<sup>8</sup> His short life was spent on the road (like a lonely beatnik of his time) mostly between Brussels and Paris, but also as far away as Java, Aden and Abyssinia. Marginal poet, but also occasionally gun trader, he was in continual revolt against everything surrounding him: the current culture, the moral and religious values, and the social forms of the civilisation. His revolt was against the alienated mindset of its contemporaries, victims of the apparent self-sufficiency of determinism and the glorification of conformism.

«Transformer le monde», a dit Marx; «changer la vie» a dit Rimbaud: ces deux mots d'ordre pour nous n'en font qu'un.<sup>9</sup>

## 1.2. Aesthetics before Cubism

In order to introduce, in the next chapter, the dynamic changes in art after the *Belle Époque*, I propose to summarise some of the dynamic changes before the critical period in which Modernism developed<sup>10</sup>. The purpose is partly to clear up some possible problems of terminology and partly also to illustrate, as mentioned in the introduction, the respect of Man Ray for David or Ingres, but also his complete disdain for naturalism.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by three tendencies of seeing: the classical, the naturalist and the baroque. They follow in time the mannerism of the late Renaissance. The classic style is used to refer to the vision of Ancient Greece or Rome: it is above all a doctrinal vision of art calling for strong academic respect (in the main for the classical concept of beauty). Though it can be restricted to pure academic art forms, after 1500 it means also a certain reverence for a style used, for instance for symmetry, rationality, logic or other conventional references. The period that is called *Classicism* should be restricted however only to the period of time after the Renaissance which uses only classic forms. By Neoclassicism (or True Style) is understood a school whose leadership is usually attributed to David (1748–1825). Neoclassicism was a reaction against Rococo style (around 1700), a return to classical forms after almost one century of «distortions», a new search for purity and simplicity through harmony and classic mythology. We thus see that the construction of the stratum ending at the *Belle Époque* was not a unitary transformation of vision but more of an evolution of forms through successive revolutions of taste. *Naturalism* brings a great confusion of terms with realism. The question is more or less about subjectivity and objectivity, of trueness or reality, and will be important for my study in photography, cinema and video as well as painting. Naturalism tends to transpose the concrete reality (what is) as objectively as possible, exactly in the same way as the human eye can see, without any symbolic or stylistic interpretation. The naturalistic vision tends to assimilate the signifier to what about it is referring (signified), to put them as close as possible. *Realism* by contrast is a stylistic approach grasping the reality as experienced. The term should be used only when describing any art form after 1800; it applies also to the period between Romanticism and Symbolism. Before 1800, Realism can however be assimilated into naturalism. Realist vision in French art could be represented by

Émile Zola in literature, or Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) in painting. Following the manifesto of Courbet, Realism should record life truly and honestly. Strangely, the realist period coincides with The Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851 and it is interesting to mention that it closely followed the first steps of photography (1839) and the naturalist landscape that is also named *Pre-impressionism* (e.g. Constable and Turner).

As extensions of the word *realism* come Social-realism, Scientific-realism, Photo-realism, New Realism, Hyper-realism, and Surrealism. All are specific answers to perception (vision). All are nevertheless taking reality — what is— as the basis for observation.

*Romanticism* (in visual arts) is represented by artists such Ingres, Géricault and Delacroix. It is conventionally restricted, in Western Europe, to the visual art after the French Revolution (Bastille, 1789), under the period of Napoleon. In Germany Romanticism is also linked to philosophy by its rhetoric (e.g. Goethe) and in England to poetry (e.g. Wordsworth, Coleridge).

The formal appearance of romantic vision can be conceived as a continuing of Neoclassicism more than as a reaction against it. Indeed most of the Romantics came from David's atelier. Romanticism differs from Neoclassicism essentially by a new and personal regard for old values. Its new vision is more active, and takes into consideration reactions to moving situations (e.g. politics). From that viewpoint it prepared the artist for social and political criticism, in a pre-modernist way. This means that art is not any more a static value but a *dynamic field in touch with society*. *Romanticism by its dynamism became a progressive and emotional force opposite to the old dogmatism of Classicism.*

In *Self Portrait*, Man Ray gives plenty of references to classic art, especially concerning his school years when he took a course in mechanical drawing:

[...], and my admiration for him [the teacher] was complete when he designed our graduation pin in gold with Michelangelo's head of David in bas-relief surrounded by a circle enameled with our school colors.<sup>11</sup>

Engraving, etching to me meant Rembrandt, Goya, Whistler.

I had gloated over reproductions of Greek statues and Ingres's nudes, had made drawings of them ostensibly as exercises in art, but inwardly knowing full well it was the woman that interested me equally.

[...] for years the old masters had been a source of inspiration for me as a student: Uccello and Leonardo, the investigators; Breughel and Bosch, the Surrealists of their day; and many others through the nineteenth century, when painting was left to its own devices and sources of inspiration, less patronized by the church and state.

**[ways of seeing as result of the evolution of perception]**

Keeping my objective of a fast historical retrospective in mind, and showing how crucial perception is for the analysis of culture, I now propose to describe briefly how the arts have been given a new function with the conversion to Modernism. I intend to discuss later from the same perspective, but in more depth, some artistic viewpoints that are important in my study.

To state that art 's role is not only to be a mirror of its time but also an active and emotional factor needed to catalyse that culture into constant transformation is easier than demonstrating it. The problem is the problem of the fish in the sea. The artist, as it was already suggested cannot «stand aloof from his people», nor can the critic. We can define the way of seeing as the concrete result of the process of perception —an abstract emotional process— and its projection into human activity —an active visionary process— and resulting in new inventions (figure 5).

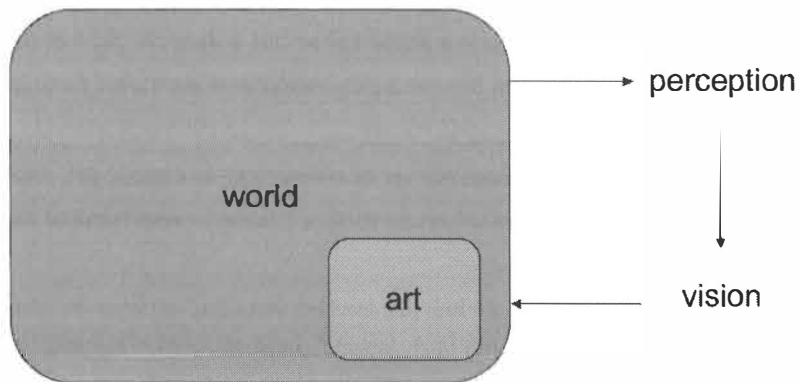


Fig. 5: Perception and Vision as Way of Seeing

For instance, whenever it is asked what «*dada*» means, the answer could be only as absurd as the question and the *dada*-word are. The answer, if an answer is required, must explain first what *dada* is *not* and *how* this «not» became *dada*.

Another classic example was the word *Impressionism*. Though it means «*impression sunrise*», and became the narrow perception of a critic, it still does not explain anything at all: *impressionism must* be explained by the entire positivist vision.

Usually most art historians agreed that modern art starts with *Impressionism*.

I argue that the evolution of perception can be the key for ways of seeing as much as transformation of vision is. Herbert Read insists however on the perceptive phase, which is his own, as an art historian:

The artist is simply the man who has the ability and the desire to transform his visual perception into a material form. The first part of his action is *perceptive*, the second is *expressive*, but it is not possible in practice to separate these two processes: the artist expresses what he perceives; he perceives what he expresses. The whole history of art is a history of modes of visual perception: of various ways in which man has seen the world.<sup>12</sup>

It is usually demonstrated that a «visionary invention» —almost a pleonasm— transforms first the world and secondly the way of seeing this world. In that model of analysis, the artist takes the place of a passive artisan who is occasionally given new tools. Inventiveness is «a gift from the sky» or the gift of brilliant technicians.

Jonathan Crary<sup>13</sup> who seems deliberately to be mixing vision and perception introduced the idea of the observer as actor in the process.

He probably gives to the observer too decisive a role in the process of creativity —or in the process of invention.

Credit must be given for his historical perspective, but by mixing the terms of vision and perception why did he not use then simply the word *observation*?— he does not seem to understand what is pushing some artists of genius like Man Ray to stubbornly use the techniques against their supposed specifications.

Kodak had just put out their new color film; gave me a camera and supply of film to see what I could do with it [...]. Taking an orange-colored filter from my black and white outfit, I put it on the color camera [...]. I found the film when I returned to Paris with a printed note included, explaining that I had forgotten to remove a filter from the camera - the colors were all wrong. Upon projecting the film I was astonished and delighted at the result; the sky was green, the sea was brown, and everyone looked like a redskin or at least having been

exposed a month to the sun. I sent the camera back, disgusted with the technicians; they had probably never heard of Gauguin and Tahiti.<sup>14</sup>

The word *perception* must be understood in its passive sense of *noticing a phenomenon which already exists* —instead of *observing*, which is an active faculty of *giving a meaning to a stimulus* in a rational operation. And then *vision* should be attributed the faculty *to anticipate a phenomenon and subjectively (emotionally) to experience it*. Wassily Kandinsky's (1866–1944) theory of art also draws near that theory of separating (theoretically) different operations (whatever we call the final process: perception, vision, observation, ways of seeing etc.). In *Der Stum* he wrote in 1913:

A work of art consists of two elements, the inner and the outer. The inner is the emotion in the soul of the artist; this emotion has the capacity to evoke a similar emotion in the observer. Being connected with the body, the soul is affected through the medium of the senses—the felt. Emotions aroused and stirred by what is sensed. Thus the sensed is the bridge, i.e. the physical relation between the immaterial (which is the artist's emotion) and the material, which results in a work of art. And again, what sensed is the bridge from the material (the artist and his work) to the immaterial (the emotion in the soul of the observer). (...) The inner element, i.e. the emotion, must exist; otherwise the work of art is a sham. The inner element determines the form of the work of art.<sup>15</sup>

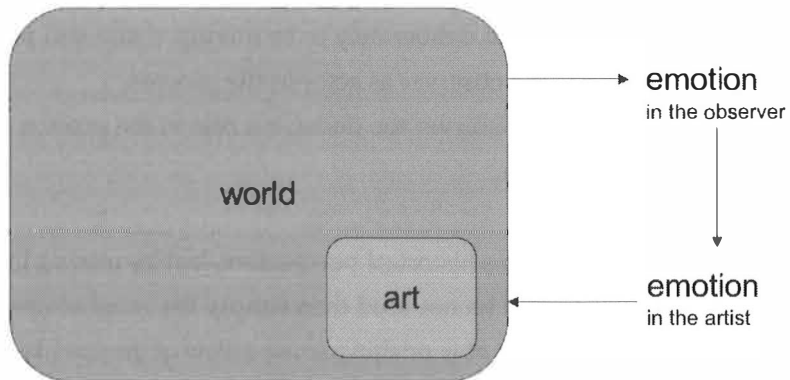


Fig. 6: Perception and Emotion (after Kandinsky)

Personally I place the «bridge» of Kandinsky somewhere between perception and vision (figure 6) and I do not differentiate fundamentally between the observer and

the artist —the first being anonymous the second too subjective— because in doing so I consider it becomes more a question of *communication* than *artistic vision*. The next question is of course to know for whom the artist is working.

In this differentiation of perception and vision (and observation) I do not restrict the argument to the visual sense, but include also hearing and other cognitive faculties. The easiest way to explain Impressionism, for instance, seems to do so by some technical particularities. The point should be more to understand *why* Monet, for instance, reached an obsessional stage in his impressionist experience (plate 1):

Monet began to paint: but shut up in his studio. Not for a moment did he think of setting up his easel at the edge of the pond, facing the waterlilies. It was immediately clear to him that, having laboured for years to create those waterlilies, he had to remain shut up in his studio to paint them, that is, confined in a place where, in order to stick to the facts, he was unable to see the waterlilies. Sticking to the facts: there, in his studio, he could *remember* them. And this choice of memory - rather than the direct approach of sight - was an extreme, brilliant modification of nothingness, since memory - as opposed to sight - assured an infinitesimal perceptual counter-movement that kept the waterlilies a step away from being too meaningless, warming them with a glimmer of recollection, just enough to stop them an instant before the abyss of non-existence. They were nothing, but they *were*. Finally he could paint them.<sup>16</sup>

Nor did Dada arrive out of the blue as a new manner of seeing the world (or as the perception/observation of absurdity of war). Dada was a possible answer (but only an answer among other possible —one vision) and a reaction to a socio-political-cultural context. But it is also the continuation, beyond latent opposition, of impressionist, expressionist, futurist and cubist logic.

Thus the process, including perception and vision —called here ways of seeing occurs in the way that they complete each other and without any special intervention of any specialized observer. Any phenomenon can be *felt* without any deep observation. In the arts, observation is more the method of the critics than that of the artists and their public. The point is to determine who is doing art: artists or their critics? Perception is the attribute of the sensible eye,<sup>17</sup> but to have a vision is the result not only of a perception, but the perception accompanied by a mental (cognitive) process driving to make a decision beside or beyond direct observation. This will be the center of my discussion in chapter 9.



Between the *Gare Saint-Lazare* of Monet (1877) and the *Bottle rack* of Duchamp (1914) there seems to be a great distance. But in the end it is only a short time: perception and vision are not dissociable in art making; there are dissociable only in theory, when *observing* the transformation. For this the question is: is vision—for instance, the impressionist vision— *before perception or after perception*? Is it a way of *looking at* or a way of seeing and *experiencing*? A priori it is both.

Similarly, is the vision of Duchamp *before perception or after perception*? Here the evidence is not so clear, because of the importance of the cognitive phase, in time and in the quality of the decision.

Duchamp and Man Ray in their early years had painted independently<sup>18</sup> in the way of Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) and the Cubists (plate 26). Curiously their iconoclastic and conceptual vision developed in the same direction at approximately the same time.

[...] Man Ray's first months in Ridgefield were spent during the winter of 1912–1913 [...]. Working directly onto the surface of unprimed canvas, he quickly sketched the outline of trees, houses, and the profile of a large hill located in the distance across the valley. Only as a final step did he elect to apply the uneven patches of white paint, taking care not to cover those details in the landscape he had just painted. The results are surprisingly convincing. The exposed areas of unprimed canvas are interpreted as sections of uncovered ground, while at the same time they provide the paintings with an unfinished quality—an effect the artist doubtlessly intended, in emulation of the watercolors of Cézanne.<sup>19</sup>

Man Ray indeed himself confirms his source in *Self Portrait* in the description of a visit to Alfred Stieglitz's *Gallery 291*:

The first show I saw at his place was one of watercolors by Cézanne. I admired the economical touches of color and the white spaces which made the landscapes look unfinished but quite abstract. So different from any watercolors I had seen before<sup>20</sup>

Impressionism carried out further what romanticism had announced in its way: a personal vision but also execution through the artist's own sensations. Impressionism was the last step to accede to the view that art can be something other than a tool for describing reality. Or further that a painting can be a masterpiece without presenting any concrete subject.

It is worth stating that we can speak about the object of a painting instead of about the subject. Furthermore the storm created by the Impressionists could be as well explained by social and moral devices.

The social and moral impact can be understood by the unconventionality of the subject matter, and also in the way it is treated. Pierre Francastel<sup>21</sup> distinguishes in Impressionism the idea of vision as opposed to the idea of execution. The concept of the relationship between the artist, the work and the public is going to be disturbed. The concept of freedom in front of the subject *and* the canvas, already experienced in some ways by the romantics, is now becoming the object of the painting itself. This can explain why there are almost as many kinds of Impressionisms as there are Impressionists.

Besides the core painters of Impressionism (Monet, Manet, Renoir, Sisley, Degas...) there are individuals such Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin and van Gogh who take advantage of the revolution and become emotionally more *expressive* as an alternative answer to the new conventionalism which comes in the wake of Impressionism. Their vision is linked to the new vogues of fashion, exoticism and introspection. The symbolist group besides had its connection to literature from which it had originated. Verlaine, Mallarmé and Baudelaire are the main figures in the group of symbolist writers. They are of primary significance for their connections with visual arts and more specifically concerning the question of surrealist literature or surrealist painting. French poetry came early in the life of Man Ray, with the help of his first companion, Adon Lacroix, a Belgian poet deeply involved with French avant-garde literature who translated for Man Ray poetry by Rimbaud, Apollinaire and the Comte de Lautréamont. Neil Baldwin<sup>22</sup> has noticed that it was this last poet who had the most profound impact upon Man Ray. *Les Chants de Maldoror* published in 1889 was the most *surrealist* work of its time —with debts to de Sade and Dante.

One day, when Man Ray and Adon Lacroix (Donna) moved to Ridgefield, in the country, Donna went to get her books from town. Man Ray describes his first contact with French literature:

The other case was full of books, yellow paper-backed insignificant-looking volumes in French. Donna began removing them carefully one by one, stopping now and then to turn the pages of one, reading some lines to herself, then translating into literal English a poem by Mallarmé; another by Rimbaud and a paragraph from Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror*, works that were to be adopted ten years later as slogans by the Surrealists in Paris. Then there was Apollinaire, whose *Calligrammes* played havoc with typography, who defended the young Cubists. And Baudelaire, with his odes to his mistress, his translations of Poe, bringing his genius to the French.<sup>23</sup>

The symbolist concept is simple: behind the appearances hides the truth. But an effort must be made to get in contact with it, perhaps through intuition or mysticism.

If they had taken advantage of the Impressionists, the Symbolists nevertheless started to reject the way Impressionism was becoming almost a new academicism. As it should be always in arts, they refused to close the circle. A perception not in constant progression is no longer bringing a vision.

On one hand van Gogh and Gauguin opened the way to Expressionism, and on the other hand Cézanne, the most significant Post-impressionist, opened the way to Cubism. Both Expressionism and Cubism were strong visions. I shall show that the step from Impressionist photography (Stieglitz) to creative photography is a comparable one.

### **[evolution of form as result of vision in transformation]**

By the turn of the new century there were three fundamental lines of development: Expressionism, with a strong northern school and the Fauves in France, Cubism, and a totally decorative stream that was mostly architectural: the New Style.<sup>24</sup> The significant role of the New Style has been often shadowed by Cubism and Expressionism. André Breton, who also admired the architecture of the *Facteur Cheval*, had noticed how the Modern Style had completely transformed the idea of human construction in space, and how it was an architecture expressing «the sinuosity of thought».<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, Salvador Dalí formulates the next conclusion, in connection with his theory of «paranoïa-critique»<sup>26</sup>:

No collective effort has succeeded in creating a world of dreams so pure and so confusing as those Modern Style's buildings, which beside architecture represent by their own, true realisations of solidified desires, where the most violent and cruel automatism shows painfully the hatred of reality and the need for a refuge in an ideal world, in the same way as it happens in the neurosis of a child.

If there is a style which can summarise both the taste of the bourgeoisie taste and the *Belle Époque* from Barcelona to Brussels, it is surely the New Style.

I would like to concentrate briefly on a few aspects of this exceptional *style 1900*, a paradoxical art, with forms which are so strongly present in the years 1895–1905 preceding Cubism. The effervescence of 1900 was undoubtedly a new manner in which to experiment the world. The Eiffel Tower (1889) was a start and a source of inspiration: the new materials (iron, concrete, glass), new building technologies and new summits pointed society towards the future. It was also a new positivist manner to conceive the real and to enjoy dynamism and transportation (car, train, dirigible, Zeppelin), subjects immediately adopted by the Impressionists (plate 1). Pure art could therefore concentrate on pure visual tasks and architecture could independently express its time avoiding any commitment with painting. Here the contradictions of the New Style come in: if it is a return to classical, bourgeois values (through motifs and much ornamental reference to antique art and Rococo art such as spirals, torsades, arabesques and so on), it also represents the apparent disorder of nature. A certain order in chaos or a controlled chaos in a certain order —a blend of spontaneity and rationalism. The decorative trend is also very popular, bourgeois but not elite, and transnationalistic too: in *La maison du Peuple* in Brussels (Horta), in the *métro* stations in Paris (Guimard), and in Spain (Gaudí) etc.

The direct influence on visual arts is quite difficult to measure<sup>27</sup>, but going only by the statements of Breton and Dalí it is easy to guess at the impact it had on young artists. Fourteen year old Man Ray was in secondary school (1904) and was learning all embellishments and secrets of mechanical drawing, typography and calligraphy, and actually learning the graphic trends of New Style.

Man Ray tells us, in *Self Portrait*, how near he was to starting a career as an architect when he finished school in 1908:

[...] I came out with a complete technical training in the fundamentals of architecture, engineering and lettering. [...] Upon the recommendation of the teachers in drawing, it was announced on graduation day that I had been awarded a scholarship in architecture at an important university.<sup>28</sup>

The *Fin de siècle* is undoubtedly a time of intense activity. Before 1900, Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) and Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) had provided the basis for Expressionism, out of a reaction against Impressionism, and a focus for a regrouping of individuals who started to give more importance to emotions and subjectivity. In 1894 Paul Cézanne makes the first *Montagne Sainte-Victoire*; in 1895, Edward Munch (1863–1944) paints *The Scream*; the next year Monet starts his *Nymphéas*; from 1901 to 1904, Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) goes through blue and pink periods; in 1904 Cézanne makes another, rather cubic *Montagne Sainte-Victoire* (plate 1). Fauvism (Matisse, Fauve exhibition, 1905), Synthétisme, Cloisonnisme, Tachisme, Nabis, etc. follow their various sensibilities and intuition more or less in an expressionist way. The technique adapts itself to vision and that vision is not necessarily a collective trend but an individual quest.

Full colours and simple shapes, often with black borders, was the vision of a world without nuances which resolves itself into two fundamental tendencies: first, a decorative Expressionism (Gauguin) with an open door to abstract painting (Klee and Kandinsky) and secondly, a more subversive, less formalist tendency.

As a point of convergence of these visions, one must not neglect the philosophy of creative destruction of Nietzsche (d. 1900). For him, in brief, creativity is a question of fight. This perspective brings to the artwork an inherent concept of destruction (and self-destruction). Perceiving the impossibility at least for himself of basing a modern moral system on God, and the imminent danger of nihilism, Nietzsche sought to set up an alternative, immanent morality of the «super-human» (*Übermensch*) to replace the old transcendental morality.<sup>29</sup>

These visions, or, should we say, this general vision in transformation, from form to fight, brings a new way of perceiving and seeing the world. The artist reinvents his place in the world. Some even choose deliberately to escape through exotic subject matter, mysticism and esotericism (Gauguin in Tahiti, such members of Die Brücke,

Der Blaue Reiter, but also Braque and the young Picasso started to show interest in ethnological masks). Primitivists help to look at art with a *new eye* not «polluted»—, with a fresh and spontaneous, almost naïve attitude.

The *inner eye* or the *intelligent eye* is the result of that transformation of vision. Only two years after the Fauves exhibition, in 1907, Cézanne was having a significant retrospective exhibition at the *Salon d'automne*. It was the start of that new vision. The inner eye of Cézanne made possible the *constructing of space*, which is driving inevitably to cubism (plate 1).

Following a decisive comment of Cézanne about cylinders, cones, and spheres the public of painters such as Braque, Villon, Gris, Léger, Delaunay among others and Duchamp understood that something important had happened. The world of machines and all kinds of mechanical inventions had come to support the new vision, a vision of systems, constructed, imagined, dynamic, changing, fighting. That vision is itself transformation (plates 2–3).

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<sup>1</sup> «Oh! oh! my once bright eye is burnt to cinders now» Euripides, *The Cyclops* (scene 10) French and English translation at [http://www.mythorama.com/caches\\_txt\\_fr/1200\\_1299/1282/1282.html](http://www.mythorama.com/caches_txt_fr/1200_1299/1282/1282.html) and <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/cyclops.html>

<sup>2</sup> Jean Clair: *Opticeries*, October, Vol. 5, Photography, Summer, 1978, pp. 101-112

<sup>3</sup> Published in: Jean Thoraval *Les Grandes étapes de la civilisation française*, 1972

<sup>4</sup> The historical context of this chapter is based on diverse general art encyclopedia (see bibliography). Facts have been compared and are centred on the western world. The work of Jean Thoraval *Les Grandes étapes de la civilisation française* (1972) was a helpful source of information and interpretation for its consistent view of the historical evolution of culture in a socio-political context

<sup>5</sup> As a definition originally in French of *humanisme* by *Le Petit Robert* transl. JC

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer, On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century*, 1990, p. 3

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Rimbaud: *Oeuvres complètes*, éd. Gallimard, Paris, 1951

<sup>8</sup> Rimbaud and Verlaine shocked the French bourgeoisie by their violently outrageous behaviour. Polish director, Agnieszka Holland tells about Rimbaud and Verlaine, characters of one of her film: «I know these guys are very controversial and they wanted to be controversial, especially Rimbaud. He did everything to provoke the bourgeoisie and to fight them. He did it because he believed he could find some kind of truth by going over the border of the normal and traditional.» Rimbaud believed that true art could only be produced through what he called «constant and systematic derangement of the senses.» To this aesthetic end he smoked a lot of hashish. <http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/~hayward/van/glossary/rimbaud.html>

<sup>9</sup> André Breton: *Position politique du surréalisme*, 1935 ed. 1991 (Livre de Poche), p. 68

<sup>10</sup> Cf. note 3

<sup>11</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 18-20 and more p. 269 for the followings

<sup>12</sup> Herbert Read: *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, 1974, p. 12

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer, On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century*, 1990

<sup>14</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 238

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Read: *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, 1974, p. 171

<sup>16</sup> Alessandro Barrico: *City*, 1999, English transl. by Ann Goldstein pp. 97-98 ; the original text is even more explicit: «Monet iniziò a dipingere: ma chiuso nel suo studio. Nemmeno per un attimo pensò di montare il cavalletto sui bordi dello stagno, di fronte alle ninfee. Gli fu immediatamente chiaro che, dopo aver faticato anni a fabbricare quelle ninfee, le avrebbe dipinte rimanendo chiuso nel suo studio, e cioè confinato in un luogo da cui, per attenersi alla verità dei fatti, quelle ninfee non poteva vederle. Attenendosi alla verità dei fatti: lì, le poteva ricordare. E questo scegliere la memoria - non l'approccio diretto della vista - fu un geniale, estremo

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aggiustamento del nulla, giacché la memoria - e non già la vista - assicurava un millimetrico contromovimento percettivo che frenava le ninfee a un passo dall'essere troppo insignificanti e le intiepidiva con la suggestione del ricordo quel tanto che bastava a fermarle un attimo prima del baratro dell'inesistenza. Erano un nulla, ma erano. Finalmente, poteva dipingerle»

<sup>17</sup> Called also «innocent eye» by Stan Brakhage

<sup>18</sup> They meet for the first time only in 1915

<sup>19</sup> Francis M. Naumann: *The Early Work of Man Ray, Conversion to Modernism*, 2003, pp. 37-38

<sup>20</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 25

<sup>21</sup> Pierre Francastel: *L'Impressionnisme*, 1974

<sup>22</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, pp. 37-38

<sup>23</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 44

<sup>24</sup> The New Style is also known under the appellations *Art Nouveau*, *Art Floral*, *Modern Style*, *Style 1900* and *Jugend*

<sup>25</sup> «Les sinuosités de la pensée», quoted by Yvonne Duplessis in *Le Surréalisme*, PUF, Que sais-je, 2002

<sup>26</sup> Originally in: Salvador Dali: *De la beauté terrifiante et comestible de l'architecture modern style*, dans *Minotaure* n°3-4 (Paris, 1933) ) transl. JC; paranoïa-critique: «spontaneous method of irrational knowledge» in Maurice Nadeau: *Histoire du surréalisme*, 1964, pp. 146-153

<sup>27</sup> In *The Manifesto of Futurism* an annexe on Architecture was made in 1914

<sup>28</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 18

<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche's own ideas about creative destruction, as popularized through his *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, had a profound and wide-ranging influence on generations of German-speaking artists and intellectuals (Sokol 1959). See also *Creative Destruction in Economics*, a curious article by Hugo Reinert, Cambridge University & Erik S. Reinert at: [http://www.otherscanon.org/uploads/Nietzsche\\_Creative\\_Destruction\\_in\\_Economics\\_f.doc](http://www.otherscanon.org/uploads/Nietzsche_Creative_Destruction_in_Economics_f.doc)

## 2. The New Century



### Vision in Dynamism

The wheel with an axle is the only contribution that man has made to the world which doesn't exist in nature. That's really the only thing we have ever done. —Man Ray<sup>1</sup>

#### 2.1. Europolism<sup>2</sup>

«The critical reevaluation of the European tradition was in general an important aspect of early twentieth-century avant-gardism»<sup>3</sup>: in this part, I intend to set the general background in which Modernism, particularly Dadaism and the Avant-garde, has developed. First I will present the socio-political development in relation to the techno-economical level of society.

Secondly, I will briefly turn my intention toward the intellectual and philosophical development of ideas showing that the efflorescence of society had implications in the development of the arts, implications to be described in the next subchapter (2.2. Manifestism).

#### [technology, society, politics]

Grand est le désordre, la situation est donc excellente —Karl Marx<sup>4</sup>

The 20<sup>th</sup> century had started on a surge of optimism, but the euphoria lasted for only about ten years. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had been marked by fast technological progress. The first tentative attempt at flying by Ader in 1890 was one of the events announcing the technological revolution. The progress in photography and the pioneering cinema had already made it possible to immortalize the splendour of the *Belle Époque* and its famous Paris World Fair (Exposition Universelle) with the brand new Metro in 1900. If the centre of the Earth had already been virtually conquered by Jules Verne, the flight of the futurist Zeppelin in Germany and transmissions by radio were now attempts to conquer that last unexplored space after the seas and the earth: the air. With H.G. Wells (1866–1946), man was already dreaming even



about going to the moon, the actual event prefigured only two years later in Méliès' *Le voyage dans la lune* (1902), a film in 30 «tableaux». These works also may be said to introduce the virtual worlds commonly associated with media today.

After the invention of a gas-powered engine in Belgium, and a petrol-driven engine in Germany at the end of the century, society enters the world of new machines. Following the «impressionist» steam machines, trains and boats it is also the beginning of a new era: the car era. The first French *salon de l'automobile* takes place as early as 1893. By 1908, the Model T Ford was in mass production. Its advent promises the dream of comfort and convenience for everyone that becomes a fact for many. If it is the time of motors and machines, it is also the coming of electricity. It's a fair of cars, telephones, tramways, lifts with their astonishing electric cables, underground railways, and Edison's invention —arguably the most significant of all— of the electric lamp.

The key concept of progress could be summarised in two words: stream and speed. The general euphoria was only a little affected by social unrest, particularly among workers, and by political disturbances in Russia in 1905. The progress of the unions in France for instance, which still hesitated between a revolutionary position close to the Marxists and a progressive reformism that offered a compromise with the bourgeoisie, gave the illusion that social and political harmony could be possible in time. With the protectionism of Méline in France, social reforms could be made, so that for example the working day which was still up to 14 hours per day as Zola had described it, could be reduced albeit just a little, to 12 hours for men and 11 for women.<sup>5</sup>

Crises like the bankruptcy of the company constructing the Panama channel (1893) or the Dreyfus case (1894), with their considerable international repercussions, were localised symptoms of a larger problem that was dormant until 1914. In France between 1906 and 1909 political demonstrations were increasing and the coal workers went on strike. The strikes were suppressed.

The problems are in fact international: economics and diplomacy are closely interdependent. For instance, to get the needed capital to industrialise its Empire, Russia, which had turned down the help of Germany, had, as early as 1893, also negotiated with the French government (alliance Franco-Russe).

World War I became progressively inevitable: the head of the socialists, Jean Jaurès, had already warned as early as 1909 that the workers' demands and the nations' increasing resort to arms were incompatible. In all European states military

expenditure was expanding disproportionately. Jaurès, his criticism aimed at Germany and Great Britain, was calling for a *détente européenne*:

Je crois que nous pouvons plus que formuler des vœux, je crois que nous pouvons et que nous devons analyser les causes essentielles avec lesquelles nous nous débattons, et je crois qu'après les avoir précisées, nous pouvons demander à la France pour sa part, dans la mesure de son rôle qui est resté grand, de contribuer à corriger le mal dont l'Europe souffre et dont nous souffrons nous-mêmes.<sup>6</sup>

The same year, Blériot had made the first cross-Channel flight. Social instability, technological utopia and overemphasized dynamism became an intriguing cocktail. In 1912, the sinking of the Titanic, a western symbol of technological progress, prosperity and luxury brought to the surface the existential reality of the world: fragility. Luxury also has its dark shadow: France, in 1913, reinforces its alliance with Russia and increases the time of military service from two to three years. On July 25th, 1914 Jaurès and the socialists still tried to avoid the conflict with Germany. The general European destabilisation and the tensions created by new alliances the conflict ignites from the infamous assassination in Sarajevo. On July 31st, Jaurès is murdered.

The situation was hard for the Americans to understand but it was understood by a few of them as a menacing «shadow». Man Ray reports in *Self Portrait*:

In August war broke out in Europe. We figured that our plans to go abroad would have to be postponed - perhaps for another year or so. I was finishing my large canvas; Donna said it was prophetic, that I should call it War. I simply added the Roman numerals in a corner: MCMXIV. In town the impact of the war was more visible. It was a field day for the newspapers with their accounts of battles and atrocities; Wall Street was booming; speculators were reaping fortunes in a day. [...] It was like a great holiday, all the profits of war with none of its miseries. Walking home in the evening through the silent wood [in Ridgefield], I felt depressed and at the same time glad that we had not yet been able to get to Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Among the staggering total number of war dead and injured on both sides, the price of «victory» for France alone was 1,400,000 dead and 3,000,000 injured.<sup>8</sup> Towns and industry were in ruins.

After 1918, the physiognomy of the world had completely changed. Russia was isolated. The United States became the creditor of Europe, a fact that brought

astonishingly swift economic progress and full prosperity for Americans. However France, which had to rebuild itself, quickly recovers its balance.

Politically there is a split between socialists and communists, and the unions now claim the social improvements they did not achieve before the war.

At the opposite of the country, the towns, and specially Paris, become hubs of activity that includes illuminations, concerts and exhibitions. It is a new era of prosperity: *Les années folles*<sup>9</sup> have begun. The general standard of living rapidly improves: developments in transport, especially of cars and planes, and in communication by radio, and in the newspapers, but also in the worlds of fashion, sport, and art, all contribute to social change.

Neil Baldwin, in the context of making a connection with the life of Man Ray, writes:

There was a strong desire to avoid a repeat performance of the Great War, which had decimated the society. The economic malaise of France between the wars was in many respects traceable to the after-effects of World War I. France was «a nation of old men, widows, and *mutilés de la guerre*».<sup>10</sup>

In 1926, Germany's entry into the S.D.N. (Society of The Nations) seemed to provide the promise for universal peace. Actually European countries hesitate between a social policy or a more conservative (and capitalist) attitude, the latter inspiring investors' confidence.

«Bread, peace, and liberty» was the motto of the (French) Popular Front. Its leader, Léon Blum, who counted many of the intelligentsia among his friends, including Man Ray, denounced the practice of compulsory military service, espousing pacifism as the only answer, as Hitler moved to invade the Rhineland in March of 1936.<sup>11</sup>

The American crash of 1929, a consequence of unbalanced policies for production and redistribution of goods, will not affect Europe so much directly as indirectly: with the liberals weakened, overproduction in agriculture, industrial bankruptcies and a failed European policy towards Germany after 1930, Europe will again descend into the nightmare of military conflict.

«I wasn't getting myself mixed up in politics...» he [Man Ray] wrote years later, looking back on those volatile times, because it «might create some misunderstanding by leading people to

think I was politically minded». Every artist of the period had to decide about the extent to which he was going to become *engagé*, or remain detached in the world of ideas.<sup>12</sup>

### [arts, sciences, culture]

L'ordre est le plaisir de la raison: mais le désordre est le délice de l'imagination - Paul Claudel<sup>13</sup>

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a period of intense activity in intellectual life. For instance rapid evolution in the sciences and technology brings renewed interest in philosophy as it questions itself about its own role and foundation in the face of these developments. Psychology and sociology take an active part in those philosophical matters. In this time the scientific essay flourishes. For instance, Émile Durkheim<sup>14</sup> (1858–1917) asserts the independence of sociology as a discipline and identifies its function. With a full scientific comparative method in the positivism of Auguste Comte, Durkheim analyses various social models.

Henri Bergson (1859–1941) is undoubtedly the most popular and influential of the philosophers, and he was directly connected with the world of the arts. Bergson rejects positivism and opposes the rational method with a counterbalancing intuition. For him the rational method serves only determinate topics. In place of reason he gives the spiritual a central role in our mental life. He believes that the human being, less than truly creating, only bears the world as it is experienced<sup>15</sup>. Bergson also proposes a new concept of time by placing psychological time («durée» or «temps concret») in opposition to linear time (or abstract time). He gives the *moi* a deeper value, with a social dimension. Between 1889 and 1907 his essays on consciousness, matter, memory and creative evolution are published: *L'Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889); *Matière et mémoire* (1896) and *L'Evolution créatrice* (1907), his major work.

Bergson's new concepts of memory and intuition influence the world of arts and the concept of creativity. He sets up an opposition between *mémoire-habitude*, an automatic memory made of habits, intended to adapt us to the environment, and *mémoire-pure*, a kind of deep spiritual remembrance. This opposition links to another opposition: intelligence versus intuition, or rational versus irrational.

Intuition et intelligence représentent deux directions opposées du travail conscient : l'intuition marche dans le sens même de la vie, l'intelligence va en sens inverse, et se trouve ainsi tout naturellement réglée sur le mouvement de la matière. Une humanité complète et parfaite serait celle où ces deux formes de l'activité consciente atteindraient leur plein développement.<sup>16</sup>

For Bergson, intuition is clearly the favourite: it goes deep to the soul of the matter and reveals real time. These questions were the focus of surrealist discourse. In a famous publication about laughter, in 1900, he also develops aesthetic ideas: the concept of «*idéalité*» or «*irréalité de l'art*» (ideality or non-reality of art), which is one of the key-concepts of modern art. Bergson's theories will take on some importance in the ideas developed by Gilles Deleuze and the discussion of chapter 9.

I emphasise here Bergson's scepticism about rational thinking which he placed in opposition to intuition, an element which will become central in this study and that I will discuss in the last section of this chapter.

Another very influential figure for this study is Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). The father of psychoanalysis will investigate hypnosis and free associations, and his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) will later serve the Surrealists (and Man Ray).<sup>17</sup> Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1978) will re-establish the foundations of philosophy in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading to existentialism and new concepts of liberty. Husserl sets up philosophy as a rigorous and rational science, making phenomenology a descriptive analysis of «*l'essence des choses*» (the nature of things).<sup>18</sup> Through «*phenomenological reduction*» he reaches towards the pure essence of psychological phenomena. Nearer to the concerns of the arts, the existence of an object revealed by normal perception is believed to exist beyond that perception, which is seen as catching only a few aspects of its real «*essence*». This is of particular interest for theories in photography and cinema, and for instance is one of the focuses of camera-eye and montage theory. Heidegger concentrates the fundamental question of essence around human existence. He develops the concept of «*Dasein*» in *Being and Time* (1927) which leads to believing for instance that the human being is perhaps the only being able to think about existence and nothingness («*das Nichts*»).

Science and society are closer than ever. Because the sciences no longer describe only the world, but tend now also to explain it, and because there is also a

technology for recording and observing (the cinematograph for example), not only do the arts now adopt a new aesthetic (of progress) but they also participate in the revolution of ideas and concepts. New social and cultural values, new knowledge, including looking more deeply into human nature, and into the nature of time, provide a new vision of the world: it is there *around* us, it is also *inside* us. But above all, it is *changing*.

As I have shown, the technological revolution does not spare any field, but deeply involves all levels of human activity and thought: philosophy, sciences, industrial techniques, and finally also the arts, in which from 1884 with the *Salon des Indépendents*, a celebration of the autonomy of the arts, up to 1914, an aesthetic revolution took place such as had not occurred since the Renaissance.

The turn of the century is nevertheless marked by a society of divided values. On the one hand, there is a bourgeoisie which receives all the benefits of new technologies and comforts, refusing to see social claims and international tensions. The impression of happiness and security in the *Belle Époque* was therefore mostly artificial and egocentric. For the bourgeoisie and its fashions there was still a tranquil, decorative, comforting fashionable art that provided new forms, new styles and a taste for embellishment. On the other hand however there were masses of workers whose working conditions had remained almost unchanged since the industrial revolution. They had enough to deal with in the daily struggle to make a living and could hardly be concerned with the arts. Thus the renewal of the art-culture was actually in the hands of a marginal group not directly concerned with «capital». It is therefore easy to believe that any progressive art could develop quite independently of bourgeois values, far from fashion and embellishment, taste and good manners.

The artist had necessarily to choose between two prospective ways: to content himself with forms and embellishments or to be subversive in both form and matter. The first required dependance on the tastes of «high society» while the second makes the artist isolated but free. The latter option comprises individual dreamers free from any strong national attachment. Often they are poets. And often —no doubt because of the solitary nature of their artistic activity— they come together in cafés, around a review, or sometimes in their ateliers.

The Cubists, later the dada-group and Man Ray in his early Ridgefield years are all this kind of free artist.<sup>19</sup> Man Ray remembers how he moved to the community of Ridgefield and made his first contact with poetry:

In the foreground, scattered here and there, stood a few simple and picturesque little houses with fruit trees in between. To the right, among taller trees, could be seen more substantially built rustic stone houses. It certainly looked like my idea of an artists' colony. [...] the poet appeared perspiring and out of breath, with his belongings in a bag and his folding cot on his shoulder [...]. Besides writing, he was a musician and a chess player. [...] we might develop into something more than merely an artists' colony: Ridgefield, New Jersey - our colony was within its boundaries - could become an advanced cultural center embracing all the arts.<sup>20</sup>

In a letter to his younger brother Sam, Man Ray does not hide how much he appreciates the freedom of Ridgefield:

It isn't exactly concern for the future, it is the happy-go-lucky existence without any goal.<sup>21</sup>

It is in Ridgefield too that Man Ray and Duchamp meet for the first time.

1915, Yes and Love

1945, New York; Yes, and chess. Au revoir!

On nous a traités d'hommes finis.

Parce que nous ne finissons jamais rien, dites plutôt: hommes infinis<sup>22</sup>

The freedom of the modern artist, at the margins of society, contrasts with the classical view. However, Lucretius in 50 B.C., a Roman poet and the author of the philosophical epic *De Rerum Natura* (*On The Nature of Things*), provides an allegorical situation. Lucretius «made a comprehensive exposition of the Epicurean world-view» —pleasure based<sup>23</sup>. «Very little is known of the poet's life, though a sense of his character and personality emerges vividly from his poem. The stress and tumult of his times stands in the background of his work and partly explains his personal attraction and commitment to Epicureanism, with its elevation of intellectual pleasure and tranquility of mind and its dim view of the world of social strife and political violence.»<sup>24</sup> In the following verses, Lucretius focuses on free will:

*Denique si semper motus conectitur omnis,  
et uetere exoritur <semper> nouus ordine certo,  
nec declinando faciunt primordia motus*

*pricipium quoddam quod fati foedera rumpat,  
ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur,  
libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat,  
unde est haec, inquam, fati auolsa uoluntas,  
per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque uoluptas,  
declinamus item motus nec tempore certo  
nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens?*<sup>25</sup>

Lucretius, whom I quote here mostly in the spirit of a homage, was also a source of inspiration for Bergson, and I would call him the *âme soeur* of Rimbaud in the world of modern poetry. That *Eternal Fire* (of the eye of the «second» Cyclops) perpetuates itself through the times and their most «modern» temperaments.

Returning now to the century being examined, a new notion of modern art gradually appears, which gives an artistic expression of free will, scepticism of rationalism and a role for intuition. Measurements of time and space change at the same time as science and technology make great strides in their development. The cinema and especially the avant-garde cinema of the twenties is one of the results of that synergy.

## 2.2. Manifestism

Moving away now from a description of society, I shall now proceed «from inside»<sup>26</sup> to examine the visions of artistic movements which have contributed to modulate what we call today «Modernism». It is the method that I will adopt again later with Man Ray and the viewpoints of artists involved in the marginal cinema. I remind the reader at this point that one of the fundamental questions of this work, besides the role of intuition and reason, was what functions to give to the arts. And it is my intention to give some consideration of the educational possibilities of video art facing society today.

Herbert Read writes:

History of art must be written in the terms of art itself, as a piecemeal transformation of visual forms; but this does not mean that we should under-estimate the social and intellectual forces that from the beginning of the romantic movement had been transforming the civilization of the Western World. The visual arts, and all the arts, are in this respect



deeply involved, both as cause and symptom, in the general process of history. The arts have an originative function in this process—they pre-figure and give plastic precision to inhibitions and aspirations that would otherwise remain repressed and voiceless. In this sense artists are socially integrated, and act as units dispersed throughout society rather than as members of one or more self-sufficient and independent groups<sup>27</sup>.

It has already been seen in chapter one how perception and vision were integrated in the same process and how the year 1889 was marked in the life of Paris by the first World's Fair and its symbol the Eiffel Tower. In the new building the results of progress and change were made visible, and the construction sets up a challenge for the future. The challenge is also an aesthetic revolution, not only in a visual or technical sense but also intellectually though the powerful dynamics of change of these times.

The raw metal used in the architectural concept was directly connected with trends in the new architecture to come. It had its equivalents all around Europe. The Art Nouveau aesthetic in its mechanical and technical aspects was not in any apparent conflict with the development of the railways and communications. The *Belle Époque* is a curious mixture of old embellishment and new forms, born from new techniques.

The Impressionists were the first painters to look at the world as a dynamic environment of forms and light, time, and rhythm, including the rhythm of the seasons.<sup>28</sup> It is no coincidence they were more interested before the new century in such «ugly» topics as railway stations and steam machines. If their *impressions* were in 1874 the subject of attacks by critics the group was already very established at the beginning of the century: Monet's *nymphéas* (1898–1905) can be understood also as a withdrawing into himself away from urban fever. But the most important impact of Impressionism was surely more the expression of emotions—still in a romantic way—than on the object of emotions itself. If the Eiffel tower had been built only 25 years earlier, one could hardly imagine what kind of reaction it would have provoked among the late Romantics and the Impressionists. The tower was actually painted immediately after it was finished in 1889 by Seurat (plate 1). There is a good example here of the interaction between art and technology. The Eiffel Tower was in fact the center of great aesthetic discussions, a fact that makes Seurat's gesture seem like a «political»<sup>29</sup> participation by the Impressionists in the issue of the challenge of technology.

Through Impressionism Cézanne has grown into the most influential Post-Impressionist. With for instance *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire* Cézanne is the artist who gives a sense of continuity to the innovations of the Impressionists. When he paints a new decisive version of *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire* in 1904, two years before his death, he is definitively the most influential painter of his time —along with Gauguin, van Gogh, Matisse and the young Picasso (plate 1).

The quest of Cézanne's painting concentrates in perception of the real in a very subjective way. While the classical vision concentrated on reproducing the sensations in an imitative, touching, or dissociative way, Cézanne uses an interpretative vision. It is not only via techniques —in a dissociative and constructive way, as with the Impressionists— but also with his «brain», in a cognitive way.

Mais il s'est vite séparé des impressionnistes. L'impressionnisme voulait rendre dans la peinture la manière même dont les objets frappent notre vue et attaquent nos sens. [...] Le paysage, disait-il, se pense en moi et je suis sa conscience. Rien n'est plus éloigné du naturalisme que cette science intuitive<sup>30</sup>

If the eye is considered as the window of the soul, the retina can be said to be a gate to the brain. Cézanne focuses his eyes on objects as a photographer focuses on objects before he concentrates on framing. Cézanne speaks of «unifying women's curves and hills' shoulders».<sup>31</sup> The lens of his «camera» can be adjusted to specific vision (as with diverse lenses). Vision is not coming from the object itself but is concentrating *on* the object with a special *aptitude*. One can call that a modulation or an adjustment. Cézanne doesn't paint in a fastidious way, eyes half-closed as did Impressionists. He calls for an interpretative plenitude of vision (plate 1).

Cézanne n'a pas cru devoir choisir entre la sensation et la pensée, comme entre le chaos et l'ordre. Il ne veut pas séparer les choses fixes qui apparaissent sous notre regard et leur manière fuyante d'apparaître, il veut peindre la matière en train de se donner forme, l'ordre naissant par une organisation spontanée. Il ne met pas la coupure entre *les sens* et *l'intelligence*, mais entre l'ordre spontané des choses perçues et l'ordre humain des idées et des sciences<sup>32</sup>

Van Gogh and Gauguin were already concurring with Naturalism in photography, doing symbolic «prints», with their economy of lines, their flattened forms, their dark contours and their aptitude for diminishing shadows —as fashion or

advertising photography do today. Also they concurred with the movie camera with their *scenes* and their *inner-time*. It is quite amazing to observe how the classic concept of *tableau* has given place to the concept of *scene*, later even called *happening*. The most kinetic approach in painting until the Futurists and Duchamp is undoubtedly van Gogh's, and it is one of the keys to his unstable vision, with its dynamic and turbulent vision of space. Thus time in painting is no longer a «still» but a «moving-still», or even a «happening-still».

The convergences of image-vision into dynamics could also be observed in the expressionist visions. Munch, Ensor and Grosz embody a convergence of sensibility and feelings into pictorial scenery (plate 2).

Picasso's «pink period» of around 1905 had attempted a turning-point in 1907 with *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. Version O)*. It had been the result of a long constructive initiation by Cézanne<sup>33</sup> (plate 1).

The «impressive», «expressive» or «cubist» aggressions afflicted on Classicism and Romanticism were decisive in terms of vision. Artists such as Kupka, Grosz and Dix were all benefiting from that evolution. The point was that visual arts had to choose between either a constructive or expressive way to progress further, and more specifically to find an answer to the environmental dynamism of the machine: stream and speed (plates 2 and 3).

An astonishing step was taken curiously in Italy, far from German Expressionism and French Fauvism, by a radical literary group led in 1907 by Marinetti: the Futurists. They rapidly extend the scope of their interest to the visual arts (plate 3), of which they also see architecture and technology as being an integral part. They were following the idea that dynamism and electricity were the unavoidable marks of a new art. Their very radical ideas wanted to entirely replace classicist and academic vision. Instead they wanted to make use of all technological possibilities in the arts. Their progressive artistic ideas were nevertheless connected with certain political absurdities and ideas of utopia. The futurists are responsible for a rapid propagation all over Europe of new aesthetic concepts and also for engendering a few intellectual philosophically reactive streams. They influenced equally Cubism and Expressionism, creating a tide of new clones and manifestos.<sup>34</sup>

In 1912, Duchamp makes *Nu descendant un escalier* (plate 3), a kinetic study recalling Balla's futurist kinetics and near to the naturalistic, kinetic-scientific nude pictures of Marey and Muybridge.<sup>35</sup> *Nu descendant un escalier* is a significant painting in the way

that it marks more than one step. Besides his original both cubistic and kinetic message, *Nu descendant un escalier* is also a provocative way to exhibit flesh: the intention—in words—is here even more subversive than the body itself and its unusual action reminiscent of *Animal Locomotion*<sup>36</sup>. To the visual content Duchamp has added *another* provocative intention. According to the storm it had provoked in the Armory show the extension of flesh on to a mechanical, existentialist, scientific and non-aesthetic level was quite rapidly understood.

In 1914, when Duchamp exhibits his first ready-made, *The Bottle Rack*, the definitive transition was made. But also a question was posed: what next?

Aesthetic (formal) contents were therefore totally denied. The *visual-image* has been replaced by a strong *visual-concept*. Later Duchamp completely rejected pencils. The question—what next?— is not yet answered today but several *Bottle Racks* lie in museums as a significant challenge. Hans Richter underlines Duchamp's comment in a letter received in 1962:

When I discovered ready-mades I thought to discourage aesthetics. In Neo-Dada they have taken my ready-mades and found aesthetic beauty in them. I threw the bottle-rack and the urinal into their faces as a challenge and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty.<sup>37</sup>

Duchamp's action was radical but not irreversible, fortunately. Duchamp's *Nu* and his ready-made *Bottle Rack* came before Dada spread and in the full dada-spirit. Yet it is very interesting to notice that both Duchamp and Man Ray in the beginning were painting in the same way in which Cézanne was constructing his own specific «order».

Un peintre comme Cézanne, un artiste, un philosophe doivent non seulement créer et exprimer une idée, mais encore réveiller les expériences qui l'enracineront dans les autres consciences.<sup>38</sup>

Hard on the heels of the pure *image-space* concept were the concepts of *image-time* and the *image-word*. The image became an *attraction* in the visual (and film) sense, the foundation of modern communication. The *Nu*, for instance was also consolidating the idea of image-movement invented by the Futurist and (almost) by the Expressionists (plate 2 and 3). Thus, picture became more than a simple picture: it became a picture, which had a double referent, a visual referent and a mental referent. This was also the first step of symbiosis between kinetic image and poetry.

Note that «kinetism» is obviously a mental phase induced by stroboscopy, a physical particularity of the brain and not of the eye. The image-concept is not however sufficient in itself, but, needs a certain *resistance* to be mentally valid, an aspect I shall analyse later.

A fast ascendancy of visions (table 1) shows the dynamic of modern painting within a period of fifty to sixty years. The impressionist and expressionist periods can be defined as preparative; the dynamic and abstract periods as crucial; and the conceptual/constructivist and surreal/productivist periods as consequent. One can observe in that evolution a transformation of the intuitive-rational zones so as to show up a basic dilemma, or an adequation represented by the slightly different functions of perception and vision as defined in the first chapter, perception being an emotional process while vision should involve cognition and the faculty of anticipating. From the top (Impressionism) to the bottom (Surrealism and Purism) we have the formation of a pitchfork (or «Y» upside down), whose branches represent the intuitive/expressive (left) and the rational/constructive (right) ways of art making —and that I will shortly analyse (2.3.)

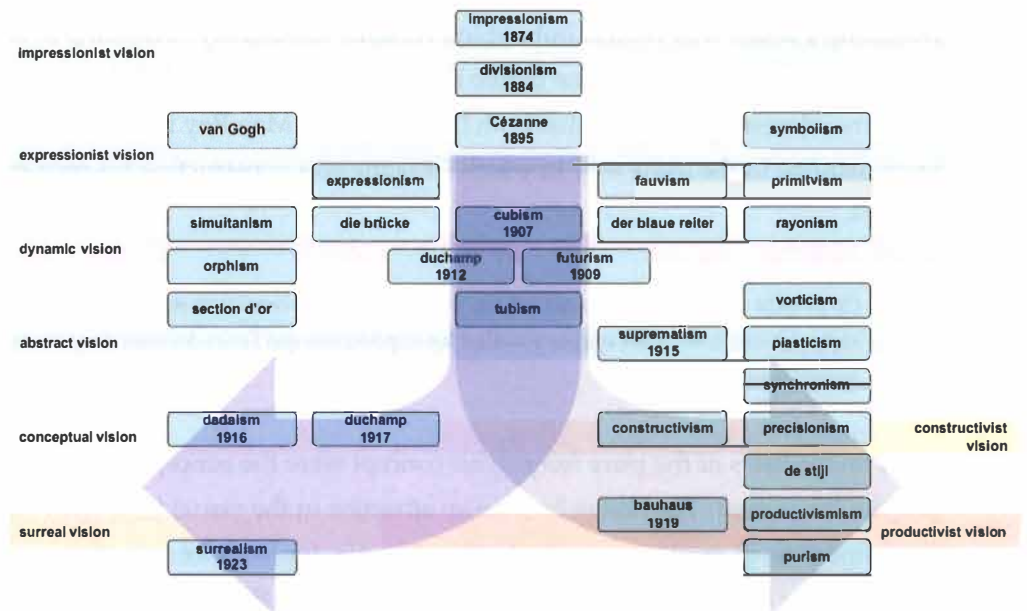


Table 1: Manifestism 1870–1930

Most of the streams are directly or indirectly connected with Futurism, Expressionism or Cubism. Some were especially sharp in vision: in Russia Suprematism (Malevitch), Rayonism (Natalia Goncharova and Mihail Larionov) , and Productivism (Tatlin); Chagall, Kandinsky and Rodchenko were developing their own solutions either into intuitive or constructive way. French Primitivism and Der Blaue Reiter searched for inspiration in ethnic arts, while Die Brücke in Bremen had a strong philosophy and technique close to the Fauves in France. Plasticists develop in the countries of Eastern Europe and particularly in the city of Prague. In France the most original groups were represented by the Orphists (as Apollinaire named the group) and the «Section d'Or» around 1910-1913 (and a few years later with Dadaists such as Picabia and Duchamp) but also by Robert Delaunay (himself seen as a Simultaneist) and Fernand Léger (seen as a Tubist<sup>39</sup>). Small groups such as Vorticists, Esoterists and Spiritists among others searched for a local counterpoint to Cubism, Expressionism or Futurism (plate 3). On one hand the perception (vision) of these groups differed essentially in their philosophical conceptions of light, rhythm, colours, dynamism and contrast (and how they emotionally perceived it), but on another their philosophical approach could also be described as extending into political matters. For instance, taking the example of the Futurists, Tom Sandqvist asks pertinently how a movement in revolt against Classicism can be associated with a totalitarian ideology. Sandqvist has recently also questioned the deepest roots of Dadaism and his quest brought him to the city of Bucharest and a Yiddish community.<sup>40</sup> Modern art is a blend:

Modernism must be interpreted as objectifying and reflecting the symptoms of the relationship to society of late industrialism [...] in its formal artistic innovations and solutions, and especially revolutionary ones. Modernity is «to live in an environment which promises adventures, power, pleasure, progress and dynamism, but as a corollary is also threatening the destruction of the same virtues.»<sup>41</sup>

This last comment could explain, at least partly, the Futurists' fear of any nihilistic attitude.

Instead of analysing each stream, I shall show only how these tendencies have influenced the avant-garde film production of the twenties, including of Man Ray. For instance, I emphasise the importance of these «revolutionary» means of cubist perspective, collage, lettering, etc.

The most important and radical output of the «ism-plosion» was undoubtedly from the dada-movement around 1915 with Hugo Ball and Tristan Tzara in Zurich.<sup>42</sup>

Dada was above all a provocation based on the *rejection* of formalism in art (plate 4). The dada manifesto comes out in 1916. After its Swiss period and just after the war,, Dadaism spreads rapidly first to Germany (Raoul Hausmann, Hans Arp, Max Ernst, Hans Richter,...) then to France (Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, De Chirico,...) and even to New York (Duchamp, Man Ray)<sup>43</sup>. Unexpectedly the dada «virus» spreads to Holland and Germany through a formal and structural tendency (out of a split in Dadaism). In Holland, with De Stijl (Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg), a neo-plasticist group emerges in 1917, which simplifies and reduces vision to extract the essence of objects. In Germany the Weimar Academy (and Hans Richter) also has revolutionary commitments that are later linked to Constructivism. In 1919, following Walter Gropius, the Weimar Academy leads to the Bauhaus, a school of art beyond comparison at that time and which has left an indelible mark on art education throughout the world (plate 5).

I shall analyse the dadaist and bauhaus-constructivist impact on the European avant-garde cinema in more detail.

In the United States the tendency was also towards change. Synchronism brought a very precise analysis of light phenomena while Precisionism, coming out of American Cubism in the same way as Purism in Europe— had influence on architecture.

A decisive factor in the analysis of vision in art and culture during the period 1900-1929 is the rapidly developing circulation of persons, goods and leisure, an aspect that has already been mentioned. It explains at least in part the dissemination of artistic ideas in Europe and also across continents.

The great interest in new French art in America and especially in New-York can be seen in the opening of such galleries as Gallery 291 by Alfred Stieglitz in 1905, that was very active in promoting American and European modern art, and not only painting but photography and sculpture as well.

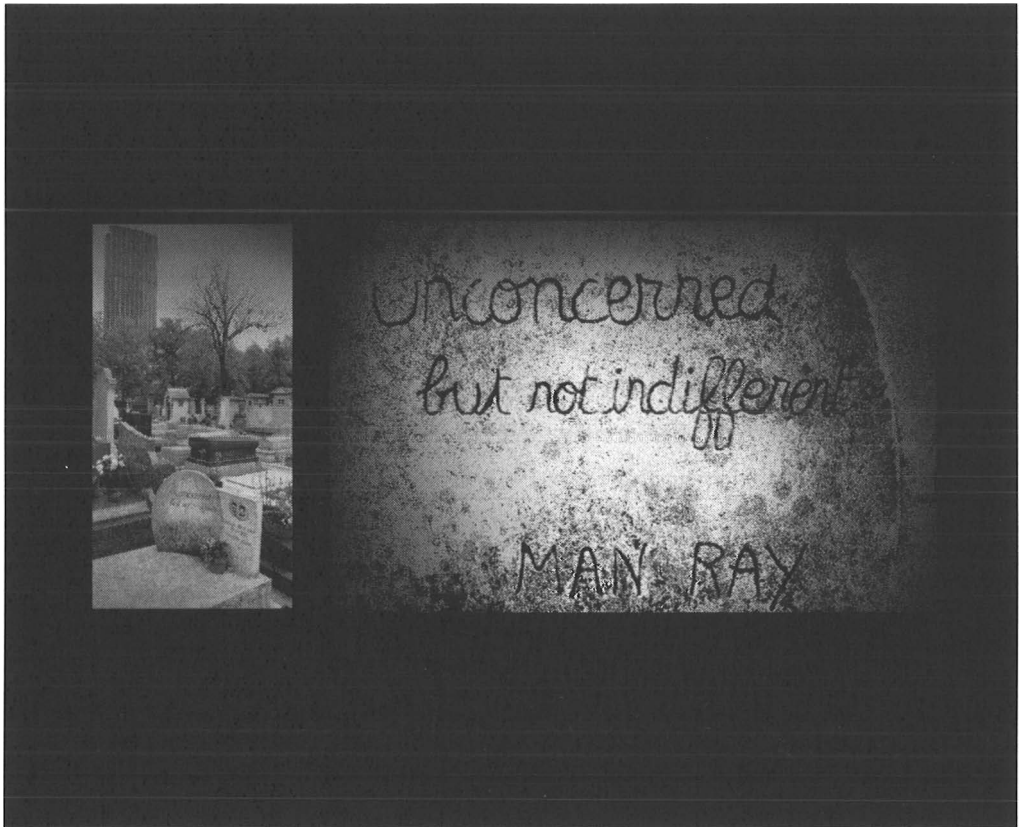
A modern art exhibition named *Armory Show*, in 1913, also located in New York, was decisive in bringing modern European art to America. For instance Cézanne, Duchamp and Picabia —the latter two through memorable scandals— influenced American artists, including Man Ray.

Man Ray remembers:

Another big event occurred that year which was to mark a new departure in my work: the Armory show of modern painting in 1913. All the European schools of the most extreme tendencies were represented, but it had been organized by two American painters. [...] I had produced nothing that could make me eligible for this show, but it gave me the courage to tackle larger canvases.<sup>44</sup>

The International exchange-dynamics in visual arts was no more restricted to Paris and New York but was reflected in mixed exhibitions all around Europe. Among the most important were a new generation of Europeans who exhibit with the Fauves in Paris during the years 1903–1907 (Matisse, Gauguin, Sérusier, Derain, Dufy, etc.) in such places as the *Salon des Indépendants* and the *Salon d'automne*; Die Brücke exhibits in Dresden (1905); the Primitivists with Kandinsky; Malevich and the Cubists exhibit in Moscow (1910); Der Blaue Reiter in Munich (1911); Plasticists with Picasso in Prague (1913) and Futurism moved to Russia (1914). Hans Richter in the Weimar Academy was very active, and among others he was in contact with these Futurists. In 1916 Dada was everywhere in Europe, and even travelling with Duchamps and Francis Picabia over the Atlantic to New York. Painting was no longer an individual quest as it was still for the Impressionists or even van Gogh, but an *action*, a *movement* under the initiative of some leaders usually resulting in a published manifesto. The words *movement*, *action* and *manifesto* tell about a *shared vision* and a *struggle*—calling to mind the «fight» of Nietzsche but extended to a group of individuals. The manifesto can be read in two ways, as a law to accept, or as a philosophy to share. Besides the concept of art, came the concept of *act*. Reviews (e.g. dada reviews, *Der Sturm* in Berlin), among many other publications, meetings, parties, happenings (then called cabaret or *soirées*)<sup>45</sup>, but also areas of inter-action (*gesamtkunstwerk*) between for instance literature and painting—pen and pencils—became normal. Dadaism is not the only art stream to have its own inflexible ideal. Politically it has its importance. A few movements' political positions differ radically, though they use similar means, Futurism and Dada for instance. The focus of controversy in art lies often in the dilemma between rationality and anarchy. The paradoxical sentence on Man Ray's grave in Montparnasse speaks of a contradiction inherent to Man Ray. But aren't all the dilemmas *between the isms* of art also borderlines, and so points of contact as well as divisions?





«Unconcerned but not indifferent». Photographs: Jacques Coelho, 2001

### 2.3. Expression versus Construction

Il n'y a rien de si conforme à la raison que ce désaveu de la raison —Pascal<sup>46</sup>

In the preceding paragraph (2.2.) I have opened up the complexity of the relations between movements in visual arts. Each movement of the Modern arts presents itself as a discrete and self-sufficient expression of the spirit of Modernism. Because of this most of the artists belonged to several periods or movements during their visual quest and also these movements themselves are sometimes intrinsically contradictory, as is the case with Dadaism. In many works there are as many technical approaches as there are visual searches. Despite opposing philosophies (e.g. futurist and dadaist), artists from opposing camps used similar tricks, such as

the collages used in Nazi propaganda (plate 5). Moreover no kind of single analysis would be adequate for understanding the origins of divisions or fusions. In the necessary process of selection and simplification, analysis can also modify some of the finest connections between visual perceptions. For example Futurists have given Dada most of its aesthetic and even anti-aesthetic base, letterism and collage techniques. More problematic for the observer is that perception of an artwork does also change with time. The dadaist poster had an anarchic purpose, and its graphic impact was to create a strong anti-aesthetic vision. But, unexpectedly, with the passage of time it belongs now itself to a new aesthetic which has connections in recent streams to punk and hip-hop —interestingly called *low culture*. In passing it may be noted that fashion and advertising have profited well from it. Impressionists accorded a primordial role to sensibility of vision. At the same time they were also rejecting visual objectivity and finding their inspiration mostly in nature. Instead of painting with eyes half-closed like the Impressionists, Cézanne was recovering a consistency of forms, and was even *reconstructing* the object mentally yet without rejecting the original emotion.

In this subchapter I shall draw the characteristic oppositional tendencies of two main streams in the 1920s, the first «anarchist» (Dada), and the second «constructivist» (Bauhaus); I intend to show later in chapter 4 (Post-dada) that the dada principle of deconstruction opposed to the rational constructivist approach of the Bauhaus will find an echo as a comparative and parallel model with Neodadaism and minimalist abstraction —and in chapter 9, with repercussions on the main visions of avant-garde cinema and video.

As Hal Foster remarks, there has been «a return of the dadaist readymade and the constructivist structure» and «for North American and Western European artists in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Dada and Constructivism offered two historical alternatives to the modernist model at the time, the medium-specific formalism».<sup>47</sup> Foster emphasises that «in any case they reposition art in relation not only to mundane space-time but to social practice».<sup>48</sup> Thus repositioning Postmodernism too.

I shall not discuss here the argument of Foster, which disputes Peter Bürger's view that «our understanding of an art can be only as advanced as the art» and reproach him that «he still narrates it as an evolution» because he «could not conceive it

otherwise, given his strict reading of the Marxist connection between object and understanding». <sup>49</sup>

I am not convinced myself by Bürger's political and «residual» evolutionism, but in concentrating on the creative moment I observe in my analysis (chapter 9), and especially in the arguments of the artists involved with art theory, a kind of action-reaction principle. And I see it in terms of *vision* rather than in terms of history. We shall see that the action-reaction principle and the dialectic of rational-intuitive method are connected.

Matisse, Braque, Picasso, Kandinsky, Chagall, Klee, Delaunay, Léger, the Futurists, the Fauves, members of the German groups Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter were all acquainted with the expressionist movement. Expressionism can be thought of a basic reaction to Impressionism, a quest for the deepest within oneself, so that differences of style are no longer so important as long as all imitation of nature is rejected. «Exactitude is not the truth» Herbert Read would say. <sup>50</sup> Expressionism gave the primal spontaneity back to the work of art and to the artist his personal mental vision of the world. Cubists, instead, avoided confusing their feelings and the object, and set up their vision surrounding it. With Expressionism, the subject to be represented and the final representation, the object itself, are completely dissociated from one another. It is no longer a way to see what comes to be represented, but a real transmutation.

Where Impressionists dissected the outer world objectively—in a positivist way—Cézanne reconstructed it mentally—like Monet did with his waterlilies—but non objectively, emotionally. Expressionists reflected their own subjectivity on to the outer world. Activating intuition and creativity, they were in close contact with subjective reality, the state of mind of the moment.

Since the primary sense of Impressionism was replaced by *intuition* and *intellect*, there were two trends that could emerge by expressionist means. At one extreme there is a drive towards total abstraction.

It is the physical configuration of what is achieved at a spiritual level. It creates objects and does not begin with objects - but subjects. The object, for material expressionism, contributes to the configuration. It distils the essence of a subject by rejecting everything that is not essential to its purity and intensity<sup>51</sup>

The other was connected to violence, an inner violence reflecting anger and frustration in society. It gives a truncated representation of reality: grimacing images convulsive traits and distorted forms. Tensions, cynicism, mental illness, an anguished and a degenerate even grotesque atmosphere were some of the visual devices used by the artists in their spiritual dialogue.

Dada is seen as a consequence of the second, but pushing it further, with a total repudiation of art itself and instead of being satisfied with «spiritual» resistance, the intention is to destroy with appropriate methods or techniques, and one of them is chance:

But beneath it all lay a genuine mental and emotional experience that gave us wings to fly and to look down upon the absurdities of the «real» and earnest world. Chance became our trademark. We followed it like a compass.<sup>52</sup>

The question of chance and anti-chance was a key concept for doing art *without doing art*. Dada understood very fast that a total rejection of aesthetic (formal) values gave the strongest spiritual effect, but rapidly understood also that after the first impact there was little effect thereafter. Something stronger had to be invented. In his book on Dada, Hans Richter<sup>53</sup> shows very clearly how Dada was living on the front line but leaving the ground sterile after it had passed over. Almost from the beginning two tendencies (the intuitive-anarchic and the constructivist) were living under the same roof.

Richter explains why the conscious break with rationality had offered a proliferation of new art *forms and materials* in Dada and how the boundaries between the arts became indistinct, painters turned to poetry and poets to painting. Similarly cinema too could turn into poetry.

By avoiding rationalism, rejecting any technique as method or any school, Dadaists contributed to productive fusions between the arts and enlarged the field of visual arts to social and political criticism. Paradoxically, they contributed by their —often hidden— progressive «wing» to establish the European avant-garde of the twenties. When some critics give transitory status to the dada movement they show that they have understood only Dada's anarchic or irrational side.

Compared with all previous «isms», Dada must have seemed hopelessly anarchic. But for us, who lived through it, this was not so. On the contrary, it was something meaningful, necessary and life-living. The official belief in the infallibility of reason, logic and causality

seemed to us senseless - as senseless as the destruction of the world and the systematic elimination of every particle of human feeling. This was the reason why we were forced to look for something which would re-establish our humanity. What we needed to find was a «balance between heaven and hell», a new unity combining chance and design.<sup>54</sup>

The similarity with Bergson's writings on intuition and rationality is obvious:

Le même effort, par lequel on lie des idées à des idées, fait évanouir l'intuition que les idées se proposaient d'emmagasiner. Le philosophe est obligé d'abandonner l'intuition une fois qu'il en a reçu l'élan, et de se fier à lui-même pour continuer le mouvement, en poussant maintenant les concepts les uns derrière les autres. Mais bien vite il sent qu'il a perdu pied; [...] L'intuition, si elle pouvait se prolonger au delà de quelques instants, n'assurerait pas seulement l'accord du philosophe avec sa propre pensée, mais encore celui de tous les philosophes entre eux. Telle qu'elle existe, fuyante et incomplète, elle est, dans chaque système, ce qui vaut mieux que le système, et ce qui lui survit.<sup>55</sup>

The tensions inside a movement can also correlate to the opposition of rationalism (alienation, order, utopia) and intuition (chaos, anarchy, dream).

Against the main characteristics of a movement there is always a corresponding opposite force *which is inherent to the existence of the movement*, acting as a sort of natural balance (figure 7). Against the chaotic perspective of cubist art for example there is the corresponding need to construct space, or against the surrealist dream a political utopia may be opposed, and so on.

We have seen that, besides its very first momentum (e.g. in the case of Dada: the Great War and bourgeois art) the so-called action-reaction principle is in fact more efficient *within* a movement (the *Yes* and *No* of Dada) than *between* movements. Or as Hal Foster writes, the tensions are also modulated by «distant» events (that can be ideologically opposite) as much as by «related» history:

One event is only registered through another that recodes it (...) Historical and neo-avant-gardes are constituted in a similar way, as a continual process of protension and retention, a complex relay of anticipated futures and reconstituted pasts —in short, in a deferred action that throws over any simple scheme of before and after, cause and effect, origin and repetition.<sup>56</sup>

For the same reason and as Richard Huelsenbeck observed «what Dada was in the beginning, and what developed later, is totally insignificant in comparison with what it means today»<sup>57</sup> And that «today» of 1964 applies also to the «today» of 2007.

In the next figure, one can observe that Surrealism for instance marks a return towards a new academic spirit (the right hemisphere) in a clockwise direction. So in that sense Surrealism can be thought of as the result of opposed action (order) inherent to the anarchism of Dada and making the whole «system» move ahead. Similarly the visual «chaos» of Cubism moves to the «alienation» of Constructivism through the next phases: anarchism, dream and (a new) rational thinking, and in that sense Productivism too is the result of the many «relays» and the «deferred actions» of Dada, Surrealism, Neoplasticism and Constructivism.

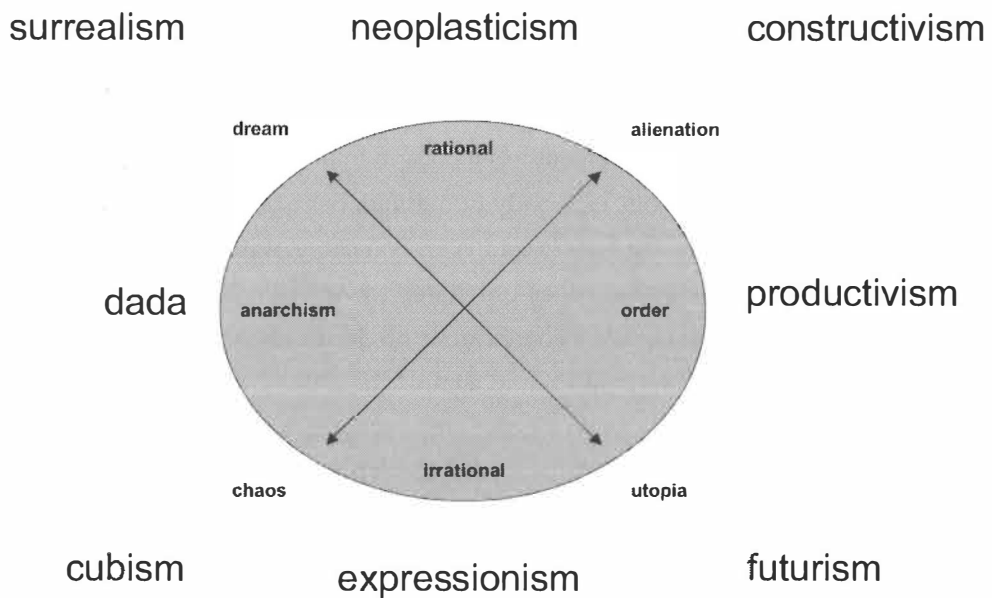


Fig. 7: Tensions of Visual Art Movements

**[dadaism]**

Out of the strange philosophy of Dadaism I am attempting here to formulate the main lines of its expression, in order to see later how suitably adapted Man Ray 's own vision was to his pretensions to being a Dadaist.

Dada had no unified formal characteristics as have other styles. But it did have a new artistic ethic from which, in unforeseen ways, new means of expression emerged.<sup>58</sup>

Hans Richter is for several reasons a key personality in this study. He was with Dada almost from the beginning, he was one of the main figures in Berlin Dada, and a pioneer in kinetics, pure cinema and dadaist cinema; he was a Dadaist on the cross-roads of Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism, Neo-plasticism and Surrealism. Moreover, he knew the main figures of those movements (Léger, Marinetti, Malevitch, van Doesburg, Breton,...) very well. Besides enjoying this key position, he was a close friend of Duchamp, Man Ray, Eggeling and Eisenstein. In this stage of my study he is also the main source of interest through his closeness to the Bauhaus and as a historian of Dadaism.<sup>59</sup>

Though Dadaism is usually attributed to Tristan Tzara (thanks to his 1918 manifesto), the dada movement has its origin in another personality, the writer Hugo Ball. Eastern roots, especially Romanian, have been also proposed.<sup>60</sup> Soon after the outbreak of the First World War, Ball came, with his mistress Emmy Hennings, to Zurich, where they gravitated towards the kinds of free poets and thinkers mentioned earlier. «There can be no doubt about Ball's unswerving search for a *meaning* which he could set up against the absurd meaninglessness of the age in which he lived. He was an idealist and a sceptic, whose belief in life had not been destroyed by the deep scepticism with which he regarded the world around him.»<sup>61</sup> He opened the *Cabaret Voltaire* (he was also himself a cabaret performer) on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1916<sup>62</sup>. It is not a coincidence if Dada began in Switzerland and not elsewhere: Zurich was the peaceful eye of the encircling storm of war, with a number of very different personalities from all over the world forming a constellation which soon became a movement. «Only in this highly concentrated atmosphere could such totally different people —Romanians and Germans principally— join in a common activity. It seemed that the very incompatibility of character, origins, and attitudes which existed among the Dadaists created the tension which gave, to this fortuitous conjunction of people from all points of the compass, its unified dynamic force.»<sup>63</sup> The same comment could be made for the New York tandem Man Ray-Duchamp a little later.

In the first *Cabaret Voltaire* publication, on 15th May 1916, Hugo Ball provides the night club's successful credits:

Mademoiselle Hennings and Mademoiselle Leconte sang French and Danish chansons. Herr Tristan Tzara recited Rumanian poetry. A balalaika orchestra played delightful folk-songs and dances. [...] Herr M. Slodki, designed the poster, and Herr Hans Arp, supplied some Picassos, [...] Marcel Janco and Max Oppenheimer agreed to take part in the cabaret. [...] We organized a «RUSSISCHE» evening and, a little later, a «FRANZÖSISCHE» one (works by Apollinaire, Max Jacob, André Salmon, Alfred Jarry, Laforgue and Rimbaud). Herr Tristan Tzara was the initiator of a performance by Messrs. Tzara, Huelsenbeck and Janco of simultaneist verse. [...] The present booklet is published by us with the support of our friends in France, Italy and Russia. [...] Cabaret Voltaire, which has as its sole purpose to draw attention, across the barriers of war and nationalism, to the few independent spirits who live for other ideals. [...] La revue paraîtra<sup>64</sup> à Zürich et portera le nom «DADA». («Dada»). Dada Dada Dada.<sup>65</sup>

The «programme» is established. The moral and philosophical origins of the dada revolt are inscribed in this short innocent publication in which, for the first time, the word *dada* is mentioned without any further explanation.<sup>66</sup>

What we call Dada is foolery, foolery extracted from emptiness in which all the Higher problems are wrapped, a gladiator's gesture, a game played with the shabby remnants... a public execution of false morality.<sup>67</sup>

The (anti)programme is not only intellectual, it is also artistic under the close influence of the futurist point of view in art (an absolute rejection of the past and the unity of all art forms and fields in a dynamic process).

We discussed the theories of art current in the last few decades, always with reference to the mysterious nature of art itself, its relationship with the public, with the race and with the cultural environment of the moment. It is true that for us art is not an end in itself; we have lost too many of our illusions for that.

Art is for us an occasion for social criticism, and for real understanding of the age we live in. These are essential for the creation of a characteristic style.<sup>68</sup>

In the first publication we enter already in a very large palette of artistic activities: music, poetry, graphics, painting, dances... but also new concepts of simultaneity and performance. Aggressiveness and provocativeness were already devices that had been developed by the Futurists for a few years. As well as «the aesthetic of the



first line» of dadaist publications and posters, there was also the futurist habit of manifesto. *Bruitistic* poems, in which words alternate with noises, had shocked audiences. It was the equivalent of the futurist motto «*vivere pericolosamente*». The free and anarchic use of typography was another kind of dadaistic assimilation of futurist trends. The futurist motion, dynamism, and the simultaneity principle «did play a part in Dada, but not as elements in a programme. Here is the fundamental difference: Futurism had a programme and produced works designed to «fulfil» this programme. Whether the result was a work of art or a mere illustration of the programme depended on the talent of the artist. Dada not only had *no* programme, it was against all programmes. Dada's only programme was to have no programme»<sup>69</sup>

Contrary to the Futurists and later the Surrealists, Dada was not dogmatic. Dada's emphasis was to be free of all aesthetic or social constraints. This absolute claim of freedom was a new concept in the arts. This freedom might lead to a new art, or as alternative, to *nihilism*, destroying any form of art (a characteristic too much emphasised by most of the critics).

While *Cabaret Voltaire* was a communal affair controlled by Ball, the ideal promoter of Dada was Tristan Tzara. Being a modern poet enabled Tzara to make contact in France with colleagues such as Breton, Aragon, and Eluard.

Tzara was also expounding dada-theses, anti-theses and a-theses:

I smash drawers, those of the brain and those of social organization: Everywhere to demoralize, to hurl the hand from heaven to hell, the eyes from hell to heaven, to set up once more, in the real powers and in the imagination of every individual, the fecund wheel of the world circus

Order = disorder; self = not-self; affirmation = negation; ultimate emanations of absolute art. Absoluteness and purity of chaos cosmically ordered, eternal in the globule second without duration without breath without light without control.- I love an old work for it's novelty. It is only contrast that attaches us to the past

I destroy the drawers of the brain and of social organization: spread demoralization wherever I go and cast my hand from heaven to hell, my eyes from hell to heaven, restore the fecund wheel of a universal circus to objective forces and the imagination of every individual.

Freedom: Dada Dada Dada, a roaring of tense colors, and interlacing of opposites and of all contradictions, grotesques, inconsistencies: LIFE

Thought is produced in the mouth<sup>70</sup>

That call for freedom was firstly a total repudiation of art itself, because of its rules (no matter if classical or futurist), precepts, money and receipt of critical praise. The freedom was characterized by a total absence of mercenariness, opportunist behaviour or dependence on general opinion. On the contrary, public discontent should be a stimulus.

It may be anecdotal but it is nonetheless interesting to notice that despite its anarchic and revolutionary ideas, the dada-movement did not mix with politics (at this stage). As it happened, at that time a student was living near the Cabaret Voltaire, the man who only one year later would be a major force in the Russian revolution: «I saw Lenin in the library several times and once heard him speak at a meeting in Berne. He spoke good German. It seemed to me that the Swiss authorities were much more suspicious of the Dadaists, who were after all capable of perpetrating some new enormity at any moment, than of these quiet, studious Russians...»<sup>71</sup>

In answer to a question by Philippe Sers about the origins of Dada, Hans Richter gave a link to the possible precursors of Dada in France: «For about 100 years, in France, there was a kind of free thinking. In other parts of the world, some influences drive towards a total liberation. For instance, Bakunin and his anarchist nihilists have created a movement which has become social, politic, economic.»<sup>72</sup> Such varied figures as Nietzsche, Bergson, Freud, Saussure, Einstein and Heisenberg have also been critical of bourgeois beliefs and attitudes in various fields of human activity. «Why then not artistic? In France, the dada-movement consisted much more of writers than of painters. Why? Because Jarry and Apollinaire were Dadaists before their time, not only in their poems, but in their way of thinking and writing, which was pictorial.»<sup>73</sup>

Hans Richter insists on the fact that for each of the Dadaists this freedom expressed itself in different ways. The religious idealism of Hugo Ball was quite far from the ambivalent nihilism of Tzara. Hans Arp always adhered to the idea of a «balance» between the conscious and the unconscious, between reason and non-sense. He said:

Reason is a part of feeling, and feeling is a part of reason.<sup>74</sup>

Richter himself agree with the fact that his «sense of order and of disorder» shuttled him back and forth and he only occasionally achieved the «balance between heaven and hell»<sup>75</sup> that Arp was born with —and that Tzara had no interest in.

This profound contradiction of dadaist logic —apart from the issue of technical diversity— is thus clear from the very beginning. The contradiction was inherent to the «dada system» itself and the palette of individual approaches.

«This contradiction between rational and irrational opened a bottomless pit over which we had to walk,»<sup>76</sup> Richter concludes.

One of the basic concepts, which has engendered the idea of art and anti-art (as a consequence of the contradiction) is the concept and the «principle» of chance (and anti-chance). The Dadaists wanted to restore its primeval magic power to the work of art, and find again the spontaneity it had lost through its classical heritage (as it had in the case of Goethe in Germany, for instance, Richter observes).

The systematic use of chance, of the arbitrary, was opening an important new dimension in art: the techniques of free association, fragmentary trains of thought and unexpected juxtapositions of words and sounds. The concept of *objets trouvés* (found objects) came out of it and later more specifically *ready-mades*, but in the break with rationality it was an explanation of the sudden proliferation of all kinds of new art forms and materials. It was to accept the very «obstacles» that Nature happened to place in the path of the process of creativity, so that they would become fully integrated, for instance like in the processes dear to action-painting or unpredictable solarization in photography. Richter was observing that, «in spite of all our anti-art polemics, we produced works of art» and «chance appeared to us as a magical procedure by which one could transcend the barriers of causality and of conscious volition, and by which *the inner eye* and ear became more acute, so that new sequences of thoughts and experiences made their appearance.»<sup>77</sup> Here, Hans Richter provides a link to the «unconscious mind»<sup>78</sup> discovered by Freud in 1900. Richter observes that Tzara exploited the same chance factors as did Arp, but while Arp made *conscious use of his eye and brain to determine the final shape*, and thus made it possible to call the work his, Tzara left the task of selection to the laws of Nature. He refuses to take part (consciously) in the process.

It is worth understanding the importance of that duality inherent to Dadaism in spite of seeing only the negative pole. As long as Ball was actively part of the dada scene in Zurich, the anti-art movement never became anarchistic. Here one of the

other principal aspects of the movement since the *Cabaret Voltaire* comes in, the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*<sup>79</sup> which Ball had taken up in Munich under the influence of Kandinsky. *Gesamtkunstwerk* meant to enlarge the activities of Dada to other fields, at the beginning enlarging dada-activities to cooperate with other movements by organising, for instance, mixed exhibitions, lectures, readings and ballets with pictures. The *interactive* concept (which is today evident) was at that time revolutionary and absolutely anti-academic.

Soon the *Cabaret Voltaire* was under notice to close, since there had been complaints of the nightly excesses committed in the name of Voltaire. But the seriousness of the mixed events through a new gallery and exhibitions of Kandinsky and Klee also impressed the Zurich public.

Performances, simultaneity, interactivity, dynamism, and chance only ten years after *Les grandes baigneuses* by Cézanne; Hans Richter summarises the important step that had been made: «... suddenly I found myself in a room, with an enormous painting in green, brown and grey; with reclining women, absolutely badly painted, with bottoms like potatoes, legs too long and unnatural colours. It's a *cochonnerie*. ... and I continued walking and looking at other paintings, speaking to people.... And suddenly I was in front of the painting again. But I wasn't then looking at the painting; *the painting was looking at me, to me*. [...] And it was only after four years, in 1913 ...that I saw the Picassos, Braques, Cubists and Futurists, etc. [...] Then I understood that I had been *prepared* by Cézanne's painting for this experience and I followed him immediately.»<sup>80</sup>

Later on Richter was confronted with the principle of counterpoint dear to music, as an analogy with the principle of balance between the rational and irrational in the artwork: «I turned my attention to the structural problems of my earlier cubist period, in order to articulate the surface of my canvases.»<sup>81</sup> This method of counterpoint was developing a new dimension, time, and finally drove Richter to the experiments with the rolls (experimented with also by Eggeling).

It is obvious how Cézanne had been the common denominator for many of the visual Dadaists such as Man Ray, Duchamp and Richter. I suggest a premise that *among visual Dadaists there is a strong constructivist tendency which appears to be in contrast to the literary branch that was more plunged into the dream and the unconscious (plate 4). The later transformation of Dadaism into Surrealism brings a (re)conversion of its visual artists to literature's oneiric expression.*

The basic «principles» of Dadaism may be summarised here and provide a criteria for analysis.

1. Individual freedom (with a possible nihilist alternative)
2. Outrage of public opinion (provocation)
3. Anti-pro (balance between «heaven and hell» later «principle of contradiction»)
4. Use of chance (later also use of subconscious)
5. Gesamtkunstwerk (interactivity between arts)
6. Dynamism

As a consequence of the arrival of Picabia in late 1918, the dada-movement received some new «anti-blood» which meant the end of the *anti* versus *pro* balance. Consequently and following Hans Richter, Tzara's position was consolidated, first in Switzerland and later in France.

Viewed in retrospect, Picabia's arrival marks the end of an era in the history of Zurich Dada. As an incidental consequence, it gave an enormous boost to Tristan Tzara's rise to fame.<sup>82</sup>

Hans Richter possibly exaggerates the role of influence, especially when one thinks about the distant «problem» of fame for the Dadaists, but nobody can deny the synergy.

Picabia arguably developed his most anti-aesthetic work and outrageous achievements with the simple principle that the «public likes nothing better than to be made fun of, provoked and insulted. This is the moment when the public finally begins to think.»<sup>83</sup> Following this last aesthetic statement, it may be added that:

#### 7. Intellectual exigency precedes aesthetic considerations

In January 1917 in Barcelona Picabia had founded the periodical *391*, named after Alfred Stieglitz's New York periodical *291* (the gallery's street number): a curious allusion to harmonic «12» and symbolical anti-chance «13».<sup>84</sup>

After four issues in three months it moved to Paris where there had already been aggressive literary antecedents with Alfred Jarry, and Guillaume Apollinaire, who was to die near the end of the war, in 1918. The periodical was also edited in New York where collaborators were found in the persons of Duchamp and Man Ray — until then unknown in Zurich. Besides containing writings of all kinds, the review included graphics, mostly of «infernal machines» or «absurd Cartesian drawings».

In some issues photographs of Man Ray's objects were published. It was full of vulgar attacks and absurdities of all various kinds (plate 4):

La connaissance et la morale ne sont que papier à mouches, je conseille aux mouches de vivre dans les confessionnaux, les pêchers étant une nourriture bien plus agréable que le caca.<sup>85</sup>

Following Richter, Picabia was a very creative artist who was however conscious of the total pointlessness of creative activity, an absolute nihilist whose Cartesian intellect ruled out all hope:

Reason shows us things in a light which conceals what they really are. And, in the last resort, what are they?<sup>86</sup>

«Picabia was his own inexhaustible arsenal of destructive weapons: he could provide negations, contradictions and paradoxes of all kinds, ranging from ridicule to downright slander. All this in the service of a negation of life that was, if the word can be used in such a context, exuberant. It was this negation of life that gave him his dynamic forward momentum. It included a negation of art.»<sup>87</sup>

Here is an excerpt of a manifesto by Picabia:<sup>88</sup>

*Dada alone does not smell: it is nothing, nothing, nothing.*

*It is like your hopes: nothing.  
like your paradise: nothing.  
like your idols: nothing.  
like your politicians: nothing.  
like your heroes: nothing.  
like your artists: nothing.  
like your religions: nothing*

His ideas about publishing rules read like a contemporary statement on publicity for a magazine or Internet homepage:

Every page must explode, whether through seriousness, profundity, turbulence, nausea, the new, the eternal, annihilating nonsense, enthusiasm for principles, or the way it is printed. Art must be unaesthetic in the extreme, useless and impossible to justify<sup>89</sup>

In New York Picabia was quite close to Stieglitz, but his relationship with Duchamp and Man Ray remained always quite formal. Man Ray does not mention Picabia

very much in *Self Portrait*, and not at all during the New York period of Dada (1915–20). Picabia was however an important figure on the New York scene through the participation of Duchamp in the review 391. One of the possible reasons why Man Ray refers relatively little to Picabia at that time was that Man Ray felt detached from the art of Stieglitz, and Picabia was already an old friend of the Stieglitz circle as early as 1913 before the Armory Show. Man Ray was still painting at that time in the manner of Cézanne, so he was a kind of novice. Picabia was also eleven years older and rich, as opposed to Man Ray who had just taken the risk of quitting his job and had an uncertain income.<sup>90</sup>

Man Ray should have never said:

J'ai horreur de la peinture de Cézanne - elle m'embête. (Francis Picabia)<sup>91</sup>

It is quite difficult to understand how the tensions between these strong personalities were making New York Dada come alive, nor how they could produce anything together. As we have seen Picabia was also such a nihilist that Stieglitz, though he was trying to «follow» with 291 the radical trend of Dadaism and as an exhibitor of works of art, could not accept all Picabia's rejections and attacks. Stieglitz was a very open personality but he was pushed too fast towards a position quite different from any he could ever adopt himself. Stieglitz was regarded above all as a photographer who wanted photography to reach the same artistic status that painting enjoyed as long as it does not reproduce the world of reality but the artist's will (plate 1). The preoccupations of Dada were quite different after all, to reject the classical concept of the artwork itself. Stieglitz was finally understood as a Maecenas who had propagated modern art and new art concepts on the American continent, but who was certainly not such an art-anarchist.

Man Ray has surely been much influenced by ideas developed by Stieglitz but at least in *Self Portrait* he defends himself by stating that he had been mostly critical (in a manner in some ways reminiscent of a son - father relationship). The anti-art concept that Man Ray had developed *already in New York* can be the result of only two influences<sup>92</sup>: Picabia or Duchamp. I believe that the strong nihilism of Picabia has been reflected first in Duchamp's attitudes that influenced Man Ray indirectly through his friendship with Duchamp. Picabia and Man Ray became closer only afterwards, and Duchamp became a nihilist by *a complete detachment from what was going on around him*. He did go further in fact than Picabia with an aggressiveness

not only against traditional art, but moreover, about *pencils*. The position of Man Ray was unclear at that time —and even later— hesitating between «heaven and hell». Man Ray, who was already producing dada-objects (useless and absurd) in New York, could not completely reject the use of pencils, a step he nearly took after coming to France. Thus he tried to be anti-aesthetic only in the manner of Picabia (and not always successfully). *The Rope Dancer accompanies herself with her shadows* (1916) or *Revolving Doors* (1916–17) were closer to Picabia's production than Duchamp's world: it was first aggressiveness against female forms and aesthetic standards (plates 25 and 26). The few objects he made in New York are from the very last time he was there, around 1920 (plate 27).

Other figures out of Spain, such as Albert Gleizes and Arthur Cravan, also went to New York. But it seems clear that the most important output of New York Dada is by one personality: Duchamp. For Man Ray New York was a period of dada-scholarship, one of transition. Man Ray finds his own personal, original and definitive vision later, in Paris. In New York, he was mainly acquiring a «dadaist aptitude», what I shall refer to later as *the cacodylic eye*.

I shall analyse kinetics and some of Duchamp's original founding principles in more detail when analysing the New York dada-period of Man Ray. I shall resume here consideration of the essence of his thinking.

Duchamp sees in the activity surrounding him nothing but a «comical, involuntary pathos». This is to explain his legendary ironical behaviour towards events. By contrast, it is interesting to recall again the sentence on Man Ray's grave in Paris: «not concerned, but not indifferent». On Duchamp's rather, *unconcerned and indifferent* could be inscribed. «This allows him to smile contemptuously, to draw ironic conclusions, to compromise others pitilessly, or to offer his intelligent if condescending assistance. Vanity he regards as a basic human characteristic —it is his only concession to humanity.»<sup>93</sup>

From what Richter further writes about Duchamp: «All that Picabia had argued, passionately, in every line, every poem, every drawing, every manifesto in 391 was now reduced to a precise formula. With Picabia the words «Art is dead» seem always to be followed by a faint echo: «Long live Art». With Duchamp the echo is silent. And that is not all: this silence renders meaningless any further inquiry after art. Art has been «thought through to a conclusion»; in other words eliminated. Nothing, *nihil*, is all that is left. An illusion has been dispelled by the use of logic.



In place of the illusion there is a vacuum with no moral or ethical attributes. This declaration of *nothingness* is free from cynicism and from regret.»<sup>94</sup>

It should be observed that in art and the dada-corollary anti-art, both the action and the destruction that are in constant dialogue are concrete products. Duchamp is replacing the art-product or the anti-art product (both created) by an intellectual «a-art» concept (discovered but not created). It is not a negation but an annihilation. The difficulty with New York Dada is to conceive of it as a real movement with its own aims and landmarks, or to see it as homogeneous in a more or less durable way. Most of the traces that remain of that «movement» are shown in sporadic and eclectic manifestations, as much as in some very personal colours and behaviours free of constraints, like those of Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Neither the names of Man Ray nor the Baroness can be found in the «very international» Berlin *Dada Almanach* in 1920, which led me to the conclusion that New York was still unnoticed. Mina Loy, a British poet and novelist, who moved to New York in 1916 and was photographed by Man Ray around 1918–20, is however in the list (besides Alfred Stieglitz).

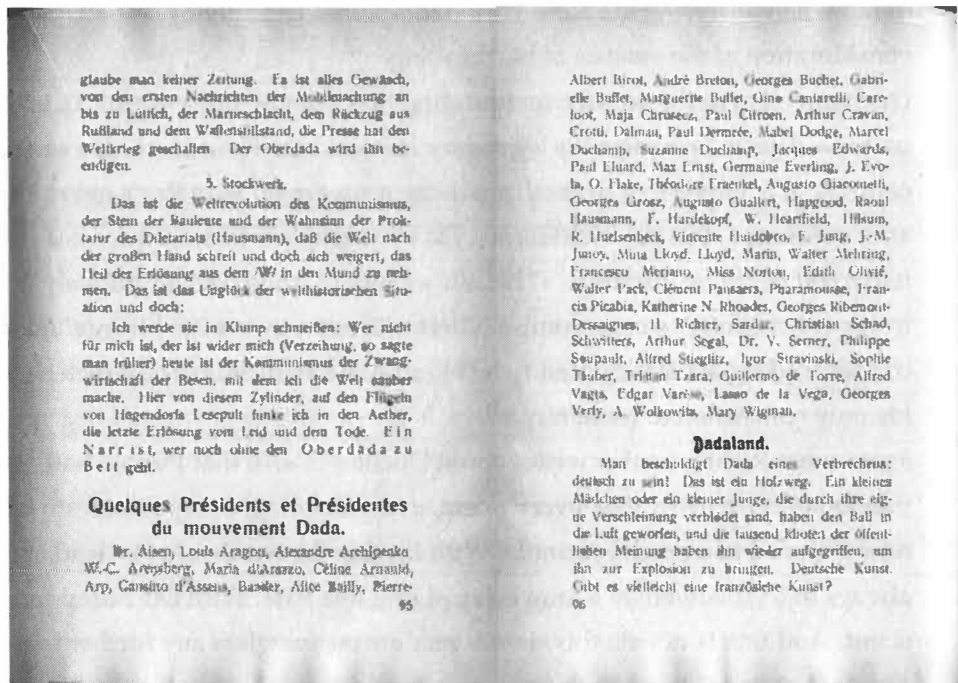


Fig. 8: Dada-Almanach, Berlin, 1920, pp. 95-96

The role of the *Société Anonyme* (see in chapter 6, p. 313) with Katherine Dreier, another actor of New York at the time does not clear the situation either. In the new edition of *Self Portrait* there is a caricature by Richard Boix of the New York Dada Group in 1921. Man Ray can be seen accompanied by Katherine Dreier, Joseph Stella, Marcel Duchamp and a few others (but not the Baroness). The question also arises, is the dada-movement only a consequence of the war (as Berlin Dada is usually considered to be)? On one hand, there is the way in which Duchamp, Picabia or Man Ray were thinking art had been rough-hewn by French writers like Apollinaire, with the irony that this was America. On the other hand can we even speak about a movement when it is matter of a maximum of three or occasionally a few more individuals?

You are completely mad when you say that there was a Dada-movement in New York. We were not a movement, we were three persons who had fun, who were interested in art from a special point of view, but not at all in a movement.<sup>95</sup>

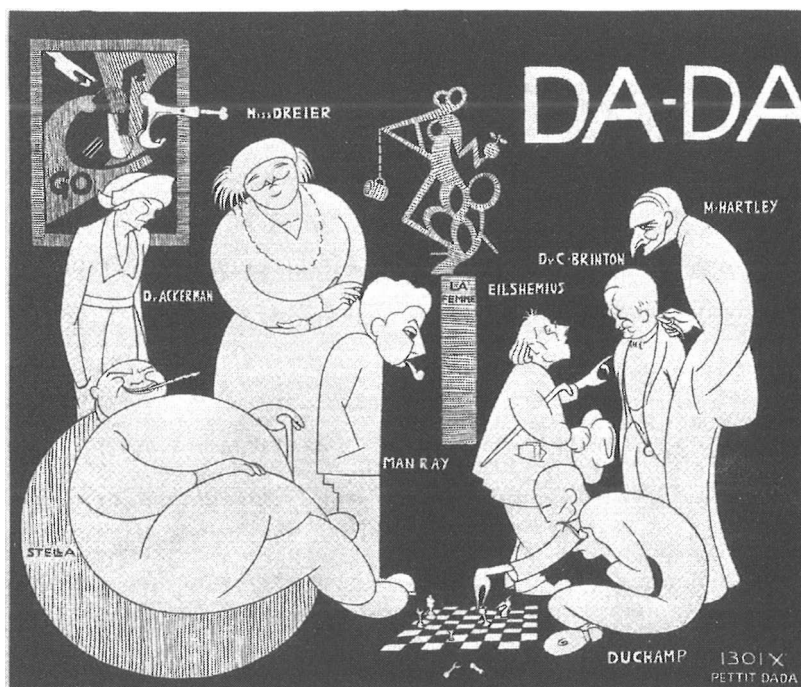


Fig. 9: The New York Dada Group Seen by Richard Boix, 1921

In a letter dated June 1921 —in which there is a photogramme of the Baroness nude—, so just before his departure for Paris, Man Ray comes to a definitive conclusion about Dada and New York:

*...LAMERDELAMERDELAMERDELAMERDELAMERDELAMER  
del'amerique!*

*Cher Tzara - dada cannot live in New York.  
All New York is dada, and will not tolerate a  
rival, - will not notice dada. It is true  
that no efforts to make it public have been  
made, beyond the placing of your and our  
dadas in the bookshops, but there is no  
one here to work for it, and no money  
to be taken in for it, or donated to it. So  
dada in New York must remain a secret.*

*(...)  
Most cordially  
man Ray  
directeur du mauvais movies<sup>96</sup>*

As Tom Sandqvist has shown recently in *Dada East* (2006) there was a pre-dada context in Romania within its important Jewish artistic tradition. One could ask: could the same step have been taken in New York as well with the influence of the Jewish community of Greenwich Village at the time? A hypothesis which of course should reverse the common idea that the «Swiss» dada-movement went to America. Such a hypothesis could at once make Man Ray a central figure —considering that Duchamp and Picabia were respectively French and Spanish, and that their involvement was in European Dada and if it is even considered that the Baroness was a German (from Prussia).

Back in Zurich meanwhile, personalities like Richard Huelsenbeck had moved to Germany around 1918. The first action of Berlin Dada was concentrated on attacks towards Expressionism, Futurism and Cubism. Berlin Dada produced a wave of dada-manifestoes. «Art in its execution and direction is dependent on the time in which it lives, and artists are creatures of their epoch.»<sup>97</sup> So they question the expectations stressed by Expressionism, the attack concentrates on the fact that the Expressionists wanted to be regarded as «a generation which is already looking forward to honourable mention in the histories of literature and art and aspiring to the most respectable civic distinctions. On pretext of carrying on propaganda for the soul, they have, in their struggle with naturalism, found their way back to the

abstract, emotional gestures which presuppose a comfortable life free from content or strife.»<sup>98</sup> The end of this manifesto is the most absurd and significant content: «To be against this manifesto is to be a Dadaist!»<sup>99</sup>

Visually, one of the most typical figures of Berlin Dada is George Grosz. Other significant artists (plate 4) are Raoul Hausmann, Johannes Baader, Walter Mehring, Hannah Höch, Carl Einstein, Wieland Herzfelde and Helmut (Johann) Herzfelde alias John Heartfield, well known for his photomontages. Hans Richter arrives in Berlin not before 1919. One of the common denominators of the Berlin Dadaists were anti-authoritarian values. A revolution was going on in Russia, so Communism, Bolshevism, Anarchism, or whatever else was in the air, but free individual choice was to be the dadaist way. The political meaning of Dada also became stronger, and from a satirical political Party, *The Trump of Doom*, came a wave of ferocious political street publications (that were banned one after another). The purpose here is not to formulate however a political statement of this new face of Dada, but to show how a social enterprise emerged from an art phenomenon which had begun in Switzerland. Hans Richter described the difficulties: «Efforts to abolish art, whether or not they were based on some social theory, met with unexpected difficulties. Hausmann preached anti-art, and yet most of his works were very close to the same «abstract art» that Huelsenbeck and Grosz so despised. Collages and photomontages later became important components of a «new art»

new because it opened the way to a vision of the world consistent with our experience. [...] So, when Dada gradually assumed the positive social function of rousing the public from its sleep and making it conscious of its own banality, the presence of a social and cultural purpose was in itself a sign of decadence. Dada in its pure state was pure revolt, ANTI-EVERYTHING! The flirtation with communism was solely the product of this anti-everything mentality, not of any devotion to the doctrines of Karl Marx—even though Marx possessed, for the Herzfeldes and Grosz, the statues of an anti-saint. [...] This anarchistic spirit enabled the Berlin Dada movement to live life to the full, in its own way. It provides some excuse for even the most revolting lapses of taste and for the violent manifestoes that sometimes even have a Nazi ring to them. In practice, the demand that art should be banished to the scrap-heap turned into a battle, not against art as such, but against social conditions in Germany.»<sup>100</sup>

The sympathies of John Heartfield for the Marxists has given the world its best propaganda posters and cynical anti-nazi photomontages (plate 5).

A remark of George Grosz can resume the social link that dada art had had in Germany: «The answer to the question, whether my work can be called art or not, depends on whether one believes that the future belongs to the working class.»<sup>101</sup> That innocent short statement is one of the key ideas of modern art: *the virtues of an art work does not come from it, but goes to it.*<sup>102</sup> So the modern artwork gets its meaning by the potential feedback. Hans Richter had very well showed that from the dada-nest, in Zurich, Dada has developed two ways, the *social* and the *self*. The first being turned to «satirical surrealism»<sup>103</sup> and the second to abstraction, one turned to politics, the other to sound and forms. The nihilist pamphlet is counterbalanced by optophonetics<sup>104</sup> or abstract poetry (plate 32).

Technically, in the visual arts after Zurich the alternative was either surrealist or abstract (non representational, non figurative). The photomontage and collage in Germany meant a simultaneous juxtaposition of different realities (point of view, angle, perspective, etc.) Such a way was followed by Hoech, Heartfield, Grosz, Hausmann and in Holland by Paul Citroen, for example (plate 4).

As we have seen, the formal means were never the *raison d'être*, but the goal can define also the means and it is not impossible besides Futurism, Expressionism and Cubism to find links with Constructivism and De Stijl for instance.

Outside Berlin, Hanover Dada can be seen through the personality of Kurt Schwitters, and in Holland through its proponent Theo Van Doesburg. These more eclectic branches also merit some local attention in a study of Dadaism. The same interest touches a branch in Cologne, represented by Max Ernst and Johannes Baargeld. The emphases of this last was very political and attacked Church, State, Establishment and Art through periodicals. But neither Baargeld nor Ernst agreed at all with the Berlin Dadaists who wanted to use the movement for ends of political propaganda. Ernst in particular was of that opinion that art and politics could of course develop hand in hand, but their amalgamation had to be avoided. Contacts between the Cologne and Paris movement existed because of the relative proximity, as soon as 1921 Max Ernst also moved to Paris. Man Ray remembers:

Max Ernst, the painter, arrived in Paris about the same time as myself, but I did not make his acquaintance until later.<sup>105</sup>

Between Berlin and Paris contacts remained almost non-existent.

The last place Dadaism developed was Paris.<sup>106</sup> Dadaism had in fact started as early as 1917 in literary circles, but it is mostly after the war, in the arrival of Tzara at the end of 1919, that it takes on any importance. Before that, some artists of the Avant-garde such as Breton, Aragon, Soupault, Ribemont-Dessaignes and Eluard had collaborated on the dada review in Zurich and *391*, but they had been, at the beginning, a little hesitating. Their Paris *Littérature*-review had nothing in common with Dada, but soon after a «contribution» by Tzara, the review found itself «infected» by the dada-virus.

New York Dada, through Duchamp but also from an active correspondence between Tzara and Man Ray, had an eye<sup>107</sup> on the development of the «virus» on French soil. Meanwhile, the noise from the dada-front in Berlin was audible and suddenly circumstances were favourable for the «virus» so that it spread very fast in Paris, too.

*391*, the review Picabia founded in Barcelona, now established itself in Paris, and following a dada-legend made great publicity for the arrival of Tristan Tzara. The reality was in fact more banal: the arrival of Tzara (like the arrival of Man Ray) was unimpressive. The true historical fact was that it was Tzara himself who started to provide for himself the place of a leader. But the soil was fertile for what Richter called «the dada vortex». The literary ground was rich and well prepared for the revolution: Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Jarry, Roussel and Apollinaire had been the pioneers.

Tzara was becoming very fast the soul of French Dadaism, by his «rigour and method». He wasn't an authoritarian leader like Breton was soon becoming with institutionalised Surrealism. Tzara refused all kinds of ideology, or rational organisation. That does not mean that Tzara was in a total confusion over values, but the opposite. For, affirming a balance between order and disorder, Tzara showed how apparent disorder is a mark of hidden order. His quest served the base for many principles (techniques) discovered by the Dadaists. Richter is pleased to tell how Hans Arp was one day tearing up a drawing he didn't like, and when he looked at the pieces that had fallen on the floor he found in their arrangement exactly what he had been wanting. This process of creating apparent disorder became the key feature of the relief architecture of Janco, the photography and cinema of Eggeling and the *Generalbaß*, and in the *rhythms* (plate 8) of Richter ,and,

above all, in Man Ray's *rayogrammes*. In this new order, chance assumes a remarkable role and becomes one of the parameters of the creative phenomenon. The principle can even be related to the *morphogenesis* of Kandinsky.

*Tabula rasa*: in the 1918 manifesto Tzara wanted to create a total vacuum. Dada wants to destroy art by means of art:

Il y a un grand travail destructif, négatif, à accomplir. Balayer, nettoyer.  
Il nous faut des œuvres fortes, droites, précises et à jamais incomprises.<sup>108</sup>

But, as Richter has observed, it finally does not go so far as Duchamp's total rejection of art and the annihilation of art forms. The neutralisation of art by anti-art affirms the existence of both. With Duchamp there is no need to speak about art (or anti-art) when art per se simply does not exist. For him if art is by definition anywhere it ceases to exist as a separate entity and there is in fact no art to be spoken about. On that point Dada was very original: it wasn't expressing itself in a new art form but using the artifacts of the art movements of Cubism, Futurism and Expressionism that it was struggling against.

*Conjunctio oppositorum*: Richter observes that «The *yes* and the *no* of Dada makes Dada. Not only the *yes*, or not only the *no*: Dada is really the new ethic dimension and creative expression. It's why the uniformity of elements of a *style* are missing.»<sup>109</sup>

The bipolarity of Dadaism, through the concept of art and anti-art, has given new horizons to the forms. This bipolarity has provided evidence of a hidden system of repulsions and attractions which was undiscovered until Dadaism. Eggeling, Richter, Duchamp and Man Ray are film-makers who scrupulously followed their own *logical and elaborate system* where all artistic —technical or stylistic— means were permitted. So the boundaries of art itself were mixing. A film could be music, and from a poem a picture could be made, and so on.

The debate about the dimension of the «yes» and the «no» is a delicate question as it poses the question of whether Dada is to be seen more from one of those points of view or the other. The debate between the role of logic that was denied by Tzara (no) and the role of logic affirmed by Richter (yes) can be resolved by such a statement: «Often the Dadas (sic.) employed the techniques of modernism in such a

way as to mock and subvert the aims of their original inventors. At the same time, individual Dada painters, such as Marcel Janco or Hans Richter, were often *privately* experimenting with pure abstraction while *publicly* exhibiting more provocative, polemical work under the Dada banner.»<sup>110</sup> Tzara believes strongly in prerogatives of inspiration, spontaneity, chance and intuition. Art logic lies in improvisation.

La logique est toujours fausse. Elle tire les fils des notions, paroles, dans leur extérieur formel vers des bouts, des centres illusoires. Ces chaînes tuent. Marié à la logique, l'art vivrait dans l'inceste, engloutissant, avalant sa propre queue, toujours son corps se fornicant en lui-même, et le tempérament deviendrait un cauchemar goudronné de protestantisme, un monument, un tas d'intestins grisâtres et lourds.<sup>111</sup>

Richter takes up this new dada-front: «It looked as if the tempo of Dada was quickening as it got older. After wildness in Berlin –paroxysm in Paris! *Littérature* and *391* formed a solid front. But Paris Dada, unlike the Zurich, New York, Berlin, Hanover and Cologne movements, belonged almost exclusively to writers, not to visual artists. Painting does appear in Paris alongside literature, but the painters did not play a decisive part; their work neither influenced the Paris movement essentially nor was influenced by it. The visual artists continued with things they had already begun elsewhere. Meanwhile they applauded the Dada writers and identified themselves with the revolt that was led by them. [...] In visual art, nobody achieved a truly characteristic Paris Dada style, which might have contributed a new note of its own to the international concert of twentieth-century art. But, if Paris Dada produced few painters of its own, it was all the more successful in attracting them from outside.»<sup>112</sup> So, it was the case for Ernst, Picabia and Man Ray.

Dadaism has often been understood superficially without its essential bipolarity. Many superficial writings have given a wrong image of Dada using that apparent disorder and anarchism which were its first provocative means. Concerning Man Ray, it is also typical to observe how many illustrated popular books pass over the dadaist content of the works, retaining only the *figurative* or *formal* impact. The facts show that Dadaists jump from Futurism to Constructivism, flirting occasionally with Cubism or De Stijl (plate 8). And in the end the fact that most of the Dadaists accepted the well institutionalised surrealist conjecture set up by Breton is a proof of great flexibility: Dadaism is not a style but a philosophical artistic movement, an *alternative way of living art*.



Before concluding this premise about Man Ray's vision analysis, I would like to quote Philippe Sers at greater length. I in fact found in his text an explicit expression of how I myself have felt the vision of Dada through the work of Man Ray, and how there appears to be a gap in the field of art education today:

Un nouvel examen du dadaïsme s'impose, car son approche est actuellement tributaire du filtre plaqué par le surréalisme ou le néo-dadaïsme. En réalité Dada est la modernité artistique. La rénovation artistique de la modernité est fondée sur la découverte du pouvoir de l'image et le rejet de l'expression et du style. Le contenu de vérité dépend de la mise en œuvre d'une herméneutique de l'image Dada.

La fausse «mort de Dada» a curieusement correspondu avec le début de la montée du pouvoir des idéologies que vécut le début de notre siècle. L'effondrement actuel de ces mêmes idéologies n'appelle-t-il pas à la redécouverte du mouvement Dada, de ce mouvement qui crée le lieu de rencontre de tous les acteurs de la modernité artistique de par sa capacité d'accueil, liée au vide radical, qu'il a su instaurer, et de par sa foi dans le futur, dans un futur libéré de toutes les usurpations partisanses et ouvert à la véritable utopie? C'est en tant que vide méthodique que Dada appelle toutes les forces de l'utopie. En même temps notre époque, encombrée comme elle peut l'être des scories de ces idéologies et envahie, après leur disparition, par l'incroyable cynisme des marchands étouffant la liberté d'expression et même l'esprit critique, a bien besoin de faire recours à l'expérience Dada pour retrouver un souffle libérateur.<sup>113</sup>

«A new examination of Dadaism is needed, because its approach today is blurred by the filter of Surrealism or Neodadaism. Actually, Dada is artistic modernity.

The artistic renewal of modernity is based on a discovery of the power of the image and the rejection of expression and style. The amount of truth depends on the hermeneutics of the dada image.

The false «death of Dada» curiously corresponded to the rise to power of early 20<sup>th</sup> century ideologies. Does not the current neglect of those ideologies appeal for a recovery of the dada-movement, the movement which is a meeting-point of all the protagonists of artistic modernity through the scope of its concerns and which is linked to an absolute vacuum, and, by a belief in a better future, freed from political domination so as to be aiming for a real utopia? It is through a vacuum in method that Dada regroups the forces of utopia. Meanwhile, our times, infected by the remnants of those dispersed ideologies and a victim of the astonishing cynicism of commercial exploitation that suffocates freedom of expression and even criticism,

are in real need of rediscovering dada experience in order to rediscover the taste of freedom.»<sup>114</sup>

Between 1912 and 1913 Man Ray had followed drawing courses (plate 26) at the Ferrer Center, well known for its anarchist tendencies at the time. His professors were Robert Henri, «a secessionist painter» with «ideas more stimulating than any direct criticism» and George Bellows, «famous for his brutal prizefight paintings» and speeches about «initiative and imagination».<sup>115</sup> They very probably helped to distance Man Ray from academism, and prepared him for the spiritual and emotional freedom he would need soon after to deal with Duchamp and Picabia. Man Ray remembers the school's relaxed atmosphere:

Besides the art class there were classes in literature, philosophy, and a day school for the children of members who wished to bring them up in more liberal surroundings than the public schools afforded. All courses were free; some well-known writers and painters volunteered their services as instructors; in fact, everything was free, even love. Most of the conventions of society were frowned upon.<sup>116</sup>

More than fifty years later Man Ray wrote in the catalogue of a retrospective exhibition:

Nous sommes une race ou plutôt une espèce dont la particularité est d'accumuler. [...] Nous recherchons la variété dans la vie — en art [...]  
Sommes-nous pour cela supérieurs? Un mot sans signification, comme le mot sérieux. [...]  
La recherche du plaisir, de la liberté et de la réalisation de l'individualité, sont donc les uniques mobiles de la race humaine susceptibles d'acquisition, dans notre société, à travers l'œuvre créatrice.<sup>117</sup>

As a final *résumé* of this subchapter I would like to call to mind the sound of Renato Poggioli rejoining the thoughts of Man Ray, Hans Richter, Philippe Sers, Lucretius and Henri Bergson, all of whom had that longing for freedom.

The iconoclastic attitude can always be reduced to a vulgar gesture of protest or a brutal act of vandalism. Its more profound root is sometimes the quasi-religious aspiration toward an absolute emotional and mental freedom, the desire to reacquire an ingenuousness and innocence of vision which modern man seems forever to have lost, the anxious will to discover the eternal laws of ideal or perfect form<sup>118</sup>

In the case of the Bauhaus it will be seen that freedom and emotion, rationality and pleasure, along with the «perfect form», become the centre of modern art education too.

### [bauhaus]

In 1919, about the same time that Dada was spreading in Germany, the Bauhaus came out of the Weimar Academy.<sup>119</sup> While it does not have any direct connection with Man Ray, it nonetheless is of some considerable interest. First, it provides a link to Dadaism in the personality of Theo van Doesburg and the dadaist revolt.<sup>120</sup> Secondly, it is a kind of fusion between art streams and aesthetic conceptions of which it forms some of the philosophies I have discussed. Thirdly, it has had a very important impact on the output of modern art, and finally it has a significant presence in art education (including film and photography). I have been interested in the Bauhaus for this last reason especially.<sup>121</sup> Some personalities in teaching like László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946) are of particular interest with regard to Man Ray's photography and the «absolute cinema» of Richter. Further, with Kandinsky for instance, the Bauhaus has provided some basic founding premises for art education theories that will be discussed later. The importance of that art school stems in part from strong personalities, but above all from its artistically important social and political commitment.

The Bauhaus had a relatively short life, but this period, usually said to be from 1919 to 1933, when the Nazis closed the school, still has repercussions today in the forms and methods of art education. After its closure in Berlin in 1933, the Bauhaus took a foot hold also in America (Chicago, 1937), known under the name of *New Bauhaus*. The same statement can be made about the Bauhaus as the summarising statement on Dadaism: it is mostly an art philosophy —constructivist— which has a part to play in our conception of contemporary art. But though Dadaism had been in favour of irrational existence and doubt of any values, the final output of the Bauhaus went in quite opposite direction: it is the origin of rational architecture and design concept dearest to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with echoes in Functionalism and Productivism (plate 5).

The roots of the Bauhaus are nevertheless of a less rational origin, since it was born in the spirit of Expressionism and its father is a Belgian architect of *Art nouveau*. The development of the Bauhaus in a more rationalist direction can be seen to have been because of the following factors:

- 1° a decisive influence of Constructivism and De Stijl
- 2° a strong architectural and (anti)-decorative output
- 3° a palette of very particular personalities-teachers
- 4° the social, economical and political context in Germany during the twenties

As consequence of the industrial revolution, around the turn of the century the German government had created a special post in London to study and report on housing policies. Hermann Muthesius (1861–1927), who admired English domestic architecture for its sobriety and functionalism returned from London, and was appointed superintendent of Schools of Arts and Crafts by the Prussian Board of Trade. Muthesius encouraged the establishment of training workshops in which students could learn by actually making things rather than designing them on paper.

Even more important than Muthesius' efforts in art education were his attempts to persuade German industrialists to encourage good design. Muthesius believed that ornament and mechanized production were not concealable: for him the English offered a solution for problems in design and art education.

In 1907, he was responsible for the foundation of the *Werkbund*, an organization of twelve industrialists and twelve artists. The *Werkbund* was to arrange for the employment of designers in industry and improvement in the quality of goods. Its aim was also to conciliate again art, craft, industry and trade.

A founding member of the *Werkbund*, Peter Behrens (1868-1940) was appointed in Berlin by the German company *AEG* as chief designer. Behrens was originally a painter but his chief interests came to be in design and architecture. There he worked with architects such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Henry van de Velde, who was well known in Belgian *Art Nouveau* design.

Walter Gropius (1883–1969), who had joined the group in 1912, was taking an active part in the organisation of the *Werkbund* and in its policy-making. Henry van de Velde (1863–1957) as a Neo-impressionist painter believed that painting was not the best medium in which to meet. He saw architecture and design as having social responsibilities. Following Gropius' statement, the debt Bauhaus owed to van de

Velde, at least in practical terms, was the largest debt among all the members of the *Werkbund*. At the beginning the school was a little more than the continuation in Weimar of the activities of van de Velde, who had provided «artistic inspiration to craftsmen and industrialists by producing designs, models, examples and so forth».<sup>122</sup> The Bauhaus idea started in fact under the creativity and direction of van de Velde around 1907, in the Weimar *Kunstgewerbeschule*, but it must wait until 1919 after World War I before that Gropius was finally offered the directorship of the Bauhaus. Van de Velde, as a Belgian citizen, was forced to leave Germany in 1914.

The catastrophic economic situation of Germany after the war and the crash of ideals—that was suffered artistically by Expressionism— was the launch of the Bauhaus. Its base rested on van de Velde's ideas, but after the war a new kind of society was also needed—which was also the ultimate aim of Dadaists. So a huge reform in state education, including art education, was attempted. There is no doubt that the trend of progressive (and utopian) ideas rejecting the nihilist face of Dadaism in 1919 was Expressionism. The Bauhaus manifesto, illustrated by an expressionist artist, Lyonel Feininger (plate 5) was also expressionist. The main idea of the manifesto, though it appears ecstatic, vague and utopian, bears some resemblance to the idea of the *Gesamkunstwerk* of Dada: between crafts, design, architecture, sculpture and paintings there are no limits; everything is only construction.<sup>123</sup> Handicraft especially was to become the principle vector of art education. The school would become *a source of social change through art*. The programme of the school should be as large as possible, providing training in visual arts for the craftsmen and for the artists the opportunity of exercising a handicraft profession, such as that of designer.<sup>124</sup> Since specialisation should be avoided, the school should embrace as many activities as possible. The fine arts should find their place alongside the greatest possible variety of craft skills and, wherever possible, architecture and engineering as well. The belief in a synthetic art education, a «total work of art» combining separate disciplines and media, if not strange to the Futurists and Dadaists, is not totally unknown either by the Expressionists, when one recalls their significant input in expressionist cinema through sets and decors. No better example could be taken in this year 1919 than Robert Wiene's film *Das Cabinet des Dr Caligari*.

No wonder from this perspective that the first incarnation of the Bauhaus (1919-1923) in the Weimar *Kunstgewerbeschule* was an expressionist initiative.

Another question was to be the centre of polemics: the «academic freedom» which was one of the principles of German higher education and which allowed the students to take final examinations whenever they considered themselves ready to do so, clashed with the practical method of training and the inevitably structured organisation of workshops. The educational reform can be summarised in three main elements:

1° craft-training in art studies

2° very large training field

3° period of studies rigidly structured and completed in fixed time

If this was now a general trend for all establishments of that kind all around Germany, the term *Hochschule für Gestaltung*<sup>125</sup> was to describe now also the Weimar *Kunstgewerbeschule*. Because the Weimar school was an old academy that had been founded in 1860, the new reformed *Staatlichen Bauhaus* (the State Bauhaus) was in fact mostly a new amalgam of new and former professors —and it also inherited the former students. The choice of the name *Bauhaus* says quite a lot about the new rather anti-academic education philosophy. *Bauhaus* is a derivative of *Bauhütten*<sup>126</sup>, which in the Middle Ages organised guilds of masons, builders and decorators (and incidentally also freemasonry). This is to give a clear idea of the structure to the new institution. Gropius, following his shocking experience during the war as a cavalry officer, arrived in Weimar with firm political commitments. He argued for «the necessity for an intellectual change of front» and was persuaded that «capitalism and power-politics have made our species creatively dull and a broad mass of bourgeois philistines are suffocating living art. The intellectual bourgeois... has demonstrated his inability to support a German culture.»<sup>127</sup> Thus the Bauhaus gives him the possibility to share some utopian aims of the left-wing revolutionaries —and that means also a possible link with Berlin Dada. But Gropius was an «apolitical socialist»<sup>128</sup>: «We must destroy parties. I want to found an unpolitical community here» he wrote to a friend.<sup>129</sup> To reverse the hierarchical values of the bourgeoisie the Bauhaus could be an educative opportunity. Here there is a link with the freemasonry model in avoiding hierarchical power, and replacing it by a system of companionship.

For Gropius the word «professor» with its academic connotation was to be banished, but replaced by an anti-academic «master». Teachers became «masters» also, and students «apprentices» or «journeymen», to give evidence that the Bauhaus ought to be a craft-based institution in close connection with the working world. A probationary period of one year of a well structured course, the *vorkurs*, was to be established. If a student performed unsatisfactorily in the *vorkurs* he was not allowed to proceed to workshop training. Four years was the maximum time the student could remain in the Bauhaus. The «workshop» principle replaced the traditional studio but was in close relation with teaching. Apprentices were to be instructed not only by «masters» but also by visiting fine artists who were called «Masters of Form» (because they favoured the teaching of creativity and expression).

Johannes Itten (1888–1967) was in charge of the *vorkurs* from the beginning. His pedagogical starting point was to find a balance between intuition and method or between subjective emotivity and objective observation, a curious variation of the dadaist chance and anti-chance principle and the theory on intuition dear to Bergson.

In the beginning, the administrative, economical and political situation was quite chaotic, and the Bauhaus was also criticized by nationalists for sympathies with Communists or that it simply did not serve German «Aryan» ideas (as early as 1919). Further the former academy staff turned against Gropius and agitated for the reinstatement of the academy.

As a consequence a split emerged in 1920–21 and a high school of (pure academic) painting *Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Kunst* was founded which gave former conservative teachers the possibility of leaving the Bauhaus for it. The Bauhaus was in the middle of political and ethical controversies but still became the centre of a rich social life. Although Gropius' conception of a radically new kind of art education (as was the manifesto's aim) was turned into crafts, he was forced to revise his education policy. How could the staff that had been appointed, mostly fine arts artists, also teach bookbinding, carpentry, and metalwork, for instance? Between 1919 and 1924 as the German economic situation improved the personalities who made the Bauhaus less utopian and more realistic were appointed: Gerhard Marcks, Lyonel Feininger, Johannes Itten, Georg Muche, Oskar

Schlemmer, Paul Klee, Lothar Schreyer, Wassily Kandinsky, Theo van Doesburg and László Moholy-Nagy (plate 5).

The school revised its educational programme in a more rational quasi-scientific way including new teaching methods. The men who came to teach at the Bauhaus were intrigued by visual art theories and fundamental problems, maintaining some distance from the original Expressionism. The original conception of the Bauhaus was saved because in Gropius' eyes those artists free from the old conception of the visual arts were predisposed to teach more in a new way than old-fashioned craftsmen with narrow horizons. Such painters could stress and explain the elements common to all artistic activities. They could give instruction in the effects and uses of colour, in form and composition, and provide insights into the fundamentals and into issues of aesthetics. The purchase was the formulation of «a new grammar of design which in no way depended on historical examples».<sup>130</sup>

The education system in the Bauhaus was in constant tension between «Workshop Masters», «Masters of Form», students and its directors. The pragmatic modus vivendi model came finally in a way that diverged from what had been the original aims. For instance the architecture and practical task had been completely left behind. «In order to reach the goals aimed for by the Bauhaus in its manifestoes other masters are required, masters who know what the creation of a unified work of art entails and can demonstrate their ability to create such a work...»<sup>131</sup>

Van Doesburg, the founder of De Stijl, but previously member of the dadaist group in Zurich, turned up in Weimar in 1921 and in fact began to publish his magazine from there. He was of the same opinion as Gropius that educational reforms were needed, but was also radically critical about the direction Bauhaus-teaching had taken. Feininger (who was an Expressionist) had carefully considered at the beginning that van Doesburg's teaching could represent an interesting opposite pole by teaching from an «anti-romantic» point of view. At the other side, it was feared that van Doesburg could take over everything. Following Hans Richter he was «crazy about rationality».<sup>132</sup> Some other teachers then in the Bauhaus were from another side altogether, like Itten who was more of a mystic.

Hans Richter reports that «at the Bauhaus, discussions were terrible, and it is because of Itten and Moholy that he (van Doesburg) couldn't do the teaching he wanted, in the way of De Stijl, [...] because he (van Doesburg) wasn't authorized to do his lectures».<sup>133</sup> But fortunately, van Doesburg was a recognized figure in the international avant-garde, of the same stature as Mondrian. They had already left a



decisive mark on Constructivism, which was the direction in which Gropius wanted ultimately the development of the Bauhaus.

In 1922, a constructivist-dadaist congress was organized in Weimar: it brought Constructivism and Dadaism, as prominent European avant-garde movements, face to face and in an encounter that became a historical one:

The Constructivists living in Germany (Theo van Doesburg, El Lissitzki, Hans Richter et al.) called a congress in October of 1922, in Weimar. Arriving there, to our great amazement we found also the Dadaist, Hans Arp and Tristan Tzara. This caused a rebellion against the host, Van Doesburg, because at that time we felt in Dadaism a destructive and obsolete force in comparison with the new outlook of the Constructivists. Doesburg, a powerful personality, quieted the storm and the guests were accepted to the dismay of the younger, purist members who slowly withdrew and let the congress turn into a Dadaistic performance. At that time we did not realize that Doesburg himself was both a Constructivist and Dadaist.<sup>134</sup>

De Stijl had a positive impact on the school in the end in the way that it counterbalanced the expressionist element. Van Doesburg's presence in Weimar forced Gropius to accept the fact that the Bauhaus had moved in a specific direction (constructivist), and that it would be even too late to change. Van Doesburg had been influential mostly over the direction the Bauhaus had taken in the quasi-scientific task of studying matter, forms and colours, so that the emphasis on the crafts seemed to diminish. «...We are obviously considering two entirely separate creative processes which advance side by side. One is not outdated and the other modern; both will develop further and, as it seems, will gradually move together», concluded Gropius.<sup>135</sup>

Further, a new figure László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946) who was close to van Doesburg, replaced Itten in the *vorkurs*. This fact was decisive in the development of the school.

László Moholy-Nagy was the purest image of sobriety and calculation. Absolutely constructivist, he believed strongly in the superiority of the machine over the emotions, and rejected any subjective definition of art.

The reality of our century is technology: the invention, construction and maintenance of machines. To be a user of machines is to be of the spirit of this century. It has replaced the transcendental spiritualism of past eras.

Everyone is equal before the machine. I can use it, so can you. It can crush me; the same can happen to you. There is no tradition in technology, no class-consciousness. Everyone can be the machine's master or its slave.<sup>136</sup>

Moholy-Nagy had a great admiration for the Russian Constructivists like Vladimir Tatlin. For him the art object is a product, which must not obligatorily be an original and unique creation, as long as it serves its purposes. But the object is to be perfect in its conception as well in its execution. He also expresses a kind of new vision on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (1925):

An attempt to bring together into one entity singular works or separate fields of creation that were isolated from one another. This entity was to be the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, architecture, the sum of all the arts. (The De Stijl Group, Holland; first period of the Bauhaus.) The concept of a total work of art was readily intelligible, yesterday, at the period when specialisation was at its height. With its ramifications and its fragmenting action in every field, specialisation had destroyed all belief in the possibility of embracing the totality of all fields, the wholeness of life. Since, however, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is only an addition, albeit an organised one, we cannot be satisfied with it today. What we need is not the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, alongside and separated from which life flows by, but a synthesis of all the vital impulses spontaneously forming itself into the all-embracing *Gesamtwerk* (life) which abolishes all isolation, in which all individual accomplishments proceed from a biological necessity and culminate in a universal necessity.<sup>137</sup>

The rational-spiritual was the centre of misunderstandings at the Bauhaus and it reflects very well the dada chance and anti-chance concept we have analysed. «It always seemed a pity that a great visionary and artist like Kandinsky should bother to try to discover the source of his inspiration. By analysing that source for the instruction of his students at the Bauhaus he in fact exposed what had been the subconscious which had driven him (to around 1923) and he consequently lost the dynamism and power he had been guided by during the period of the *improvisations*.»<sup>138</sup> Also Paul Klee's phrase that art's purpose is «to render the invisible visible» is quite opposite to Moholy-Nagy's idea. He is supposed to have said to Schreyer: «You surely don't believe the old fairy-story about the human soul? What is known as the soul is nothing but a function of the human body.»<sup>139</sup> Moholy-Nagy was supported by student-representatives but Paul Citroen, a Dutch student of the Bauhaus (close to the Dadaists) claimed that «none of us who had suggested Moholy liked his Constructivism. This «Russian» trend created outside

the Bauhaus, with its exact, simulatively technical forms, was disgusting to us who were devoted to the extremes of German Expressionism.»<sup>140</sup>

Moholy-Nagy was nevertheless a very versatile and excellent teacher who had amazing control of many techniques. He had great ability in making constructions and collages as well painting and photography. He was also typographer and designer.<sup>141</sup> Above all, for him photography was technically the top of visual arts (plate 5). He specialized in doing photograms.<sup>142</sup>

Moholy-Nagy's appointment provided clear evidence that Gropius had changed his mind about the kind of institution the Bauhaus ought to be. Moholy-Nagy was helped by Josef Albers (1888–1976), a former student of the Bauhaus, to keep the *workurs*. After the Bauhaus moved to Dessau, in 1925, and after Moholy-Nagy's resignation in 1928, Albers assumed responsibility for the entire preliminary course. He was the perfect complement of Moholy-Nagy. Together they are responsible for the change of the Bauhaus course after an important exhibition of the school's activities in 1923.

The Bauhaus exhibition included a lecture by Gropius *Art and Technology: a New Unity*. It was the time of political reform after social and economic disaster. For a few years between 1924 and 1929, it seems that German industry could attract foreign investment. It was during this period that the Bauhaus moved definitively over to the idea of industrial design and the mass-production of cheap quality products. The presence at the Bauhaus of a Dutch architect, J.J.P. Oud was, along with the influence of De Stijl, the major element in the school's development. The utopian idea of unifying man and machine was becoming the trend of those transition years of economic prosperity, both with a blind fascination with Utopia and also with the fear of the alienation of the masses and its social impact, as *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1925) has shown. However that period was also the time of growing inflation —shown by Hans Richter's film *Inflation* (1927–28).<sup>143</sup>

From the art-philosophical point of view the Bauhaus was in the middle of the dilemma which is one of the principal subjects of this study: rationality versus spontaneity. Critical statements from inside the school were of two opposing kinds: «it was the time when the Bauhaus began to think rationally after a period when our strengths were intuition and ignorance.»<sup>144</sup> On the other hand even though Feininger —expressionist— «had seen the need of change, he also quickly regretted its results, as did Klee and Kandinsky who, like Feininger, preferred to remain at the

school in the hope that they would provide a balance against the weight of rationalist thinking».<sup>145</sup>

I shall pass over the second period of the Bauhaus up to its closure in 1933 because the purpose here is not to study the history of Bauhaus Design and Architecture. Around 1924–25 such questions as whether art education should be a reflection of society, or rather a means to change society, and whether art education should be regarded as a quasi-scientific matter (or even as a technology) or rather a means of expression, came to prominence in the Bauhaus. As Magdalena Droste remarks<sup>146</sup>, the Bauhaus was a rigid system, but there was always a tolerant reaction towards experience and the changing times. The situation, as is the case in so-called meta-stable systems in chemistry, was one where there was a constant action and reaction between opposing forces, bringing a kind of balance by neutralising each other.

After 1924, political and financial pressure from the Thuringian Ministry and also by local nationalists forced Gropius to search for a new location for the school, outside Weimar. Dessau had made an offer for the school to continue its programme there in 1925. It was a centre of modern industries and a Social-democratic area unassailable by the Nationalists. Dessau was also nearer to Berlin. A fund was provided by local industry to finance the construction of new buildings for the workshops and also accommodation quarters. Most of the former teachers at Weimar including Kandinsky, Klee and Moholy-Nagy went to Dessau, but the dual system of «Masters of Forms» and «Workshop Masters» was abandoned. They became again «professors». Also the school became a *Hochschule für Gestaltung* (Institute of Design). The hierarchic direction model was also restored in a more conventional way and the director made the decisions alone.

But the most important change was the introduction of the department of architecture. The director of the department was Hannes Meyer (1889-1954) and he would take over the direction of the school after the resignation of Gropius in 1928. The new buildings and the new department were an opportunity to experiment in a totally new architecture related to ideas developed by the staff. A totally new Bauhaus was developing and essentially it was a move to design and architecture. After 1927, a communist cell inside the student organisation had grown in importance and by 1930 was receiving so much attention that the entire school and its new director, who had Marxist sympathies, were labelled undesirables by a large

section of the local authorities: «Meyer's Marxism played into the hands of the school's opponents, who had been arguing ever since the Bauhaus had moved to Dessau that it was a nest of Bolsheviks [...] Ironically, the school under the Marxist Meyer benefited enormously from the success of the capitalist system. For the first time the school was achieving what it set out to do. At the same time, however, the school had changed almost beyond recognition, and it was inevitable that most of the staff whom Meyer inherited should feel disaffected and threatened. Albers, Klee, Kandinsky and Schlemmer were quickly convinced that their presence was an irrelevance» writes Frank Whitford.<sup>147</sup> In 1930, Meyer was forced out of the school and was replaced by Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969). For two years the school continued its activities in Dessau, then moved out to Berlin. But, after one year, in 1933 it was closed definitively by the Nazis (see Nazi propaganda poster, plate 5).

<sup>1</sup> In James Gunter's interview: *Man Ray in Paris: His heart belongs to Dada* S&S Paris bureau S&S archives, European edition, Jan. 14, 1966 published also at:

<http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=126&article=23009&archive=true>

<sup>2</sup> As an echo of what Hal Foster calls «the obscene narcissism» of Europe that should be left «behind»

<sup>3</sup> Charles Harrison and Paul Wood in the Introduction of Part I of *Art in Theory, 1900-2000, An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, p. 14

<sup>4</sup> See for instance at: <http://www.desordre.net/>

<sup>5</sup> Jean Thoraval: *Les grandes étapes de la civilisation française*, 1972, for the socio-political history

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 399, Jean Jaurès, tribune de la Chambre, 18th November 1909

<sup>7</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 49

<sup>8</sup> Jean Thoraval: *Les Grandes étapes de la civilisation française*, 1972

<sup>9</sup> The «foolish years»: french appellation for the beginning of the twenties, do not mix with *Belle Époque* which links only to the beginning of the century.

<sup>10</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 220

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Paul Claudel: *Le Soulier de satin, Avertissement*, 1943

<sup>14</sup> See in: Clément, E., Demonque, C., Hansen-Løve, L., Kahn, P.: *Pratique de la philosophie de a à z*, Paris, 1994

<sup>15</sup> «L'intelligence est aux hommes ce que l'instinct est aux animaux: une forme d'adaptation au réel» (*Pratique de la philosophie*, Hatier, 1994)

<sup>16</sup> Henri Bergson: *L'évolution créatrice*, 1907

[http://www.uqac.quebec.ca/zone30/Classiques\\_des\\_sciences\\_sociales/index.html](http://www.uqac.quebec.ca/zone30/Classiques_des_sciences_sociales/index.html), p. 180

<sup>17</sup> Neil Baldwin has showed that in many ways did Man Ray and the Surrealists enjoy an uneasy marriage and especially Man Ray's flirtations with astrology and spiritualism were undoubtedly not as convincing as one could imagine (see in chapter 6)

<sup>18</sup> I use here a French form in order to set in dialogue the old (for instance Lucretius) and new philosophy

<sup>19</sup> Also called by Tom Sandqvist *borderpeople*

<sup>20</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 33-37

<sup>21</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 31

<sup>22</sup> Man Ray: *Ce que je suis et autres textes* (pres. Vincent Lavoie), 1998, p. 90. *I and Marcel* text originally published in *View*, n°1, march 1945, In *Self Portrait* Man Ray also describes this meeting, see in chapter 3

<sup>23</sup> The four-fold cure for anxiety: «Don't fear the gods, nor death; goods are easy to obtain; evils are easy to endure» <http://www.epicurus.info/etexts/PD.html-1>

<sup>24</sup> David Simpson at <http://www.vroma.org/~abarker/lucretius.html>

<sup>25</sup> Lucretius (c. 94 - c. 49 B.C.) in *De rerum natura* (50 B.C.) ex book II: «If all motions are linked together, And from the old ever arise the new. In fixed order, and primordial seeds. Produce not by their swerving some new start Of motion to sunder the covenants of fate, That cause succeed not cause from everlasting, Whence this free will for creatures all over the lands, Whence is it wrested from the fates,- this will Whereby we step right forward where desire Leads each man on, whereby the same we swerve. In motions, not as at some fixed time, Nor at some fixed line of space, but where The mind itself has urged?» Transl. William Ellery Leonard and adapt. JC from: <http://www.vroma.org/~abarker/lucretius.html>

- <sup>26</sup> I emphasise the viewpoints of artists
- <sup>27</sup> Herbert Read: *A concise History of Modern Painting*, 1974, p. 50
- <sup>28</sup> Adapted out of the work of Pierre Francastel: *L'impressionnisme*, 1974
- <sup>29</sup> (Positivist), as an allusion to the «position politique» of Surrealism 25 years later (against Positivism)
- <sup>30</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Le doute de Cézanne in Sens et Non-Sens*, 1945, (1996), p. 16
- <sup>31</sup> Henri Van Lier: *Les arts de l'espace*, 1971, p. 52, transl. JC
- <sup>32</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Le doute de Cézanne in Sens et Non-Sens*, 1945, p. 18
- <sup>33</sup> We refer to the mythic influence of Cézanne within the modern painting milieu before he was recognized by the critics and during his retreat in Procence well developed in the recent film of Jacques Deschamp *Paul Cézanne* (France, 2000)
- <sup>34</sup> Sources: Hulten, Pontus *Futurismo & Futurismi*, 1986 and Apollonio, Umbro *Futurist Manifestos*, 1973
- <sup>35</sup> About Duchamp references works are : Ades, Dawn; Cox, Neil; Hopkins, David: *Marcel Duchamp*, 1999; Tomkins, Calvin: *The World of Marcel Duchamp 1887-1968*, 1973 and Arman, Yves *Marcel Duchamp Pelaa ja voittaa* transl. Kimmo Pasanen, Taide, Gal. Arman, NY, 1986
- <sup>36</sup> As reference to E. Muybridge's «Animal Locomotion» (1887), «Animals in Motion» (1899) and «The Human Figure in Motion» (1901)
- <sup>37</sup> Duchamp op. cit. in Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, pp. 207-208
- <sup>38</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Le doute de Cézanne in Sens et Non-Sens*, 1945, p. 25
- <sup>39</sup> A curiously formalist deformation... of «cube» in «tube»
- <sup>40</sup> Tom Sandqvist: *Dada-East*, 2006
- <sup>41</sup> Tom Sandqvist: Rajamaila, 1990, pp. 123-125 transl. JC
- <sup>42</sup> Tristan Tzara (pseudonym for Sami Rosenstock) is Rumanian; Tom Sandqvist has showed recently that Dada did not spring full-grown from a Zurich literary salon but grew out of an already vibrant artistic tradition in Eastern Europe, particularly Romania, that was transposed to Switzerland when a group of Rumanian modernists settled in Zurich.
- <sup>43</sup> This habitual view will be discussed and refused later
- <sup>44</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 34
- <sup>45</sup> Happening is the term especially restricted to performances and art events of the sixties, but the principle is quite the same; also what is called today «interactive» can be assimilated to the «Gesamtkunstwerk» of the Dadaists
- <sup>46</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées et Opuscules*, Pensée n°272, c. 1660
- <sup>47</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 4
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5
- <sup>50</sup> Herbert Read in *A concise History of Modern Painting*, 1974, p. 44 quoting Georges Duthuit's French locution: «L'exactitude n'est pas la vérité»
- <sup>51</sup> Oswald Herzog: *Der abstracte Expressionismus* in *Der Sturm* X. May 1919. 29
- <sup>52</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 51
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58
- <sup>55</sup> Henri Bergson: *L'évolution créatrice*, 1907, p. 163
- <sup>56</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 29
- <sup>57</sup> Richard Huelsenbeck quoted by Hans Richter in *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 128
- <sup>58</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 9 see also at: <http://www.idehist.uu.se/distans/ilmh/pm/dada-richter01.htm>
- <sup>59</sup> Historical references are therefore mainly from the work of Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964. Most of the historical facts have however been compared in diverse biographies and in general literature. A work of first help was: Hulten, Pontus *Futurismo & Futurismi*, which records largely facts about other movements contemporary to Futurism.
- <sup>60</sup> Cf. note 36
- <sup>61</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 13
- <sup>62</sup> Hans Richter in *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 13 claims that the Cabaret was *founded* on 1st February. The first opening was however 5th February.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12
- <sup>64</sup> In French in the German text
- <sup>65</sup> The original text of that first dada publication was published in German (except for the French part of the text). The original text, drawings and the text translation by David Britt can be found in the English edition of *Dada, Art and Anti-art* (Thames and Hudson, 1997) see also: <http://katsclass.com/10770/wk05.htm>
- <sup>66</sup> Some claim that the word was «discovered» by opening a dictionary at random, others that it means a rocking-horse. Hugo Ball and Richter had left the question open because it's a question of dispute between Arp, Tzara, Huelsenbeck and Ball. By other meanings Dada is in Rumanian and Russian «yes-yes», in French «hobby-horse», in German «idiot naivety», in some Italian dialect «a die or cube», as well a «mother» or even «wet-nurse». In Kru-African it is «The tail of a sacred cow» and so forth. The fact is that Dada appears for the first time under the pen of Ball.
- <sup>67</sup> Hugo Ball (28th November 1916?) in Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 32
- <sup>68</sup> Hugo Ball, diary, 5th May, 1917
- <sup>69</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, pp. 33-34

- <sup>70</sup> Tristan Tzara: originally in French in *Les sept manifestes dada*, 1918, (Pauvert, 1979 pp. 19-35) partly translated from French by Hans Richter in *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 34 and by Robert Motherwell in *Dada Painters and Poets*, 1951; see also: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~jenglish/English104/tzara.htm>
- <sup>71</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 16
- <sup>72</sup> Philippe Sers: *Sur Dada, essai sur l'expérience dadaïste de l'image, entretiens avec Hans Richter*, 1997 (interview made in French in 1971 by Philippe Sers), pp. 66-67, transl. JC
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>74</sup> Hans Arp, cited by Hans Richter in: *Dada, art and anti-art*, 1964, p. 60 (look also for the comparison with Pascal saying in chapter 9)
- <sup>75</sup> An expression of Arp himself that Richter used with great satisfaction, p. 60
- <sup>76</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 61
- <sup>77</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, pp. 57-59. Notice the term Hans Richter uses the term «Inner eye»
- <sup>78</sup> In much of dynamic psychology literature, Freudians usually prefer the term 'unconscious mind', whilst Jungians prefer 'subconscious mind'. This is actually quite convenient, since the two traditions deal with different aspects of the levels of mind below normal consciousness (<http://discover-your-mind.co.uk/faqs/r3b-subconscious-unconscious.htm>)
- <sup>79</sup> A «total work of art»
- <sup>80</sup> Philippe Sers: *Sur Dada, essai sur l'expérience dadaïste de l'image, entretiens avec Hans Richter*, 1997 (interview made in French in 1971 by Philippe Sers) pp. 87-88, transl. JC
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>82</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 71
- <sup>83</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 66
- <sup>84</sup>  $2+9+1=12$  as harmony concept;  $3+9+1=13$  as anti-chance concept: Richter questions the relevance of number 13. Thirteen is regarded as an unlucky number in many cultures. Thirteen may be considered a «bad» number simply because it is one more than 12, which is a popularly used number in many cultures (possibly due to it being a highly composite number). When a group of 13 objects or persons is divided into two, three, four or six equal groups, there is always one leftover, «unlucky» object or person; see at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triskaidekaphobia>
- <sup>85</sup> Francis Picabia in 391 n°13, July 1920
- <sup>86</sup> Francis Picabia quoted by Richter in *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 72
- <sup>87</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 75
- <sup>88</sup> *Manifeste cannibale dada* by Francis Picabia, read at the Dada soirée at the Théâtre de la Maison de l'Oeuvre, Paris, 27 March 1920.
- <sup>89</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 76
- <sup>90</sup> Man Ray took the decisive resolution to leave his stable office-work he had for several years in 1918; at that time he had been active already over one year with Duchamp and they were about to create the *Société Anonyme* with Katherine Dreier
- <sup>91</sup> Francis Picabia in 391, n°8, 1919 (<http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/391/8/pages/0cover.htm>)
- <sup>92</sup> Besides the early momentum in the Ferrer school
- <sup>93</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 87
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 91
- <sup>95</sup> Comment of Man Ray quoted by Hans Richter in Philippe Sers *Sur Dada*, 1997, p. 127 transl. JC
- <sup>96</sup> The whole letter is reproduced in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, Centre G. Pompidou, 1997, pp. 8-9
- <sup>97</sup> *Dada manifesto*, Berlin, 1918, transl. Ralph Manheim and reproduced in *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 104
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-107
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>100</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 112
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 113
- <sup>102</sup> To remember the idea of Antonio Porchia when he says that «the virtues of a thing do not come from it: they go to it» (in my introduction)
- <sup>103</sup> Using the expression of Richter p. 118
- <sup>104</sup> The optophonetic and the phonetic poem are the first step towards totally non-representational, abstract poetry (Richter p. 121) Letterism (lettrism), instead is a pure pictorial tendency.
- <sup>105</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 201
- <sup>106</sup> We concentrate naturally on the French wing of Dadaism in which Man Ray was plunged. In addition of the other Dadaists mentioned in the text could be added even Swedish Finnish avant-garde poets, more or less influenced by the mainstream of Dadaism, like Gunnar Björling (1887-1960) and Henry George William Parland (1908-1930)
- <sup>107</sup> It took nearly 3 years for Man Ray to take the decision of moving to France after the end of the war. The first attempt to leave was as soon as 1913
- <sup>108</sup> Tristan Tzara: *Sept manifestes dada*, 1918, (Pauvert 1979, p. 33)
- <sup>109</sup> Philippe Sers: *Sur Dada, essai sur l'expérience dadaïste de l'image, entretiens avec Hans Richter*, 1997 (interview made in French in 1971 by Philippe Sers, transl. JC) Comments are interesting to compare with George Grosz's autobiography, *A little Yes and a Big No* (in which for Grosz the «No» meant the whole Western humanist tradition as it had developed since the Renaissance).
- <sup>110</sup> Robert Short: *Dada and Surrealism*, 1980, p. 21
- <sup>111</sup> Tristan Tzara: *Sept manifestes dada*, 1918, (Pauvert 1979, p. 31) see also Philippe Sers: *Sur Dada, essai sur l'expérience dadaïste de l'image, entretiens avec Hans Richter*, 1997 (interview made in French in 1971 by Philippe Sers)

- <sup>112</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, pp. 170-171
- <sup>113</sup> Philippe Sers: *Sur Dada, essai sur l'expérience dadaïste de l'image, entretiens avec Hans Richter*, 1997, p. 60
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid. Transl. JC and Roger Noël Smith
- <sup>115</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 28-29 and Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, pp. 20-28
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>117</sup> In Man Ray: *Ce que je suis et autres textes* presentation by Vincent Lavoie, 1998 p. 54; originally in *I Have Never Painted a Recent Picture*. Text for a retrospective in Los Angeles, 1966 translated by Denise Madin Gentili
- <sup>118</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 1968, p. 181
- <sup>119</sup> Historical statements on the Bauhaus lie mainly from the remarkable book of Magdalena Droste: *Bauhaus Archiv, Bauhaus 1919-1933*, 1990; *Bauhaus*, Bauhaus archiv museumfür Gestaltung, 1991 and Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*, 1984
- <sup>120</sup> A Dada-Constructivist Congress having been held in Weimar in October 1922
- <sup>121</sup> In my research work for obtaining the Teacher degree: *The Theoretical and Practical Approaches of Rational / Intuitive Paradox in Art Education: The Experience of the Bauhaus and the Experience of Teaching Visual Arts Today*, in Jyväskylä Univ. of Applied Sciences (2001)
- <sup>122</sup> Walter Gropius: *Concept and development of the State Bauhaus*, 1924, op. cit. (Whitford, p. 25)
- <sup>123</sup> Walter Gropius: *Bauhaus Manifesto*, 1919
- <sup>124</sup> It is good to put here in evidence the way Man Ray started his artistic career, in 1910-11: he was about of becoming architect, hesitating between the profession of industrial designer or painter
- <sup>125</sup> Superior School of Design
- <sup>126</sup> Bau = building, Bauen = to grow a crop (in terms of education)
- <sup>127</sup> Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*, 1984, p. 37
- <sup>128</sup> Gropius was however a member of the *Novembergruppe*, a left-wing artist's group including also Berg, Brecht, Richter, Eggeling and Hindemith
- <sup>129</sup> Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*, 1984, p. 38
- <sup>130</sup> Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*, 1984, pp. 47-48
- <sup>131</sup> In an article written by Vilmos Huszar, *De Stijl*, 1922, Whitford, 1984, p.116
- <sup>132</sup> Philippe Sers: *Sur Dada, essai sur l'expérience dadaïste de l'image, entretiens avec Hans Richter*, 1997, p. 146, transl. JC
- <sup>133</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>134</sup> László Moholy-Nagy: *The Constructivist-Dadaist Congress in Weimar 1922* in: Motherwell, Robert ed. *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology*. New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1951
- <sup>135</sup> Gropius in a memorandum to the «Masters of Forms», 1922, Whitford, 1984, p. 120
- <sup>136</sup> László Moholy-Nagy: *Constructivism and the Proletaria*, 1922, Whitford, 1984, p. 128
- <sup>137</sup> László Moholy-Nagy: *Painting, Photography, Film*, 1925, pp. 16-17
- <sup>138</sup> Philippe Sers: *Sur Dada, essai sur l'expérience dadaïste de l'image, entretiens avec Hans Richter*, 1997, p. 116, transl. JC / Roger Noel Smith
- <sup>139</sup> Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*, 1984, p. 127
- <sup>140</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>141</sup> Moholy-Nagy published the famous «Bauhaus Book» *Painting, Photography, Film* in 1925
- <sup>142</sup> The origin of the photogram is subject of controversy: Man Ray discovered what he called the «rayogram» or «rayograph» in 1921-22 (see chapter 6). On his side Moholy-Nagy wrote about the photogram in 1922. Hans Richter is reporting the following facts in 1971, in a conversation with Philippe Sers: «I did not like Moholy-Nagy because he was always discovering things when they had already been discovered. In 1922, I was at the Doesburg's place at Weimar, for the Bauhaus meeting (The Dada-Constructivist Congress) and Tzara had come bringing the *Champs délicieux* of Man Ray. Six weeks after he was publishing an article telling he had found the photography without camera...» (Sers, p. 205, transl. JC)
- <sup>143</sup> Concerning the film of Hans Richter he explains himself the idea: «besides the social theme, what interested me, was the form in which I could express it. Like in the *Rhythms*, I was using the principle of counterpoint, but this time, not with abstract elements, enlarging or diminishing squares, but I was using the objects of this inflation diminishing in counterpoint with the value and amount of money which was increasing» in Philippe Sers: *Sur Dada, essai sur l'expérience dadaïste de l'image, entretiens avec Hans Richter*, 1997 (interview made in French in 1971 by Philippe Sers) p. 169, transl. JC
- <sup>144</sup> Georg Mücke op. cit. in Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*, 1984, p. 150
- <sup>145</sup> Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*, 1984, p. 150
- <sup>146</sup> Magdalena Droste: *Bauhaus Archiv, Bauhaus 1919-1933*, 1990, e.g. pp. 46-50
- <sup>147</sup> Frank Whitford: *Bauhaus*, 1984, p. 190



### 3. The New Cyclops



*Vision ex machina*

Car ils disent que cette chambre représente l'œil; ce trou, la prunelle; ce verre, l'humeur cristalline, ou plutôt toutes celles des parties de l'œil qui causent quelque réfraction; et ce linge, la peau intérieure, qui est composée des extrémités du nerf optique. —Descartes<sup>1</sup>

In *Techniques of the Observer*, Jonathan Crary is questioning the nature of and the relation between human perception and the «mechanical eye» of the camera, its impact on human capacity to experience environment. He believes that the historical «construction» of the observer, and the vision itself, are inseparable from the social dynamics. I emphasise once more that my concern here is not to measure perception as if comparing performances of the human eye and the camera, but to understand their respective apprehension of the world and, furthermore, their capacity to modulate an interpretation of it.

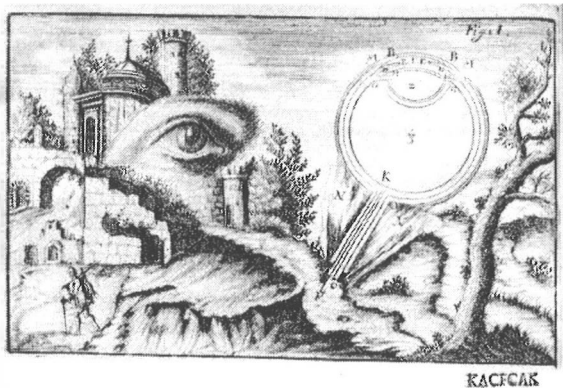


Fig. 10 and 11: from Johannes Zahn's *Oculus Artificialis Teledioptricus Sive Telescopium* of 1685 and model of *Camera Obscura* designed by Robert Hooke in 1694

Crary, commenting on Descartes' description of the camera obscura in his *La dioptrique* (1637), notes that «the images observed within the *camera obscura* are formed by means of a *disembodied cyclopean eye*, detached from the observer, possibly not even a human eye» and concludes that «if at the core of Descartes's method was

the need to escape the uncertainties of mere human vision and the confusions of the senses, the camera obscura is congruent with his quest to found human knowledge on a purely objective view of the world.»<sup>2</sup>

While the allegory of the Cyclops that I am developing in this study has an ambivalent meaning of the «eye» of the camera and the «eye» behind the camera, it is the center of our discussion about the transformation of vision in the modern arts and specifically of Man Ray's idea to be the photographer of «fantasies» instead of «nature»<sup>3</sup>.

In this chapter I shall provide an overview of the development of both photography and cinema in terms of arts and visions. Both paragraphs will provide the background in which Man Ray grew and created his own vision. I begin by apparently separating photography from cinema for two main reasons: first, because there are two distinct media in practice, and also from Man Ray's own point of view; and secondly, while it is a common observation that photography has transformed painting, cinema is not usually attributed with any contributory role in that transformation. I will however limit the history of photography to a few historical names, because photography is, in this study, only one of the elements —like painting— for understanding experimental cinema and video. Paradoxically I include *kinetics* in the cinematographic part although I speak about painting and, for instance, vortography: the reason lies in their common fascination with *time*, *duration* and *movement*. My method concerning cinema will be to move from the general (in this chapter, the movies and the European second avant-garde) to the particular (experimental film and video, chapter 5), ending with Man Ray (chapter 6 to 8) and generalising again finally with theories on experimental cinema (chapter 9).

### 3.1. Photography

● n a encore rien fait en photographie; elle est dans l'enfance; c'est le plus primitif des Arts; la peinture a 20000 ans; la photographie 100 à peine; elle est à une époque qui correspondait pour la peinture à celle des gravures rupestres dans les cavernes · Man Ray<sup>4</sup>

In spite of Man Ray's statement, in 1900 photography had in fact reached some relative maturity. From Nadar's first exhibition (1839), 61 long years had passed, full

of chemistry, patience, hope and, also, disappointment. Arthur Rimbaud, for instance, had lived the entire duration of his short life in the period from Nadar's first studio (1853) to the *Belle Époque* and the first large artistic records in photography were still to come.

Besides, «photography is not Art».<sup>5</sup>

This has been a moot question since the invention of photography, in which I had never been interested, and to avoid discussion, I had declared flatly that photography is not art. [...]

When asked more recently if I still held to my opinion, I declared that I had revised my attitude somewhat: for me, art is not photography.<sup>6</sup>

Nadar's air pictures of Paris in 1858 have undoubtedly more impact in their sensationalism than in their artistic goals. Nonetheless they provided visual and artistic answers to the old dream of Icarus. Jules Verne's *Cinq semaines en ballon* (1863) was a classic of the same sort. Nadar's other photography has a certain painterly touch (thanks to the positions of the figures, the decors and long exposure times). But considered as a purely historical document it today also has the important role of a photographic relic or simple visual record and perhaps is even more significant in those ways than as an artistic work. But how to define the artistic dimension? For instance Roger Fenton's (1819–1869) naturalistic portraits of heroes in the Crimean War (1855) or Mathew B. Brady's more realistic records in the American civil war (1865) don't even give, as historical documents, a true image of the atrocities of these wars. How could they, with exposure times as long as many seconds on glass plates. *Instant*-photography is still to come. The real purpose of these war-pictures was in fact more the glorification of soldiers than to serve as shocking evidence against war.<sup>7</sup> One could be arguing, of course, that even propaganda can be art. The point here is not to search for an artistic record in photography —there is quite a lot of individual effort in fact in that direction between 1860 and 1900 when techniques improved and equipment gradually became easier to carry outside into the field. But the point is to see if there is any photography that has acquired respect as an art —as painting has. Peter H. Emerson, Julia Margaret Cameron, Jakob A. Riis in Finland Oscar Gustav Rejlander— are a few examples of photographers who may have a claim as artist-photographers. Touring-photography and landscape-photography flourish of course —in the same way as Lumières' exotic films in the 90s.

The dialectic between the real and the true was already an issue in photography: is the concept «naturalistic photography» a pleonasm?

It is easy today to find artistic qualities in the studies of Edward Muybridge (1873–84) or the chronophotography of Etienne-Jules Marey (1882–87), or even Fenton's *Queen's Target* (plates 1 and 6), but was being artistic their purpose? Nature draws, babies draw, scientists and engineers draw, but: is it Art?

Around 1900 things change. Movies come and are *more realistic* than photography is. Cinema is movement, movement is life and life is the real. It seems that photography was first used to provide a record in the same way as portrait painting did. The cinematograph of the Lumière Brothers does «photograph» exactly the same way but, as it adds movement, it photographs *in another way*, representing also an action. Still photography therefore now finds itself to some extent released from the weight of naturalism. Photography becomes something occupying a place somewhere between painting and cinema, *illustrating*, as an artefact of reality, not the reality itself. Further, the print, the *impression* made on the photographic plate, curiously may be seen as a follow-on from pointillism and divisionism.

In New York, Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946) is very active in the field of urban photography (plate 1), and from 1903 also with his *Camera Work* magazine. Two years later his famous gallery 291 opens. Man Ray sums up that time in New York:

During my lunch hour, I would run up to exhibitions at the art galleries on Fifth Avenue, nearby. There was one called «291», its number on the avenue. It was run by the famous Alfred Stieglitz, who had started a secessionist school of photographers... The first show I saw at his place was one of watercolors by Cézanne. I admired the economical touches of color and the white spaces which made the landscapes look unfinished but quite abstract... At the same time Stieglitz worked incessantly at his photography, to prove that it was art, both by his publication of a deluxe photographic magazine, and by his own examples.<sup>8</sup>

But Man Ray was no longer only observing. He understood immediately the photographic dilemma:

[...] he set up his old camera on its rickety tripod, [...] He told me the exposure would be rather long, but to keep looking at the camera; I might blink my eyes, it wouldn't matter nor show. He produced a hoop stretched with cheesecloth, uncapped his lens, and began waving the hoop over my head, moving about like a dancer, watching me closely. It lasted about ten seconds. I have since seen photographers with more modern instruments shooting at one

hundredth of a second, perform similar gymnastics, but before making the exposure. With Stieglitz, it was simultaneous and synchronized. Although the photographs of Stieglitz were free of anecdote and cheap sentiment, they remained intensely figurative in contrast to the painting and sculpture he exhibited. I could not help thinking that since photography had liberated the modern painter from the drudgery of faithful representation, this field would become the exclusive one of photography, helping it to become an art in its own right; hence Stieglitz's interest in the two means of expression.<sup>9</sup>

In France, Eugène Atget (1856–1927) is one of the pioneers in art photography.<sup>10</sup> His *Versailles* at that time is unique. From a documentary perspective, photography was one of the charms of the *Belle Époque*. In 1910, when the brothers Séeberger immortalized the floods of Paris it was maybe more anecdotal but nonetheless one of the strongest examples of reportage photography at that time: it was an eye on events. The tradition of anthropological and ethnographical photographs, represented by for instance Edward S. Curtis and his portraits of the Amerindians around 1908, extends the eyewitness of the camera to further topics, and sometimes exotic ones.<sup>11</sup> Jacques-Henri Lartigue (1894–1986) develops action photography and surely represents photography *sur le vif*, the birth of instant-photography. With André Kertész (1894–1985) we undoubtedly enter the field of creative photography.

The early tradition of landscape photography makes an interesting comparison with landscape painting.<sup>12</sup> Only after 1920 does montage photography get the constructivist masters from Russia like Aleksander Rodchenko (1891–1956) and of course the Bauhaus theorist László Moholy-Nagy, one of the most decisive figures in photography aesthetics in Germany. Their visions were later partly supported by the Dadaist John Heartfield (1891–1968); it should be observed that montage photography developed later into an aesthetic of the poster close to advertising or the associative methods pertaining later to propaganda, methods also close to the cubist, futurist and dadaist aesthetics of collage, well represented by Hannah Höch's *Da-dandy* (1919), Raoul Hausmann's *Dada cino* (1920–21) or Paul Citroen's *Metropolis* (1923) (plate 4).

In 1913 the futurist school gives birth in Italy to very interesting experiments by A.G. Bragaglia with his photodynamics (plate 3). In Great Britain, there is a similar dynamism with Alvin Langdon Coburn and vortography in 1917 (plate 3, see also in «kinetics»). Coburn exhibited in Stieglitz's 291 Gallery several times. In 1921–22 the

first photograms were produced, by Moholy-Nagy (plate 5) and Man Ray<sup>13</sup> (plate 25).

The techniques in photography develop significantly between 1900 and 1920, as do its lenses. For instance, Zeiss and Tessar lenses in 1902; Leica, Linhof, Speed Graphic 9x12 -cameras with fast shutter speeds (exposure time down to: 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of a second). The Lumière Brothers come up with with an autochrome dia-emulsion (color slide) as astonishingly early as 1907. Panchromatic emulsions are commercialised by Wratten and Wainwright from 1906 but it was not until 1928 that the first film emulsion, by Ilford, became available. In 1921 came the first 24x36 mm formats with 35 mm kinofilm. The same year came the Rolleiflex 6x6 double objective. Man Ray was moving to Paris around that time.

### 3.2. Cinematography<sup>14</sup>

Le cinéma est un art supérieur qui vaut tous les autres réunis –Man Ray<sup>15</sup>

#### [movies versus cinema]

On December 28th 1895, when Lumières' cinematograph astonished the French public in the *Grand Café* of Paris, the cinema industry bases were in fact already in place in the United States thanks to Edison's kinetoscope, albeit not as theatre spectacle but as an entertainment production and distribution system. The «invention» of cinema can be attributed both to the Americans and the French, but neither Edison nor the Lumière Brothers have share full responsibility for it. Auguste and Louis Lumière were in fact more involved with camera techniques than with spectacles, but as public demand was so great, they saw some opportunities for making money with a monopoly position on the market. After that famous historical projection, they developed a kind of «world news system» on the same basis, with its own technique, cameramen and directors<sup>16</sup> and, of course, its own spectacles, a kind of kaleidoscope of sensations from France and from more exotic topics which announce the arrival of the documentary genre.

Meanwhile in America studio productions played first in studios like the *Black Mary* (1893) and turned into increasingly larger productions with already full length 35mm films but played in the kinetoscope or similar machines working with coins and heralding in screening for the individual. The Kaiser-panorama machine is a good example of this.

American production and Lumières' French concept of the cinema were quite different: such American kinetoscope films as *Fred Ott's Sneeze* or *Fun in a Chinese Laundry* (1894) tend to tell and entertain by inventing tricks. The reportages of the Lumière Brothers astonished by bringing to life the reality of domestic scenes or even exotic life. It may be said that the American cinema in its roots constructs a false reality (fiction) and the French extracts facts from the real world.

After 1900, kinetoscope production gradually gives way to fiction films imported from England and made with Lumière cameras. In 1901, when Ferdinand Zecca came to work on contract as film director, the Lumière Brothers concentrate more on technical achievements, mainly building and selling cameras, with film production and distribution now being understood as a supplementary benefit for the company. No later than 1896 Georges Méliès (1861–1938) who was from the beginning interested in the Lumière camera techniques as an illusion tool and appreciated its tricks and *trompe l'oeil* possibilities, travels to London where the Lumières' camera is of interest to other people for the same reasons.<sup>17</sup> In the same year Méliès makes *L'escamotage d'une dame* (The Juggling of a Lady). The first European studio also starts in Montreuil-sous-bois. The next year, Méliès produces very interesting pieces such as *L'auberge ensorcelée* (The Bewitched Inn) in which he engages in a fantasy of dancing dishes. His cinema therefore not only records or tells, but also produces dreams far beyond common reality. The same vision comes out from England soon with Robert Paul (1869–1943) and his film *Human Flies* (1899) in which he films people upside down walking on the floor, but projected as flies on a roof, resulting in a sort of surrealist vision. In these films the scene itself can be the theatre of effects as in many early tricks used by Méliès.<sup>18</sup>

In *L'homme à la tête de caoutchouc* (1901) Méliès used a complete set and depth to create a supernatural vision (figure 12). On the one hand, the stroboscopic effect in the camera is often the principal key for creating new special effects, but on the other hand the subject itself can be the focus of an illusion: as his or her movement in the picture often summarizes all the movement perceived, it can be called a *percept-in*. Thus, the camera is still a tool for recording and a tool for tricks. Its

stroboscopic effect is understood in the same way as something supernatural, almost cybernetic<sup>19</sup> while the movement (in the picture) still represents an artifact of life. Therefore what is purely mineral and normally static can become «animated», full of life.

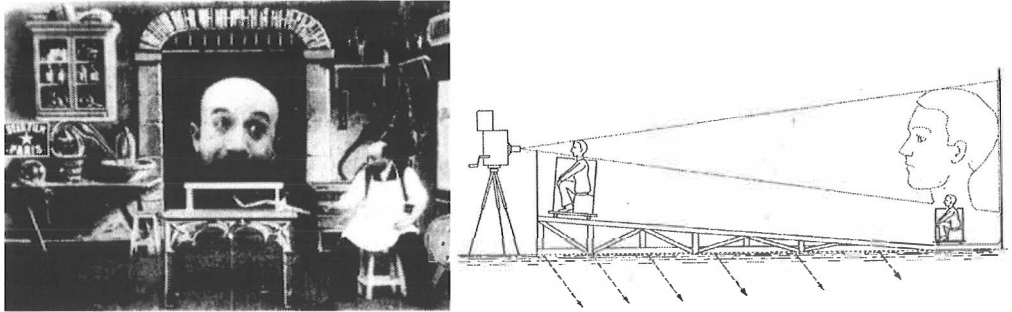


Fig. 12: Georges Méliès and the Trick of *L'homme à la tête de caoutchouc* (1901)  
(drawing from Maurice Bessy and Lo Duca: *Méliès, Mage*, 1945)

Narrative and its corollary *ellipsis*<sup>20</sup> are bringing the cinema a *percept-out* (called extensively fiction or narrative cinema), the faculty to develop a diegesis.

If cinema is above all movement —movies— it is however, as Méliès sees it, also a suite of «*tableaux*», a suite of animated paintings. One could say *animated-life*, a term contrasting with *still-life*. The most important progress in the narrative of early cinema is indeed in choosing the scenes and their organisation around action<sup>21</sup>.

Before the end of the century Méliès had already produced a popular film about the Dreyfus case. It was in nine scenes and its ten-minute length was in itself a record length for that time. It set up the basis of the French cinema industry. Méliès in this way quickly abandons his visual experimentations and concentrates on the public demand for stories, narrative fantasies or fictive historical reconstructions.

At the Great Exhibition of Paris, the Lumières are however still at the height of their popularity and earn a lot of money from their productions. In America, where the kinoscope was still in use at that time, the first crash of the cinema industry came in the form of an actors' strike which led American cinema to make a technical conversion to the European standard of cinematograph. In 1903 Edwin S. Porter provides the basis of the genre of the Western with *The Great Train Robbery*, which is in fact an American transposition of an English thriller-production from the Sheffield Photo Co.



Meanwhile Méliès had started his very popular productions after Jules Verne: *20,000 lieues sous les mers* (1901), *Le voyage dans la lune* (1902) and *Voyage à travers l'impossible* (1904). Méliès himself distributed the films he produced on the American market, a form of competition that was regarded by others as disloyal. The Lumière Brothers around 1908 under Zecca's artistic hand turned to subjects of a more biblical, moral and historical nature with the *Film d'Art*, a new genre. Each culture at that time seems to look for inspiration in its own historical past, so for example in Italy Ancient Rome inspires epic historical productions such as *Giulio Cesare* (1909), *Quo Vadis* (1912) and *Pompei* (1913), and England produces stories from its literature.

In 1908, Méliès is in top production with 45 films a year (about 15 minutes each). French comic Max Linder has also risen soon to popularity (1913). Cinema is not anymore the monopoly of a few individuals. Cinema is showbusiness with capital, investments and financial rewards. Production risks are increasing fast. Big trusts, such Pathé, Eastman and Edison still control production or distribution. They see unfair competition in the fact that somebody controls all stages of the industry and reaps the lion's share of the rewards. The international congress of cinema professionals in 1909 makes an end of production and distribution control by the same company. Méliès is forced to turn to distributors to show his films. Financial rewards are lower, production decreases and finally in 1911 Méliès goes bankrupt. In America production splits in different directions. First there is D.W. Griffith with his well prepared and expensive dramas, and secondly the Comics with their fast improvised short pieces. Such big American productions as *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1915 and 1916) definitively reinforce the commercial development of cinema as an industry. The artisan and independent cinema would not become an alternative until after World War II.

This short aperçu of the early history of cinema shows how cinema became «the movies» and an art form out of diverse non-artistic compromises rather than as a result of individual visions. Cinema became also a star-linked system.<sup>22</sup> In the field of comic cinema, Charlie Chaplin's personal vision remains the most significant.<sup>23</sup> If cinema had been understood much earlier as poetry or pure movement—the subject of this study—it could possibly have developed more connections with painting. In fact, these connections—as will be seen—have always existed, but remained marginal and isolated. Another historical fact shows the importance of the social-economical context on the artistic: before the advent of the twenties, big trusts

such as the Motion Picture Patents Co assure maximum rewards for themselves by agreements with Kodak-Eastman, Fox or Universal, and also such monopolies of distribution as Paramount. Through contracts some stars and directors want their own benefits: they create their own trust system, for example: Pickford-Chaplin-Fairbanks-Griffith became established as United Artists Co.

One can see that any attempt at an independent cinema was virtually doomed to financial failure—or at least condemned to be distributed only locally and to remain isolated from the larger public. Those structures are essentially still the same today.

In Sweden, Denmark and France the first social dramas and deeply emotional narratives had their first productions, and cinema got more involved with literature though not yet with poetry (Viktor Sjöström, Léonce Perret, ...). *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (Carl Dreyer, 1928) is surely the film which represent this genre at theist height. This link with literature is nevertheless the first real link with the avant-garde.<sup>24</sup>

Around 1922, Robert Flaherty personalised the documentary genre with a touch of poetry.<sup>25</sup> *Nanook* remains half-documentary, half-fiction, with well planned anecdotes and a sort of action setting or reconstruction intended to edit the scenes for narrative continuity. The times before the coming of the sound and the financial crash of 1929 correspond to the golden time of silent movies. Hollywood as a closed production system brings its own star palette.<sup>26</sup> The system above all did not allow at all any creative risks. The coming of sound did not improve the position of *poetic cinema*.

In Russia where production had also started around 1907, the Lumière invention had generated a lot of enthusiasm. The influence of French, British and American productions was at that time evident. The repressive autocracy, persecutions of the peasants and corruptions of the Tzarist system (revealed later by soviet film) take over in 1917. When World War I erupts, Russia joins the allies. With food shortage, military defeats and rumours about secret dealings of the aristocracy with Germans, the country little by little moves towards civil war and the communist revolution. From the perspective of this study on cinema, an important phase is coming soon in the first years after the revolution with the advent of Lenin for, as is well known, Lenin was fervently in favour of cinema as a medium to serve the revolution. In 1922 he is known to have declared that «of all the arts, the cinema is the most

important»<sup>27</sup> and after seeing *Intolerance*, that «the cinema must and shall become the foremost cultural weapon of the proletariat.»<sup>28</sup> The following year, Trotsky remarked that cinema was also the most important weapon in propaganda: «This weapon which cries out to be used, is the best instrument for propaganda, technical, educational and industrial propaganda...a propaganda which is accessible to everyone»<sup>29</sup> These words are intended to create a film industry tailored to the goals of the Revolution:

Cinema can and must occupy an important place in the process of cultural revolution as a medium for broad educational work and communist propaganda, the organization and education of the masses around the slogans and tasks of the Party.<sup>30</sup>

Lenin also saw in cinema a powerful means of recording the revolution, and also of communicating with the masses beyond languages and cultures. The cinema is nationalised, and with nationalisation, movies fall under the People's Commissariat of Education. Thanks to the universality of its content Griffith's *Intolerance* is massively distributed. The new editing scheme of *Intolerance* was influencing a totally new generation of filmmakers as Russia's own production started up again in 1919.

Lev Kuleshov (1899–1970) produced newsreels from 1919 to 1920, and his interest was mostly in the editing. He reduced the image to simple components close to the filmmaker's subjective view, and then by connecting these shots he achieved new meanings. He founded a workshop which had great influence on Vsevolod Pudovkin (1893–1953) and Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein (1898–1948). Eisenstein's theory of montage is in fact much indebted to Kuleshov's classes. Later on Kuleshov concentrated on making both documentaries and fictions.

Dziga Vertov (1896–1954) made his debuts as a supporter of the revolution in 1918 with *agit-train*<sup>31</sup>, including a theatre review, journalists and press serving the revolution. As experimental poet Vertov occupies an extreme position towards narrative continuity and also to fiction in general. His position as supervisor of *Kinonedelia* (Film Week), the Soviet Newsreel drives him to diverse productions and series for the *Kino-Pravda*. Lenin was committed to there being a full daily record of the events, a filmed daily news, which had to be the reflection of current events serving the revolution. The *Kino-Pravda* began in 1922 and ran to 23 issues. It was mostly concentrated on filming the progression of the soviet empire along through the construction of railways. The *Kino-pravda* had given birth to a totally original

concept of cinema: cinema could be considered not only as a dream-factory, but also as an objective eye on reality. During the 1930s and 40s that «objective» reality was actually giving place to a more social aspect of reality. After World War II, in France, with Jean Rouch and the *cinéma vérité*, the objective function of the camera as an «honest eye» on reality, avoiding manipulation, is rediscovered. This cinema tends towards an objective point of view on true events and rejects manipulation through the artifice of montage.

In the *Kino-Pravda* Vertov had to concentrate on filming Lenin, the man, his life, thoughts and achievements, for posterity. Vertov developed for this purpose his own manner of editing «without cutting», which involved mainly measured rhythms and tempo and strange camera-angles and superimpositions. Vertov saw himself not as a field director, but as a newspaper editor, whose work was to organise and commission correspondents throughout the country.

The equipment that those correspondent cameramen had stands up well in comparison with the portable video equipment of TV news in the 1970s.

Vertov's interest in poetry and sound mixing, his cubist influences, and his great fascination for the Futurists with their «machinery» and their mechanical models makes him into a radical eye on reality, a sort of robotic and mechanical eye. The impulses of Constructivism in USSR allied the artist to modern architectural forms and the rejection of what was perceived as the aristocratic influence of embellishment. In 1922, under Vertov's influence, a controversy developed with pure fiction film, which was supposed to reintegrate the classic values of literature. Vertov's group gave their opposite views through manifestoes celebrating work and technology, a kind of ode to machines and progress. In 1924 the group renamed itself *Kino-Eye*.

WE discover the soul of the machine, we are in love with the worker at his bench, we are in love with the farmer on his tractor, the engineer on his locomotive, WE bring creative joy into every mechanical activity. WE make peace between man and machine.<sup>32</sup>

Formally the *Kino-Eye* makes strong contrasts between the new and the old, the country and the city, health and disease, etc. In the frequent use of intertitles, and in cadences, typography, duration and rhythm Vertov was turning towards film as communication rather than as oriented montage. *The Man With a Movie Camera* (1928) is undoubtedly the most achieved work of the genre. It is the high point in the

marriage of silent film and machine, as much as as the *Ballet mécanique* (1924) by Fernand Léger (plates 6–8).

The counterpoint of *Kino-Eye* theory is undoubtedly Eisenstein's «montage of attractions». The theory is based on the principle that when two pictures (or two takes or attractions) follow each other in the film it is forming mentally a third one which has a meaning correspondent to the sum of the attractions, a kind of chemical reaction, visually. «I don't produce films to please the eye but to make a point» was Eisenstein's answer to Vertov's theory.

He argues that he wants to break down the aesthetic distance between audience and performance. In montage theory the spectator himself should play an active role in perception. For Eisenstein, originally a futurist drawer, the visual composition of the picture has great importance, as has music. In *Strike* (1924) he was accused of deviationism, with the use of very primary radical montage such as crosscutting police brutality and shots of animal slaughter.

*The Battleship Potemkin* (1925) proved a great success in Russia and abroad. Critics like it for its compositional sophistications, but also the mise-en-scène: the «personified» characters, its dramatic shooting, and its dynamic composition, and especially the use of psychic duration and editing.

He later developed his theory to a very high level, ordering cellular shots that followed definite «design purposes»: metric montage, rhythmic montage (credited to Vertov), tonal montage, overtone montage, intellectual montage, etc. Eisenstein was to become the most demanded Russian director abroad and developed his theory of montage in a classic book.<sup>33</sup>

Pudovkin also came out of Kuleshov's workshop. Originally a scientist, he was approached to make an educational film *Mechanics of the Brain* (1926) about the conditioned reflex experiment of the well know physiologist Pavlov. The film is a good educational exposition for that time. Incongruously Pudovkin also touched on slapstick-like comedy but reached his first great success, also in 1926, with *Mother*, one of the most remarkable films of that time along with *Potemkin*. Pudovkin can be considered as the artistic rival of Eisenstein. Both constituted the bases of the Soviet cinema at that time.

Alexander Dovzhenko (1894–1956) started to work in the cinema after *Potemkin*. His *Zvenigora* (1928) made a big impression on Eisenstein and Pudovkin. With the screenplay of *Arsenal* (1929) he emphasised the role of the revolution and in his last

silent film *Earth* (1930) he used symbols of nature's fecundity to serve the socialist ideal. All films of the period 1920 to 1930 until the coming of sound definitely belong to the so-called Soviet formalist school. After a Congress on Film Matter in 1928 the Soviet Party comes to show disdain towards «free» Formalists and with the coming of sound and new techniques the Soviet cinema attempts more narrative emphasis. Behind the official reasons given for trips offered to Eisenstein abroad there was also the desire to send him far from active production circuits.

Besides the stylistic and theoretical masters of the twenties, the Russian cinema was also deeply naturalistic (e.g. Abram Room, Grigori Kozintsev, ...). It is the blend of theoretical formalism, sophisticated naturalism and changing techniques which little by little transform the experimental Russian cinema into the well-known socialist realism of the thirties.

So it can be observed that, similarly to American cinema, and with a totally different goal, Russian cinema developed itself also in a narrative direction, despite the avant-garde spirit of its inception.

Contrary to a general opinion that Lumière had a monopoly on the making of cameras, Germany too was in fact manufacturing them as early as 1896.

Because cinema enjoyed a very poor reputation there as art, the bourgeoisie generally turned more to the enjoyment of theatre productions. Cinema was indeed seen originally as being supplied to fairgrounds and showmen.

The development of cinema in Germany was nonetheless rather similar to what it had been in France and Britain so it provided opportunities for many experiments along the lines of Méliès': as early as 1908 there were even experiments with a sound system on film. But at that time most of the films were imported. The success of such actors as the Dane Asta Nielsen forced some producers to import actors from abroad —such imports soon becoming something of a tradition. Persuading the German actor Max Reinhardt to take on a leading role in German film was decisive for national production. Germany's big studios (e.g. Babelsberg) were built around 1913. The *Kinoreformbewegung* (movement for film reform) with its ambitious *Autorenfilm* campaign succeeded in giving the German cinema its own place in film production. Paul Wegener was one of the pre-war directors who had the biggest influence internationally.

As early as 1911–13 a taste for the supernatural is evident. It brings some important characteristics to German Expressionism with echoes in the silent Swedish classic

*Körkarlen* (The Phantom Carriage, 1920) by Viktor Sjöström, and even later in American cinema. These films are very interesting in the way that they exploit all possible techniques, as did Méliès in France. Their goal was not however in the fantastic cinema, but in the supernatural, which is rather different. It may be said that the fantastic is to science fiction what the supernatural is to the horror film. The potential relationship between the supernatural in film and the surreal (plate 11) will be analysed in chapters 5 and 9.

As World War I raged, German authorities were very affected by anti-German propaganda and its power on the masses. So the *Deutsches Lichtbild-Gesellschaft* started, which in 1917 became the BUFA (Bild- und Filmamt). BUFA first provided of course documentaries and films for the front line theatres. The private companies joined the BUFA in order to expand their capabilities so before the end of the war the famous UFA (Universum Film A.G.) emerged. The concentration of the German film industry, with a third of its capital owned by the state, spelt the end eventually of an experimental free cinema and allowed only converging tendencies. The defeat of Germany in 1918 had the effect of narrowing the industry still further by concentrating it under the financial control of the *Deutsches Bank*.

However there was a positive result also, for though the country was in total disgrace the German cinema, was from the artistic viewpoint saved and made commercially viable for export. The situation at the end of the war stimulated a great deal of intellectual interest in the artistic milieu. Avant-garde art forms (in connection with dada-movement) were a part of the general excitement and another result of that «Aufbruch» was Expressionism, which became the favourite watchword. It followed a general sense of freedom, which provides a very special aspect to the early twenties to be shown in film. This sense of freedom was as we now know quite false, being disconnected from deeper facts —the social and political reality—, and stemming rather from fear and guilt. Siegfried Kracauer<sup>34</sup> has shown how things change fast. The reasons for change are thus not only sociological and political, but also psychic. One could find formal connections between Dada's anarchism and Expressionism, but it seems more difficult to marry their logic. But both are reactions, artistic reactions, against the same canker: the war, power and their alienating effect.

Expressionism was however a movement connected with the system, generated and alienated by it. It was a revolt from inside, a scream. The centre of the dilemma can be represented the best by the *November Group* with such important figures as

Gropius (see chapter 2.3.) and Brecht. Formally, if seen from the outside, the result appears to belong to the same world: general tricks, contrasts, geometric forms, angles, cubist collages, architectural instability, caricatures, anamorphisms, distortions, anarchy and masquerades. It has in fact more to do with the general euphoria occurring in the visual arts than with a real purpose to renew forms or to reject stale classical values (like in Futurism, for instance). It is nonetheless amazing how formally such decors or characters of the expressionist German cinema (plate 6) reflected the psychology of an entire nation. *Das Cabinet des Dr Caligari* (1919) of Robert Wiene (1881–1938), *Nosferatu* (1922) of F.W. Murnau (1888–1930) and *Metropolis* (1926) of Fritz Lang (1890–1976) sum up the extreme visions of expressionism and its fear of alienation and despotism. Is *Metropolis* the apology of Futurism, a critical or complicit view of class segregation, is it complicit with a technocratic-militarist view, or in the end a simple vision of the myth of a utopian Babel? The horror-fear-paranoia genre moved to America with their authors with the rise of Nazism where it provided *detective film* classics. Some deep psychological traces can be found through the thirties right up to the *film noir* of the fifties, passing through Cold War stories such as *The Third Man* by Carol Reed (1949) or *Les Espions* of Henri-Georges Clouzot (1957) and it survived right up to Roman Polanski's paranoiac cinema. Though it is surrealist there are even some traces of Expressionism to be found in Man Ray's *Le Mystère du Château du dé* (1929). A transition period in German cinema was marked by the so-called *mountain film*, a popular genre which is a cocktail of physical endeavour, adventure and the cult of beauty and mysticism. Though supernatural, it is an escape from the oppressiveness of Expressionism. The *mountain film* prepares the ground for the Nazis' Neo-classical ideology in cinema that reached its apogee in Leni Riefensthal's allegorical motto of «a healthy mind in a healthy body» —a contrast with the rachitic corpse of *Nosferatu*...

How commercial cinema might have had an influence consciously or unconsciously on Man Ray it is impossible to know. It might explain some strange particularities in the developing of his cinematographic vision. *Le Mystère du Château du dé* is a good example, but we shall see that *Emak Bakia* (1926–27) too reveals some elements related to narratives (chapter 8).

Kiki de Monparnasse, Man Ray's first mistress in Paris, seemed to love commercial cinema. At least in her correspondence from Burgundy, at a time when they were



separated, she mentioned a film with Douglas Fairbanks that she went to see. They may have visited cinema theatres together sometimes. It could be that some aspect of the commercial cinema did act unconsciously on Man Ray's mind.

However in *Self portrait* Man Ray insists on his total detachment from cinema's production system. Moreover, though he was in contact with cinema personalities at various times during the course of his career, including his second American period (1940–1951) when he was in close contact with Hollywood stars, he did not even once seize the opportunities there must have been to do a commercial film.<sup>35</sup> He had a meeting with Sergei Eisenstein in December 1929 but there is no evidence of cinematographic discussion with him. His concern with commercial cinema can be summed up by this statement:

Quand le cinéma nous aura donné la couleur, la troisième dimension, la chaleur et le froid, on n'aura plus qu'à aller dans les rues, on aura plus besoin d'aller au cinéma.<sup>36</sup>

The rapid development of silent cinema leads now back to France in the early twenties, precisely when Man Ray moved from to Paris (1921).

The French context changes very fast after the bankruptcy of Méliès in 1911, a consequence of the International Filmmakers Congress in 1909. As has been seen, production was then more concentrated on historical reconstruction or melodramas<sup>37</sup> (*Film d'Art*) but also on comedies (Max Linder). An experimental, progressive or avant-garde approach of films was also less attractive from the commercial viewpoint. Most of the leaders of avant-garde cinema in the early twenties such as Abel Gance (1889–1981) had in any case started their productions soon after Méliès' disappearance and their starting-point was also the *Film d'art* in its commercial context based on demand. It is easy to understand that artistic changes can also happen as a result of new demand —the public becomes bored by the «same» films one after another. But besides that commercial explanation one must also see the new context created by the modern arts. The change happened within about a decade.

The «French school» which represents the French *cinéma d'avant-garde* can be reduced to three groups with their leaders representing its main branches:

1° **Louis Delluc** mostly as filmmaker-critic representing formal-aesthetic and philosophical self-analysis giving rise to a polymorphic Impressionism.

2° **Abel Gance** with *La roue* (1920) and *Napoleon* (1927) representing the main avant-garde itself with technical emphasis for solving semantic problems.

3° **René Clair** with *Entr'acte* (1924) representing the radical stream with Dadaists.<sup>38</sup>

I propose to concentrate here on 1° and 2° leaving 3° for chapters 5 and 9 (the stream to which Man Ray belongs).

Louis Delluc (1890–1924), novelist and critic who had a great respect for Chaplin, the Expressionists and the Swedish cinema, was persuaded that French cinema could also find its own stylistic, indigenous school. Delluc was maybe the first to make the distinction between movie and cinema. «Movie» has American connotations with consumption and leisure (and a worldwide distribution) while «cinema» has the connotation of national and cultural identity (though not necessarily anti-commercial).<sup>39</sup>

Delluc advocated an approach that later was termed «impressionist» (mostly to balance with German Expressionism). I will not discuss the value of this term which emphasises the importance of *light* — in itself a central aesthetic means or mood for filming.<sup>40</sup> The significance of Impressionism is however deeper. Delluc emphasised the elaboration of a persuasive, dominant atmosphere — even to the subordination of plot and character— that he called *photogénie*. Delluc certainly had a great influence on other «Impressionists» like Germaine Dulac, Jean Epstein, Marcel L'herbier, and even Abel Gance. Delluc's intellectual and philosophical approaches, including the response of the audience and criticism (he founded a *ciné-club* and a magazine) could only drive these filmmakers to also develop their own solutions for specific problems, in order to personalize their films. He demanded an individualised and independent cinema. This can explain partly why the Impressionists have not themselves constituted what one might call a school but they have rather been a spring-board for a diversity of visions. Gance is as far from Dulac than both are from Dimitri Kirsanoff and Jean Renoir, other Impressionists.

The technical experimental solutions of Abel Gance in *La roue* (1922) realised one of Erich von Stroheim's ambitious dreams of cinemascope. Yet the film was later edited and exploited as a single feature. In addition to this it was conventionally still melodramatic. Around railroad subject Gance had developed an exaggerated series of effects, «visual excesses, literature that only appears in these bits of visuals, and the extreme bad taste, because it is the price we have to pay for the dazzling glimpses of something to admire. It matters little whether we are mistaken. It is

sufficient that it is ventured. Gance is the first to have captured, and, albeit confusedly, he has captured, exuberance, movement, depth—in a word, original beauty.»<sup>41</sup> In *La roue* the cutting is swift, because Gance wanted to give the *impression* to the spectator that he is (in person) in a crazy train (the train finally flashes off the track). Locomotive machinery and the protagonist's past life roll into kinetic speed. There is an undisputable influence of the constructivist approach, the kinetic and the Vertovian. *La roue* anticipates also the *Ballet mécanique* by two years, but its main purpose was still narrative, not abstraction. In his earlier films Gance had already experimented with some of his tricks but he later developed them as a characteristic visual tool palette obtained mainly from the subjectivity of the camera: the use of out of focus, «hesitation», deformation or anamorphism of the subject, gigantism, multi-exposition, superimpositions, parallelism, etc.

Gance's camera was supposed *to take the place of the eyes of the protagonists*, to take place in the action, not only to record it (as with Vertov).

To the «experiment» of *La roue* must be added a mega-project which took Gance four years of work: *Napoleon* (1927). Gance had already experimented on a triptych effect in *La folie du Dr. Tuba* (1914), a projection of three separated segments of film synchronised on three screens. In *Napoleon* instead of creating three different segments he experimented by enlarging the same space (as a vision field) to all the three screens as if it was an early cinerama.<sup>42</sup> The interesting difference is that the purpose was not to bring the spectator into a realistic field ratio (as did the cinerama of the fifties) but to make a real visual effort to compose a large *tableau*. For this he used the three screens as three different spaces (similarly to a triptych). Gance counterposed left and right screens and balanced action between the three screens. He used them also to develop metaphoric parallels (e.g. Bonaparte and eagle). The screens were carrying different moods of colours (the film was toned) following some specific psychological or dramatic moment. Gance already expected the coming of sound and in 1934 he indeed made a stereophonic dubbed version. Paradoxically, the coming of sound techniques will force polyvision technique to be abandoned. Technically it was too demanding, but some had obviously noticed too how the sound version was deforming the visual impact: the «symphonic» composition of the image did not work with a *too realistic* sound of the battle. This example shows how every technical improvement bringing cinema nearer to reality—its referent—in fact reduces artistic creativity.

The first talkies had similar problems with narration: sound worked as if it was a backwards move in a visually creative sense. We could link this also with video<sup>43</sup> (chapters 5 and 9).

Je n'aime pas les choses qui sont une imitation. J'aime la réalité pure et simple. Ou alors j'aime ce qu'on ne trouve pas dans la vie: mais ça c'est difficile à trouver.<sup>44</sup>

Before closing the pages of silent movies with these words by Man Ray, it could be interesting to have a look at animation. What is the significance of animation in movies and more specifically concerning avant-garde cinema?

It has been seen how Méliès early films used cinema for object animation and that in England some films had been produced in the same way. Before the film was a reality, pioneers were drawing animated pictures for working out their inventions. The subjects in those «shorts» were a continuation of the old *laterna magica*, a world of *fantasmagoria* and that world was rarely realistic. One can also find abstract, purely formal animated drawings (e. g. kaleidoscopic models). Naive stories were developed for instance in Emile Reynaud's *Théâtre optique* (1889). In America the first strictly feature-animation of the early cinema *Gertie the dinosaur* (1909) was a pure fantasy, the *King-Kong* and *Godzilla* of the time. Animation as a technique is a larger concept than animation as genre. The technique of animation used normally in the animation-genre is used as well in fiction<sup>45</sup>, and directors have been able to use animation to underline facts and situations. One interesting early classic example was Eisenstein in his *Potemkin* (1925) where the use of animation montage gave life to the lion statue in the *Odessa's stairs* scene, making it «rise up» like the masses.<sup>46</sup> In the experimental cinema of the twenties too, the exploitation of animation technique is recognised as a common trick. The *Ballet mécanique* (1924) of Léger also contains abstract animation of rapidly intercut spheres, triangles and ovals as an echo of cubist and futurist paintings. It animates wine bottles, mannequin legs and ...a sympathetic drawing of a cubist Chaplin. The flying hats of Richter in *Vormittagsspuk* (1927–28) are very close to Méliès' vision of animated dishes. It will be seen that Man Ray largely employed animation technique in *Emak Bakia* (chapter 8).

## [kinetics]

The new way of seeing which was coming with Impressionism (chapters 1 and 2) marks also the point of departure for the isolation of sense-data: colours, lines, tones, depth, and occasionally movement (plate 2). This was the indispensable step on the way to abstraction.

That time was also marked with the recent developments in photography, with the search for understanding movement (plates 2, 3 and 6) and stereoscopic vision. With the fascination of movement and its perception, the main problem was obviously representation. The notion of representation is linked to the real nature of movement but also with its conventional extensions (conventional time for instance). If the movement cannot be shown as movement, could it be shown as a «trace» or by any conventional method? It will be seen how cinema is by its very nature *faux-movement* (false movement). The problem and its diverse implications will be discussed later under Deleuze's argumentation (chapter 9). A similar and comparable discourse about light and perspective will also be considered in the same chapter. It seems that there are many ways to classify movement and even more to represent it. Some of the basic ones could be:<sup>47</sup>

- 1° movement within the work (virtual movement)
- 2° movement of the work (real movement)
- 3° movement linked to construction of the work (genesis of the work)
- 4° movement engendered by perception of the spectator (perceptual suggestion)
- 5° movement engendered by movement of the spectator (field vision)

Besides this basic classification, the relationship between the arts, which possibly includes the notion of movement (e.g. painting and cinema, photography and cinema) and also the real nature of this movement, whether biological, physical, physiological, psychological, chemical and so on, can interfere when the question is experiencing the mobility of the work. Kinetics is a discipline usually restricted to the visual arts, but it also occurs in the arts of spectacle or stage (cinema, theatre, choreography, music, etc.).

The Impressionists brought into art the notion of interpretation (that existed before, but not as a principal concern). They dealt above all with all visual data recordings of their time, including humans and machines, so they were as a consequence

concerned with movement as an objective phenomenon. Their themes are very popular: trains, barges, boats, water, bridges, sunsets, flags, smoke, mist, clouds, circus, fairs, beaches, race-horses, picnics, restaurants, reflections, ballets, dancers, etc.

If the Impressionists are popular as «masters of light», they can also be appreciated as «painters of the instant». Edouard Manet made «contour coincide with gesture in such a way that the lack of equilibrium in the subject matter is strongly accentuated.»<sup>48</sup> He calls therefore for a typical conventional movement.

Edgar Degas had a clear predilection for bodily movement such as horses and dancers. Ballet, trot and gallop are delightful studies, almost instant-photography. Degas can be understood as a precursor, possibly an initiator for the experiments by Muybridge and Marey. «Germain Bazin has shown that Degas uses a characteristic cinematographic procedure in several of his works. First of all, he makes use of «mobility of scale and plane». He was intimately concerned with the purely plastic problems which arose from his distinctive use of movement and light vibration.»<sup>49</sup>

Claude Monet was above all concerned with retinal impression: concerned therefore with light and its vibrations. The way Monet, especially in the Argenteuil period and in the *Nymphéas*, had to create a series to depict successive impressions was a plastic solution to a specific time-movement problem (plate 1). Thus Monet used a serial of *clichés* to render an impression<sup>50</sup>; chronophotography used the same fundamental method: a series of photographs to trace movement from a sequence of static impressions.

«The Impressionist period also saw an expression of movement of an entirely different kind, which derived from the innermost recesses of the human personality and foreshadowed research into the unconscious»<sup>51</sup>, explains Frank Popper. The symbolist painter Odilon Redon (1840–1916) «develops his own plastic and thematic use of movement.»<sup>52</sup> For him there are «static and dynamic elements». «Once the elements in the plastic conflict are laid down, there is free rein for the rhythmic interplay.»<sup>53</sup> «The art of suggestion can achieve nothing without its unique recourse to the mysterious interplay of shadows and the rhythm of lines conceived in the mind.» said Redon.<sup>54</sup> Redon's arabesque is one of the output of this «art of suggestion».

In the sciences, Théodule Ribot made the first investigations in the nature of movement. In 1879 he published an article on the psychological importance of movement. This was followed by the theories of David Sutter whose work had a

direct influence on the artists. In 1881, Paul Souriau wrote a thesis on the perception of movement and his *Esthétique du mouvement* came out in 1889. The chronophotography of Marey was published before 1887 and Muybridge's *Animal locomotion* the same year (plate 6). The works of Bergson on parapsychology, attributing a soul to invisible matter, were appearing.

About the same time the Impressionists split into different tendencies. The interest of Georges Seurat (1859–1891), with the Divisionists, was in colour decomposition-reconstruction, but towards the end of his life he was also involved in movement on the canvas, in a very similar way that the Italian Futurists (using for example the legs of different dancers in *Le Chahut* (1889–90) to decompose the movement of each into a rhythmic progression (plate 2). The decomposition of light and the linear rhythms give an almost scientific (or experimental) value to his work, which evolved slowly towards a new vision of movement.

After the Impressionists the representation of movement, and particularly subjective movement, was a matter of quite a lot of masterpieces in which the use of kinetic forms-arabesques in order to dramatise the subject was common. The development of the *arabesque* school influenced the dynamic embellishment of Art Nouveau. Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch (plate 2) typically develop subjective-dramatising movement. Paul Gauguin and James Ensor were masters at suggesting life throughout gestures and crowd choreography.

Around 1910, dynamics occur in the sphere of expressionists, and especially of late expressionists: Emil Nolde, Egon Schiele, Alexei Jawlensky, Ferdinand Hodler linked to new stream, including for instance Die Brücke and Blaue Reiter. The list of artists interested in representing movement in the years between the *Belle époque* and World War I includes many names and tendencies: for instance, Frantisek Kupka (1871–1957), Otto Dix (1891–1969) and George Grosz (1893–1959) (plate 2). However the decisive step concerning movement was taken by the Cubists and the Italian Futurists at the same time, around 1910:

*On apprend de Montrouge  
que l'ami Picasso  
fait un tableau qui bouge  
ainsi que ce berceau (Apollinaire)*

The apprehension of time and space by the cubists was very radical. It is specifically the abandoning of a unique subjective viewpoint that makes Cubism original: the object is seen from several points of view *at the same time*, so that movement too could be represented in the same way.

So the cubist eye, not reduced to one viewpoint because it turns around the subject, selects many *faces* of it: the profile or the front or the back, which provide a «total» image of the form. This new manner of seeing —by an «intellectual movement» around the form— is for the same reason, among others, the antithesis of Impressionism, a rejection of the «instant» concept. The picture instead of being a part of a sequence, like for instance in Monet's *Nymphéas*, is created by the *superimposition* of several *clichés* (as a photographic «sandwich» or montage is). The *photodynamics* of the Futurists explore that new vision (plates 1 and 3).

Fernand Léger (1881–1955) explains about *Ballet mécanique* (1924) that it «represents an experiment into the value of the object in itself, both fixed and mobile. It is an anti-romantic work». He also wrote: «The true subject of this film is the object and it is that I have set in rhythm and movement... Between the principle and the form, there is an abstract element.» «For me, he says, concerning cubist painting, a picture is the very opposite of a wall —that is to say, it is *éclat* and movement.»<sup>55</sup> The *Ballet mécanique* remained the only film made by Léger and it was made with the help of Man Ray,<sup>56</sup> but the preceding argumentation applies generally to his paintings around 1910.

Robert Delaunay (1885–1941) is the link between Cubists and Futurists with his famous *simultanisme*. Around 1912 as *simultanisme* he described a colour method consisting of creating an impression of space, form and movement with the help of colour and contrast, which could be felt simultaneously. In 1913 Delaunay became involved in a dispute with the Futurists about the meaning of the term. The difference came out of the fact that Delaunay restricted it to colours. For the Futurists it was instead a question of «state of mind» or even an effect suggested by retinal persistency. Apollinaire also called Cubists *Simultanistes* as a way of describing their habit of apprehending a scene from simultaneous viewpoints. Anyway, this is the primordial step —simultaneity: it transforms the picture into a time-concept,<sup>57</sup> which itself suggests movement. Delaunay explains his ideas: «Around 1912–13 I had the idea of a type of painting which would be technically dependent on colour alone, and on colour contrast, but would develop in time and offer itself to simultaneous perception all at once.»<sup>58</sup>



Delaunay arrived at a quite complicated system with complementary and dissonant colors, which had finally nothing to do with the dynamic descriptive point of view developed by Cubists and Futurists. If the time-concept was present in Delaunay's work, it is the first time with the Futurists, involved with movement (one of several fields of investigation of the Futurists) that the idea of movement takes precedence over the perception of movement or the emotions associated with it.

The futurist works describing movement stand halfway between the objective approach of the impressionists and the subjective movement of the expressionists. Their starting point is that movement is a different concept from time and, as has been seen, simultaneity is more time than movement.

Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916) and Giacomo Balla (1871–1958), the main figures, represent two tendencies: the first puts the accent on states of mind, and the second dissects the movement in a more or less similar way as Marey did twenty years before the painters (plates 2 and 3).

Beside simultaneity and movement the concept of speed also came to the fore, and for Balla (and the Futurists) it was very important. For the Futurists speed best represented their own time with its technology, change and progress. They turned their focus to the future in a rather strong intellectual way that was transposed directly into emotional and political actions and reactions: movement and speed were becoming a means. Balla's subjects, like speeding cars, a dog on a leash, a girl running and the hand of a violinist, are concrete subjects—but there is also plenty pure abstraction—which had to be controlled and verified both analytically (scientifically) and formally (aesthetically).

The first period of research into movement was in fact passing because, as was the case before with impressionism and light, the point wasn't to describe or to paint the movement *technically*—especially since photography had already proved that it can do that—but to try to understand what movement is as «invisible matter».

As we have mentioned the trend was analysed in thematic terms: movement is suggested through human activity, through the displacement of objects and machines. All kinds of phenomena as light, expansion, noise, perfume, etc. were in fact noticed by the Futurists as a progressive field, «invisible matter» worthy of investigation.

In futurist photography<sup>59</sup> Anton Giulio Bragaglia (1890–1960) tries with his photo-sandwiches, double exposures and photodynamics to follow in the steps of his futurist compatriots (plate 3). In 1911 he made a photodynamic called *Figure*

*descending stairs*. The next year Marcel Duchamp produces his famous *Nu descendant un escalier* (see chapter 2 and plate 3) and curiously before producing it he also made a photographic study of the same subject.

*Nu descendant un escalier n°2* (1912) was not the first work of this kind. With *Nu descendant un escalier n°1* and *Jeune-homme triste dans un train* in 1911, Duchamp is known to have been influenced by the experimental chronophotography made by Etienne-Jules Marey.<sup>60</sup> «*Nu descendant un escalier* works by suggesting movement as a static composition, which is constructed by the shapes of static positions that a body in movement has, without any kinetic/cinematographic effect» describes Tom Sandqvist.<sup>61</sup> He also emphasises the abstract means as a chronophotographic method: «the static image of a movement can be conceived as a pure abstraction, imitating Marey's 18<sup>th</sup> century's chronophotographs of galloping horse adapted to the principle of *shaping parallelism* idea or through *demultiplication*.»<sup>62</sup>

Bragaglia's interest in kinetics wasn't an accident: he was a personality in the Italian theatre and had worked as assistant director for the films of Enrico Guazzoni, a key director in the Italian version of the *film d'art*. He started experimenting with photography, probably inspired by the work of Marey. In 1916 he came back to cinema as director for several films. With the concept of photodynamism he meant to free photography from natural realism and the limits of the snapshot. He wanted to show movement in another way than chronophotography did, but he did not want to produce blurred photographs either.

Bragaglia made double prints on the front-profile principle, a real cubistic method applied to photography (unavoidably reduced to catching a subject from a single viewpoint).

Similarly there exists a futurist photodynamic portrait of Boccioni that is attributed to Giannetto Bisi (plate 1). In this photograph the cubo-futurist dynamic is even more typical.

The photodynamics of Bragaglia finds an echo in England a little later with the Vorticists. Vorticism covered a wide range of artistic experiments. The momentum of their investigations was very often intellectual. In kinetics two figures are interesting: the painter Percy Wyndham Lewis (1884–1957) and the native American photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882–1966). Lewis' point of departure lies in music and machines. He defined movement in the following terms in the 1915 Vorticist exhibition:

by vorticism we mean a) ACTIVITY as opposed to the tasteful passivity of Picasso; b) SIGNIFICANCE as opposed to the dull or anecdotal character to which the Naturalist is condemned; c) ESSENTIAL MOVEMENT and ACTIVITY (such energy of a mind) as opposed to the imitative cinematography, the fuss and hysterics of the Futurists<sup>63</sup>

The Vorticists put the main emphasis on energy rather than on the analytic investigation of movement undertaken by Futurists. This energy has an intellectual origin: «Will and consciousness are our *vortex*.»<sup>64</sup>

As a photographer Coburn is of particular interest here. The pictures he made around 1917 are more an attempt at abstraction than a research into movement, but as has been seen both searches are linked. Coburn himself explains his intention when he joined the group of Vorticists: «I did not see why my own medium should lag behind modern art trends, so I aspired to make abstract pictures with the camera. For this purpose I devised the vortoscope late in 1916. This instrument is composed of three mirrors fastened together in the form of a triangle, and resembling to a certain extent the kaleidoscope —and I think many of us can remember the delight we experienced with this scientific toy. The mirror acted as a prism splitting the image formed by the lens into segments.»<sup>65</sup> Ezra Pound who had been a model for the vortography of Coburn wrote about it: «The vortoscope freed photography from the material limitations of depicting recognizable natural objects. By its use the photographer can create beautiful arrangements of form for their own sake.»<sup>66</sup> This is comparable with music where the aspect of duration has to be considered. As a parallel with music, we can consider Frantisek Kupka who began very early to paint in a non-figurative way. His interest for making analogies with music rhythms was already much developed in 1910 when his approach came to be more conceptual. He explains his intentions himself: «I believe that I can find something between vision and hearing and that I can produce a figure in colours just as Bach did in music.»<sup>67</sup> Kupka's subjective form of dynamism as in *The Dream* and *Riders* (plate 2) perhaps reaches its highest point in the series of variations on the theme of universal gravitation *Autour d'un point* completed between 1910 and 1930.<sup>68</sup>

Jacques Villon (1875–1963), born Gaston Duchamp and the older brother of Marcel Duchamp, was a cubist painter who became active in 1911 with the group *Section d'Or*. The group was effectively involved with the dynamism of the Cubists but found it still too static: «The Cubism of Braque and Picasso interested us very much, but it seemed too static to us» said Villon. He continues: «We thought, on our own

account, that it was rhythm, and the breaking down of surfaces into coloured planes that made the picture live.»<sup>69</sup>

On the margin of *Section d'Or* stand Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp. With Picabia and Duchamp a real programme for analysing movement, whether of cars or bodies, has been worked out.

Picabia, who emerged out of Orphism, had an active interest in depicting the expression of movement through contrasts of coloured forms. His predilection for the aesthetics of machines and mechanical systems (and the coronary absurdity) was also becoming evident. The fact that Picabia —and Duchamp— were interested in the mechanics of movement is therefore logical. Both had a «cold» temperament, which provided the capacity for ironic apprehension. The approach of their aesthetic was essentially thematic. Both turned later to Dadaism for the same reason. They wanted to indicate the successive phases of the movement in a very schematic way. It was revolutionary to apply *machinisme* to human behaviour. Here a detour to cybernetics in the sixties could of course readily be made.

I experienced the revelation that the genius of the modern world is the machine, and that in the machine art can discover a living form of expression<sup>70</sup>

Picabia was mad about automobiles: «When I paint a motor race, can you distinguish the precise shapes of the cars shooting past at crazy speed on the track? No. All you see is a confused mass of colours, of shapes, which might seem strange... I am able to communicate the very idea of movement, so that you feel, experience and appreciate the thrill of speed.»<sup>71</sup> It may be recalled that in the Armory Show of New York in 1913 it was in fact Duchamp who provoked an artistic scandal with his *Nu descendant un escalier n°2*. The work seemed scandalous for plenty of reasons, but the worst was that the figure was a mechanical woman yet still nonetheless a nude! Duchamp's painting was a concentration of «invisible matter»... He said: «This picture is not a painting, but an organization of kinetic elements - an expression of time and space through the abstract presentation of the movement...But we must bear in mind that, when we consider the movement of form in space over a certain time, we are entering the realm of geometry and mathematics, as when we construct a machine.»<sup>72</sup> *Nu descendant un escalier n°2* had been already exhibited in France, at the *Salon des Indépendants* in 1912. Duchamp, disgusted with the Paris art scene, abandons a career as a professional avant-garde painter: he refuses pencils. But with the Armory Show scandal he again became the

center of a debate about modern art. He was marking an important step in the same way with his first ready-made. His interest in movement is marked with the first «installation» of the *Bicycle Wheel* and with his first notes: *Time and Space Calculating*. In 1915, in Ridgefield, Duchamp and Man Ray meet for the first time. In *Self Portrait*, Man Ray describes their first meeting:

Visitors continued to descend [from NY] upon us: one Sunday afternoon two men arrived - a young Frenchman, and an American somewhat older. The one was Marcel Duchamp, the painter whose *Nude Descending the Staircase* had created such a furor at the Armory show in 1913, the second a collector of modern art, Walter Arensberg. Duchamp spoke no English, my French was nonexistent. Donna [Adon Lacroix] acted as my interpreter but mostly carried on a rapid dialogue with him. I brought out a couple of old tennis rackets, and a ball which we batted back and forth without any net, in front of the house. Having played the game on regular courts previously, I called the strokes to make conversation: fifteen, thirty, forty, love, to which he replied each time with the same word: yes.<sup>73</sup>

In 1920, their kinetic experiments together start, but also during this period Man Ray photographed the personal works of Duchamp: they were essentially based on precision optics and kinetic systems: *Rotary Glass Plates* (1920) for instance. They tried also to build together a stereoscopic camera and to make a kinetic film, which was aborted. Soon before the departure of Man Ray to France, they succeeded in making a pamphlet film with the baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven — probably the only New York dada-film ever made. At that time, Man Ray also made *Moving sculpture* and the «mobile» *Lampshade* (plates 23 and 27).

In Paris, after July 1921 they continued to build kinetic works with bicycle wheels and different moving optical devices such as *Rotary Demi-sphère* (1925). Some rotary experiments took form under the name of *Anémic cinéma*. Meanwhile Duchamp's first major essay was published and he started a serious career as a chess player and in 1924 he works on the roulette system in Monte Carlo. In 1925 *Anémic cinéma* comes out in the form of an achieved film (thanks to Man Ray). Later in the thirties he continued experiments with optical disks under the name of *rotoreliefs* (plate 6). The rotorelief is quite an interesting illusion: it gives a sensation of depth by rotation. Previously in *Anémic cinéma*, Duchamp had made similar plates organising dada-texts in a spiral form in the same spirit as calligrammes.

In Russia, Rayonnists were also making experiments with light and movement during the same period. Mihail Fedorovitch Larionov (1881–1964) wanted to

interpret Einstein's theory on light. The theory of Rayonnism depended to some extent on the notion of «invisible energy» so Larionov worked on representing traces of radiation of objects and spaces, hence the name of the movement itself. Larionov occasionally used real movement in his work, for instance by incorporating a mechanized ventilator in one canvas. Natalia Goncharova (1881–1962) was maybe more involved with the emphasis on movement but she was also more inclined towards ornament and arabesque.

In Suprematism and its main figure Casimir Malevitch (1878–1935) the element of movement played a predominant role. Malevich gave the phenomenon of wave vibration some attention, but he asserted that, «in relation to eternity, vibrations of this order must be considered immobile»<sup>74</sup>, and believed that wave vibrations could also be artificially increased in speed. He was in fact generally interested in cosmic laws. Suprematism was «the supremacy of pure sensation in the plastic arts»<sup>75</sup>. This sensation was the result of tensions and movements between colour, form and ground.

Vladimir Tatlin (1885–1953) who belongs to the constructivist school was one of the most important pioneers of real movement. In fact, for the Constructivists the concept «real» itself and its quest was at the centre of the matter. Tallin set out to recreate a real space with the help of real materials and real movements, as did Alexander Rodchenko who later moved in the productivist direction.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) with his book *On the Spiritual in Art* came to the conclusion that art is an intuitive or psychic process, an idea which became one of the main tenets of the Bauhaus (chapter 2). He also showed how personal interpretation was giving a spiritual content to the work. Kandinsky's favourite interest was in the relation between the visual arts and music. These aspects were developed in his treatment of movement, on the theoretical and practical planes.<sup>76</sup> Kandinsky represented the spiritual life of art in terms of movement:

The spiritual life to which art belongs, and of which it is one of the most powerful agents, can be transcribed by means of a forward and upward movement, complex but firm, and capable of being reduced to a simple element. This is the very movement of the act of knowledge. Whatever form it adopts, it keeps the same profound meaning and the same goal.<sup>77</sup>

Kandinsky sees music as «immaterial art» able to reveal to the (visual) artist his particular «interior universe», what he called also «internal sound» or «internal

resonance», a means to achieve «rhythm, abstract and geometrical construction». He developed a theory of colour based «on the results of empirical and psychological contact with nature and natural phenomena, rather than on scientific knowledge.»<sup>78</sup> For him, there is a correspondence between musical tones and colors: he observes movement between colours and measures the musical value of movement of forms. Kandinsky's concern with possibilities of linking sequential arrangements of colours and forms to subjective movement persisted throughout his career.

The Futurists Bruno Corra (b. Bruno Ginanni Corradini 1892–1976) and Arnaldo Ginna (b. Arnaldo Ginanni Corradini 1890–1982) between 1910 and 1912 also made what is probably the first abstract films and «probably the first avant-garde works of cinema of any kind»<sup>79</sup> by painting directly on the film<sup>80</sup>; Bruno Corra published in the Futurist manifesto of 1912 a document entitled *Abstract Cinema—Chromatic Music*. «In his article Corra argues that the chromatic scale consists of only one octave, on the assumption that the eye, unlike the ear, lacks the power of resolution»<sup>81</sup>; he was nevertheless constructing a kind of *colour-organ*:

We had four reds chosen at equal distances in the spectrum, four greens, four violets etc. In this way we managed to extend the seven colours in four octaves [...] The keyboard was exactly like that of a piano (but was less extensive). When an octave was played for example, the two colours were mingled, as are two sounds on the piano<sup>82</sup>

In this and other preceding examples it may be seen that not only abstract art and color, but also movement, duration, speed, rhythm and other «invisible matters» and even «internal resonance» are linked together; the meeting point between visual arts, music and cinema, probably also psychology, is therefore somewhere around the subjects of these experiments.

Most of the progressive experiments in kinetics after 1919 are made through the existence of the Bauhaus and the personality of its generation of teachers that include such figures as Kandinsky, Klee, Schwitters, Berlewi, Itten, Albers, Moholy-Nagy and Schlemmer. This last gave a sense of gesture to movement: Oskar Schlemmer (1888–1943) saw in man's movements, in a work of choreography, the aesthetic value of that movement, on a plastic, choreographic or dramatic level. He used actually the term *kinetic*.

## [european second avant-garde]

In the two former subchapters an overview has been provided of the many fields of moving pictures since the concept of stroboscopy had been discovered. It has been observed that from the very beginning the pioneers of the cinema had an initial fascination of two kinds: the first, such as the Lumières, Méliès or even Eisenstein though formalism in the narrative, were developing the main road of the actual cinema: the movies. The second, like Gance or Vertov were worried about the kinetic particularities both in narrative or pure visual way. Finally in «kinetics» evidence has been found for links between chronophotography and photodynamics and experimental cinema and painting, or with the fine arts in general.

The concept «experimental» should be avoided at this stage of the investigation because it is too restrictive. Indeed the term «experimental» has a connotation which links too much with the film material and its physical manipulation.<sup>83</sup> Yet, it has been seen that the topics of Kinetic Art were fully visual rather than experimental despite possible theoretical bases (e.g. in the Bauhaus) —nobody speaks about Picasso's «experimental Cubism» but simply about Cubism.

On the other hand the other term «avant-garde» is at the same time too vague in order to describe a cinema which is sometimes purely a cinematographic extension of painting. Indeed Russian formalist film (Eisenstein), Vertov and Gance also belong to the avant-garde though they represent only the avantgardist narrative branch. The experimentations of Méliès, for instance, or painted films by Zecca (plate 13) and even Impressionism (Delluc) are sometimes known under the name of *first avant-garde*.<sup>84</sup> Even German Expressionism has sometimes been linked to the avant-garde for its strong connections with painting. More complicated still to classify are the transgeneric films such Grierson's house productions, or Ivens' or Flaherty's films (docudrama). The end of the 1920s also sees the coming of surrealist films which are assimilated into the avant-garde despite the fact that they *became* narrative. Delluc's aspiration about «*un cinéma d'auteur*» as an *independent* medium can be integrated as well into the avant-garde category though it should merely be a *cinéma d'Art et d'essais* or simply *cinéma d'auteur*. Some critics even speak about «subjective cinema» or «non-objective film»<sup>85</sup> (what then is objective cinema?). Because the main avant-garde mainstream cinema up to sound (what I just called «avantgardist narrative» cinema) has already been surveyed I will concentrate here



on the specificity of the cinema from which the full genre of experimental film and video is emerging and which is also commonly named *the European avant-garde* (EAG)<sup>86</sup> or sometimes *The second avant-garde* (SAG)<sup>87</sup>, «a film history label for that body experimental production realized by a number of fine artists on the European continent who turned to the cinema as an extension of their work in painting, sculpture, and other media during the decade of the 1920s.»<sup>88</sup>

Deke Dusinberre defines avant-garde cinema as follows:

The term *Avant-garde* is intended toward those films which seek an alliance with modernism in the other arts, which demand a consistent interrogation of the medium; they challenge the industry not only on the level of content and of production / distribution / exhibition, but also on the level of the aesthetic / representational postulates on which the industry's commerce is based.<sup>89</sup>

The majority of those fine artists thus emerge from the visual streams we have viewed in the former chapters (cubist, futurist, dadaist or constructivist). They operated mostly in France or Germany.

Phillip Drummond who has also tried to define the notion of avant-garde cinema<sup>90</sup> claims «a binary opposition between «dominant» and «avant-garde» cinema» should be avoided, showing that many of the avant-garde films «do not merely reject the possibilities of narrative» and therefore, he sees basically «two avant-gardes at work within the numerous years, and films, and authors»<sup>91</sup> rejoining the camp of Peter Wollen whose classification follows the next polarity<sup>92</sup>:

**1° the filmmakers and works closely associated with tendencies in the fine arts**

**2° the filmmakers exploring film formal, ideological, social and political concerns**

The idea is clever because it avoids the problem of narrative perspective, but unfortunately it does not work in terms of historicity. Following that model the vision of Vertov should be as close to Godard as Man Ray's is to Greenaway's. I noticed that the pioneers were interested in cinema for different reasons and these reasons were more often bore some relation to their professional background. I believe that there is another basic polarity:

**1° the fascination with pure movement**

**2° the fascination of telling «something psychological» visually**

I conceive the historical avant-garde of cinema as the meeting ground of these tendencies (table 1 and figure 7), but through successive waves (generations of filmmakers).

To clarify the terminology and isolate *the avant-garde cinema of the twenties involved in the modernist revolution* —in the fine arts—, I will adopt a new term: the *European second avant-garde* (ESAG) which has the advantage of resembling the term EAG (which is still valid, but larger) and the term SAG that is sometimes mentioned. It will clearly demark however the *European second avant-garde* from the *American second avant-garde* (called AGG or ASAG). Another advantage is to follow the idea of Wollen and Drummond which emphasised the connections with fine arts for a type of avant-garde. Following that model we shall have the next «generations» in avant-garde cinema (covering a period ending with World War II):

- 1° E(F)AG: European first avant-garde
- 2° ESAG: European second avant-garde
- 3° A(F)AG: American first avant-garde
- 4° ASAG: American second avant-garde

As Edward S. Small observes the E(SAG) «contradistinct approach largely avoided both expository discourse and narrative structures for cinematographic extensions of painting.»<sup>93</sup> Indeed the narrative and psychological level of a painting (if it may be said to exist) is always subordinated to its visual characterization. What typically marks the narrative is the «genuine characterization» of the people who act as actors<sup>94</sup> (something that excludes characterization as a key element in the experimental). In this connection Kiki's role in *Ballet mécanique*, *Emak Bakia* or *L'Étoile de mer* is questioned.

Similarly the temporality of a painting and the temporality of fiction are quite different concepts. When analysing any characteristic of the ESAG film's temporality, no characteristic belongs to the temporality of the «fiction-narrative».<sup>95</sup> The structure of a fiction/narrative works like the structure of a language: the link between the signified and the signifier is quite arbitrary. For the same reason the temporalities of fiction in film and language can be compared (an ellipse in the fiction is an ellipse only from its temporal and spatial context), but the dynamic of a kinetic work is of another kind, without any possible logical and credible reference to the real. In the work of fiction<sup>96</sup> «the time of the thing told» and «the time of the

telling» are always in close relation.<sup>97</sup> At the opposite, when there is question of the ESAG, the time belongs to the work itself, it lives by its own. The only possible theoretical analysis could be a «physiological» analysis: formal or even structural, but not a syntactic one.<sup>98</sup> As a parallel with literature, the same characteristic belongs to surrealist poetry, a product of psychic automatism (chapter 4).

It has to be observed that none of the ESAG filmmakers was duped by differences from mainstream cinema and resemblances with avant-garde literature; they made their cinema fully aware that they were *telling something else* than what the physical world offered them to be filmed, and what the real world offered them to tell. Edward S. Small makes the obvious observation that «by the beginning of the (E)SAG, film narrative had already arrived at its contemporary status, being cinema's all but exclusive structural characteristic»<sup>99</sup> (and though it was still the silent movie, with its own syntax and conventions). When Fernand Léger in the *Ballet mécanique* cuts the scene of the stairs into a repetitive loop sequence raising to absurdity none could explain it in another way than as a visual-kinetic and humoresque play (plate 7). The arbitrary figurative/non-figurative or even signified/signifier is not purely a cinematographic dilemma. When looking at an abstract *painting* it isn't difficult to accept the formal intention through a «figurative» subject. On the other hand, when the method consist in *filming* (or simply photographing) «figurative elements» it is noticeably more difficult to reach a new level of perception. The experiments of the absolute films by Eggeling (*Diagonal Symphony*), Richter (*Rhythmus 21–25*), and Ruttmann (*Lichtspiel opus 1–4*) are quite easy to approach as pure formal aims because they represent an absolute reality in themselves (such an abstract painting or sculpture) independently from any concrete imagery (or even collective subconscious or symbolic meaning) (plates 7–9).

The principal characteristics of the ESAG thus have their origin in the art movements we have already analysed. I also include the Futurists who worked earlier. In the case of Surrealism, that will be analysed separately in the next chapter, I make some reservations (chapter 9). I shall summarise briefly the sources again:

**FUTURIST: machinery and dynamism**

**CUBIST : cubist perception**

**CONSTRUCTIVIST: abstract formalism**

**DADAIST: calculated irrationality**

**SURREALIST: dream and psychic automatism**

A particularity is that none of the filmmaker of the ESAG can be thought of as belonging exclusively to one particular group. The ESAG has above all been eclectic. For instance Clair, Duchamp, Man Ray, Dulac, Richter, Léger are few names which can be classified in more than one of the following cinema *genre categories* of avant-garde film production.

These categories all have their origin in visual arts through photographic, kinetic and poetical fields. We must remember they together make up the European second avant-garde as a major genre (figure 13):

1° the futurist cinema: Bragaglia, Corradinis brothers<sup>100</sup>

2° the absolute film (abstract film): Eggeling, Richter, Ruttmann, Graeff, Moholy-Nagy, Fischinger, Bruguère, Lye, Szczuka

3° the pure cinema (cinéma pur, structural film<sup>101</sup>): Chomette, Man Ray, Moholy-Nagy, Ruttmann, Dulac, Fischinger, Lye, Corra

4° the dadaist film: Clair, Man Ray, Richter, Duchamp, Léger

5° the surrealist cinema: Man Ray, Buñuel, Dulac, Cocteau, Richter, Brunius

6° the experimental documentary (docudrama): Ivens, Storck, Ruttmann, Painlevé.

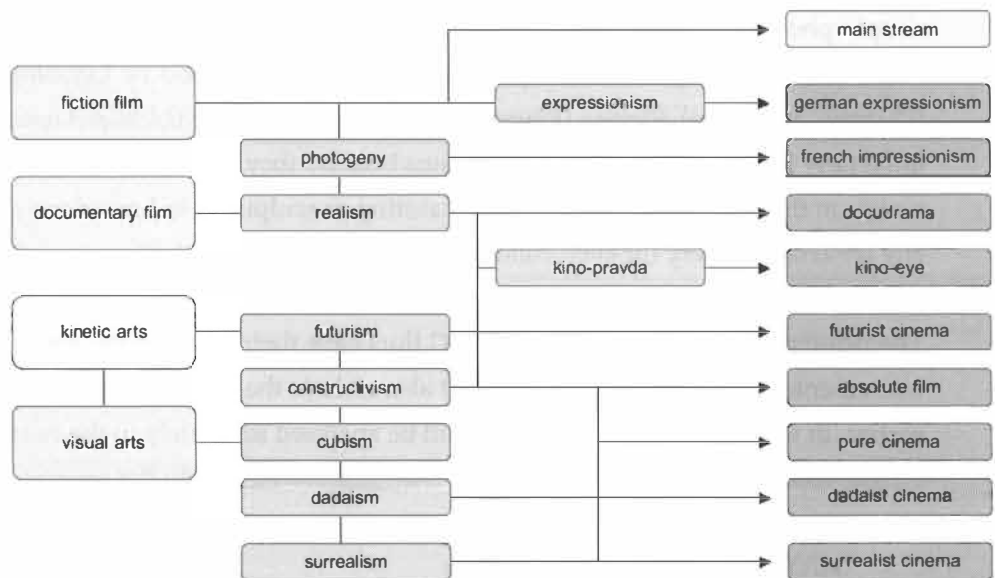


Fig. 13: European Second Avant-garde (ESAG)

In a larger perspective, if the EAG is considered as a whole, the following can be added to the above categories (if narrative—non narrative differentiation is avoided) :

7° the German Expressionism Wiene, Murnau, Lang

8° the French Impressionism and photogénie: Delluc, Dulac, Gance, Grémillion

9° the Kino-eye Vertov

For an overview of the ESAG filmmakers see in the *Appendix* of this work. Man Ray will be analysed in details in chapters 6 to 8.

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<sup>1</sup> René Descartes *La Dioptrique* (1637) Discours cinquième: *Des images qui se forment sur le fond de l'œil*, quoted and translated by Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer*, 1990, p. 47, for the original text of Descartes see at: <http://www.ac-nice.fr/philos/textes/Descartes-Dioptrique.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer*, 1990, pp. 47-48

<sup>3</sup> In Man Ray: *Ce que je suis et autres textes*, pres. Vincent Lavoie, p. 87

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86

<sup>5</sup> Man Ray: *Photography Is Not Art*, View, n°1, April, 1943

<sup>6</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 181

<sup>7</sup> See in Leena Saraste: *Valokuva. Tradition ja toden välissä*, 1996, pp. 92-95 or Walter Benjamin *A short history of photography*, Screen, Spring 1972

<sup>8</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 25-26

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26

<sup>10</sup> Atget and Man Ray were neighbours for a few years on rue Campagne-première. Man Ray admired Atget and bought some of his photographs

<sup>11</sup> Such as Emil Boehm, Lehnert & Landrock, Aksel Berner, in Finland: I.K. Inha

<sup>12</sup> For instance: Alvin Langdon Coburn, Edward Steichen, Paul Strand, Frederik H. Evans, Timothy H.

O'Sullivan, William H. Jackson, John Thomson

<sup>13</sup> Called also rayographs or rayogrammes (see endnote in chapter 2)

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Coelho: *Film History lectures/anthology* after general works on film history such: Georges Sadoul *Le cinéma français 1890-1962*, 1962; Georges Sadoul *Histoire générale du cinéma*, 1973; Kristin Thompson & David Bordwell *Film History*, 1994; Richard Abel *French Cinema. The First Wave, 1915-1929*, 1984; John L. Fell *A History of Films*; David Robinson *World Cinema: A short History*; Jay Leyda *Kino, A History of the Russian and Soviet Film*, 1960 (1971)

<sup>15</sup> In Man Ray: *Ce que je suis et autres textes*, pres. Vincent Lavoie, p. 87

<sup>16</sup> For instance Ferdinand Zecca (1864-1947)

<sup>17</sup> Mostly Robert Paul and G.A. Smith

<sup>18</sup> Called significantly «tableaux»

<sup>19</sup> The allegory eye-camera being enlarged to man-machine (robot)

<sup>20</sup> *Ellipsis* in a film is what has happened but was not showed

<sup>21</sup> The dialogue after 1929 was the other important narrative organisation

<sup>22</sup> For instance: Broncho Billy, Sarah Bernhardt, Asta Nielsen (1910), Lilian Gish (1912), Mary Pickford (1912), Douglas Fairbanks (1919)

<sup>23</sup> Other productions: Mack Sennett productions and the Keystone Studios with Mabel Normand, Roscoe

«fatty» Arbuckle, Marie Dressler, and Ben Turpin. Later on, the genre gets more famous names as Harold Lloyd, Charley Chase or Will Rodgers in Hal Roach productions, Buster Keaton and Harry Langdon; Stars are also collectives such as *Our Gang* or *Bathing Girls*. Later pairs of stars are in fashion; Both side of Atlantic found its adventurers such as Douglas Fairbanks (Zorro) and Louis Feuillade (Fantômas, Judex), etc.

<sup>24</sup> For instance the collaboration of Marcel Duchamp with Léon Perret

<sup>25</sup> In the case of Flaherty this is evident with later films: for instance *Moana* (1925) and *Man of Aran* (1934) can be appreciated as «pastoral symphonies» (see for comparison: «city symphonies»)

<sup>26</sup> Actors Rudolph Valentino, Greta Garbo, Gloria Swanson and directors such Allan Dwan, Cecil B. DeMille, Fred Niblo, Erich Von Stroheim, John Ford, etc.

<sup>27</sup> From a letter written by Lunacharsky to Boltyansky, January 9, 1925; Quoted in Jay Leyda: *Kino*, 1960, p. 161

<sup>28</sup> Quoted for instance in: Kevin Starr: *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era*. Oxford University Press. Place of Publication: New York. Publication Year: 1985., p. 309.

<sup>29</sup> Nicolas Reeves: *The Power of Film Propaganda: Myth or Reality* Film Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 2, 2001-2002

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- <sup>30</sup> Communist Party resolution (1920th), see for instance at: <http://www.leaderu.com/marshall/mhr04/tark1.html>
- This statement by the communist party connects the Russian cinema in «the process of cultural revolution» with the vision of the Nazis over the role of the arts (in my «introduction»)
- <sup>31</sup> A train which diffuses propaganda all around the country
- <sup>32</sup> «Wir» manifesto, 1924
- <sup>33</sup> Sergei Eisenstein: *Film Form and the Film Sense*. (transl. Jay Leyda, 1967)
- <sup>34</sup> Sigfried Kracauer: *From Caligari to Hitler*, 1969
- <sup>35</sup> Man Ray cites one in *Self Portrait*, p. 272
- <sup>36</sup> Man Ray, excerpt of interviews with Pierre Bourgeade, 1972
- <sup>37</sup> also an Italian syndrome
- <sup>38</sup> The appellation of «leader» does not suit René Clair but his film is undoubtedly the first dada film.
- <sup>39</sup> I see in this the biggest difference, still currently, between Hollywood and European narrative cinema
- <sup>40</sup> In the same way that Expressionism is called the cinema of «shadows»
- <sup>41</sup> Georges Sadoul: *Dictionnaire des films* (transl. Peter Morris)
- <sup>42</sup> Gance's technique is called sometimes «polyvision»; Cinerama is a large screen-technique and format used in the fifties. The scene was cross-filmed with three synchronised cameras in order to fill the vision-field and then reproduced on three curved and juxtaposed screens with three synchronised cross-projections. The system was abandoned because of its very high cost. Only a few productions were made
- <sup>43</sup> And particularly with multi-channels video (plate 17)
- <sup>44</sup> Man Ray, excerpt of interviews with Pierre Bourgeade, 1972
- <sup>45</sup> Currently this fact is even emphasised in digital cinema and video
- <sup>46</sup> Observed among others by Edward S. Small in *Experimental Film/Video as major Genre*, pp. 71-72
- <sup>47</sup> Adapted from: Popper, Frank: *Origins and development of Kinetic Art*, 1968, the whole work and particularly in chapter 9 (The Typology of Movement)
- <sup>48</sup> Frank Popper: *Origins and Development of Kinetic Art*, 1968, p. 11
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14
- <sup>50</sup> French language has the beautiful word «cliché» to depict the essence of a photographic impression
- <sup>51</sup> Frank Popper: *Origins and Development of Kinetic Art*, 1968, p. 17
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*,
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> Quoted by Popper, p. 18
- <sup>55</sup> Quoted by Popper, p. 40
- <sup>56</sup> With the collaboration of Dudley Murphy and Man Ray; the credits of Man Ray will be discussed in chapter 7
- <sup>57</sup> To be however distinct of the *image-temps* of Gilles Deleuze
- <sup>58</sup> Quoted by Popper, p. 42
- <sup>59</sup> In the work of Pontus Hulten *Futurismo & Futurismi*, 1986 there is a good panorama of futurist and vorticist photography from which these observations are made
- <sup>60</sup> Ades, Dawn, Cox, Neil, Hopkins, David: *Marcel Duchamp*, 1999, p. 48
- <sup>61</sup> Tom Sandqvist: Rajamailla, 1990, p. 224, transl. JC
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>63</sup> Quoted by Popper, p. 53
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>65</sup> Pontus Hulten: *Futurismo & Futurismi*, 1986, p. 454
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* and also at <http://www.rdg.ac.uk/library/colls/special/featureditem/coburn/index.html>
- <sup>67</sup> Quoted by Popper, p. 48
- <sup>68</sup> Frank Popper: *Origins and Development of Kinetic Art*, 1968, p. 48
- <sup>69</sup> Quoted by Popper p. 48
- <sup>70</sup> Francis Picabia quoted by Popper pp. 49-50
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>72</sup> Quoted by Popper, p. 50
- <sup>73</sup> Man Ray *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 56
- <sup>74</sup> Frank Popper: *Origins and Development of Kinetic Art*, 1968, p. 56
- <sup>75</sup> Quoted by Popper, p. 56
- <sup>76</sup> Frank Popper: *Origins and Development of Kinetic Art*, 1968, p. 62
- <sup>77</sup> Quoted by Popper, p. 62
- <sup>78</sup> Frank Popper: *Origins and Development of Kinetic Art*, 1968, p. 63
- <sup>79</sup> Malcolm Le Grice: *Abstract Film and Beyond*, 1977, p. 17
- <sup>80</sup> William Moritz: *Non-objective Film: the Second Generation* in *Film as Film* by Birgit Hein, 1979, p. 59
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>82</sup> Corra's article quoted by Malcolm Le Grice, p. 17
- <sup>83</sup> As in structural cinema (chapter 5)
- <sup>84</sup> Dimitri Kirsanoff (1899-1957) with *Brumes d'automne* (1929) is quite a typical example: the film is undoubtedly an avantgardist film which tries to avoid the main narrative stream, but its visual aims are close to pictorialist photography (Atget). The Surrealists indeed rejected Kirsanoff because of this. It is the reason we also think that the place of Kirsanoff is nearer to the Impressionists than was for instance Dulac—originally impressionist too—with her latest purist films (and her «surrealist cinema», see chapter 9)
- <sup>85</sup> William Moritz: *Non-objective Film: the Second Generation* in *Film as Film* by Birgit Hein, 1979, p. 59-71
- <sup>86</sup> David Curtis and Edward S. Small

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<sup>87</sup> Ian Christie in *Film as Film* by Birgit Hein, 1979, p. 37-45

<sup>88</sup> Edward S. Small: *Direct theory, Experimental film/video as major genre*, 1994, p. 24

<sup>89</sup> Deke Dusinberre: *The Avant-Garde Attitude in the Thirties* in Michael O'Pray: *The British Avant-Garde Film, 1926-1995*, 1996 p. 65

<sup>90</sup> Phillip Drummond: *Notions of Avant-garde Cinema, in Film as Film* by Birgit Hein, 1979, pp. 9-16

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13

<sup>92</sup> After the model drawn by Phillip Drummond p. 13 and originally in Peter Wollen: *The Two Avant-Gardes* Studio International November 1975, p.171

<sup>93</sup> Here Edward S. Small connects to the major film theories. Neither the formalist theories of the 1920s nor the modern theories after Arnheim serve to analyse the current experimental genre

<sup>94</sup> Term used by Small, probably associated to what is called *character* (role) in a fiction

<sup>95</sup> To characterize the mainstream cinema by two major marks: stories and codification of visual language.

<sup>96</sup> In the case of a film

<sup>97</sup> Edward S. Small: *Direct theory, Experimental film/video as major genre*, 1994, p. 26; what Christian Metz has called the «irrealization» derived from diegetic temporal sequence (the action told)

<sup>98</sup> The term «structural cinema» describes the development of an aesthetic movement away from the increasing complexity -consciousness towards a more formal determination of subject and technique. (David Curtis: *Experimental Cinema, a Fifty-year Evolution*, 1971) the term «structural» is normally restricted to that kind of experimental film after World War II, but was used for the first time by the American critic P.A. Sitney in an article *Structural film* in *Film Culture*, n°47, 1969. See also Peter Gidal: *Theory and Definition of Structural / Materialist film*, in the *British Avant-garde Film*, 1996. The term «structural» has here nothing to do with «structural linguistics». I use «structural» here as a film concept. The concept «structural cinema» will be developed later in chapter 5

<sup>99</sup> Edward S. Small: *Direct theory, Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre*, 1994, p. 26

<sup>100</sup> On close examination, one cannot really talk about futurist cinema in the strict sense of a theory and practice, of a history or of a technical-linguistic experimentation which would define a clear field (*Futurismo and Futurismi*, 1986, p. 448). The only film which could stand classification as purely «futurist» is *Vita futurista* (1916) made by Marinetti, Balla, Corra, Ginna and Settemelli (the film is lost). A manifesto of Futurist cinema was however done after the film and considered as fundamental for the experimental cinema, for instance the *Kino-eye* of Vertov has its origin in Russian futurist dynamism

<sup>101</sup> As an intentional link to «the structural /materialist cinema» via its means only (Peter Gidal: *Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film* in *The British Avant-Garde Film*, 1996)

# 4. Post-dada



## Vision in Re/deconstruction

I never considered myself a surrealist, but I took a parallel course —Man Ray<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1. Surrealism

SURRÉALISME, n. m. Automatismes psychiques pur par lequel on se propose d'exprimer, soit verbalement, soit par écrit, soit de toute autre manière, le fonctionnement réel de la pensée.

Dictée de la pensée, en l'absence de tout contrôle exercé par la raison, en dehors de toute préoccupation esthétique ou morale.

ENCYCL. Philos. Le surréalisme repose sur la croyance à la réalité supérieure de certaines formes d'associations négligées jusqu'à lui, à la toute-puissance du rêve, au jeu désintéressé de la pensée. Il tend à ruiner définitivement tous les autres mécanismes psychiques et à se substituer à eux dans la résolution des principaux problèmes de la vie. On fait acte de SURRÉALISME ABSOLU MM: Aragon, Baron, Boiffard, Breton, Carrive, Crevel, Delteil, Desnos, Éluard, Gérard, Limbour, Malkine, Morise, Naville, Noll, Péret, Picon, Soupault, Vitrac.<sup>2</sup>

In these words Breton describes Surrealism in the first manifesto; Breton actually enlarges the concept to an amazing extent, but places «a few philosophers and some painters» in opposition to the «absolute surrealist» team above. In a «longer list» —though they «haven't always produced a harmonious sound»<sup>3</sup>— Man Ray can also be found, along with Duchamp and other Dadaists, Picasso, Rimbaud, Swift, who was a surrealist in «naughtiness», Sade in «sadism», and... Hugo<sup>4</sup> «when not stupid» etc.!

In this chapter, I propose to reflect on the latest development of modern art, from a particular perspective: the «pre-postmodernist» period. The period of Postmodernism itself and contemporary art (from the 1990s to the present) will be approached briefly only for the specific needs of this study.

From Man Ray's point of view, «post-dada» means the gradual loss of energy of Dadaism and a conversion to new ideas that surrealism brought. It is often said that



Dadaism was a transition period ending with the birth of a more «consistent» stream. Thus Dadaism died, was «sacrificed». But to what does the long journey from Dadaism to Neo-dadaism correspond? From this particular perspective, Surrealism too could possibly be seen as only a «transition period».

«Nothing is created, nothing is lost, everything is transforming» says a universal law; also «l'inquiétude humaine», Breton knows. The times of Villon are still a menace:

Dans les cadres qui nous font sourire, pourtant se peint toujours l'irréparable inquiétude humaine, et c'est pourquoi je les prends en considération, pourquoi je les juge inséparables de quelques productions géniales, qui en sont plus que les autres douloureusement affectées. Ce sont les potences de Villon, les grecques de Racine, les divans de Baudelaire.<sup>5</sup>

### [surrealism versus dada]

Surrealism can be defined only in relation to Dadaism: Surrealism is the extension of it. The word *surréalisme*, invented by Apollinaire<sup>6</sup>, was first of all used as a weapon to destroy Dada<sup>7</sup>. As Hans Richter observes the word was disputed by other Dadaists such as Paul Dermée and Ivan Goll, who had started another kind of Surrealism<sup>8</sup> through the publication *Surréalisme*, but as the strange list above demonstrates, Breton extends the concept of Surrealism to include things that can clearly not be described as surrealist except *post factum*<sup>9</sup>. The methods of Breton sometimes seem to reveal a real faculty for manipulation (of ideas and people) as will soon be seen. By the way it is around Breton that the definitive movement progressively takes form.

In Zurich the *Littérature* review group had contributed to publications in the dada review and acquired a more avant-garde look under dadaist influence. It is now 1919 and Tzara had just arrived in Paris. In *Littérature* Breton and Soupault publish something they call an experiment, «une expérience, au sens scientifique du terme, nullement comme un nouveau morceau de littérature d'avant-garde»<sup>10</sup>: *Les Champs magnétiques*, a work which *post factum* —again— has pretensions to be the «first surrealist work, since it resulted from the first systematic employment of automatic writing.»<sup>11</sup> A similar process had nonetheless been already employed by Ball, Arp, Serner, and Huelsenbeck in Zurich, both individually and collectively, from 1916 onwards. Breton concludes that generally his experience of *écriture automatique*

brings a deeper insight but as Hans Richter observes that «does not make the latter a surrealist activity. It may be called so today, just as the works of Arp, Picabia, Man Ray, Max Ernst and others are called Surrealist, although they have remained since 1916 or 1918 exactly what they were before: Dada-realism or Sur-Dada-realism or whatever. In its beginnings, Surrealism seems to me to be as like Dada as two peas in a pod.»<sup>12</sup>

The essence of Surrealism is therefore not deeply original: its roots lie in the deconstruction<sup>13</sup> of a «construction» —dada—, itself a destruction of classicism, and in the reconstruction of a new ideology out of the ruins of Dada. It is a neologism that I propose, ironically, to call «re-deconstruction».

Whatever one thinks about Surrealism, as a construction, a deconstruction, or a reconstruction the readings of the first manifesto of Surrealism (1924) today still give the same impression: no better statement can be made than Dalí's in 1929:

Surrealism is the systematization of confusion. Surrealism appears to create an Order, but the purpose of this is to render the idea of system suspect by association. Surrealism is destructive, but destroys only what it considers to be shackles limiting our vision<sup>14</sup>

As in Derrida's deconstructionism<sup>15</sup>, the surrealist transcendental ideology is unable to demonstrate causality, plays with paradoxical laws and rejects established stability or simply matching with the real. It emphasises the idea, for instance, that «il n'y a pas de hors-texte»<sup>16</sup>, a quite equivocal sentence Derrida used in an early work that has provoked misunderstandings —meaning sometimes that there is nothing in addition to the text, sometimes nothing in the text except its form; sometimes that «all referents» are «outside of the work» etc.

Le concept de texte que je propose ne se limite ni à la graphie, ni au livre, ni même au discours, encore moins à la sphère sémantique, représentative, symbolique, idéale ou idéologique. Ce que j'appelle 'texte' implique toutes les structures dites 'réelles', 'économiques', 'historiques', 'socio-institutionnelles', bref tous les référents possibles. Autre manière de rappeler une fois encore qu'*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*. Cela ne veut pas dire que tous les référents sont suspendus, niés ou enfermés dans un livre, comme on feint ou comme on a souvent la naïveté de le croire et de m'en accuser...<sup>17</sup>

If dadaist poetry was a pure deconstruction (in the literal sense), the dislocation of the text and an anarchist revolt against the supremacy of the words in western culture, it is also the destruction of syntax, its logic and its linearity. Surrealist

method instead reconstructs fragments methodically into a new reality, with its new associative laws and logic. And once again, rationality versus irrationality.

Surrealism devoured and digested Dada. [...] It is certain that the method and discipline [rejected by Tzara] of Surrealism are essentially Breton's handiwork. Out of the explosive Dada element in Surrealism he fashioned, on rational principles, an irrational artistic movement, which, although it took Dada over wholesale, codified the Dada revolt into a strict intellectual discipline. [...] The significance of both movements lies in their mobilization of the subconscious in the service of a new conception of art. Surrealism gave Dada significance and sense, Dada gave Surrealism life.<sup>18</sup>

The question «what would Surrealism be without Dada?» is nonsense so it is hazardous to attempt to answer it. Surrealism might conceivably have somehow existed but would have been rather different because the presence of Dada produced a kind of *potlach* effect.<sup>19</sup> But once Dada had «surrendered» and Surrealism alone held sway, it was totally dependent on Breton's political goals—mostly after its crisis of 1929 and the second manifesto (see the subchapter *revolution*). As has been seen, soon after that Tzara had come to Paris, he had started the show-provocations similar to the ones in Zurich but on a bigger scale. As happened in Berlin at the same time, there was a complete breakdown of rationality. The outbreak of hostilities against Dada occurs in July 1923, after a representation of *Le Cœur à gaz*. Actually, for Breton and Éluard especially, Dada's final expression was sole «anarchism». Tzara was the main figure, but he wasn't a leader. «The real Dadaists are against Dada. Everybody is director of Dada.»<sup>20</sup> So the leadership itself was open and so were the divisions: «Picabia was against Tzara, Ribemont-Dessaignes against Picabia, Tzara against Breton, Breton against Picabia and so on. Dada was approaching a crisis to which there was no solution. The weapons it had wielded with such success for six years, with so much expenditure of wit and perfidy, sense and nonsense, art and anti-art, the weapons of confusion and provocation, were now turned against Dada itself.»<sup>21</sup>

For *Littérature* it was above all a question of research in poetry, a means for realizing a continual passionate conscience of the world (or sensations), not transcending the real, but getting deeper to its substance; with the words of Breton: «prendre une conscience toujours plus nette en même temps que toujours plus passionnée du monde sensible.»<sup>22</sup> Also, the question was a re-evaluation of the poetry of Lautréamont and Rimbaud, even Mallarmé and Valéry. Breton's aims were to

«systematise» poetry. At that time, the theories of Freud also became a possible source for surrealist phantasms. We are far from Tzara, whose only final consideration was to provoke and destroy existing institutions. Tzara and Breton were equally leading figures. «Breton was weary of demonstrations which led to nothing. His methodical mind naturally inclined towards orderliness. The process of dissolution, of society and of art, that he had himself supported, he now considered to be accomplished. Apart from this, he now wanted to take over the leadership himself and lead the movement his own way towards his own ends.»<sup>23</sup>

Tzara and Breton did behave as rivals. Breton was refusing to collaborate on Tzara's dada-events such as at the Gallery Montaigne's *Grande après-midi Dada* or excursions, and on his own side Breton organizes the *Procès Barrès*, despite the disapproval of Tzara. The «*mise en accusation et jugement de Maurice Barrès par Dada*»<sup>24</sup> is announced in *Littérature* on the 13th May, 1921. The event and its disapproval are significant because they reveal differences in the nature of Breton's and Tzara's philosophical approaches. Barrès was a talented patriotic writer, a fact which of course placed him in opposition to dadaist values. Breton wanted the court to be composed of spectators (but the accusation had already been made by Breton and he was the president, not a spectator). So he wanted to build a symbolic tribunal and intended by this process to avoid or limit the anarchistic activity of Dada, to transform it intellectually by a flat simulacrum of order. Tzara did not have anything directly against the person of Barrès and his life. Breton's habit of attacking institutions through some of their representative individuals was a constant all through the surrealist period. As Maurice Nadeau observes<sup>25</sup> this was maybe the *Procès Barrès* but it was also the *Procès Dada*, which was beginning. It was symbolically Tzara versus Breton.

After the *Procès Barrès* a part of the Dadaists like Picabia wanted even more anarchy. This last transformed his periodical 391 into *PILHAOUTHIBAOU*. Dada's relative equilibrium between «heaven and hell» (see in chapter 2) was moving towards a more or less unilateral anarchic split of activities. The creative complementarity of forces which had once made it alive and progressive were either vanishing or tearing it apart.

The next year Breton wanted to organize an international congress for the «determination of directives and the defence of modern consciousness».<sup>26</sup> His idea was to invite personalities of really different artistic conceptions e.g. Fernand Léger and Robert Delaunay.<sup>27</sup> The reaction of Tzara was to refuse politely because «Dada

is not modern». <sup>28</sup> For Tzara engaging in a rational discussion with artists, reviews and art groups all free of anarchic aims was totally against the dada-spirit. The refuse of Tzara to take part in the congress effectively scuppered Breton's initiative and provided him with an official reason for the rupture with Dada. The paradox was that Dada was possibly at that time at the height of its subversive activity. The reaction of the old friends of Dada were to offer Tzara material, ideas and actions such as the pamphlet *Le Cœur à barbe* (*The Bearded Heart*) written by among others Péret, Duchamp and Soupault. A long list of artist were also signatories against the committee of the Congress. <sup>29</sup>

On the evening of July 7th, 1923 *Le Cœur à barbe* was an excellent demonstration of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, full of music (Auric, Milhaud, Stravinsky), design (Delaunay, van Doesburg), film (Sheeler, Richter, Man Ray<sup>30</sup>), plays (Ribemont-Dessaignes' *Mouchez-vous* and Tzara's *Le Cœur à gaz*), readings (Herrand) and phonetic poems (Iliazde).

It was clear that nobody wanted the personal attacks of Breton against Tzara to become a source of disruption within Dada. Arguably with the exception of Picabia, who had already left Dada: «Picabia, prudently absent, had completely withdrawn into his own Dada citadel when the final storm began.» <sup>31</sup>

In fact the fatal turn of this evening was the result of divergences between Tzara, Breton and Picabia. Hans Richter provides a vivid description of how the piece by Tzara *Le Cœur à gaz* was interrupted: «...the actors... were suddenly interrupted by violent protests from the stalls. [...] Breton hoisted himself on the stage and started to belabour the actors.» Breton and Péret are in the end physically attacked, and Éluard and Pierre de Massot receive bodily injuries. Man Ray too sums up Dada's apogee and end:

*Le Cœur à Barbe* was one of the last public manifestations of the Dadaists, the group dividing into two camps over questions of personal leadership between Tzara and Breton. The death of Dada was announced with relief by the same critics who had announced it as still-born in the beginning. But Dada had accomplished its purpose of mocking the artistic and political futility of the day, offsetting it with irrationality and the destruction of all accepted values. It was as if the Dadaists were proposing to take over the affairs of this world, implying that they could not have made a worse mess than had the accredited leaders. <sup>32</sup>

Breton and his friends personally attacked Dada's leader and even tried to steal Tzara's «paternity» of the group.

Dada, bien qu'il eût, comme on dit, son heure de célébrité, laissa peu de regrets: à la longue, son omnipotence et sa tyrannie l'avaient rendu insupportable...

Lâchez tout. Lâchez Dada. Lâchez votre femme. Lâchez votre maîtresse. Lâchez vos espérances et vos craintes. Semez vos enfants au coin d'un bois. Lâchez la proie pour l'ombre. Lâchez au besoin la vie aisée, ce qu'on vous donne pour une situation d'avenir. Partez sur les routes.<sup>33</sup>

### [psychic automatism]

Now that Breton was rid of the Dadaists, an inventory could be made. In fact, all this affected Man Ray very little and he himself remarks on the privilege he had of being neutral:

There were rivalries and dissensions among the avant-garde group but I was somehow never involved and remained on good terms with everyone - saw everyone and was never asked to take sides. My neutral position was invaluable to all; with my photography and drawing, I became an official recorder of events and personalities<sup>34</sup>

The political and economical vacuum engendered by the war was fast replaced by a new rhythm of life: *Les années folles* had begun. The manner of thinking had also changed rapidly. The ideas of the world, of matter, man and conscience are changing. On the ruins of Determinism, universal relativity and the subconscious are theories which offer a possible evasion from the real. Anarchic destruction could not go on forever. The «scorched earth policy» is a momentary solution; in this way, the end of Dada can be thought as a victory; screams and agitation had anyway to be replaced by *something* new: in that way Dadaism was a transitory movement, but as Richter said, if Surrealism has devoured and digested Dada, it means also that *something dada* remains in Surrealism. Breton sees it as *état d'esprit*<sup>35</sup>, an attitude towards events. Dada has given Surrealism the absolute criticism of classical, logical and rational solutions in literature, in poetry or in the visual arts. Art itself was being questioned existentially and for a long time the Surrealists were not concerned with producing any work with pure aesthetic goals. This is surely the reason why the first manifesto does not appear so original (compared to dada-ideas). The originality lies in the compilation of various horizons. Dada had no horizon, or if it ever had been a horizon it was to be finally

destroyed; the horizon of surrealism is *behind* the horizon. Surrealism first fills up the vacuum of each protagonist with it's own dreams and phantasms. Do their grounds in dada-nihilism provide an explanation for the lifeless backgrounds of so many surrealist paintings (e.g. Dalí, Tanguy, Ernst, de Chirico, Man Ray)?

De quelque côté que je me tourne, c'est dans le fonctionnement de ce monde la même apparence de déraison froide et hostile, le même cérémonial extérieur sous lequel se distingue tout de suite la survivance du signe à la chose signifiée. Ce sont toutes les valeurs intellectuelles brimées, toutes les idées morales en déroute, tous les bienfaits de la vie frappée de corruption, indiscernables. La souillure de l'argent a tout recouvert. Ce que désigne le mot patrie, ou le mot justice, ou le mot devoir nous est devenu étranger. [...], on ne nous fait pas grâce un jour de l'ahurissant paradoxe: Qui veut la paix prépare la guerre.<sup>36</sup>

Breton, Aragon, Éluard, Péret and others imagine Surrealism instead of an artistic movement as a means of supplying knowledge of new, unconscious, fantastic, hallucinatory matters. They want to create a laboratory where dreams and madness could be systematically explored. It is no wonder that as early as 1924, when the group was officially founded and the manifesto made public, an office called *Bureau de recherches surréalistes* was opened and *La Révolution surréaliste*, the official journal (of the «party») was founded.<sup>37</sup>

Breton thinks that the traditional concept of complementarity of *puissance d'émotion* (level of sensibility) and *don d'expression* (gift of communication, expressiveness), which is supposed to live in the artwork, so that the latter is giving life to the former, is a completely wrong concept and a consequence of rationalist positivism. He believes that poetic subjectivity is a stronger way to create *un foyer vivant* (vital focus)<sup>38</sup> as a deeper level of the *fond émotionnel* (emotional source). For him what is lost in rational rigour must be compensated for by humanism. Rimbaud and Lautréamont, but also Hegel and Freud are the principal sources cited in Breton's vision of the surreal.

«Everything that is real is rational, and everything that is rational is real»<sup>39</sup> is the starting point for Breton: it must be expected that the rational adapts itself to the course of the real. Breton proposes that rationality<sup>40</sup> continuously assimilates the irrational in order to reorganise itself. For that reason, he argues that Surrealism must always be accompanied by *Surrationalism*.<sup>41</sup>

The pseudo-scientific, systematic, experimental and even political determination of the Surrealists was without doubt a way of losing the mark left by Dadaism.

However, old tools were used<sup>42</sup>: intuition, the irrational, inspiration, associations, etc.

Les procédés logiques, de nos jours ne s'appliquent plus qu'à la résolution de problèmes d'intérêt secondaires. Le rationalisme absolu qui reste de mode ne permet de considérer que des faits relevant étroitement de notre expérience. Les fins logiques, par contre, nous échappent. Inutile d'ajouter que l'expérience même s'est vu assigner des limites. Elle tourne dans une cage d'où il est de plus en plus difficile de la faire sortir. Elle s'appuie, elle aussi, sur l'utilité immédiate, et elle est gardée par le bon sens.[...]

Sur la foi de ces découvertes [of Freud], un courant d'opinion se dessine enfin à la faveur duquel l'explorateur humain pourra pousser plus loin ses investigations, autorisé qu'il sera à ne plus seulement tenir compte des réalités sommaires. L'imagination est peut-être sur le point de reprendre ses droits. Si les profondeurs de notre esprit recèlent d'étranges forces capables d'augmenter celles de la surface, ou de lutter victorieusement contre elles, il y a tout intérêt à les capter, à les capter d'abord, pour les soumettre ensuite, s'il y a lieu, au contrôle de notre raison.[...] Mais il importe d'observer qu'aucun moyen n'est désigné *a priori* pour la conduite de cette entreprise, que jusqu'à nouvel ordre elle peut passer pour être aussi bien du ressort des poètes que des savants et que son succès ne dépend pas des voies plus ou moins capricieuses qui seront suivies.<sup>43</sup>

As early as 1919 Breton had observed half-sentences which seemed to be nonsense at first, but which become perceptible by the subconscious. He was also very concerned with the theories of Freud; especially rapid monologue as a key to the phenomenon of *pensée parlée* (spoken thought)<sup>44</sup>: the subject does not let a judgment interfere with his thought (usually disturbed by reluctance to be criticised). He came to the conclusion that thinking is not necessarily faster than speaking, or even writing. Breton started, with Soupault, to write *Les Champs magnétiques* in this way, without being preoccupied by the stylistic result: they were amazed by the facility of the process, yet also concerned about some weaknesses of the method:

Je crois de plus en plus à l'infailibilité de ma pensée par rapport à moi-même, et c'est trop juste. Toutefois, dans cette écriture de la pensée, où l'on est à la merci de la première distraction extérieure, il peut se produire des «bouillons». On serait sans excuse de les dissimuler. Par définition, la pensée est forte, et incapable de se prendre en faute. C'est sur le compte des suggestions qui lui viennent du dehors qu'il faut mettre ces faiblesses évidentes.<sup>45</sup>

They bring as evidence the «*absurdité immédiate*» (immediate or current absurdity)



of the mechanism. But the particularity of this «absurdity», in place of a rational or conscious examination, is ultimately to legitimize a deeper analysis of properties and facts susceptible to being as objective as the periphery of things (the pseudo-objectivity of direct observation) and that could otherwise remain hidden (figure 14).

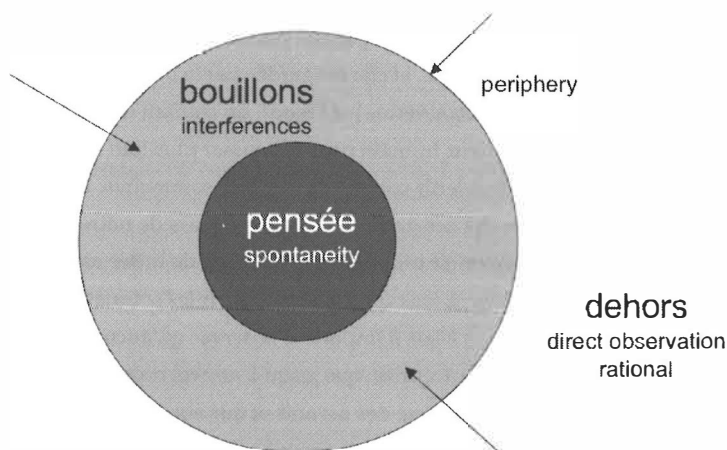


Fig. 14: Psychic Automatism

The surrealist adventure with the syntax of «*écriture automatique*» brings Breton to a similar observation as Eisenstein made with the picture and its organization in space and time: «Les mots, les groupes de mots *qui se suivent* pratiquent entre eux la plus grande solidarité.»<sup>46</sup> Thus, words or group of words *which follow each other* in fact react with one another in a mutual cohesiveness —and coherence— or repulsion. But immediately the observation is followed by a philosophical attitude: «It's not for me to pick up one or other [as narrative film montage does] — I let chance interfere»<sup>47</sup> He continues a few lines further: «It has happened that I was using in the surrealist manner words whose meaning I did not recall. I could observe that the use I made of them corresponded exactly to their definitions.» This observation is also available in speaking a foreign language, provoking the idea that one does not learn, but only learns *again* (in French Breton uses the words «apprendre» and «réapprendre»).<sup>48</sup> Breton speaks about the *conscience poétique des objects* giving a name to the phenomenon.

In the first manifesto of Surrealism (1924) Breton observes some of the particularities of the dream(s):

1° the dream is continued and organised. Memory makes cuts. Series of cuts (dreams) compose the dream, they appear as brief cuts of reality.

2° the dream is subject to interferences

3° the dream cannot be controlled. Its appearance (experience) is natural

Breton concludes: «Je crois à la résolution future de ces deux états, en apparence si contradictoires, que sont le rêve et la réalité, en une sorte de réalité absolue, de *surréalité*, si l'on peut ainsi dire.»<sup>49</sup>

4° the resolution of dream and reality is the absolute reality: the surreality

For this reason, Breton makes the *merveilleux* or *fantastique* (fantastic) a «superior» genre, and the *roman* (novel) an «inferior» genre, because *in the fantastic there is no longer fantastic: there is nothing but the real*.

Breton concludes the first manifesto with a few «laws» which concern the *surrealist image* and are the consequences of the above dream analysis. I shall summarise them like this:<sup>50</sup>

1° the surrealist images come spontaneously to mind, uncontrolled by this last (as in dreams) —in the same way as the effects of a drug.<sup>51</sup> Through the concept of *lumière de l'image* (image luminescence) Breton gives the method of metaphor a much inferior impact than the method of association (of different ideas-realities). Breton also rejects the method of the ellipse, but emphasises the surrealist atmosphere created by the «*écriture mécanique*» (mechanical writing<sup>52</sup>). For him, the best image is the one which is the most arbitrary. The arbitrary is obtained by:<sup>53</sup>

1° contradiction

2° the missing of logical elements

3° sensational contents

4° inconsistency

5° weak formal justification

6° hallucinatory task

7° giving the abstract the consistence of the concrete

8° giving the concrete the consistence of the abstract

9° negation of elementary physical laws

10° humorous contents

2° the surrealist method provides the opportunity to remember childhood: Breton compares it to a «film of life», where childhood is the key to the «*vraie vie*» (true life). Life is being lived through «*paysages dangereux*» (dangerous landscapes).

3° Breton does not see the establishment of a style in Surrealism because Surrealism is connected to a multitude of techniques which are not an end in themselves but only a means. For him there is however a common approach: an attitude of non-conformism in the face of «normal life».

### [revolution]

The same experience of the *Procès Barrès* occurred again in the review *La révolution surréaliste* with the attack by Aragon, for example, against Anatole France.<sup>54</sup> The second publication of the review in early 1925 already takes a political turn which is the general ambition of the *Centrale surréaliste*: «Il s'agit d'aboutir à une nouvelle déclaration des droits de l'homme»<sup>55</sup>, the aim is a new declaration of human rights. The revolution is above all in *ideas*. For the Surrealists, the concept of a new society lies first in their placing of unconstrained freedom in opposition to the general pragmatism or materialism of society. It is the start of a radical political direction of the movement, which produces a new issue of the manifesto in 1929. Up to that point Surrealism was an ideal of vague aspiration. In anti-culture and anti-reason the movement achieved considerable cohesion, but because its members had come together from very different backgrounds, when the time came to formulate concrete ideas, the ways of doing so could be very divergent. It seemed at that point that surrealism was faced with a dilemma. Pierre Naville was the first to sound the alarm: Surrealism or revolution?

Je ne connais du goût que le dégoût. Maîtres, maîtres-chanteurs, barbouillez vos toiles. Plus personne n'ignore qu'il n'y a pas de peinture surréaliste, [...] mais il y a des spectacles. La mémoire et le plaisir des yeux: voilà toute l'esthétique.<sup>56</sup>

«I know of taste only disgust. Masters, manipulators, scribble over the canvas. Nobody ignores that there is no surrealist painting, [...] but that there are only shows. Memory and pleasure for the eyes: that's the only aesthetic.»<sup>57</sup>

Was Surrealism falling back into Dadaism? The crisis of Surrealism around 1925–26 and in 1929 show that Surrealism had only a few choices if it wanted to get *further* than Dadaism. Naville saw only two solutions for continuing:<sup>58</sup>

1° a total anarchy leading to self-destruction, a dadaist attitude, in contradiction with the principle of the revolution:

[...] une attitude négative d'ordre anarchique, attitude fautive a priori parce qu'elle ne justifie pas l'idée de révolution dont elle se réclame, attitude soumise à un refus de compromettre son existence propre et le caractère sacré de l'individu dans une lutte qui entraînerait vers l'action disciplinée du combat de classes<sup>59</sup>

or:

2° a total revolution, which means a Marxist revolutionary output leading to demonstrate that spiritual force, something that is all of and shared by the individual, is intimately linked to a social reality:

La force spirituelle, substance qui est *tout et partie* de l'individu, est intimement liée à une réalité sociale<sup>60</sup>

Naville chooses the second solution.

Tzara, Artaud, Naville, Vitrac, Soupault: one after the other come to be the focus of the political polemics of Surrealism and to be rejected by the «group of five» that comprises Aragon, Breton, Eluard, Péret and Unik. For the group there is no alternative any more: it isn't sufficient to proclaim ideas, or even to live by them. Everyone must now be a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party.

L'art authentique d'aujourd'hui a partie liée avec l'activité sociale révolutionnaire: il tend comme elle à la confusion et à la destruction de la société capitaliste.<sup>61</sup>

The difference with Naville is small in terms of words but it leads to important consequences. If «true» art is linked with revolutionary *social activity* and its *ultimate* goal is the confusion and destruction of capitalist society, we are far from a simple destruction of art and the destruction of individualism itself. But the question remains: is it (still) art? Or is it a kind of propaganda? On one hand there is the individual, on the other hand the social. On one hand *art*, on the other hand *act*.

Naville, who sees an incompatibility between Surrealism and being a Marxist, leaves art to become a fully committed communist.

In fact there are two perspectives plus one:

1° the «old Dadaists» anarchists, individualists, who have sympathies for the communist ideal.

2° the Breton group which believes in the surrealist revolution first and actively supports the communist party.

3° Naville which refuses the surrealist compromises of the second.

The dilemma is deep and it will be seen that Man Ray will remain an outsider from it—or occasionally attached to the first group. The question is, can Man Ray and even the first perspective be connected to Surrealism? He steered, according to his own perspective, «a parallel course».

A new state of Surrealism is launched: «Surrealism is defined by its defenders and by its attackers»<sup>62</sup>. The fundamental positions of Surrealism—with all its contradictions—are to be represented in 1928 by Breton's *Nadja* and Aragon's *Le Traité du style* (1927).

As far as this study is concerned<sup>63</sup> with the political position of Surrealism one more event of 1929 should be mentioned. On February 12th a letter is sent to a large number of personalities who are more or less close to Surrealism (or to the Revolution).<sup>64</sup> The letter enquires about their personal ideological position at that particular time, so that action at the individual or collective levels may be planned. A meeting on March 11th was proposed to the respondents, in which the destiny of Trotsky (who had been discarded by Stalin) would be discussed. Seven personalities were finally not permitted to attend the meeting «because of their occupation or their character». Man Ray was one of them.

## 4.2. Abstraction

I am concerned with this area of the Modern arts in a specific way for two main reasons. First, because abstraction, an intellectual landscape opened by Cézanne, crosses the vision of a few painters, photographers, and filmmakers of prime importance in this study (chapter 3). Secondly, because the pioneer paths to abstraction and dynamism explored by the cubists and the futurists arguably have

the greatest impact on avant-garde visions in cinema of this period on which I am concentrating —and on Man Ray— that is to say from 1910 to the coming of sound, and also on experimental film and video (chapter 5).

In fact, I have partly touched on abstract art in the previous subchapter *kinetics* and with the ESAG when creating a category *abstract film* (chapter 3, plates 2–9).

It should be remembered that *abstract film* is a path considered to have been opened up by the Futurists, the Corradini brothers between 1910 and 1912, and was the center of preoccupations of filmmakers such as Eggeling, Richter, Ruttmann, Graeff and Moholy-Nagy. I shall describe the close relationship between painting and cinema, especially in the visions developed around the Bauhaus, with such figures as Oskar Schlemmer. «The war years saw the achievement of a vision which had possessed the avant-garde since the turn of the century: abstract art»<sup>65</sup>

But what is abstract art? I could not find one satisfying definition, but many definitions:<sup>66</sup>

**Abstract art:** syn. non-figurative art, non-objective art; non-representational art.

**Abstraction (historical definitions):**

1° cubist and futurist depiction of existing forms in a simplified or rather reduced way

2° after 1910, art in which the vision process sometimes has its origin in the real world or the imaginary world but does *not* represent them. (Dadaism, Abstract Surrealism)

3° uses of matter, line, form and colour for itself (Constructivism, de Stijl)

**current definitions:**

1° abstract art is now generally understood to mean art that does not depict objects in the natural world, but instead uses colour and form in a non-representational way.<sup>67</sup>

2° term applied in its strictest sense to forms of 20<sup>th</sup> century Western art that reject representation and have no starting- or finishing-point in nature. As distinct from processes of abstraction from nature or from objects, abstract art as a conscious aesthetic based on assumptions of self-sufficiency is a wholly modern phenomenon<sup>68</sup>

Abstract art is therefore understood as one of the resulting directions of the overall process of abstraction. The definition has its importance in photography and cinema, which are media arts that usually are required to deal with the *real* world. «Abstract art has frequently baffed many people, largely because it seems unrelated to the world of appearances» begins the preface of Anna Moszynska's book<sup>69</sup> which has helped to clarify some aspects of abstraction-philosophy in cinema and video. Being «twice avantgardist», because one hand is abstract while the other is experimental, that cinema is definitively unrelated to narrative cinema, the cinema

of «appearances». I shall make the observation that *the vision of Man Ray, in Emak Bakia, is not only dadaist and surrealist but also cubist and abstract, making it a unique film in cinema history* (chapter 8 and 9).

My very brief incursion into the large field of abstract art is mainly with the intention of understanding the perspectives of abstract painting and to underline that abstraction is a vision made of many visions which all have their various places in avant-garde and experimental cinema including an expansion into video art.

Si l'expression picturale a changé, c'est parce que la vie moderne a rendu cela nécessaire<sup>70</sup>

The discourse of the existential purpose of the arts —must art be a passive mirror of its time or actively bring in new values?— will surely never find a definitive answer. The formal particularities of the picture have been observed since ancient times and throughout all times have been in close relation to concepts of beauty. The coming of abstract art in the time of Modernism is not a coincidence. But it must not be forgotten however that abstract art does not alone represent Modernism: it is only one face of Modernism (especially when it is considered that a great part of Modern art continued in fact to be representational) «Abstract art exists in varying degrees and forms. Some abstract art is *abstracted* from nature; its starting point is the *real* world.»<sup>71</sup> Some is a *non-representational* mode which «provided a thorough-going challenge to the depictive tradition, governed since the Renaissance by the rules of single-point perspective [...] The evolution towards this kind of abstract art did not occur in isolation but was only one aspect of the social, intellectual and technological upheaval that took place at the turn of the century.»<sup>72</sup>

When Dada rejected aesthetics it was first a rejection of the classical concept of beauty. Secondly, it was a protest against certain bourgeois values. It has also been observed how the Bauhaus had moved from an emotive expressionism to a rational constructivism and ended concerned with design. I have endeavoured in chapter 2, to adduce evidence of some of the basic existential dilemmas of the modern arts and I have come to the conclusion that the action-reaction principle between art periods is almost essentially caused by the opposition of the rational and the irrational —what André Breton has called sometimes *richesse d'intuition* (irrational) and *verve de combinaison* (rational).<sup>73</sup> Following Cézanne through efforts of composition or construction I have arrived at Cubism, where the object observed was still the

source of the work, but the essence was taken from elsewhere, from the artist's mind —I called it the inner eye.

The first abstract works<sup>74</sup> came around 1910: first through the Futurists with their kinetic efforts, followed by Duchamp and finally in totally abstract paintings such as those of Kandinsky or the wood cuts of Hans Arp. The works by Robert and Sonia Delaunay around 1912–1914 are for their part not specifically kinetic but have an emphasis on form and colour. Though they were Simultaneists (chapter 3, kinetics, plate 2), they researched nonetheless several time-space solutions which are closely linked to the analysis of movement.

«Delaunay evolved the idea of creating a type of painting that would be technically dependent on colour and on colour contrasts, but would both develop in time and offer itself up to *simultaneous* perception.»<sup>75</sup> Theories on patches of colours will be discussed later (chapter 5 and largely in chapter 9), as here the only intention is to provide evidence that even a figurative work of art does not fundamentally differ from an abstract work (or vice-versa) and to bring the idea that what is new with abstract painting is not necessarily the artistic vision (abstraction) but the gesture (abstract) against old academicism.

Un tableau, avant d'être un cheval de bataille, une femme nue ou une quelconque anecdote, est essentiellement une surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblées.<sup>76</sup>

Divergent views between avant-garde cinema and commercial narrative cinema require the same alternative to be formulated for the seventh art. What is cinema —essentially? And, if true cinema was basically only light, color, consciousness of movement and visual rhythms;<sup>77</sup> is narrative cinema then just a «world of appearances», an artifact of literature, a «periphery» as Breton would say?

One of the aims of the Futurists was also to free colour «from a representational function and, like Delaunay, they turned to colour theory to help them.»<sup>78</sup>

Another starting-point is the constructivist attitude represented strongly by teachers of the Bauhaus, e. g. Moholy-Nagy and Kandinsky and De Stijl and extended to cinema (plates 8 and 9)

«The bold, flat and geometric elements which characterized the two-dimensional arts at the Bauhaus were also employed in other media. Although the paintings of Oskar Schlemmer were based on the simplification of forms found in nature, and



were thus representational in origin, his designs for the Bauhaus' *Mechanical Ballet* (1923) were completely abstract, employing brightly coloured geometric forms».<sup>79</sup> Anna Moszynska has well observed the similarity of Schlemmer's sets and Richter's abstract cinema (plate 8), when she observes:

Once the figures were in motion, the costumes created moving abstract patterns —a live version of the experiments that Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling had recently been pursuing in film.<sup>80</sup>

Within a few years, visual arts reached two important «Zero Points»<sup>81</sup> at the exact opposite extremes of the rational and the irrational —what Richter had called «heaven and hell». The first was the «Zero Point» of Suprematism, with the *White square on white* (1919) or the *Black square* (1923) both by Casimir Malevitch, and the second, in Paris at the same time, was Dada's *total work of art*. The dilemmas between form and matter or between figurative and non-figurative must be thought of as a dialogue between the rational and the irrational, with the awareness that both the figurative and the non-figurative can be either rational or irrational. Theoretically there are four possibilities in which the process of abstraction could produce «abstract art»:

- 1° figurative rational
- 2° figurative irrational
- 3° non-figurative rational
- 4° non-figurative irrational

We could also add the opposition of real and imaginary, among others. In practice only two tendencies emerge, surprisingly not around figurative or non-figurative criteria but around form itself. First, the formalist tendency which rejects the subject, the idea (except the formalist idea itself) or descriptive aims, in order to give forms and colours a purely plastic role. That means that formalist art cannot be compositional for iconographical or pictorial aims, nor biographical, historical or sociological ones and Apollinaire called it *Pure Art*. Formalism thus emphasises form over realism and it has a tendency to search for «beauty» (or the «perfect form»). Artistic form is sufficient in itself and the context for the work, including the reason for its creation, the historical background, and the life of the artist, are not considered to be significant. Therefore

abstraction is not even a priority, nor an obstacle. Because formalism is not specifically abstract, such distinctions as if the arabesque is from nature or an arabesque «in the mind» become irrelevant, paradoxically, when the focus is on the form in itself.

The second tendency, Informal Art (*art informel*) on the other hand *must* be abstract but its abstractionism is lyrical, positioning it near tachism and pure abstraction; it rejects traditional and geometrical forms (the rational).

After 1930 it can be seen that there are four main streams from which non-figurative art has developed, and which I shall summarise as follows:<sup>82</sup>

**1° Abstract Geometric Art and Constructive art.** From around 1930, this branch emerges from Russian Constructivism and Suprematism, the Neo-plasticism of Mondrian or the Constructivism of the Bauhaus.

**2° Abstract Surrealism.** Non-figurative Surrealism starts with Jean Arp (as early as the dadaist period) but continues late into the fifties in *Automatic Abstractionism* (Miró, Masson, Lam): surrealist automatism in abstraction (random technique); opposed to Visionary Surrealism (usual objects in unusual context).

**3° Art concret.** Neo-plasticism develops also into concrete abstraction (Theo van Doesburg): the picture is to be constructed only by pure plastic elements in two dimensions. It gives birth to the concept of *art concret* (in France). «Concrete art» is not a suitable term until the sixties, because criteria for differentiating it from Constructivist art are sometimes difficult. **Abstraction-création:** art non-figuratif (1931-36): abstract movement opposed to surrealist supremacy; Concrete art, Constructivism, Neo-Plasticism.

**4° Informal Art.** Of mixed origin (Neo-plasticism and Surrealism) it regroups American *Abstract Expressionism (and Action painting)* and European *Informalism (art informel, tachisme)* of the forties and fifties. **Abstract Expressionism:** Action Painting; late forties, early fifties; New York School; meditative, derives from European cubism and surrealism; all-over technique, on floor technique, dripping, etc.

From this large scope of *abstract art*, only two (1° and 4°) will result in a substantial and important output in avant-garde cinema. I emphasise here the principals:

**1° Constructivism in ESAG: Eggeling, Richter, Ruttmann, Graeff and Moholy-Nagy**

**2° Abstract Expressionism: in the fifties with Stan Brakhage**

Some films like a few of Chomette's and Dulac's, and even *Ballet Mécanique* could stand in the *formalist* category (cinéma pur, photogénie), but are not abstract. It will be seen in chapter 8 that Man Ray will progress much further into «abstract formalism» with *Emak Bakia*.

The coming of video and especially the early experiments by Beck and meditative and psychedelic cinema (e.g. Belson, Whitney) herald a comeback—or a continuation—in the sixties of the formal and informal art of the fifties (chapter 5, plate 13). The trend stops quite abruptly after 1968.

### 4.3. Neodadaism

From the end of the fifties, Pop Art, New Realism, Neo-dada<sup>83</sup>, Op Art and so forth, brought a new turn in the visual arts. I propose to look briefly over a period of thirty years (1955–1985) at all the main tendencies of the visual arts that have influenced the new experimental film and video (chapter 5).

Visual arts at the beginning of the fifties had developed around Abstract Expressionism and Informalism, including also the *Cobra* group, which had connections with Abstract Expressionism but also to a certain extent with the abstract Surrealists (subchapter 4.2.). On its side Kinetic Art develops into Op Art with such leading figures as Vasarely (plate 6). The kinetic and constructivist tradition had remained almost unchanged for over twenty years (chapters 2 and 3); there are still the same concerns as have been observed in the Bauhaus: studies of forms, colours, rhythms, visual movements, dynamic, etc.

At the same time with the coming of television and mass-media consumer values, a so-called pop culture was emerging, a popular and stereotyped culture (music, strip cartoons, advertising, magazines, etc.). Lichtenstein, Warhol and Hamilton could serve to sum up the approach of such consumer and product-oriented art. Because it is an art to «consume» there are considerable repercussions in design, the decorative arts and fashion. Pop Art is not an art-movement proper, but a general term for a phenomenon in art and society which has global repercussion at different artistic levels. Though the concept of Pop Art is strongly attached to Britain, it is nonetheless a fully American cultural phenomena linked to Rock n' Roll and Coca Cola<sup>84</sup> (plate 12). In Europe, the leading trend is New Realism, a «recyclage poétique du réel urbain, industriel, publicitaire».<sup>85</sup> It was to break with abstraction and Expressionism, and the conception of the work, very often also the anti-aesthetic means, were to express ideas close to the dadaist way. Neodadaism—the so-called new anti-aesthetic trend— was in fact a regrouping of different artists under the same name, and movements such as *Fluxus* (originally German), *Réalistes*

*Nouveaux* (France) or *Arte Povera* (Italy) that were also at their zenith around 1965 (table 2). *Happenings* were very often a common way of making the artistic action public. What the New Realists propose is proclaimed by Pierre Restany (1930–2003) in his «first manifesto»(1960): «the exciting adventure of the real seen for what it is and not through the prism of conceptual or imaginative transmission», a «sociological reinforcement at the critical stage of communication»<sup>86</sup>; both the distance from Dada and the roots in it appear framed by these definitions:

Dada est une farce, une légende, un état d'esprit, un mythe. Un mythe bien mal élevé, dont la survie souterraine et les manifestations capricieuses dérangent tout le monde. André Breton avait tout d'abord pensé lui faire un sort en l'annexant au surréalisme. [...]

Ce qu'elles nous proposent, c'est la passionnante aventure du réel perçu en soi et non à travers le prisme de la transcription conceptuelle ou imaginative. Quelle en est la marque? L'introduction d'un relais sociologique au stade essentiel de la communication. La sociologie vient au secours de la conscience et du hasard, que ce soit au niveau de la ferraille compressée, du choix ou de la lacération de l'affiche, de l'allure d'un objet, d'une ordure de ménage ou d'un déchet de salon, du déchaînement de l'affectivité mécanique, de la diffusion de la sensibilité chromatique au-delà des limites logiques de sa perception. [...]

Tel est le nouveau réalisme: une façon plutôt directe de remettre les pieds sur terre, mais à 40° au-dessus du zéro de dada, et à ce niveau précis où l'homme, s'il parvient à se réintégrer au réel, l'identifie à sa propre transcendance, qui est émotion, sentiment et finalement poésie, encore.<sup>87</sup>

Whether separately from Pop Art in general or in connection with it, so-called «Conceptual Art» develops during the seventies. It above all questions self-analysis and self-criticism in art.

Three original streams emerge, two in fact developing out of radical extremes in Pop Art: Hyperrealism and Minimal Art, and the third, Land Art, was a completely new stream, and was an extension of the happening-performance and New Realism. It has, as the name suggests, a strong link with the living environment (table 2) and it also split into different tendencies, Christo for instance representing the most conceptual side, while Robert Smithson, with Earth Art, develops a symbolist, environmental and archeological approach (plate 12).

As Hal Foster remarks, with Minimalism and Pop Art one can «smell a rat: the arbitrary, the avant-gardist, in a word Marcel Duchamp».<sup>88</sup> «This intuition, he says, of the return of the readymade paradigm in particular, and the avant-gardist attack

on the institution of art in general, was common among both advocates and detractors of minimalism.»<sup>89</sup>

The richness, diversity and originality of Pop Art and Conceptual Art (as trends and ideas of art) have been very often questioned, particularly by the fathers of Dada. In 1964 Hans Richter in *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, formulates the overall philosophy of the zero point of art, and in searching for «a motto of Neo-dada, Neo-Realism, Pop Art, etc.». I cannot resist reproducing his own initial opinions. He writes:

I can find not one slogan, or one motto, but several:

1. «The desert grows, woe to him who bears deserts within himself.» (Nietzsche)
2. «Art must first be totally despised, it must first be thought totally pointless, before it can once more come into its own.» (Philipp Otto Runge)
3. «I have seldom seen so much inventiveness combined with so little talent.» (L.K.)
4. «Kitsch is always in the process of escaping into rationality» (Herman Broch)
5. «Dada fell like a raindrop from Heaven. The Neo-dadaists have learnt to imitate the fall, but not the raindrop.» (Raoul Hausmann)
6. «The new art is a contribution to art criticism» (Harold Rosenberg)
7. «Like a joke without humour, told over and over again until it begins to sound like a threat» (Ibid.)
8. «Advertising art which advertises itself as art that hates advertising.» (Ibid.)<sup>90</sup>

In 1964, the time that had elapsed since the dada-period was forty decades. Now, as much time again has passed since 1964. Could a new appreciation today, taking into consideration also the later period of evolution, possibly clarify the relation between Dada and Neo-dada —and our own time? Is Neo-dada an imitation, a resurrection, a resurgence, a continuation or an affirmation? «Neo-dada has turned the weapons used by Dada, and later by Surrealism, into popular ploughshares with which to till the fertile soil of sensation-hungry galleries eager for business» is the verdict of Huelsenbeck.<sup>91</sup>

The *Campbell's Soups, Marylins, Mickeys, Supermarkets, Oven and Cake-Boxes, Coffee-cups, Dinner Tables, Giant Hamburgers, Salad, Bread and Butter and Desserts* made good profits for forty years —and still do. But, I do believe that besides their commercial attempts there is a social impact that we cannot neglect: what has made this art a different art from Dada's anti-art is the «reactions to a world which has become even more lunatic than it was»<sup>92</sup> in Dada's times. The forms and the means of this new art have adapted Dada's *solutions*, laugh and provocations towards new targets. One of the targets completely absent was the anarchist and ideological goals

of Dadaism and Surrealism. But this new art has some connections to the real world and to the place of art itself in the real world. If Dadaism was based on derision and destruction of «past» bourgeois values present in the «real» world, Surrealism escaped from that reality into inner dream worlds, beyond rational appearance. On one hand *negation* of reality; on the other *evasion*. I see the answer of Pop Art or New Realism as another kind, and what makes it different from Dada or Surrealism is that there is no question of *negation* or *evasion* but rather there is *affirmation*, and affirmation over and over again. Be true and stronger than the real, a bigger delight that the real is —hyper-real.

When Hans Richter presents<sup>93</sup> Man Ray and his *Marteau* from 1963, and concludes that Man Ray «has a prescriptive right to do this» because «he was doing things like this forty years ago»<sup>94</sup> I think he is not fully addressing the problem. I should say that the *Marteau* is a good idea, *but one that he had in 1923*. I should say it is *almost* a pity to see Man Ray beside his *new Marteau* in the sixties. With Warhol and other fellows they nonetheless prove to us that art is (in 1963) still at the «zero point»<sup>95</sup>. Neither he nor Warhol can do anything about it; Warhol is absolutely right to commercialise the *Marilyns* because he belongs to his time —as she does. Man Ray was effectively «ahead of the times»<sup>96</sup> but in 1963 «behind his time».

Pop culture as a mainstream also has its hidden level: the underground. Like pop culture, underground is a vague term used from the 50s which blends more than just art: it also means *subculture*. Frank Zappa summarised the difference between pop and underground: «the mainstream comes to you, but you have to go to the underground.» An idea of the clandestine is linked to the underground, but sometimes it means only avant-garde, experimental or progressive. I shall use it in a specific way to indicate a kind of «experimental» or marginal film in America after World War II (chapter 5).

To borrow again from Richter, but changing one word: «reaction to a world which has become even more *capitalist* than it was» is the art of Warhol: not anti-art but anti-anti-art, or «*anti-production*» as Henri van Lier would say.<sup>97</sup>

Sol LeWitt, a «basic» minimalist and conceptual artist, shows that reason and intuition are *not* necessarily contradictory concepts. In this case intuition can replace spontaneity and emotion, reason and intuition together becoming the «expression» itself, as he writes:

When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive, it is involved with all types of mental processes and it is purposeless. [...] He would want [his work] to be emotionally dry. There is no reason to suppose however, that the conceptual artist is out to bore the viewer. It is only the expectation of an emotional kick, to which one conditioned to expressionist art is accustomed, that would deter the viewer from perceiving this art.<sup>98</sup>

Hal Foster sees Minimal Art as follows:

However, more important to minimalism than this perceptual positivism is its avant-gardist comprehension of art in terms of its conventionality. In short, minimalism is as self-critical as any late-modernist art, but its analysis tends toward the epistemological more than the ontological, for it focuses on the perceptual conditions and conventional limits of art more than on its formal essence and categorical being. It is this orientation that is so often mistaken as «conceptual»<sup>99</sup>

For Foster too thus, Minimalism challenges both the rational and the irrational in the way that challenges the formalist model and the expressionist one.

«More importantly, with its stress on the temporality of perception, minimalism threatens the disciplinary order of modern aesthetics in which visual art is held to be strictly spatial.»<sup>100</sup> This helps one to understand the repetitive or replicated forms used in so many installations today, which started with for example the *multi-Marilyns* and *Lizes* and were continued by the minimalists in abstract geometrical sculpture and music.

The effect of repetition is one of the artistic tricks that remained undiscovered by Dada. It is a *duration effect* —almost understood by Léger in the *Ballet mécanique* (chapter 3) and the optophonetic poem. It has the particularity of reinforcing —or by exhausting, also to weaken— the message.

Richter however observes that Pop Art objects «are neither non-art» —as Duchamp's *Pissoir* was— «nor anti-art but objects to be enjoyed».<sup>101</sup> Kitsch is absolutely that: anachronistic or to the critical mind an «anti-aesthetic» object of «bad taste» produced by the industrial economy and culture of consumption, so banal and useless as to be laughable. The *Pissoir* on the other hand was shocking, destructive, subversive. The laugh came after. Kitsch never shocks, nor do Brussel's *Manneken Pis*; Kitsch is sweet, not acid. «The aim of the [historical] avant-garde is not at all to sublimate art *into* life but rather to purify art *of* life —to save it from

debasement by mass-cultural kitsch and abandonment by bourgeois patronage» writes Foster, borrowing the words of Clement Greenberg.<sup>102</sup> With the neo-avant-garde we do not assist such «failure» to integrate art into life, a point of view that he challenges with Peter Bürger's analysis. For the latter, «the gesture of the neo-avant-garde becomes inauthentic»<sup>103</sup>, a point of view equally adopted by Richter. Another new particularity of Pop Art observed by Richter in 1964, was the *happening*.<sup>104</sup> The apparent similarity with the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is evident. It required the participation or the collaboration of the public. But here the comparison stops: the «total work of art» of the Dadaists came out of cabaret, and cabaret is an art of spectacle. Here in the *happening* Hans Richter observes «A Ritual!»; «It was a composition using space, colour and movement, and the setting in which the happening took place gave it a nightmarish, obsessive quality, although «the meaning» of «the action» was more or less non-existent.»<sup>105</sup>

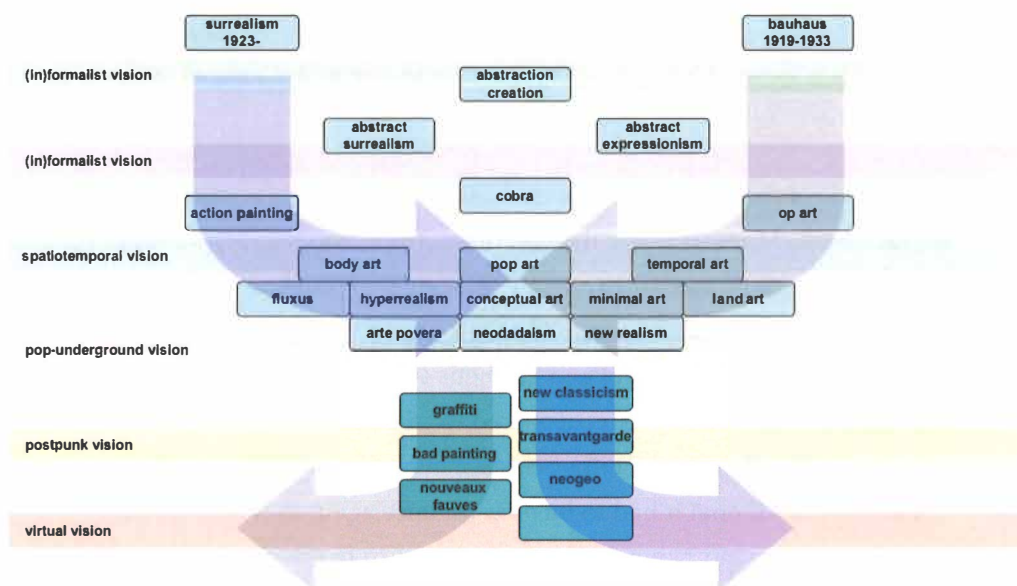


Table 2: Development of Visual Arts 1930–2000

Today the *happenings* have been «transformed» in *installations* and *performances*, or *mises-en-scène*. When the artists of *Land Art* take photographs and produce drawings for a project they are creating, the whole is a process that must be taken into consideration.



Thus, Pop Art, Conceptual Art and Neodadaism were a meeting-point (art, kitsch, social, communications, etc.) but also a breaking-away (table 2).

Concerning one of the main roles of the avant-garde, Bürger writes that «the meaning of the break in the history of art that the historical avant-garde movements provoked does not consist in the destruction of art as an institution, but in the destruction of the possibility of positing aesthetic norms as valid ones»<sup>106</sup> with a considerable impact on art education itself. As Foster writes twenty years later in 1996, «the normative criterion of *quality* is displaced by the *experimental* value of *interest*, and art is seen less by the refinement of the given forms of art than by the redefinition of such aesthetic categories.»<sup>107</sup> The Punk period (1977–80) which led to a post-punk (post-post modern?) period is characterized by a radical and violent output that in a way, we are still living with at the moment.

Hal Foster writes:

The object of critical investigation becomes less the essence of a medium than «the social effect (function) of a work» and, more importantly, the intent of artistic intervention becomes less to secure a transcendental conviction in art than to undertake an immanent testing of its discursive rules and institutional regulations<sup>108</sup>

The trends of the eighties offer a clear almost predictable *regression* of ethical and social values. Moreover, «by the end of the 1970s, Modernism's utopian principles of innovation, artistic authenticity, and individual expression had become increasingly suspect in a critical culture attuned to late capitalism's production of desire.

A number of different yet related aesthetic strategies emerged at this time to signal the apparent demise of Modernism and to critique its legacy.»<sup>109</sup>

Because in Pop there was neither classicism nor expression/emotion nor construction/rational it had to be *invented* once again in *New Classicism*, *Transavantgarde*, and *Neo-geo*. The first is a return to classical values, the second a return to Expressionism, and the third sometimes to constructivism and geometry. *Bad Painting* and *Graffiti Painting* are perhaps the most spontaneous forms of art at the end of the century. Because real *Graffiti* is non-legal, it could represent a true avant-garde, as a spontaneous and anarchic attitude against social rigidity and social injustice. Illegal *Graffiti* has amazingly the same structure and the same «hell and heaven» balance as Dada. The *Graffiti* artist is challenging authority, taking risks but doing so with rational and systematised methods. Like the rap-musician he lives in the paradox of formal structures which are in the end quite rigid too.

The Transavantgarde seems to mark a step forward in the way that it looks towards a future evolution. Started in 1979–80 it is above all a reaction against Conceptual Art and the already old avant-garde concept. Indeed the general terms of modern art, avant-garde, new-wave, etc. link to some «ethical» problem: for how long are modern art *modern*, avant-garde *avant*, does the «new» remain *new*, and how quickly does the «post» become *rear* ?

The problem as defined by Foster is to «provide a provisional distinction between formalist, modernist art and avant-gardist, postmodernist art: to compel conviction versus to cast doubt; to seek the essential versus to reveal the conditional.»<sup>110</sup>

For him, who sees Minimalism and Pop as a definitive «artistic crux», the «advanced art»<sup>111</sup> in the 60s was caught between «autonomy» and «textuality», the latter leading to emphasize the *sign*. Foster sees in the late 70s «two versions of Postmodernism» the first «aligned with neoconservative politics» (that he calls also «pastiche») and «the second associated with post-structuralist theory».<sup>112</sup>

For him both alternatives, «pastiche and textuality» are related to a general crisis in representation and authorship. I would remark here that in art history such refinement-pastiche existed similarly in classic art.

The space-time-dynamic dimension that the Futurists had developed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was completed with surrealist collage and has arrived today at a «*barock*» age: action movies, music television and video-games are the most popular forms of this obsolescent visual trend.

Artists also confronted a «trauma of signification» that Foster links to the paradox of «an abstraction of the referent» and «a predominance of the photographic» both curiously announced by Duchamp and consolidated by Warhol.

Hal Foster demonstrates well the affinities of Neo-geo with appropriation art and for instance the simulation that commodity-sculpture assumes with the readymade, showing that these streams have *reversed* the values, and Foster labels these «strategic inversions» as «bricolage».<sup>113</sup> To break away from the textualist model and the cynical conventionalism of the 80s, Foster sees for the artist the dilemma of being «engagé» or «dandy». For him, in the wake of a crisis of the artistic sign, at the start of the 90s «these tendencies mark an emphatic turn to the bodily and the social, to the abject and the site-specific»<sup>114</sup>(plate 12).

From a conventionalist regime where nothing is real and the subject is superficial, much contemporary art presents reality in the form of trauma and the subject in the social depth of its own identity.

I deliberately will not debate the categorizations of New-classicism, Neo-geo, Simulationism or Transavantgarde, and their subsequent artistic «trauma» —because it does not directly concern the early development of video— but from the beginning of the 90s there has been a strong appeal for a new dimension in the visual arts. The concept of *virtual space* has much strengthened, but the surrealist image was also virtual and so were the fantastic voyages of Méliès. What is specifically new in virtual vision? What is new is not so much the image itself created by this vision (so-called synthetic, digital or virtual images) but the *new subjective vision*. The *old* «subjective vision, a vision that had been taken out of the incorporeal relations of the camera obscura and relocated in the human body»<sup>115</sup> in the future, will be probably taken out of a computer, or the Internet, or whatever electronic device or network. As early as the fifties Karlheinz Stockhausen had remarked that most of the music we listen to has an electro-acoustic origin, and comes to us through recordings or loudspeakers, independently of the fact that the source is an acoustic instrument or not.<sup>116</sup> Most of the visual works we watch today are observed through an electronic device (e.g. TV, video, computer, mobile telephone) independently of the fact that the source picture is an oil painting, sculpture, a happening or a photograph —or it is more often a printed image itself processed through the «filter» of electronic devices. I will return to this aspect of the electronic image in the conclusions of this study.

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<sup>1</sup> In James Gunter's interview: *Man Ray in Paris: His Heart Belongs to Dada* S&S Paris bureau S&S archives, European edition, Jan. 14, 1966 published also at:

<http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=126&article=23009&archive=true>

<sup>2</sup> André Breton: *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, 1924, ed. Gallimard Folio, 1979, p. 36

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38

<sup>4</sup> Obviously Victor Hugo, though Jean Hugo was a Surrealist

<sup>5</sup> André Breton: *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, 1924, p. 26

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* : «in homage to Guillaume Apollinaire, who had just died [...] Soupault and me,...», p. 35

<sup>7</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 193

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Nadeau: *Histoire du surréalisme*, 1964, p. 53

<sup>9</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 194

<sup>10</sup> André Breton: *Le surréalisme et la peinture*, 1928 and Nadeau, 1964, p. 46

<sup>11</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 194

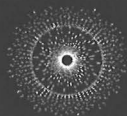
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> I first thought about the literal sense of the French word in opposition to nihilistic «destruction»: the (systematic) de-construction of any Western art form (art and anti-art). In searching for «deconstruction» of Western tradition, discourse and rhetoric I noticed that it fits well with Jacques Derrida's (1930-2004) concept of the same name.

- <sup>14</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 194
- <sup>15</sup> *Deconstructionism* as a challenge to the attempt to establish any ultimate or secure meaning in a text; for the complete definition see at <http://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/gengloss/decon-body.htm>
- <sup>16</sup> «There is nothing outside of the text» Jacques Derrida: *La dissémination*, 1972, p. 158
- <sup>17</sup> In the afterword of Jacques Derrida: *Vers une éthique de la discussion* in Limited Inc., 1990, p. 199-285.
- <sup>18</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, pp. 194-195
- <sup>19</sup> Native American word used in anthropology; between rival groups the potlach could involve extravagant or competitive giving and the destruction by the host of valued items as a display of superior wealth. Complete definition at: <http://www.potlach.org/>
- <sup>20</sup> Bulletin Dada, February 1920
- <sup>21</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 186
- <sup>22</sup> André Breton: *Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme*, 1934, quoted and commented on by Nadeau, 1964, p. 5
- <sup>23</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 187
- <sup>24</sup> Maurice Nadeau: *Histoire du surréalisme*, 1964, pp. 31-34
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Congrès International pour la détermination des directives et la défense de l'esprit moderne (Nadeau p. 33)
- <sup>27</sup> Fernand Léger planned to project the *Ballet mécanique* at the congress
- <sup>28</sup> Quoted by Nadeau, p. 33; it should be remembered here that Dada was against all form of art (as Duchamp had proved), yet also that Dada takes part in the May of the same year, 1922, at the Dada-Constructivist conference at the Bauhaus. A contradiction of course proving only the distance there is between Breton and Tzara. In fact, Hans Richter who was present at this congress reported that already in Weimar Tzara delivered a funeral oration, a valediction to Dada.
- <sup>29</sup> In the list can be found among others the names of Man Ray, van Doesburg, Surville and Cocteau
- <sup>30</sup> With the famous screening of *Le Retour à la raison* (chapter 7)
- <sup>31</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 191
- <sup>32</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 213-214
- <sup>33</sup> André Breton: *Les Pas perdus*, 1923 and Nadeau, 1964, p. 34
- <sup>34</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 99
- <sup>35</sup> «Disant de Dada qu'il n'avait été pour lui et ses amis... qu'un état d'esprit», words used by André Breton in *Les Pas perdus*, 1923 and quoted by Nadeau p. 45
- <sup>36</sup> André Breton: *Position politique du surréalisme*, 1935, pp. 18-19
- <sup>37</sup> Only after 1929 does Surrealism take a radical political turn
- <sup>38</sup> André Breton: *Position politique du surréalisme*, 1935 p. 50
- <sup>39</sup> Hegel op. cit., Breton in *Position politique du surréalisme*, 1935, pp. 92-106 makes references to Hegel.
- <sup>40</sup> Breton speaks about «rationalisme» meaning probably also «rationalité»
- <sup>41</sup> André Breton: *Le surréalisme et la peinture*, 1928, a concept developed by Gaston Bachelard.
- <sup>42</sup> Compare with Dadaism (chapter 2)
- <sup>43</sup> André Breton: *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, 1924 pp. 19-21, the same text appears also in *Le surréalisme et la peinture*, 1928. A complete translation in English is available in: *Art in Theory 1900-2000* (ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood), 2003, p. 448
- <sup>44</sup> André Breton: *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, 1924, page 33 and Nadeau, p. 48
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 34; remark the word «bouillons» obviously a word play with «brouillons» which means raw or preparative version of a document.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 45
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., transl. JC
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid. This observation could be also assimilated to the phenomenon of the premonitory dream
- <sup>49</sup> André Breton: *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, 1924, p. 24
- <sup>50</sup> After the writings by Breton *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, 1924, pp. 48-53
- <sup>51</sup> André Breton borrows from Baudelaire the sentence: «s'offrent à lui, spontanément, despotiquement. Il ne peut pas les congédier; car la volonté n'a plus de force et ne gouverne plus les facultés» p. 48
- <sup>52</sup> A parallel with «mechanical drawing» practised by Man Ray is interesting
- <sup>53</sup> Compare with Dadaism (chapter 2)
- <sup>54</sup> For the political right, Anatole France was the «perfect» French writer. «the realistic attitude, inspired by positivism, from Saint Thomas Aquinas to Anatole France, clearly seems to me to be hostile to any intellectual or moral advancement.» op. cit., *Art in Theory 1900-2000* (ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood), 2003, p. 448
- <sup>55</sup> In Louis Aragon: *Une vague de Rêves*, quoted by Nadeau, p. 58 (La centrale surréaliste: pp. 51-58), transl. JC
- <sup>56</sup> Pierre Naville: *La Révolution et les intellectuels (Que peuvent faire les surréalistes?)* quoted by Nadeau, p. 74, this radical statement published in the n°3 of *La Révolution Surréaliste* was controversial by the group
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., transl. JC
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 94
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> André Breton: *Position politique du surréalisme*, 1935 (in an interview with the worker's unity organisation in Prague in April, 1935), p. 47
- <sup>62</sup> Nadeau, p. 111
- <sup>63</sup> Man Ray's «vision» was at that time in the middle of surrealist controversy at its apogee (chapter 6)
- <sup>64</sup> Including Man Ray, in: Nadeau, 1964, pp. 119-120
- <sup>65</sup> Charles Harrison and Paul Wood in the Introduction of Part III of *Art in Theory, 1900-2000, An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, p. 224

- <sup>66</sup> Here historical concepts of abstraction/ abstract art in diverse sources (e.g. Levanto, Ferrier, Wikipedia, Artnet, Moszynska, Art in Theory) are confronted in order to discuss the rational-intuitive opposition, and definitions are only indicative, a starting point.
- <sup>67</sup> Wikipedia quotes Robert Atkins *Art Spoke: A Guide to Modern Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords, 1848-1944*, Abbeville Press, New York, 1993
- <sup>68</sup> Artnet
- <sup>69</sup> Anna Moszynska: *Abstract Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1990
- <sup>70</sup> «If pictorial expression has changed, it is because modern life has made this necessary» Fernand Léger (1914) quoted in Anna Moszynska: *Abstract Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p. 8, original text in French (quotation only) at: <http://www.biospheric.info/accueil/Sommaire/Art-Int%<sup>0</sup>E9ricur/Art-Int%<sup>0</sup>E9ricur.htm>
- <sup>71</sup> Anna Moszynska: *Abstract Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p. 7
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup> André Breton: *Position politique du surréalisme*, 1935, p. 116
- <sup>74</sup> The first abstract films are attributed to Bruno Corra and Arnaldo Ginna between 1910 and 1912
- <sup>75</sup> Anna Moszynska: *Abstract Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p. 16
- <sup>76</sup> Definition of so-called *néo-traditionnisme* (1890) by the French nabis painter Maurice Denis (1870-1943) [http://www.musee-mauricedenis.fr/maurice\\_denis/aut01.htm](http://www.musee-mauricedenis.fr/maurice_denis/aut01.htm); «a picture - before it is a battlehorse, a nude woman, or some anecdote - is essentially a plane surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order»: quoted in English by Anna Moszynska: *Abstract Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p. 8
- <sup>77</sup> A compilation of terms used by Jonas Mekas and Germaine Dulac, original quotations in Jacques Coelho: *Introduction to Audiovisual Communication*, 2004, p. 159
- <sup>78</sup> Anna Moszynska: *Abstract Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p. 24
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 96
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>81</sup> Cf. Hans Richter in *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 208 (the term *Zero Point* can be defined as the absolute point of recognition of a generation or even of an individual, a point of consciousness with no possible return to old values. Hans Richter sees in it a state of purification. For him, Duchamp attained this point with the *Pissoir*)
- <sup>82</sup> Ferrier, Moszynska, Wikipedia, Artnet, Art in Theory (mixed sources)
- <sup>83</sup> Neodada, Neo-dada, Neodadaism or Neo-dadaism, Dadaistes nouveaux, New Dadaists.
- <sup>84</sup> After Jean-Louis Ferrier, : *Art of Our Century*, 1988, p. 845
- <sup>85</sup> 60/90. Trente ans de Nouveau Réalisme, édition La Différence, 1990, p. 76
- <sup>86</sup> Pierre Restany op. cit. (Engl. transl.) in Jean-Louis Ferrier, : *Art of Our Century*, 1988, p. 569
- <sup>87</sup> Pierre Restany, *À 40° au-dessus de DADA*, exhibition catalogue (Preface) Galerie J, Paris May-June 1961 <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/education/ressources/ENS-nouvrea/ENS-nouvrea.htm>
- <sup>88</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 38
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>90</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 203
- <sup>91</sup> Richard Huelsenbeck quoted by Richter, p. 211
- <sup>92</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 203
- <sup>93</sup> Illustration n°110 of Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 108
- <sup>94</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 207
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 208
- <sup>96</sup> Man Ray's own statement in a late interview: «They said that I'm ahead of the times, I am of my time, it's the others who are behind the times» (Mel Stuart's film *Man Ray Prophet of the Avant-garde*, 1999)
- <sup>97</sup> Henri Van Lier (lecture, 1977) meaning something like «a product of the system against the system but inherent to the system, an average opinion or norm which it is fashionable to criticise» (JC)
- <sup>98</sup> Sol LeWitt: *Paragraph on Conceptual Art*, First published in *Artforum*, NY, vol.5, n°10, 1967, reproduced in *Art in Theory*, pp. 846-7
- <sup>99</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 40
- <sup>100</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>101</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 205
- <sup>102</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 56
- <sup>103</sup> Peter Bürger: *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1984, p. 53
- <sup>104</sup> The happening in question was a Happening by Alan Kaprow in the Village, in New York, 1962
- <sup>105</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 213
- <sup>106</sup> Peter Bürger: *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1984, p. 53
- <sup>107</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, pp. 57-58
- <sup>108</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 58
- <sup>109</sup> David Kam (visual artist) at <http://www.thinkism.org/asp/movements/NeoConceptualism.asp>
- <sup>110</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 58
- <sup>111</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 71; observe that he does not use the term «avant-garde»
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 99-124 (p. 120 and p. 115)
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 124
- <sup>115</sup> Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer*, 1990, p. 16
- <sup>116</sup> Petri Kuljuntausta *On/Off*, 2002, p. 127

## 5. The Marginal Cinema



### Video

Je crois que, dans l'avenir, l'écran sera un cadre incorporé au mur, une combinaison de cinéma et de télévision. Un véritable tableau mouvant en relief. J'aimerais voir dans un film quelque chose que je n'ai jamais vu, que je ne comprends pas. --Man Ray (1965)<sup>1</sup>

Only a few studies have attempted to approach video art through marginal cinema. The problem is neither technical nor historical, but contextual. Studies which concentrated traditionally on marginal cinema could not embrace the whole sculptural, spatial, performing or interactive visions of video artists. A second obstacle was the traditional separation which has occurred between the visual arts and cinema. Pioneer works on video, on the other hand, too often emphasized technical innovation, or the conceptual postmodernist viewpoints of visual artists, as if video was supposed to be only an extension of modern painting. Even the relatively recent work of Malcolm Le Grice, *Experimental Cinema in the Digital Age* (2001), persists in avoiding the *expanded theory* and observes unilaterally that «like film, the discourse of video as an artistic activity has its dominant cultural equivalent —television. Also like film, the abstract art of video has not transformed broadcast television, though it has had more impact and incorporation than abstract film enjoyed in cinema. The distance between the abstract language of the video artist and the makers of television programmes is much less great than between the experimental filmmaker and the cinema industry producers.»<sup>2</sup>

Chris Meigh-Andrews's in his recently published *A History of Video Art* (2006) emphasises better than former studies «the influence and relationship of experimental, avant-garde and underground film»<sup>3</sup> on and with video.

In this chapter, although I clearly separate experimental cinema from video, I intend to adopt an *expanded theory*, showing that without the European and American avant-garde cinema *and* the modernist art revolution there would have been no *Vienna Formalism* or *Fluxus*, and no video art as we speak about it today.

## 5.1. Experimental Cinema

Looking is an avarice, a hostility, a problem-making. Seeing is an adventure, a discovery, an acceptance. —James Broughton<sup>4</sup>

### [transitional years]

In chapter 3 the avant-garde was left at the turning point of the 1930s. After the coming of sound most of the ESAG ceased to exist or they emigrated to the USA, but with some filmmakers such as Len Lye or Oskar Fischinger, who had already started to produce experimental films in the 1920s, continuity was assured. Experimental animation was also beginning to grow in importance. If the centre of attention in the 1920s was France and Germany, in the 1930s England was actually gaining in importance. In fact the cohesion of the various avant-garde film types (such as appertains to the visual stream) was not very clear because most of the filmmakers started to work in different fields or production companies: making documentaries, political films or advertising. For instance, Len Lye worked originally for the GPO<sup>5</sup>, and probably his best animations, drawn directly on the film (plate 13) are *A colour Box* (1935) and *Rainbow Dance* (1936); Norman McLaren's (1914–1987) embraced agit-prop, was associated with the Scottish Communist Party, and he also did advertising works. The only trend comparable to 1920s pure art and avant-garde film could be found in the production of the Pool group (H.D., Macpherson, etc.), but most of their films are lost. One of the key films of the 1930s avant-garde is Macpherson's *Borderline* (1930), which was rediscovered in the late 1970s. The film is nevertheless an experimental narrative and silent which could hardly stand comparison with Cocteau's films, and therefore had no direct influence on those who led the way in American experimental film of the following period, the 1940s. On the European continent, one clear tendency was that most of the experimental documentary filmmakers turned to more social matters, for instance, Joris Ivens with *Borinage* (made with Henri Storck in 1933) and Storck with his own *Les maisons de la misère* (1937). In England the tendency was the same. As Michael O'Pray observes «*Borderline* interestingly balances the output of the 1930s period which in terms of innovation was dominated by social and political documentary, and animation. It is argued that the pressures of the 1930s in Britain were towards

socialist pragmatics, thus providing the fertile grounds for documentary and commercially oriented animation.»<sup>6</sup>

John Grierson, working with the GPO film Unit, can be considered to be the producer who most favored an experimental climate in Britain, but in fact it was the literary wing — mostly the *Pool* group— which was the most progressive, at least at the beginning of the 1930s.

The economic situation during the 1930s and World War II was the decisive factor which completely dissolved the British —and all European— avant-garde. Grierson went to Canada in 1937 and McLaren followed him in 1941, while Lye moved to America in 1944 and joined *The March of Time*, a newsreel series.

Another reason put forward to explain the disappearance of experimental film everywhere all through the 1930s is the coming of sound. Sound technology had consequences which overlap the simple technical and economic perspective. Silent film had the advantage of working on the level of a universal language: all the finest efforts made, especially with musical accompaniments, had to be questioned.

Dialogue is above all a narrative tool. As a creative and progressive element sound could of course stimulate new aspirations, offering another level of control over the signifying relationship between image and sound than simply music could do.

Oswell Blakeston (who made *Light Rhythms* in 1930 with Francis Bruguière) wrote in 1931: «the most intelligent contemporary use of sound is Fischinger's «sound abstracts» (images derived from sound), Buñuel's *L'Age d'or* (visual-aural counterpoint), and the *Secrets of Nature* science series (image motivated by word/text).»<sup>7</sup>

Deke Dusinberre insists<sup>8</sup> that the coming of sound was not specifically a technological, or I should add, a semantic problem, but a problem of *Identity* assumed by the avant-garde. Indeed, silent films, including narratives were suddenly rear-guard: no longer could they represent the wave of the future. In fact this was the challenge for the avant-garde: how could they overcome the economic monopoly of sound? Private initiative was more limited by economic constraints and this forced the avant-garde to look for new sponsors. The industrial film, the promotional or advertising film, was a new kind of production which could bring an answer to this challenge. Blakeston/Bruguière's *Empire Buyers are Empire Builders* (1931) is a good example of this: it is a full advertising short and also a complete abstract film. Blakeston himself defended the position: «...an experimental approach



can only be found in the new possibility of the advertising film. Indeed, the advertising film provides an economic basis for all pioneer work at the moment.»<sup>9</sup> State funding of films was a third way of financing experimental films and state patronage in the form of the Empire Marketing Board and the GPO Film Units headed by John Grierson was surely the most significant new economic base. The dependent nature of the Film Unit in the mid-thirties changed the perception of avant-garde production: documentary and promotional films could be a contribution to modernist questioning of the medium and through technical and structural support could significantly open up new artistic possibilities. It was the starting-point of a total re-evaluation and enhancement of the productions of Norman McLaren and Len Lye. But the inconvenience of dependence on the state was the other side of the coin. Indeed the censorship of the minister responsible for the GPO was a direct source of pressure. A good example is McLaren's *Love on the Wing* (1938), an animated fantasy about a new airmail service, which was censored for being «too erotic and too Freudian». All this meant that by the end of the thirties the avant-garde spirit had gradually been completely destroyed.

The problems of the technological and economic dependence of the avant-garde in England at that time brought about by the state financing system provide reasons enough for its failure. It is evident that British artists who worked outside the state apparatus such as Francis Bruguière, Oswald Blakeston, Robert Fairthorne, Brian Salt, Andrew Buchanan, Kenneth Macpherson, B. Vivian Braun, Irene Nicholson, etc, were the real avant-garde, but fate decreed it that most of their works have been lost, as is not the case with those working in state sponsored-film, so history has been written on the existing official material.<sup>10</sup> But «it should be stressed here that the GPO did not pose a threat to the avant-garde in the 1930s, nor was it perceived as an antagonist.»<sup>11</sup>

Another reason advanced by Deke Dusinberre<sup>12</sup> for the absence of a real avant-garde comparable to the French generation of Man Ray is the lack of relatively established visual artists in Britain who had any regard for the cinema: the most progressive of them, such as Henry Moore, for instance, never explored the cinema's pure visual possibilities.

An interesting and less known avant-garde cinema in the thirties, took place in Poland. The importance of the Polish avant-garde in this study is to show how local

vision can influence the mainstream, in this case the social mainstream of the avant-garde in England. A similar effect will be analysed with Austrian video art. Unlike its British counterpart, the Polish avant-garde was closely identified with several fine art groups and activities, mostly constructivist. The origin of this current is in the mid-twenties: Mieczyslaw Szczuka, a member of the constructivist group *Blok*, made an abstract film concerned with shifting relationships between hand-drawn geometrical shapes and lines. The work was strongly influenced by Bauhaus aesthetics in general and is reminiscent of Viking Eggeling's *Diagonal symphony*. In 1925 Szczuka began *He killed, You Killed, I Killed*, which can be considered the first «letterist» film work, but Szczuka's early death in 1927 meant that the film was never completed.

The *Praesens* group, based in Warsaw and comprising painters, sculptors, and architects, also promoted progressive ideas in film form by organising occasional screenings, publishing statements on film in their monthly periodical, and most concretely through the work of Stefan Themerson. With Franciszka Themerson he made *The Pharmacy* (1930) in which they developed an animation technique to mimic the effect of photograms. In 1932 they made a film version of Anatol Stern's anti-war poem *Europa*. This last was screened beside films of Hans Richter and Joris Ivens in 1933, but the film was lost during the war. The Themersons also made the promotional film *Musical Moment* (1935), commissioned by a glass manufacturer, and involving montage of photogram-like images of glassware. Another promotional film was *Short Circuit*. The increased possibilities of film-making through sponsorship led to the founding of the Polish Filmmakers' Co-operative by the Themersons in 1935. In 1936 the Themersons travelled to Paris and London, where they were impressed by Lasló Moholy-Nagy's last film, *Lightplay: Black-White-Grey* (1930). They also met John Grierson, who had just produced Lye's *Colour Box*. In Poland the Themersons made yet *The Adventures of a Good Citizen* in 1937 but with the outbreak of war the Co-operative was dissolved and they emigrated to London, where they completed two more films in the forties.

In Cracow there was also a strong avant-garde: an exhibition in 1931 showed photographic works by Richter, Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy. Significant films were made like Jalu Kurek's abstract film *OR* (for *Obliczenia Rhythmiczne*, Rhythmic Calculations) or *Beton* (Concrete) by Kosimierz Podsadecki and Janusz Brzeski.

In Germany, Oskar Fischinger (plates 8 and 13) had been active in the twenties (see chapter 3). First known for the «wax-machine» he was a contributor to Fritz Lang's Films. He moved to America in 1936 after that his masterpiece *Komposition in Blau* (1935), that was a great critical and popular success, had got him into trouble with German censorship. Fischinger was the last avant-garde filmmaker to make abstract films in Germany after Richter and Ruttmann (plates 8 and 9) had moved on to other subject matter. Unlike Richter who made absolute films Fischinger is well known for giving up strict objectivity in favor of more melodic and emotional compositions. The musicality of his *Dancing Lines* (1921-1930), as he called his first *Studies*, was based on classical music (Mozart, Brahms, Verdi, Bach, etc.) and popular jazz.<sup>13</sup> His first *Studies* (n°1-5) were all silent animations (made before 1930) and were synchronized with records. The next were produced with sound techniques in Germany and were continued in America after 1936. On his arrival in America he got a job with Paramount in Hollywood but problems subordinating his own ideas to those of the studios and the producers made things difficult for him in the film industry (though he had already experienced similar problems with UFA). He withdrew *Allegretto* (1936) and did not want his name to be mentioned in the credits of the first episode of Walt Disney's *Fantasia*. A contract with Orson Welles also came to nothing. Fischinger was therefore forced to turn to private support, and through the Guggenheim foundation he finally managed to realise *Motion Painting n°1* (1947) which remained his last important film. In the next twenty years he lived on only a few commercials, but he started to paint and became one of the most celebrated figures in the early American avant-garde. John Cage, Maya Deren, the Whitney brothers, Kenneth Anger and Jordan Belson all met in his house, and he was the great moving force behind the West Coast school of the second avant-garde.

Before moving on to this ASAG-generation I would still like to say a word about another important figure who also moved to America during the war and has his part in the history of the American avant-garde. Hans Richter arrived in New York in 1941 and in the following year was appointed director of the Institute of Film Techniques at the City College of New York, where he taught for nearly 15 years. His most important American work is undoubtedly *Dreams That Money Can Buy* (1946), featuring sequences contributed by himself, Fernand Léger, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst and Alexander Calder (plate 11).

## [american second avant-garde and underground]

The concept of an American second avant-garde (ASAG) implies that there must have been a first avant-garde in America too. There indeed was, but its works are so diverse that it does not create a coherent force comparable to the ESAG.

I propose first to briefly overview the pioneers in America and then to link them with the European immigrants in the field.

«America's first avant-garde film was Charles Sheeler's and Paul Strand's *Manhatta*, an isolated attempt made as early as 1921.»<sup>14</sup> This film was more or less a photographic documentary, but it was organized according to passages from a poem by Walt Whitman. In 1928, under the influence of German Expressionism and trying to break with the «star system», Robert Florey made *The Life and Death of 9413 – A Hollywood Extra*. It is interesting to note that Florey was French, had been close to Méliès and an assistant of Feuillade. Through René Clair he was even introduced to Louis Delluc. He migrated to Hollywood in 1921, where he worked among other places in the Pickford-Fairbanks household. Florey typically worked in the major studios in order to be able to make his own films. He made three further experimental films around 1928: *The Loves of Zero*, *Johann the Coffin Maker* and *Skyscraper Symphony*, the last being a «city symphony» —a film close in style to Ruttmann's. In 1929 he turned to directing the Marx Brothers' first feature. In the same year, Ralph Steiner made *H2O*, a wordless, independent and highly realistic study<sup>15</sup> of water patterns produced by Paul Strand (plate 14). Edward S. Small speaks about the «lyric realism»<sup>16</sup> of *Manhatta* (1921–24) and *H2O* (1929). This «lyric realism» could be compared to Dimitri Kirsanoff's *Brumes d'automne* (1929), a French experimental narrative, or even to the impressionism of Delluc that is sometimes called «European first avant-garde» (chapter 3). Other American films in that vein are Lewis Jacobs' *Mobile Composition* (1930) and *Story of a Nobody* (1930). David Curtis considers James Watson and Melville Webber as «the first truly avant-garde American film-makers»<sup>17</sup> with their film *Lot in Sodom* (1934). *Lot in Sodom* is a fragmented narrative with a musical accompaniment. The visual construction of the film confirms the ideas of Arnheim that «the absence of the spoken word concentrates the spectator's attention more closely on the visible aspect of behaviour, and thus the whole event draws particular interest to itself.»<sup>18</sup> The film's multiple exposures, split screens and prismatic diffractions etc. represent expressionism's American outpost. Poe and expressionism also coloured *The Tell-*

*Tale Heart* (1928) by Charles Klein. James Watson's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928) and Epstein's French version *La chute de la maison Usher* appeared in the same year. However, what is particularly distinctive about the American avant-garde is above all its break with all the conventions of Hollywood's classical continuity. A non-Hollywood director from the West Coast, Herman Weinberg, made *Autumn Fire* (1930–33), a silent poetic film which can be contrasted with the lyric realism of *Manhatta* (1921–24). Here the monologue is as poetic as the form of the film. It has been also compared to Kirsanoff's *Brumes d'automne*. As in Kirsanoff's film there is nonetheless a story (the lovers), though more exactly we should call it an *intrigue*. In the ESAG there is never any intrigue.<sup>19</sup> Behind the intrigue usually lies a general *theme* rather than a visual task —as used to be the case in the ESAG.

Arnheim had already noticed that, «film directors do not make much original use of the artistic means at their disposal. They do not produce works of art but tell people stories.»<sup>20</sup> This was also generally true of the American avant-garde, which never reached the «pure» or «absolute» level of the ESAG. I should compare the pioneers of the American avant-garde to the Impressionist school in France (the «first avant-garde»). Edward S. Small notes that the American avant-garde «more typically retains a somewhat poetic narrative structure that often directly deconstructs the, by then, internationally established classical continuity conventions it thereby reveals as arbitrary.»<sup>21</sup> So-called American psychodrama belongs to that category. Maya Deren is one of the adepts of that cinema (plate 11 and 14). P. Adam Sitney has analysed these oneiric, fragmented narratives, poetic narratives or whatever we call them, and come to the conclusion that a «central theme of all the psychodramas that marked the first stage of the American avant-garde cinema is the quest for sexual identity.»<sup>22</sup> He finds also more psycho-dramatic characteristics which can be summarized as:

- 1° a quest for sexual identity
- 2° highly personal psychological drama
- 3° a strong autobiographical element
- 4° self-acted and self-realization

*Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) by Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid, is, perhaps, the best known example. The film «explicitly simulates the dream experience, first in the transition from waking to sleeping (the shadow covers the eye and the

window at the end of the first cycle) and later in the ambiguous scene of waking. The filmmakers have observed with accuracy the way in which the events and objects of the day become potent, then transfigured, in dream as well as the way in which a dreamer may realize that he dreams and may dream that he wakes.»<sup>23</sup> In her films Deren infuses emotionality into the form by using the juxtapositions of different levels of realities / appearances; she induces experiences rather than reporting them. She finished only six films in the period 1943-52: *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), *At Land* (1944), *A Study in Choreography for the camera* (1945), *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946), *Meditation on Violence* (1948) and *The Very Eye of the Night* (1952).

Following Sitney, there are different assignations for the ASAG, the «trance film», the «mythopoetic film», the «lyrical film», the «structural film» and the «participatory film». According to Sitney's criteria Deren falls into the category of «trance film», into which he also places Curtis Harrington, Gregory Markopoulos, Kenneth Anger and Stan Brakhage. My purpose here is not to discuss categories or analyse the pertinence of the criteria but simply to give an idea of the evolution of experimental cinema, in order to help us to understand the possible impact of the cinematic and early «videomatic» vision on the moving image today. The «trance film» description by Sitney is quite evocative:

The trance film as it emerged in America has fairly strict boundaries. It deals with visionary experience. Its protagonists are somnambulists, priests, initiates of rituals and the possessed, whose stylized movements, the camera, with its slow and fast motions, can recreate so aptly. The protagonist wanders through a potent environment towards a climatic scene of self-realization. The stages of his progress are often marked by what he sees along his path rather than what he does. The landscapes, both natural and architectural, through which he passes are usually chosen with naive aesthetic considerations, and they often intensify the texture of the film to the point of emphasizing a specific line of symbolism. It is part of the nature of the trance that the protagonist remains isolated from what he confronts; no interaction of characters is possible in these films.<sup>24</sup>

During the forties and fifties Deren was in contact with several European expatriates and Surrealists such as André Breton, Charles Duits and Marcel Duchamp. Moira Sullivan notes that «the work of the Surrealists during this time was unavoidable, connected with the fashion industry, and leftist politics.»<sup>25</sup> But Deren especially rejected their «private confessionals» in art. Deren's conceptual difference with the Surrealists is a frequent reference point in her book *An Anagram of Ideas on Art*.

Sitney's comparisons of *Meshes of the Afternoon*, often associated with surrealist film, to Buñuel and Dalí's *Un chien andalou* is useful (plate 11). Deren was concerned with exploring «interior experiences»<sup>26</sup> in which a dream becomes *true*, yet the iconography of *Meshes of the Afternoon* is different from surrealist intention.

It begins in the mind of the creator. The relationship between images in dreams, in montage, and in poetry is [...] they are related because they are held together by either an emotion or a meaning that they have in common, rather than by the logical action. In other words, it isn't that one action leads to another action, but they are brought to a center, gathered up, and collected by the fact that they all refer to a common emotion, although the incidents themselves may be quite disparate.<sup>27</sup>

Jarmo Valkola shows some of the tricks used to reach a psychological level of vision: «Deren [...] and Hammid developed a serial of montage-illusions to create spatial absences and temporal ellipsis in order to adapt their visions to psychological reality. When looking at the film, continuous observation (by the spectator) is like experiencing images of remembrance beyond the images of the film, by forming an invisible substratum for *double exposure*»<sup>28</sup> or as Curtis says: «she likes to show the true proportions of a room, then to stretch a person's movement across it by the use of slow motion and repeat shots subtly disguised in the editing. By establishing a continuity of camera movement she achieves a *double shock* from an unexpected move between one location and another.»<sup>29</sup> *Meshes of the Afternoon* recycles a sequence of events, each time playing variations on the relationships between Deren herself and objects. As in a dream, she proceeds through increasingly ominous repetitive experiences.

This film [...] reproduces the way in which the sub-conscious of an individual will develop, interpret and elaborate an apparently simply and casual incident into a critical emotional experience.<sup>30</sup>

The film ends in apparent self-destruction that cannot be rationally explained. The dreamlike fragmentation of narrative reminds one too of Cocteau's *Le sang d'un poète* (1930) and was also a characteristic of Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947), which was a typical psycho-dramatic work about homosexuality (plate 11). The taboo subjects and the mode of production of these works—independent and self-produced—introduces the notion of underground film. For instance Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1963) is clearly an underground film. The evolution from psychodrama to

underground can be said to have taken place within a period of fifteen years. This explains why usually the term «underground» belongs very much also to the sixties. Stan Brakhage's *Dog Star Man* (1960–61) is another underground classic. Stan Brakhage's production over a long career—from the fifties (*Interim*, 1951–52) to the eighties—and his writings on his concepts of vision, such as *Metaphors on Vision* (1963), make of him one of the principal figures of American experimental film. Concerning the theoretical aspect of the production of Brakhage (or Deren, Richter, etc.) Edward S Small pertinently cites a comment of Paul Klee, which relates to one of the questions I asked in the introduction to this work about art's (educational) task:

Art does not reproduce what we see, it teaches us how to see<sup>31</sup>

Brakhage said:

Imagine an eye unrul'd by man-made laws perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not (logocentrically) respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure in perception... Suppose the Vision of the saint and the artist to be increased ability to see—vision. Allow so-called hallucination to enter the realm of perception...accept dream visions, day-dreams or night-dreams...even allowing that the abstractions which move so dynamically when closed eyelids are pressed are actually perceived... There is no need for the mind's eye to be deadened after infancy, yet in these times the development of visual understanding is almost universally forsaken.<sup>32</sup>

«To Stan Brakhage's films is connected a *closed-eye vision*. His films are like «cooked» pictures; they remind one of what happens behind our closed eyelids, for when we close our eyes the visual world by no means ceases to exist, but floating light impulses fill our mind. Through these non-figurative, visual and optical phenomena, Brakhage approaches some kind of spirituality, though it's difficult to distinguish what is truly spiritual in his work and what reflects American poetic tradition from transcendental egoism.»<sup>33</sup> There is no doubt about the spiritualism in the work of Brakhage; it must be also linked to the abstract expressionism current at that time (plate 14). Valkola also refers to a collective level of perception in American poetry, which he probably considers to be present but unconscious. This significantly introduces the interesting discussions about Brakhage's theory of the «innocent eye», a theory whose originality I will describe in the last chapter. As has



been seen with the Surrealists, early psychologists such as Freud and Jung were devoted to the phenomenology of mental imagery. Mental images are perceptions without external stimuli except such as are induced by drugs, hypnosis or mechanical pressure on the eye itself. Hallucinations, dreams, visual memory, visualisation of situations, post-waking or pre-dream images, and entoptic images<sup>34</sup> are all parts of mental imagery. In *Dog Star Man* (1961) Brakhage uses a lot of this imagery. Technically it means the use of cameraless constructions, anamorphic images, superimpositions, extreme close-ups, macro-shots, etc. but also total control over all stages of production, including the film processing. *Mothlight* (1963), another classic, was made by sandwiching actual moth wings, pieces of leaves and twig segments between adhesive editing tape, then printing the result as if it were a photographed film.

Films in a poetic vein were also produced by the Gryphon Group, an attempt at collective film production and distribution. For instance, Marie Menken and Willard Maas in *Geography of the Body* (1943) use extreme close-ups of the human face with the idea of face-landscape. Marie Menken influenced the younger generation of New York filmmakers so that at the end of the fifties the Gryphon Group still involved Gregory Markopoulos, Ben Moore, Charles Henry Ford and Stan Brakhage. The rejection of distribution of Brakhage's *Anticipation of the Night* (1958) led to the creation of The New York Film-maker Co-operative.

Another poetic film was *Bells of Atlantis* (1952) by Ian Hugo and Len Lye, made with Anaïs Nin, who reads a poem in which the lost city of Atlantis is emblematic of the psychic interior.

On the West Coast an independent cinema was developing among poets and artists of the San Francisco area. James Broughton and Sidney Peterson together made *The Potted Psalm* (1946) then Peterson on his own with anamorphic lenses and Freudian reminiscences produced *Mr. Frenhofer and the Minotaur* (1948) and *The Lead Shoes* (1949). In the fifties, James Broughton also worked in England with Lindsay Anderson on a satirical film. After a break of nearly fifteen years, Broughton made *The Bed* (1968) and *Dreamwood* (1972), a mythic quest close to *Le sang d'un poète*.

Cocteau's «personal» mythology was also a source of investigation for the themes of homosexuality developed by Gregory Markopoulos. *Psyche*, *Lysis* and *Charmides* are a trilogy under the French name *Du Sang de la volupté et de la mort* (1948). The rapid intercutting—even by single frames, superimpositions and visual clusters—gives a particular sense of simultaneity to Markopoulos' films *Twice a Man* (1963), *Ming*

*Green* (1966), *Himself as Herself* (1966), *Galaxie* (1966), *Gammelion* (1967), and *Political Portraits* (1969).

In the forties the National Film Board of Canada produced the animations of Norman McLaren. For instance, *Begone Dull Care* (1949) was a non-narrative abstract cameraless animation by McLaren and his collaborator Evelyn Lambert on the music of the Oscar Peterson Quartet. McLaren's concept of animation was quite unusual. As he himself notes, the animated cartoon is «the manipulation of the invisible interstices that lie between the frames.»<sup>35</sup> That is to say, the art of animation for him is not linked simply to the representation of an animated sequence of drawings, but to what happens between the drawings. The animation must be the result of «what film is, formally and structurally».<sup>36</sup> The viewer is directly able to realize that film is dependent neither upon narrative nor upon the camera capturing external phenomena: film is rather the play of light upon the screen.<sup>37</sup>

#### **[structural, material and new formal film]**

I have identified six groups of films in the ESAG. Futurist film had a brief existence. Dadaist filmmakers turned with time to Surrealism, which itself almost seemed to disappear during the thirties. It reappeared after the war not only in new productions by Buñuel, Cocteau or Richter but also in works of marginal independent production in America out of which the American Underground has grown.

Documentary filmmakers of the twenties had also turned to more social aims and stopped making city symphonies. Finally what is called the absolute film or abstract film had found new ground, first in England then when it moved across the Atlantic to the USA and Canada, being much transformed on the way, through animation or documentary. Finally through the second generation it acquired a considerable poetic dimension.

But what had happened to pure cinema and its questioning of the essence of the medium itself?

P. Adam Sitney observed in 1969<sup>38</sup> that part of the American avant-garde (Underground) was by nature very different from what the ASAG had generally

been: poetic, mythological, symbolic or erotic. Sitney was in fact showing evidence of the existence of a kind of cinema which had existed from the very beginning. Indeed, even the ingenious tricks of Méliès or Robert Paul can be understood as a flirtation with the medium itself even though the tasks were finally only illusionary. But when Corra painted directly onto the film, and when Man Ray arranged salt and nails on the film for making *rayogrammes*, there was no doubt: *film as material* was itself a source of inspiration, a type of approach which had nothing to do with any other human codification (such as poetry, mythology, symbolism or eroticism). It was a pure act of cinematography. In the sixties we lived through Neodadaism and I do not think that that was a coincidence. Formal kinetic art or «experimental improvisation» is what naturally follows Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting. In Finland Eino Ruutsalo played<sup>39</sup> with film and painting in *Kineettisiä kuvia* (Kinetic Pictures, 1962), to «make an attempt to provide a new basis for pictorial expression by means of pre-prepared and post-treated film and by use of cinematic motion of framework; the power is reinforced with painting.»<sup>40</sup> He used the rushes of film (scrap) in *Kaksi kanaa* (Two Chickens, 1963), to «find pictorial expression freely taking its form from filmed material; the colour strength of painted film is multiplied in the light beam of the projector.»<sup>41</sup>

Sitney wrote that there is «a cinema of structure»:

The shape of the whole film is predetermined and simplified, and it is that shape that is the primal impression of the film [...] The structural film insists on its shape and what content it has is minimal and subsidiary to the outline... Four characteristics of the structural film are a fixed camera position (fixed frame from the viewer's perspective), the flicker effect, loop printing<sup>42</sup>, and rephotography off the screen.<sup>43</sup>

Birgit Hein<sup>44</sup> makes the obvious remark that the term «structural» was not the best choice because it carries a structuralist philosophical connotation which has *a priori* nothing to do with the matter. Besides, the characteristics are too vague and proper to films outside the structural film category, even narrative. For that reason, probably, Sitney partly reconsidered his position and added some criteria in 1974. Dominique Noguez<sup>45</sup> does not approve of the use of the term «structural» either but argues that it *could* refer partly to the structuralism of Barthes:

Le but de toute activité structuraliste, qu'elle soit réflexive ou poétique, est de reconstituer un «objet», de façon à manifester dans cette reconstitution les règles de fonctionnement (les

«fonctions») de cet objet. La structure est donc en fait un simulacre de l'objet [...]. Le simulacre, c'est l'intellect ajouté à l'objet...<sup>46</sup>

«The goal of all structuralist activity, whether reflexive or poetic, is to reconstruct an «object» in such a way as to manifest thereby the rules of functioning (the «functions») of this object. The structure is therefore an actual simulacrum of the object [...]. The simulacrum is the intellect added to the object...»<sup>47</sup>

Briefly, Barthes attributes to structuralist activity the property of being auto-reflexive, verging on being self-sufficient. This means that it could be a good criterion for *definitively* distinguishing it from the *syntagmatique* of Metz. If cinema is an autocratic art allowed to create its own system free of syntax, or even to be an «anti-system», it must be another kind of legal film-creativity than narrative: a meta-cinema.<sup>48</sup>

Ironically, Peter Gidal<sup>49</sup> caused even more confusion by referring to «structuralist /materialist film» in discussion of the same experimental aspect. Sitney's four initial characteristics give even less coherence to the structural idea but are useful for extracting from the Underground the kind of tricks and tendencies which had existed before, mostly in Europe (ESAG). Underground became a term of abuse for «trash», for everything that was not «above ground» and on the narrative ground. It seems a good idea therefore to make a distinction between «underground» and «structural». Beyond the structuralist concept, whatever that may be, the principal characteristics of structural films are:<sup>50</sup>

**1° the films have no narrative or poetic content**

**2° the content refers to the medium itself**

**3° formal devices are never used symbolically, but for their own sakes as visual themes**

**4° the films explore the whole production-reproduction process that underpins the medium including film material, optical properties, chemical properties and perceptual processes**

**5° the films are not necessarily restricted to being projected on a single screen**

**6° the projection space and the projector (and projectionist) themselves can play an active role in the work**

**7° the films allow interactive outside elements such as light, noise, music, dance, ...**

The differences between «underground» and «structural» clearly appear out of these characteristics.

Talking about a film of Maurice Lemaitre (born 1926), *Le film est déjà commencé?* (1951) which was partly hand-painted and used scientific film or newsreels' rushes (a technique also used by Kubelka or Conner), Dominique Noguez observes that experimental cinema always uses «a treasure of past experimental film because, actually, nobody is inventing as much as is intended.»<sup>51</sup> So in the fifties there were many examples of films which anticipated the so-called structural film, Fluxus, Minimal or Conceptual. In the fifties Robert Breer made frame-by-frame collages and Bruce Conner with *A movie* (1958) also used rushes of newsreels or feature-films.

During the seventies this type of film split up into several categories. The coming of video did not help much to reduce the confusion. This may be the reason why already in 1977 Malcolm Le Grice saw the activity of structuralist/materialist film in much larger areas, because «the numbers involved are so large».<sup>52</sup> It is no longer possible then to trace any development through the individual works of filmmakers. Le Grice's idea is to divide formal and material film into three «technical» categories:

**1° perceptual film** (term used for «flicker» film) seeks to examine, or create experience through devices which work on the autonomic nervous system (psycho-physical). It goes from *Anémic cinéma* to *Op Art*. Techniques which consist of stroboscopic or animation effects are part of this category, for instance frame-by-frame works.

**2° loop and image repetition** are experiments/experiences which started with the *Zoetropes* (repetitive sequences) and was tried out in *Ballet mécanique* with the woman climbing the stairs. The seventies are full of this kind of experimentation, which finds a correspondence in Minimal Art (including music and painting: Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, Sol Lewitt, Donald Judd<sup>53</sup> etc.)

**3° developing and printing manipulation** is when Corra paints directly on film, when Man Ray makes Rayogrammes or solarization, when there is superimposition, when Len Lye uses the Gasparcolor process in 1936. In such manipulation, tricks are intrinsic to the film material and the film's chemical composition, whether it is manipulation on the film material or its emulsion.

Categories of film should not be based on their technical means but, instead, on their philosophical contents (for example, Futurist film is linked to dynamism, absolute to abstraction, structural to material, etc.). On the other hand because structural cinema is an endogenic type (the structuralist idea of «simulacrum») the principle of technical analysis must be accepted. We shall see that a similar problem will be

encountered with video art. As a corollary the term *experimental* is reinforced and the term *experienced* weakened.

The first time that film material was worked on and modified to form sequences of images with that idea of «simulacrum» is in Man Ray's *Le retour à la raison* (The Return To Reason, 1923). What is amazing is that Man Ray's film is an absolutely pure example of structural film (anticipating it by nearly fifty years) meeting *all* the seven criteria of structural / materialist film, but yet impossible to classify in any of the three categories made by Le Grice. In fact *Le retour à la raison* belongs to all three categories together. The film is perceptual, containing the repetition of sequences of images which work as visual dynamic themes, and the film has been chemically and optically (rayogramme) manipulated.

Antecedents in structural film are many. In the 1930s the most influential are Oskar Fischinger's abstract color films, which used the perceptual flicker effect, and later Len Lye's or Norman McLaren's abstract works. Lye and McLaren were also both influential on structural film in West coast experimental film within the meditative films of James Whitney such as *Lapis* (1963–66), of his brother John Whitney with *1-2-3* (1970), or Jordan Belson, with his abstract, decorative but not properly structural films (plate 13). The old dividing lines of absolute film, abstract film, and pure cinema thus find an equivalent in the structural / materialist film of the fifties, sixties or seventies, but it is curious that structural film is not in fact the logical continuation of the early abstract works of Richter, Eggeling or Ruttmann, or even Man Ray. Rather it was a type of work which was born out of Underground film, and was therefore partly narrative, at least in the beginning. Indeed the Underground movement began with the poetically surrealist films of Maya Deren or Kenneth Anger, which in fact had strong links to Buñuel's and Cocteau's films<sup>54</sup> but none to Richter or Man Ray.

Stan Brakhage is also a decisive figure for that reason. He comes out of the surrealist, psychological tradition and yet his films embody a completely new consciousness of the material.<sup>55</sup> Brakhage for instance produced films «without camera» in which plants or insects were glued directly on the negative-material like in *Mothlight* (plate 14), or scratches, drawings, etc. were used.

In Brakhage's work there is a clear evolution from the narrative-surrealist level to the camera-participant stage and formal consciousness.

The Fluxus movement after 1962 is said to provide the most significant impetus in the progress of structural film. Nam June Paik's *Zen for Film* (1962–64) is easily compared to Man Ray's *Retour à la raison* because of its attacks on established art forms. We find here typical neodadaist behavior. Fluxus works reflected quite largely all the above-mentioned seven criteria: the physical inclusion of the environment in the artwork, either in combination with real action or confronting the real object with its image; the notion of continuous temporality: no beginning, no end; the adoption of loop-structure which keeps in mind the medium to itself as a mechanism; the flickering effect; etc.

Most filmmakers used at least a few of these tricks, and the phenomenon is far from being restricted only to Fluxus. In fact in around 1963 the whole movement marks a total break within Underground film between the new formal and structural streams (plate 15). On the one hand there are artists such as George Landow, Tony Conrad, Paul Sharits, Robert Whitman, Louis Brigante and Ken Jacobs ...(mostly Americans) and on the other hand the Americans Stan Brakhage and Andy Warhol, the Austrians Kurt Kren, Peter Kubelka and Marc Adrian, and a German, Dieter Rot, who will together come to represent the new formal tendency. The European New Formalists started to produce films around the same period, during the years 1956–58, quite independently and unaware of what was happening in America. Sitney tried to distinguish the formal film from the structural one. For him «the formal film is a tight nexus of context, a shape designed to explore the facets of the material... Recurrences, prolepses, antitheses, and overall rhythms are the rhetoric of the formal... The structural film insists on its shape, and what content it has is minimal and subsidiary to the outline.»<sup>56</sup> He then gives the four characteristics which have already been discussed here.

The formal tendency is rich in themes and semantic matters. From minimal material it elaborates a work of a conjunction of themes into the deepest level of interpretation, even using metaphors; the structural tendency as described by Sitney remains on the level of shapes. Noguez insists that Sitney includes all American experimental film in the formal stream and thus places the structural film into a larger context. Nor does this differentiation between structural and formal convince Malcolm Le Grice, who finds that numerous films fit equally well into the structural or formal categories. But Le Grice concedes: «To understand Sitney's conception, it is necessary to compare the context from which the formal tendency emerged in America with the way in which a similar tendency emerged in Europe. It is essential

to see the extent to which the mainstream of New American Cinema —Maya Deren, James Broughton, Sidney Peterson, Kenneth Anger, Gregory Markopoulos, Jack Smith, Ron Rice, Stan Brakhage, Bruce Baillie and so forth— is embedded in a Romantic, Symbolist, Expressionist tradition, with the roots of its cinematic form in Surrealist cinema.»<sup>57</sup> (plate 14). Le Grice tried to show how the socio-political context was different in America from Europe after the war and what an artistic vacuum there was in Europe in order to explain why and how much American Underground influenced European production. He explained the American formal inclination, represented particularly by Warhol, as a reaction against the Underground film, and as being provocative in a neodadaist way. In Europe he sees the formal development as an answer to the vacuum and against the background of the constructivist tradition of the thirties.

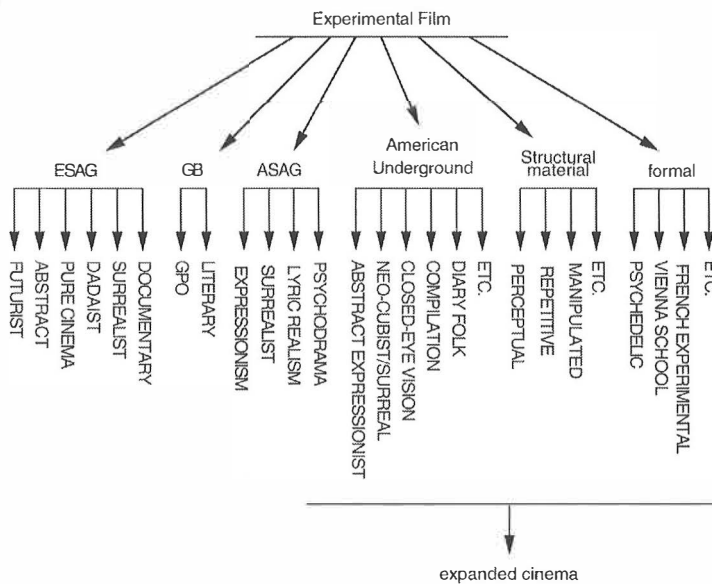


Fig. 15: Experimental Film Categories (adaptation after Edward S. Small<sup>58</sup>)

The European new formal direction is evident in the first works produced under the influence of the American Underground. Between 1965 and 1968, which can be considered to be a turning-point, we have the first films of the generation of Werner Nekes, Peter Weibel, Birgit and Wilhelm Hein, Peter Gidal, Paul Sharits and others.<sup>59</sup>



After 1966 and during the seventies the formal aspect of experimental cinema became the mainstream of the avant-garde. Le Grice sees even a second generation of filmmakers, but overall places the avant-garde on European soil.

### [french experimental film]

In his book about French experimental cinema<sup>61</sup> from 1950 to 1980, Dominique Noguez claims that no American or German critics, in their writings, have ever mentioned even one name in French experimental film. Noguez observes however, that important American experimental filmmakers such as Kenneth Anger, Robert Breer and Jonas Mekas owed much to the French tradition until the fifties, and he tries to find out why about 500 French films and about 100 filmmakers during the period he analyses were ignored. Between 1949 and 1975 Knokke-le-Zoute, on the Belgian coast, had five times been the meeting place of international experimental films but, as Noguez observes, the number of French films presented gradually decreased from one festival to the next.<sup>62</sup> He concedes that this can be explained by various organisational factors or by the nature of the French films that won awards in the Festival. He cites Agnès Varda's *L'opéra-Mouffe* in 1958 or Walerian Borowczyk's *Renaissance* in 1963 which are close to the commercial cinema and maybe for that reason are not worth mentioning in books about experimental film. Another reason given is the attitude of the *Cahiers du cinéma*, which around 1950 rapidly turned to complete disdain of experimental film in general and instead developed an apology of neorealism, an apology achieved by the coming of French *nouvelle vague* (New-wave) which became the *voie royale* of French cinema and its critics. Noguez compares this with the situation in America and observes that the huge and powerful American film industry did not allow the economic-artistic compromise of the *nouvelle vague*. This compromise was rather more an advantage for a totally independent cinema than for the experimental cinema. Thus two totally different kinds of cinema started to co-exist in America; any interchange between the two was out of question. On the other hand French cinema saw several of its marginal, independent or experimental directors find a commercially viable way out of the experimental by making avant-garde narratives. One of the most brilliant cases is the duo Jeunet and Caro (b. 1953 and 1956), whose first films came out in the late seventies.

The artistic origins of French experimental cinema cannot be found in the *Cahiers du cinéma* milieu. Usually its directors work in some delimited fields of advertising, animated pictures or simply in the field of visual arts (Hains, Schöffer, Lapoujade, Brissot, Clareboudt, Erró, Raysse, Monory, Fleischer, Boltanski, Pommereulle), as photographers (Weill), or even musicians (Fano, Schaeffer, Parmegiani), writers (Genet), or poets (Chopin).

The most significant experimental filmmaker in France after the war was Jean Mitry (b. 1904), who worked as an assistant on the films of Gance, L'herbier and Epstein.

He was also one of the co-founders of the *Cinémathèque française* in 1936.

While he was professor of history and aesthetics at the *I.D.H.E.C.*<sup>63</sup> he wrote several books on the cinema and also made three short films: *Pacific 231* (1949), *Images pour Debussy* (Images for Debussy, 1952) and *Symphonie mécanique* (1956), a film made in cinemscope. About *Pacific 231*, Mitry explains:

Germaine Dulac a tourné des films sur la musique de Debussy. [...] Je trouvais qu'elle faisait de l'illustration et ne suivait pas le rythme. Pour moi, d'accord avec les théories d'Eisenstein sur les rapports musique-cinéma, je considérais la musique comme une structure rythmique fondamentale et les images comme une interprétation subjective.<sup>64</sup>

Mitry found that when Germaine Dulac used Debussy's music she was only «illustrating» and did not followed the rhythm (tempo). He preferred the theories and the films of Eisenstein, in which there is an organic relationship between music and cinema, music being the basic rhythmical structure and the images a subjective interpretation.

The most important movement in France around 1950 was so-called *lettrisme* (French letterism). Its most characteristic figure is undoubtedly Maurice Lemaître (b. 1926). The years 1951–52 are the most productive for the movement, with films also by Isidore Isou, Gil J. Wolman, Guy-Ernest Debord, Gabriel Pomerand, Jean-Louis Brau and François Dufrêne for instance. Most of the productions were in the charge of two of them: Maurice Lemaître again and Guy Debord (b. 1931). Lemaître in fact made over 70 films in 35 mm and 16 mm until 1982. Debord broke with *lettrisme* in 1952 and then produced the 35 mm long feature *Hurléments en faveur de Sade* (Screams for Sade, 1952). This was followed by four shorts and again a long 35 mm feature in 1978 *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni*. Several younger *lettrist* filmmakers issued from classic visual arts made films in the sixties which could be considered as structural,<sup>65</sup> formal or conceptual. Many of them used film as material

without even the use of a camera. Projections too were not necessarily made on a traditional screen. Noguez gives a list of over 20 names of artists of whom Pierre Jovet (b. 1951) was one of the few who used a camera. *L'autre* (The Other, 1973) *Théophanie* (1979) and *Sylvain* (1982) are long features described as *cinéprose*, a novel in which «the words have been replaced by cinematographic shots».<sup>66</sup>

Another totally different movement in the sixties is the G.R.I.<sup>67</sup> (a attempt to counter-balance the G.R.M.<sup>68</sup>). One of the aims of the group is to associate image and music in the tradition of Léger's and Antheil's *Ballet mécanique*.<sup>69</sup> This can be seen in a whole range of films from classic animation to «salt and pepper technique»<sup>70</sup> as in *Foules* (1960) by Robert Lapoujade (b. 1921) or long exposures called *totalisation*<sup>71</sup> as in *Variations I et II* (1964) by Etienne Weill (b. 1919). Direct painting on film is also experimented with. The group involved such artists as Jacques Brissot, Peter Foldès, Raymond Hains, Piotr Kamler, Marie-Claire Schaeffer, Nicolas Schöffer and Vic Towas. They certainly produced interesting works, but Noguez nonetheless considered that the attempt in particular at unification with music was a fiasco. For Noguez, Mitry's works still achieve a more significant result.

1968 will turn out to be an important year in France, first because the American Underground started to be influential, and secondly because of the events of May: the students' demonstrations of *Mai '68* certainly had a great impact on film thematic. Noguez sees two tendencies. The first, «le cinéma à la Godard» (called sometimes «Godardisation») and the second «le psychédéisme». I see a good example today of the former in the Belgian Chantal Akerman (b. 1950), whose long and original road starts in 1968 with *Saute ma ville*. She is one of the adepts of *cinéma intégral* (refusing *montage* —editing— and working in «real time»), a cinema supported also by Jackie Raynal (b. 1940), who was also working in «real time» (despite originally being a film editor!). The latter collaborated with Eric Rohmer, Barbet Schroeder, Chris Marker, Jean Eustache and Philippe Garrel, all figures of the narrative avant-garde. Raynal made a long silent feature in 35 mm: *Deux fois* (Twice, 1969).

From the second tendency only a film by the actor Pierre Clementi (1942–1999), *Visa de censure* (1967–75) has survived. Clementi made at least 5 films.

Apart from the world of the French avant-garde cinema that has been briefly surveyed here a mixed category can also be found which can be compared more or less to the international structural and formal tendencies already considered. The New Realists belong to it, such artists as Raymond Hains (b. 1926) and especially

Martial Raysse (b. 1936), a pioneer of video in France, who between 1967 and 1969 made four shorts and in 1971 a long feature in 35 mm.

As principal visual artists Noguez notes Yves Klein (1928–1962) who made *Cris bleus de Charles Estienne* (1957) and of course Raysse, «the most productive», but he also gives a long list of names of artists<sup>72</sup> from whose works he could not find any real aesthetic or philosophic uniformity.

There is, however, also a direct influence from American and British structural film (Sharits, Snow, Welsby, etc.) after 1974 through for instance the *Paris Film Coop*. Some films of the Group were selected in Knokke such as *VW Vitesses Women* (1974) by Claudine Eizykman and *Infra-rouge-ultra-violet* (1974) by Guy Fihman (b. 1944) who both experimented with mobile holograms in the eighties.<sup>73</sup> Besides the *Paris Film Coop* there was another association called *Collectif Jeune Cinéma*. A short «movement» grew up around this collective, related in some way to Body Art, in French *Art corporel*. It was characteristic of this movement to take the human body as basic material and use it as a kind of cinematographic ritual. Around the principle figures, Gina Pane and Michel Journiac, in this movement are found Stéphane Marti, Berndt Deprez, Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki. Some of these works made with dancers, such as *Dansité* (1979) by Jean-Paul Dupuis (b. 1949), are real anticipations of video-dance.

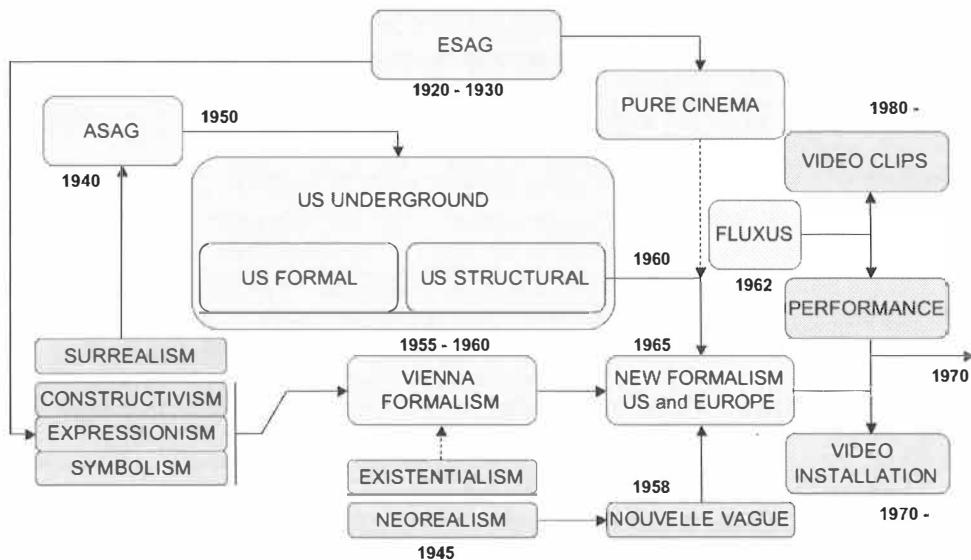


Fig. 16: Experimental Film Development (expanded theory)

In my discussion of the phenomenon of American and European experimental film during the sixties and seventies, I started with *structural film* and I have ended with *new formal film*. I have also looked briefly at the French context, making some general observations about classic books or articles on the subject (Sitney-Gidal-Hein-Le Grice-Noguez-Curtis-Small). As a genre the experimental cinema could be summed as unsure, disparate, complex and ephemeral. Personally, I have found the general argumentation of connoisseurs quite confusing and I have revealed several contradictions and ambiguities between their works (the structural-formal debate and nationalistic perspectives being the most evident). The rather small number of films which are actually available, and the «classics» which are shown nowadays in festivals, museums and the internet, though they give a reasonably satisfying general idea, will never give a definitive and exact picture of the whole. However, because the genre emphasizes individualistic points of view I consider it sufficient. Through reading comments and trying to clarify general trends in experimental cinema I found an answer paradoxically in the narcissistic roots of that same cinema, an observation that corresponds particularly well to the art of Man Ray (chapters 6 to 8). In other words, if «normal» cinema is established as a social means of communication, it can also, as an *expanded* medium, be a marvelous tool for individual and artistic development, which can give vision a personal and strong imaginative capacity (*faculté à l'imaginaire*)<sup>74</sup>. That «imaginary landscape» is at the social level as rich as its individuals, bringing to mind the argument of the French popular saying: «il faut de tout pour faire un monde». Could this be a new direction for video art education?

## 5.2. Video

Any discussion about the relationship between experimental film and video art must include a reference to their differences —Chris Meigh-Andrews<sup>75</sup>

Why don't those video makers just make silent video? We all started with silent films —Jonas Mekas<sup>76</sup>

Douglas Davis wrote in 1973:

Video is not life, of course, any more than art is. Unlike the other arts, though, it approaches the pace and unpredictability of life, and is seen in a perceptual system grounded in the home and the self. I do not know how we moviegoers are going to understand this,

thoroughly, but we must. The link between the formal occasion that is film and the private occasion that is video must be both recognized and forgotten. There will be no video art until we approach this medium as if had not existed before<sup>77</sup>

The advent of video must be understood as a revolution in the cinematic arts as important as the invention of photography was for the visual arts. The point is less to compare video and cinema than to explore its present and future potential for independent and original extensions developments in the Fine Arts.

The development of video is from its beginning first more associated with television and sound than with cinema, both by their means (image and sound) as media and the technologies involved (electronic): this is of primary importance. Secondly, the developments of video and TV broadcasting are quite closely linked by the intervention of videotape as the final result of most creations. The replacement of chemical photography by magnetic tape and also by electronic image manipulation gave the broadcasting system and video art the shapes they have today. Television precedes video by roughly one decade. It is not our purpose here to analyse the development of television, but we must always keep in mind that television is a combination of the photographic reproduction capacities of the camera, the motion capabilities of film, and the instantaneous transmission properties of telephone. Television transcends video: video is first of all a further development of television. Television has always been the object of a private monopoly or been «government-protected». Moreover, it has always tried to maintain the illusion of immediacy in its presentation of information, as is the case currently with satellite techniques. This fact may seem paradoxical when one bears in mind the increased use of videotape in its productions, since the use of videotape clearly has shown the way to transmission delay, manipulation and selective presentation —and even to censure. As far as video art is concerned, the question of the message also arises. McLuhan's theory that «the medium (itself) is the message» could of course to a certain extent have applied with structuralism in film, following the idea that the medium uses its own resources. But I will avoid this whole question, because, firstly, video art is not one of the mass-media<sup>78</sup> (unlike narrative cinema), and secondly I do not use the social quality of the message (massage) as a criterion for analysis, but only its visual impact —though sometimes socially induced. If I had the task here of analysing only the phenomenon of video clips I should undoubtedly be forced to adopt another perspective.

Video art—the medium video as art—is for all these reasons quite far removed from its television origins. David Antin notes that «at first glance artists' video seems to be defined by the total absence of any of the features that define television.»<sup>79</sup> The development of video into an independent art form followed almost immediately upon the coming onto the market of the first portable video tape recorders (VTR), the famous *Portapak*. It must be remembered that technically the VTR gave no possibilities for editing such as in filmmaking. The recording process was essentially a real-time recording method dependent upon the skill of the operator. A good example is given by Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* recorded live at the Carnegie Hall in 1965.

Nam June Paik is usually said to have bought one of the first portable videotape recorders in 1964, together with Shuya Abe<sup>80</sup>, just when art-performances were in fashion. No wonder that the Fluxus-group was one of the first to use it. Around 1965 Bruce Nauman made his first films but also put on public performances with video, for instance *Violin Tuned D.E.A.D* (1968). The next year saw the first videotapes and videoworks of Jud Yalku and William Wegman. Valie Export and Ulrike Rosenbach at the end of the sixties also used video. During the early seventies the number of artists who saw the benefits of working with video only grew. The type of basic approaches that they used can be reduced to five groups:<sup>81</sup>

- 1° the artist observes the world through the eye of the camera (filming)
- 2° the artist identifies himself with the camera (identification)
- 3° the artist observes what the camera has taped (recording)
- 4° the artist observes himself using the camera as a mirror (self investigation)
- 5° the artist observes the camera using himself as a mirror (re-presentation)

It should be noted here that most of these artists came straight from Performance Art or Land Art, but not from experimental cinema. The use of video as a mirror of the world or a mirror of itself has significant psychological resonances (narcissism, paranoia, schizophrenia, ...). If, as we usually say, TV is a window on the world, should video be a window on the *moi* (in the psychological sense given by Lacan), a video-feedback of the artist's *ego*? An interesting case is Vito Acconci with his «relational video» (plate 16). Acconci did not study visual arts, but literature and particularly after 1964 he concentrated himself on producing «physical poetry»: he wanted «to make literature hard, make words more physical,» to «use language to

cover a space rather than to uncover a meaning.»<sup>82</sup> Acconci discovered his body as an artistic space, as a place: «...when I started doing pieces, the initial attempts were very much oriented towards defining my body in space, finding a ground for myself, an alternate ground for the page ground I had as a poet.»<sup>83</sup> *Corrections* (1970) was his first videotape.

With *Hair Piece* (Toronto, 1970), Dennis Oppenheim also turned (from Land Art) to body works, using video —after having begun to record material on film—, but for him it was less a question of performance than of using «the video screen as an installational component» in sculptural situations.<sup>84</sup>

In 1976, Bob Wiegand made a quite simple dividing line in video which gives video a cinematic orientation also: «Video is often broken into many areas of exploration. I basically see only two. One includes tapes that are essentially contentless works which stem from the fine arts and communicate form and structure. The other is documentary tapes which derive from journalism or literature and communicate values.»<sup>85</sup> Ingrid Wiegand, for her part, develops the «surreal theory» of video, a reflexion about forms and values, and as a corollary a question about that dividing line:

I assume that everything we accept as reality is merely a private, limited construction that is infinitely more alterable than we imagine. At the same time, I live in a culture that has no space for what is not rationally knowable. I find that the only way out of this unrealistic and untenable situation is to change the way I see and hear what I see and hear. [...] Videotape is the means I have of making changes that leave a trace. [...] Video is a perfect medium for what I'm doing, because it's surreal by nature. It mysteriously creates an elusive, momentary, yet recognizable image from an assemblage of electronic micro-impulses. It is -at least for now- relatively grainy, indistinct, ambiguous, always full of possibilities for transformation. [...] The old surrealism became very involved with the arcane, the weird, the unusual. The new surrealism that I'm working with uses the daily, the ordinary, the familiar to reveal the surreal.<sup>86</sup>

Wegman's working procedure was quite typical of what video could offer as new possibilities which previously had been quite impossible with film. His purpose was to interact live with his dog Man Ray (plate 16) or a prop in a small private studio: «I present a situation and develop some kind of explanation around it.»<sup>87</sup> His basic principle was to use a strong and immediate stimulus to promote a spontaneous reaction. Wegman's way was an interesting case because it testified that video could be one means among others. «For long periods of time he will not produce any



video works, turning instead to either photographic works or pencil drawings. Then, when the spirit moves him, he will go into his studio either with a prop he has been thinking about or with Man Ray [his dog].»<sup>88</sup> The technical freedom of the operator and the low cost of the videotape were two important factors in this. Tape could therefore be considered a tool instead of an end.<sup>89</sup>

The second direction in which video art was developing was the computer system, which started to be technically available at the beginning of the seventies. The first video synthesizer came in 1970 and this was the first opportunity to build synthetic images. Shuya Abe and Name June Paik (plate 16) are pioneers in this field but also Stephen Beck with his *Videographics* is significant in our study, especially for the contrast it brings with video-performance. If video-performance gives unforeseeable originality to a work by its possible spontaneity or by improvisation, Beck's Direct Video Synthesizer meets the full aims of abstract painting, or what were the aims of absolute cinema: the study of forms, colours, shapes, movement, etc.

Television has a history based largely on the objective, photographic image. Experimental television is for me a process of exploring and portraying images of an opposite polarity. This type of image communicates with the viewer via a process of induction rather than through a didactic method. [...] Personally I have been interested in the symbolic, ideographic, and nonobjective modes of images, those which originate internally within the mind's eye.<sup>90</sup>

The clear formal tendency, contrary to the «objective» recording of an event by television (report) or the performance artist, is here decisive and shows that video at once experiences the same kind of dilemma as early cinema. The specificity of a videowork is, in this case, more a matter of new discoveries than a cheap and easy replacement of film material. Edward S. Small tried to convince his readers that experimental cinema includes, as a major genre, both film and video.<sup>91</sup> He takes for instance the case of Peter Campus' *Three Transitions* (1973) which uses a set of two fixed cameras, and concludes that here is a corollary of structural cinema, referring to flicker effect, loop printing and re-photography tricks which made great uses of the nature of the medium itself. I find another very clear early example in Susan Milano's installation *Video Swing* (1974), with its three cameras in parallel, and three monitor-windows reproducing an expanded virtual space (plate 17).

Like Campus, Beck's production was distributed by the New York's Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI). *Video Weavings* (1977) is another work by Beck which is reminiscent of Richter's, Ruttman's, Fischinger's, McLaren's, Whitney's or Belson's abstract works. Belson in fact worked with Beck (plate 16) and later made videos on his own, for instance *Infinity* (1982). Stan Vanderbeek also deserves a mention here. Between 1967 and 1972, in his *moviedrome* he experimented with film, video and computer-generated images, for instance *Poemfield*. Beck started to work with standard electronic waves, concentrating on visual «ingredients» of color, form, motion and texture; the process led to control over the images and the «syntax» of sequence of images.

For me the direct video synthesizer functions not as something artificial, as the term «synthetic» has come to connote, but as a compositional device which «sculpts» electronic current in the hands of an artisan. [...] Another aspect of synthesizers is that they can be used by an image composer to achieve specific images that exist internally in his mind's eye, where no camera can probe; that is, to cull images from a subjective reality or non-objective plane.<sup>92</sup>

Ben Tatti<sup>93</sup> finds three fundamental bases to video art. First, *electronic imagery*, developing two- and three-dimensional abstract forms with sound and motion through the use of an audio-video synthesizer; secondly *drawing and painting*, creating and converting black and white artwork to colour and vice versa through the application of a keyer and colorizer to the audio-video synthesizer; thirdly, *video sculpture*, projecting video images through the constructed transparent sculpture of optical devices which possibly interact with audio. In a more contemporary context we could distinguish between the following categories:

**1° video imagery produced without a camera, by electronic intervention**

**2° video works which use electronic mixers as a creative tool**

**3° video works which interact with objects added to the work**

Beck, Campus and Belson are among those participating in the video abstract-constructivist stream (plate 16) to which Nam June Paik also belongs, though he was also much involved later in neodadaist and conceptual installations, for example with *TV Garden* (1974) and *TV Buddha* (1974) (plate 16). John Hanhardt notes about Nam June Paik that he contributed «to deconstruct and demystify television. With sets randomly distributed in all positions throughout the gallery, each television

became an instrument, removed from its customary context, handled and manipulated in a direct and physical way. The exteriors were marked up and cluttered with bottles and other objects, while chairs were scattered about the space. The scanning mechanism in the television was also manipulated, affecting the reception of broadcast images. Paik's prepared televisions were his first video sculptures.»<sup>94</sup>

Bruce Nauman, for his part, was working on his *Live Taped Video Corridor* (1969–70) suggesting a sharp presence of space and time (plate 16). The *Corridor* indeed completely upset the normal apprehension of space-time and involved the spectator in the experience. Another interesting simultaneity-concept of video was given by the video-landscapes of Davidson Gigliotti. Frank Gillette and Shigeko Kubota (plate 17) also quickly saw video as an instrument of dis-location and re-presentation of the environment. The kind of perceptions linked to video and those linked to television can be compared and allow some questions concerning the perceptive environment. A television set, unlike the cinema screen, is a piece of furniture in a private home. As John Hanhardt notes, the «complex of contradictions and associations attached to the medium of television» demands our attention when we are dealing with independent video art.<sup>95</sup> The phenomenon of narrative-free and apparently information-free channels such as music television has since come to reinforce the interaction of television as home entertainment and video art as a non-narrative medium. What the works of artists of the early seventies such as Gillette's *Track/Trace* or Kubota's *Video Poem* and *Nude Descending a Staircase* have brought is a new dynamic vision—a recycling of the vision of Duchamp and the Futurists—(plate 17) which belongs neither to the cinema, nor even to multi-screen, nor the TV-screen or split-screen, and not to video-sculpture either, but to the use of a basic system for new simultaneous space-time readings (like music paper does for different instruments). Different images or different angles of the same subject are relayed on several monitors in order to organise an orchestrated simultaneous reading. The video-wall<sup>96</sup> can be one of these possible types of experience. It is a different idea to project video signals on to a screen to obtain a picture comparable to that produced in film projection. It also has its origins in the early seventies with black and white video wall projections. Like film, video can produce a series of evolving or more rapid sequential images, normally accompanied by sound. As closely as video might resemble film, its technical aspects distance it, however, from the film medium. Video, by its electronic transmission-based

technique, never sends a fully animated photographic sequence in which the human eye reconstructs the movement *itself*. Video, like the technique used in recording sound on tape, transcends the static, purely pictorial, physical and material format of film projection by first dislocating and dissociating the components of the picture (like in a telephonic conversation) and then, after transmission, faithfully reproducing the elements in an organised time-space system, so that movement (time and space dynamic) is an inherent component of the video-image. In cinema one speaks about *animated pictures* and the *frame*; in video one speaks about *freezing* or a *still*. Movement in the cinema is perceived as «false» (*faux mouvement*) while video technique gives the illusion of a basic linearity, a «total recording» — like its audio track. This is in fact the illusion of an illusion, because the electronic eye of the video camera does take 25 «stills» per second as well.<sup>97</sup> The practical consequences of this «movement of movement» on visual perception have been much discussed, and are still not satisfactorily resolved.

Keith Sonnier (plate 16) was one of the first artists to make use of video wall projectors. The quality of the reproduced image was then quite elementary, so that the projection was to create a «pictorial space, literal rather than, or as well as, optical.»<sup>98</sup> That is also called *situational video*.<sup>99</sup> The concept of a (large) pictorial space<sup>100</sup> clearly distinguishes a video projection from the conventional cinema screen: the projection space (between the projector and the wall) becomes a part of the work itself and often actively includes the spectator in the work (creating in some works shadows, as in the work of Peter Campus). If the physical participation of the spectator in a work had been totally unknown until then in cinema it had nonetheless already been experimented with by Man Ray and Lee Miller in 1930 during the so-called *soirée du «Bal Blanc»* in which they had projected a «colored film»<sup>101</sup> on dancers in white clothes.

Another interesting pioneering work, which has a close interaction with the environment but also started from a film project, was planned by Michael Snow in 1969: the machine of *De La* (1969–72), a kind of mechanical camera-stand, made of a rotating base and an arm with electronic controls. As the particularity of the machine was for filming without an operator, during the shooting of the film *La Région Centrale*, Snow himself «started to think of the machine as an object in itself as it was being built and to see that it was beautiful,» and he continues «I was thinking of other uses for it when we made the film.»<sup>102</sup> In 1971, technicians in Montreal made alterations to the machine so it could be used to hold a television

camera transmitting images by cable to four monitors (plate 18). The film and the sculpture were never shown in relation to each other but the film had led to the project of kinetic sculpture. Everything surrounding the machine is the subject of its visual scrutiny, the result of which appears as fleeting images (of the space around the sculpture, including traffic, people, light, etc.) within the rectangular frames of the four television screens. The visual particularity of this work is that the machine itself could not be seen in the monitors although it can point at the television screens and multiply their images indefinitely (electronic loop). Temporally and spatially, the «film» works in a close system and real time without any help from videotape. Moreover it involves the artist and the spectator: «The machine's only presence in the composition is an actual one, within the real space it occupies. Metaphorically, it does, however, represent the artist by looking at things and assuming them as images.»<sup>103</sup>

As Asko Mäkelä has observed, video is the best medium for describing the relationship between man and machine: video is above all a «technology-eye».<sup>104</sup> The current development of the portable telephone simply extends this concept to global human communication. The organic properties of communication technologies in relation to the mechanical properties of the human body (or seen as extensions of the body), clarified early by Marshall McLuhan, and their application in the arts, so well depicted in the work of Rebecca Horn (plate 12), will probably be the subject of some consideration in the future. So too will be the interest in body language, gesture and expression, from choreography to virtual simulation. Video performances startlingly recall Maya Deren with her *Study in Choreography for the Camera* (1945) and the subsequent films she made. Also McLaren chooses the human body as «material» for his classic experimental film, *Pas de Deux* in 1968. The French tendency known under the name of *art corporel* (Body Art) is another starting-point. Today video is a quite recognised force in the choreographic arts, especially for its electronic possibilities. The idea of using dance and choreography in order to produce original works of video—or dance—that are not simply taped sequences, using the medium for its possibilities of visual rhythm and its unique characteristics of visual perception (strobe effects, split-screens, superimposition-montages, deformations, etc.) also has its origin in the video of the early seventies. *Vidance* (1973) by Skip Sweeney and Joanne Kelly (plate 16) is one American example. The use of commercial TV material in the same way as newsreels were used in structural film has also been taken up and this has opened the way to a

development in video much appreciated in the 1980s and 1990s: scratch-video. Dara Birnbaum, the pioneer here, stole raw pictures from TV images and manipulated them. Her aims were, among others, to give video its own nature, keeping it clearly aside from TV culture, rather in the same way as the New York avant-garde did in the fifties and sixties with for example Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol.

In California, Keith Sonnier produced *Animation I* (1973), which led to *Animation II* (1974). Both are non-situational works. The former uses commercial TV material like the Watergate hearings, character-generated letters and numbers, and Kodaliths, which have all been fed into a Scanimate computer. The latter uses animated cartoons and type, and was also produced on a computer.

Observing the works produced out of the multitude of possibilities of video as art-medium, I found a few basic elements which, by their immediate inter-correlation, endow the works with their originality. These elements interact on the level of the object, the camera, the tape, the mixer, the screen and the spectator. From videographic to situational video, from video-performance to video-sculpture, from video-installation to body-video, from video-dance to scratch-video, from video wall projection to music TV, one can observe a certain number of those elements in active use. For instance, videographic is a camera-less process; some of the works need to interact with the spectator to begin to exist; one uses more than one channel (camera or monitor); another uses recycled TV or film material, etc.

I can easily distinguish *twelve* formal video art categories, according to the above elements (their presence or their absence). Works can of course fall into more than one category, though they are usually made as follows:

- 1° without a camera, by electronic intervention or video-mixer (Beck, Belson)
- 2° with the use of a camera and the video-mixer as a creative tool (Cort, Muntadas, Etra)
- 3° by interaction with objects or constructions added to the work (Paik, Byrne, Nauman)
- 4° by interaction with the environment (Snow, Gigliotti, Kren)
- 5° by interaction with the human body (Oppenheim, Nauman, Benglis)
- 6° by interaction with the spectator (this last initiating a perceptive process) (Milano)
- 7° by video projection onto a screen or wall (as film projection) (Nauman, Sonnier)
- 8° by video projection onto objects (Hill)
- 9° as a multi-channel installation (Paik, Nauman, Kubota)
- 10° as a recorded performance (Wegman, Rosenbach)
- 11° as the recording of a fact (cinéma vérité like) (Reilly)
- 12° by recycling existing material as raw material (scratch) (Sonnier, Birnbaum)

I have given an overview of some of the video-pioneers' works and observed that video art had quite early taken on the appearance of a personal medium, depending on neither television nor the cinema, and not even on experimental cinema. The evolution of video as art over more than thirty years has been relatively slow, and has mostly depended on the evolution of the techniques: mainly an improvement in the techniques of conventional cinema with possibilities of editing, but also a mobility of action with the appearance of cassettes in cameras, color, etc.

The most significant movements of the 1980s and the 1990s, like the spirit of *Subverting Television*, which I intend to discuss in the last chapter (in subchapter video-rew) are maybe more connected to popular trends (video clip, scratch,...) yet they are sometimes very experimental, avant-gardist or anarchist in nature. On the one hand the great majority of video productions of the 1980s and 1990s are near-narrative, highly metaphorical, impressionistic and emotional, far from the avant-garde spirit of 1920–1970s. On the other hand, there is a more analytical, symbolist or conceptual movement which considers video as a pure and independent visual art thought occasionally it can be linked with other media: Lynn Hershman (b. 1941) is a good example.

The new digital formats to come will be able to package a great quantity of visual and audio information. They will encourage interactive works and especially with music and video it will be possible to reach deeper perceptual experiences. Chris Meigh-Andrews emphasized recently the «influence and impact of sound recording and experimental music on video art».<sup>105</sup> After the classic experimentations of John Cage (1912–1992) and Pierre Schaeffer (1910–1995) some interesting work was done in the eighties with videos made for the musicians Laurie Anderson and Brian Eno. For instance, Eno originally composed *Thursday Afternoon* (1984) for an experimental video of the same name directed by Christine Alicino. It was intended to be experienced on a vertical TV screen and it consists of seven «video-paintings» which try to answer the question of how viewing video repeatedly, like listening to music, can be possible. The image changes inside each painting are imperceptible, so that it is at the same time a painting and an opposition to the visual and narrative «attraction» of the clip form. Eno, indeed, has observed that the narrative aesthetic structure limits the number of viewings — a work of fiction in cinema or simply a novel are intended to be experienced generally only once:

...Unfortunately, the cinematic heritage seems inimical to the idea of multiple-view video tapes or discs. It relies heavily for its impact on a dramatic momentum which is sustained by frequent scene changes, fast editing and the narrative development of the plot. As a result, being in some way a function of surprise, this impact is eroded by repeated viewings. The usual response to this problem has been to load the video with more scene-changes, faster edits, stranger camera-angles and more exotic special effects, in short, more surprises - presumably, in the hope of delaying the inevitable decline of interest in the work as it becomes more familiar. This is the condition of pop-video, and it has almost nowhere left to go in this direction.<sup>106</sup>

This statement, with which I entirely concur, leads me to add to my earlier list more possible ways of constructing video that concern only the relationship between music and video:

**13° works which produce narrative imagery for music (clip)**

**14° works which produce structurally non-narrative imagery for music**

Eno's idea is to create an image possibly acting on its immediate environment as ambient music does: «I am interested in [...] a more steady-state image-based work which one can look at and walk away from as one would a painting: it sits still and you move.»<sup>107</sup>

The video works of Peter Greenaway are sophisticated half-paintings, half-narratives: the French-Dutch production *Les Morts de la Seine* (1989), a half-length experimental documentary produced by *Le Centre d'Art Plastiques*, or another of Greenaway's non-conventional works, *TV-Dante* (1990), a rock and video art fusion, are good examples of the «new visualism» which came around the year 2000. Bill Viola has recently developed his video-making in quite similar, sophisticated theatrical and symbolic ways (plates 17 and 34).

These subcategories show that unlike previous «schools» —futurist, dadaist, surrealist, lyric realism, underground, etc.— video cannot easily be «categorized». In video art there is no longer a question of different local trends but of a global phenomenon not geographically or even temporally delimited.

The formal subcategories I have here proposed based on the techniques and actual performance output could be used for a further, and non-exhaustive, classification. The high number of «genres» only emphasises the diversity of visions and distances it singularly from experimental cinema. It emphasises that beyond experimental



film we have an «expanded cinema» in which video art plays the leading avant-gardist role.

In the current virtual and digital environment that new avant-gardist visualism can only increase and strengthen. I shall look at some of the recent development of video art in the last chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> *Témoignages: Man Ray* in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma*, Etudes cinématographiques, n°38-39, 1965, p. 45

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Le Grice: *Experimental Cinema in the Digital Age*, 2001, p. 267

<sup>3</sup> Chris Meigh-Andrews: *A History of Video Art* The development of form and Function, 2006, p. 71

<sup>4</sup> James Broughton: *Film as a Way of Seeing*, Film Culture 29, 1963

<sup>5</sup> John Grierson's production company GPO Film Unit (General Post Office Film Unit)

<sup>6</sup> Michael O'Pray: *The British Avant-garde Film (1926 to 1995)*, *An Anthology of Writings*, 1996

<sup>7</sup> Oswald Blakeston: *Film Enquiry* -3 in *The Architectural Review*, vol 70, 1931

<sup>8</sup> Deke Dusinberre: *The Avant-garde Attitude* first published in 1980, republished in

Michael O'Pray: *The British Avant-garde Film (1926 to 1995)*, *an Anthology of Writings*, 1996

<sup>9</sup> In *The Architectural Review*, vol. 69, 1931

<sup>10</sup> We are touching here a real problem of avant-garde cinema history; as Dominique Noguez also observes in *Une renaissance du cinéma, le cinéma underground américain* (1985) that underground's recognition is upon dependence of critics, festivals and overall cultural reception: beyond the «official» underground there is also the «real» underground existing outside «official galleries».

<sup>11</sup> Deke Dusinberre: *The other Avant-gardes* in *Film as Film*, 1979, p. 55

<sup>12</sup> Deke Dusinberre: *The Avant-garde Attitude* first published in 1980, republished in Michael O'Pray: *The British Avant-garde Film (1926 to 1995)*, *an Anthology of Writings*, 1996

<sup>13</sup> We remind here Man Ray's jazz-records used as accompaniment to his films.

<sup>14</sup> David Curtis: *Experimental Cinema, a Fifty-year Evolution*, 1971, p. 39

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42

<sup>16</sup> Edward S. Small: *Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre*, 1994, pp. 40-41

<sup>17</sup> David Curtis: *Experimental Cinema, a Fifty-year Evolution*, 1971, p. 41

<sup>18</sup> Rudolph Arnheim: *Film als Kunst*, 1957, *Film as Art*, English transl., 1966, p. 110

<sup>19</sup> Or the intrigue is false / artificial / parodistic (as in Man Ray's *Le mystère du château du Dé*)

<sup>20</sup> Rudolf Arheim: *Film as Art*, 1957, p. 133

<sup>21</sup> Edward S. Small: *Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre*, 1994, p. 43

<sup>22</sup> P. Adam Sitney: *Visionary Film*, 1974, p. 18

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21, also quoted by Moira Sullivan in *An Anagram of the Ideas of Filmmaker Maya Deren*, doctoral theses, Stockholm University, 1997, p. 19; I'd like to confront the term to its actual use, fifty years later to Trance-video, Trance-music, etc. or Techno, Trance, Ambient, ChillOut,... Most of the criteria of Sitney could describe the main properties of clips of the nineties.

<sup>25</sup> Moira Sullivan: *An Anagram of the Ideas of Filmmaker Maya Deren*, doctoral theses, Stockholm University, 1997, p. 51

<sup>26</sup> Maya Deren: *Notes, Essays, Letters*, Film Culture, 39 (1965), p. 1

<sup>27</sup> Maya Deren: *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*, 1946

<sup>28</sup> Jarmo Valkola: *Katseen visiot*, 1992, p. 18 (transl. JC)

<sup>29</sup> David Curtis: *Experimental Cinema, a Fifty Year Evolution*, 1971, p. 50

<sup>30</sup> Maya Deren: *Notes, Essays, Letters*, Film Culture, 39 (1965), p. 1 quoted by P. Adams Sitney: *Visionary Film*, 1974, p. 9

<sup>31</sup> Edward S. Small, *Direct Theory*, 1994, p. 50 and John Conomos in MESH film / video / multimedia / art

#11, MESH Journal of Experimental Media Arts, (no date) <http://experimenta.org/mesh/mesh11/11con.html>

<sup>32</sup> Stan Brakhage: *Metaphors on Vision*, Film Culture, Autumn 1963 (unnumbered p. 25), quoted by Edward S.

Small 1994, p. 50 (and partly by P. Adam Sitney, 1974, p. 18)

<sup>33</sup> Jarmo Valkola: *Katseen visiot*, 1992, p. 8 (transl. JC, Valkola wrote in Finnish «transsensentalistista egoismia»)

<sup>34</sup> Entoptic images are closed-eye percepts of «floaters», actually optic «debris», see also in Edward S. Small:

*Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre*, 1994 p. 52

<sup>35</sup> Edward S. Small in *Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre* 1994, p. 48, quotes Norman McLaren

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46-48 Small quotes John G. Hanhardt: *The Medium Viewed: The American Avant-Garde Film*, in the American Federation of Art's *A History of the American Avant-Garde Cinema* (New York, 1976, pp. 44-46),

<sup>37</sup> Edward S. Small: *Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre*, 1994, p. 48; it is good here to make a link with Man Ray's opening sequence in *Le retour à la raison* using objects' rayographs in the same way. It was more question of «dance» then of what, how and why, objects were dancing.

<sup>38</sup> Film Culture, n°47, 1969, in which he uses for the first time «structural»

- <sup>39</sup> «Film is a nice thing» (elokuva on kiva juttu), he said presenting a retrospective of short films. Tampere Film Festival, march 7, 1991 (Jacques Coelho)
- <sup>40</sup> In the Tampere Film Festival programme book, 1991, p. 62
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63
- <sup>42</sup> The immediate repetition of shots, exactly and without variation
- <sup>43</sup> P. Adams Sitney: *Visionary Film*, 1974, pp. 369-70 (second edition): another version of the same text is given by Birgit Hein in which «off the screen» is written «of off a screen» (*Film as Film*, 1979, p. 93, originally published in *Film Culture*, n°47, 1969. It means probably «filming a projected film» (a trick also used in video —to reduce definition of the image or creating artistic effects
- <sup>44</sup> Birgit Hein: *Film as Film*, 1979, p. 93
- <sup>45</sup> Dominique Noguez: *Une renaissance du cinéma, le cinéma underground américain*, 1985, p. 370
- <sup>46</sup> Roland Barthes: *L'activité structuraliste*, 1963, in *Essais critiques*, 1964, p. 215-218
- <sup>47</sup> Transl. JC after Philip Mairet
- <sup>48</sup> Referring to Roman Jakobson's «metalanguage» we could conceive the «metacinema», a cinema «about the cinema»
- <sup>49</sup> Peter Gidal: *Structural Film Anthology*, 1976 and *Materialist Film*, 1989
- <sup>50</sup> Adapted from Birgit Hein text in *Film as Film*, 1979, pp. 93-105
- <sup>51</sup> Dominique Noguez: *Une renaissance du cinéma, le cinéma underground américain*, 1985, p. 284
- <sup>52</sup> Malcolm Le Grice: *Abstract Film and Beyond*, 1977, p. 105
- <sup>53</sup> The Minimalists Sol Lewitt and Donald Judd are known for their «Primary Structures»: variations are important, as are combinations and series starting from elementary figures whose formal potential is developed almost mathematically (from Jean-Louis Ferrier: *Art of Our Century*, 1989, p. 628)
- <sup>54</sup> *Le sang d'un poète* (1930) of Cocteau can be considered as a «no man's land» surrealist-narrative; If it is a key film for Kenneth Anger, it is however discussed and considered by many as a non-surrealist film.
- <sup>55</sup> Birgit Hein: *Film as Film*, 1979, p. 94
- <sup>56</sup> P. Adams Sitney: *Visionary Film*, 1974, pp. 369-70 quoted by Malcolm Le Grice in *Abstract Film and Beyond*, 1977, p. 86
- <sup>57</sup> Malcolm Le Grice: *Abstract Film and Beyond*, 1977, p. 87
- <sup>58</sup> Edward S. Small: *Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre*, 1994, p. 81, Small's includes video as «expanded cinema», what is logical in itself, but forget then intentionally a subcategory for video installations and performances. Because we analyses video separately the video section has been completely removed from the chart. For instance cinevideo, computer works, etc. will take a place besides subcategories of video. To each category Small puts a subcategory «ETC.» in which Small probably means «all works which resist to classification». We have conserved this view only for the expanded cinema, and removed «ETC.» subcategory from ESAG, ASAG and British categories, because historically better described in literature.
- <sup>59</sup> See the list of the two generations of New Formal Film in «documentation»
- <sup>60</sup> Dominique Noguez: *Trente ans de cinéma expérimental en France (1950-1980)*, 1982, p. 6
- <sup>61</sup> 1949 (30 French/25 American); 1958 (17/58); 1963 (17/46); 1967 (4/33); 1974 (3/28)
- <sup>62</sup> Institut Des Hautes Etudes Cinémathographiques (French cinema school)
- <sup>63</sup> From an interview with Jawad Bashara (7 January, 1982) in Dominique Noguez: *Trente ans de cinéma expérimental en France (1950-1980)*, 1982, p. 100
- <sup>64</sup> This is similar to the case of Eino Ruutsalo in Finland whose films were both linked to the *nouvelle vague* and structural film
- <sup>65</sup> Pierre Jouvét productions: [http://perso.orange.fr/pierre.jouvet/Francais/L\\_Autre.htm](http://perso.orange.fr/pierre.jouvet/Francais/L_Autre.htm)
- <sup>66</sup> Groupe de recherche sur l'image (Image Research Group)
- <sup>67</sup> Groupe de recherches musicales (Music Research Group, ORTF, French radio house, Paris)
- <sup>68</sup> The music associated to the *Ballet mécanique* was composed by George Antheil but was never successfully recorded as synchronized version and both works have been performed separately
- <sup>69</sup> Dominique Noguez: *Trente ans de cinéma expérimental en France (1950-1980)*, 1982, p. 25; «du dessin animé classique à l'utilisation de grains de sel et de poivre», the technique is possibly close to Man Ray's rayogrammes in *Le Retour à la raison*;
- <sup>70</sup> «Totalisation» is a term given by the director Alexandre Alexeïeff (b. 1901) to describe the traces produced by the light on the film when long exposure and movement are associated. «Totalisation» means «totalizing different positions in one picture by long exposure».
- <sup>71</sup> Such as Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Christian Boltanski, Pol Bury, Jean Clareboudt, (Gudmundur) Erró, Alain Fleischer, Jean Le Gac, Jacques Monory, Armand Petitjean, Daniel Spoerri, Peter Stämpfli, Gérard Titus-Carmel, Antoni Miralda, Joan Rabascall, Jaume Xifra, and Benet Rossell
- <sup>72</sup> The technique of the cinehologram seems to have been today abandoned
- <sup>73</sup> Or *faculté d'imagination* (personal level of creativity) and *social inconscient* (social imaginary) together (=personal imaginary landscape)
- <sup>74</sup> Chris Meigh-Andrews: *History of Video art The Development of Form and Function*, 2006, p. 85
- <sup>75</sup> Steina Vasulka quotes Jonas Mekas in Chris Meigh-Andrews, 2006, p. 85
- <sup>76</sup> Douglas Davis: *Filmgoing/Videogoing: Making Distinctions* American Film Institute Journal, May 1973, pp. 51-52 reproduced in *Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, pp. 196-199
- <sup>77</sup> Nor a «massage» (As Nam June Paik's version of McLuhan's theory concerning the messages transmitted to a large scale or through a network or still messages which intend to be reproduced for diffusion) cf. in Marshall McLuhan: *Understanding media*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, NY, 1964)
- <sup>78</sup> David Antin: *The Distinctive Features of the Medium* in *Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976 pp. 174-183

- <sup>80</sup> They invented also the first video synthesizer in 1970
- <sup>81</sup> Adapted freely from Asko Mäkelä's article in Minna Tarkka *Video Taide Media* Anthology 1993, p. 93 (originally published in *Video by Artists*, Toronto, 1986)
- <sup>82</sup> *Avalanche* 6, 1972, p. 4. quoted by Willoughby Sharp in *Videoperformance Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 257
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>84</sup> Dennis Oppenheim in *Avalanche* 9, 1974 quoted by Willoughby Sharp in *Videoperformance in Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 262
- <sup>85</sup> Bob Wiegand in *Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, pp. 140-141
- <sup>86</sup> Ingrid Wiegand in *Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 143
- <sup>87</sup> William Wegman in an interview with Liza Béar, *Avalanche* 7, 1973, p. 43 quoted in *Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 262
- <sup>88</sup> Willoughby Sharp: *Videoperformance in Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 262
- <sup>89</sup> This reinforces the idea that in video art the medium is *not* the message
- <sup>90</sup> Stephen Beck: *Videographics in Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 20
- <sup>91</sup> Edward S. Small: *Direct Theory, Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre*, 1994
- <sup>92</sup> Stephen Beck: *Videographics in Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 21
- <sup>93</sup> Ben Tattl: *Video Art in Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, pp. 130-131
- <sup>94</sup> John G. Hanhardt: *Video Art: Expanded Forms, Notes toward a History*, The Luminous Image (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1984), p. 57, quoted by Edward S. Small in *Direct Theory, Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre*, 1994, pp. 92-93
- <sup>95</sup> John Hanhardt: *Video/Television Space in Video Art, An Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 220
- <sup>96</sup> One means by «video-wall» a plane or organised surface composed of several monitors, not a «video wall projection» which uses a video-projector
- <sup>97</sup> 24 frames per second for the movie camera (in silent film 16 and 18 frames per second)
- <sup>98</sup> Kenneth Baker: *Keith Sonnier at The Modern*, Artforum, 1971 quoted by Peter Frank in *Video Art Installations: The Telenvironment in Video Art, An Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 204
- <sup>99</sup> Willoughby Sharp: *Videoperformance in Video Art, an Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, p. 254
- <sup>100</sup> The projection occurs usually straight to a surface like a wall which is not a conventional screen, the edges of the picture being quite often unclear
- <sup>101</sup> «I hired a movie projector which was set up in a room on an upper floor, with the window giving out on the garden. I found an old hand-colored film by the pioneer French film-maker Méliès (sic) [...] the film was projected on this moving screen» in Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 137. Lee Miller describes the same event in *My Man Ray*, Interview by M. Amaya, in *Art in America*, New York, May/June 1975
- <sup>102</sup> Michael Snow: *De La 1969-1972 in Video Art, An Anthology* by Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, 1976, pp. 118-119
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>104</sup> Asko Mäkelä: *Esineellistetty ruumis -varhaisen performanssideon tausta* in Minna Tarkka *Video Taide Media* Anthology, 1993, p. 93
- <sup>105</sup> Chris Meigh-Andrews: *A History of Video Art The Development of Form and Function*, 2006, p. 89
- <sup>106</sup> Brian Eno: from the video's inlay card of *Thursday Afternoon* (1984) and CD (EG records, 1985)
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

# 6. Man Ray



## Bricoleur, Iconoclast, Conceptualist

Si l'on est en pleine possession d'un médium, force nous est de le mépriser un peu. —Man Ray<sup>1</sup>

### 6.1. Painting, Objects, Photography and Cinema: Man Ray's Vision

The «problem» of Man Ray begins with the matter that he cannot be classified as an artist in one genre. Painter, photographer, filmmaker, printmaker, object-maker, poet, essayist, philosopher –his eclecticism flaunts the ground rules of art history. Man Ray is a chain of enigmas. Paradoxes characterize each phase of his long and complex career and combine to make him the quintessential modernist personality.<sup>2</sup>

The biggest paradox with Man Ray was his career-long admiration for the Old Masters. A paradox because, though he started early to paint in the way of Cézanne and the Cubists, he still admired Ingres. His work and memories were never lacking in classical memories, even when he was becoming one of the hard-line figures in Dada, and was therefore supposed to annihilate academic tradition.

Throughout time painting has alternately been put to the service of the church, the state, arms, individual patronage, nature appreciation, scientific phenomena, anecdote and decoration. But all the marvelous works that have been painted, whatever the sources of inspiration, still live for us because of absolute qualities they possess in common. The creative force and the expressiveness of painting reside materially in the color and texture of pigment, in the possibilities of form invention and organization, and in the flat plane on which these elements are brought to play. The artist is concerned solely with linking these absolute qualities directly to his wit, imagination, and experience, without the go-between of a «subject». [...] The artist's work is to be measured by the vitality, the invention, and the definiteness and conviction of purpose within its own medium.<sup>3</sup>

The contradiction continues within the relation he had with modern arts in general, and especially the Cubists and Surrealists, despite the fact that many of them were close friends. The frequent explanations for this paradox, that are made very evident by his biographer Neil Baldwin, are found in his personality, and specifically in his

temperament. Examples can be found in *Self Portrait* but also in interviews, such as this short one he gave in 1965 to an American magazine:

Picasso, Matisse and Braque, I like them as personalities, their work doesn't inspire me, but their energy and productivity give me inspiration. I avoid labels. I believe in personalities, which is rather difficult nowadays.<sup>4</sup>

The temperament of the artist is, for Man Ray, the key of his art; it is quite admitted that Man Ray was an opportunist *bricoleur* and even, on the occasion, voyeur.

I'm not a politician. I don't need a majority. I don't want notoriety. I'm supposed to be modest, but it amuses me to push my paintings.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of *pushing* raises questions about the limits, the needs, the means and the targets of painting. The role to give to the arts has been pondered here several times before (in the Introduction and chapters 1, 2 and 4). The implicit significance that Man Ray gives is that the artist is always *involved*<sup>6</sup> —at least passively— with «politics», without being an actual «politician» or being directly «concerned» with anything political. But he must remain independent. This also frankly demarks Man Ray from Breton and his political Surrealism.

Man Ray was blessed with lifelong curiosity verging upon voyeurism; he was naturally intrigued by the way people looked and lived. The camera was «his passport», permitting safe passage across otherwise perilous boundaries.<sup>7</sup>

This *pushing* and infinite *curiosity* find their first real expression with the use of objects on the canvas (*Self Portrait*, 1916; *Boardwalk*, 1916) and of the industrial airbrush in the New York *Aerographs* around 1919 (plates 25, 26, 27). His contribution to designing and publishing *A Book of Divers Writings* with Adon Lacroix or to the *Ridgefield Gazook* in 1915, and the *visual poems* he made at the same period, are good examples of early works of *bricolage*.<sup>8</sup>

Claude Lévi-Strauss writes in *La Pensée sauvage*

Le bricoleur est apte à exécuter un grand nombre de tâches diversifiées ; mais, à la différence de l'ingénieur, il ne subordonne pas chacune d'entre elles à l'obtention de matières premières et d'outils, conçus et procurés à la mesure de son projet: son univers instrumental est clos, et la règle de son jeu est de toujours s'arranger avec les «moyens du bord», c'est-à-dire un

ensemble à chaque instant fini d'outils et de matériaux, hétéroclites au surplus, parce que la composition de l'ensemble n'est pas en rapport avec le projet du moment, ni d'ailleurs avec aucun projet particulier, mais est le résultat contingent de toutes les occasions qui se sont présentées de renouveler ou d'enrichir le stock, ou de l'entretenir avec les résidus de constructions et de destructions antérieures.<sup>9</sup>

Beyond the *hétéroclite* we attempt in a next chapter to show how *bricolage* was probably in Man Ray's cinema a vision à l'état brut.<sup>10</sup>

The experiment in *film stereoscopy* attempted with Duchamp and the first *ready-mades* (*Lampshade*, 1917) make Man Ray a contributor to the kinetic arts (plate 27). When photography came by chance —because he wanted to photograph his own work— he *pushed* his camera to discover new possibilities, especially in optics and with the chemical properties of the film. He was challenging reality. His photographic momentum came undoubtedly with *L'élévage de poussières* (1920) which is probably the first *sur-real* photograph ever made (plate 23).

Perhaps the final goal desired by the artist is a confusion or merging of all the arts, as things merge in real life.<sup>11</sup>

*L'élévage de poussières* (I will discuss the picture later) was historically the first picture Man Ray made with a camera and with the desire of *not reproducing what is but what it looks like*: here, an imaginary landscape. The camera became as it were a pencil by which to confuse the real and the imaginary. Rosalind Krauss who wrote on the «Index» in photography remarks about this photograph that «the accumulation of dust is a kind of physical index for the passage of time»<sup>12</sup> so, we have here two interpretations which meet in a time–space dimension.

### [painting versus photography]

One of the enigmas of Man Ray is his love-hate relationship with photography.

Painting for me was a very personal, intimate affair, photography was for everyone. There was no question for me of comparison or substitution between the two.<sup>13</sup>

It must be conceded that Man Ray's statements have never helped to resolve an already old art historical question that is still discussed today: is photography an art?

He insisted upon making his way as a painter, to the point where visitors to his studio who sought to bring up the subject of photography were brusquely turned away.<sup>14</sup>

The discussion can be handled on different level. The struggle of Alfred Stieglitz for photography to become a full and independent art form was a subject close to the young Man Ray's heart and it could be one starting-point for discussion.

Stieglitz worked incessantly at his photography, to prove that it was art, both by his publication of a deluxe photographic magazine, and by his own examples. [...] Although the photographs of Stieglitz were free of anecdote and cheap sentiment, they remained intensely figurative in contrast to the painting and sculpture he exhibited. I could not help thinking that since photography had liberated the modern painter from the drudgery of faithful representation, this field would become the exclusive one of photography, helping it to become an art in its own right; hence Stieglitz's interest in the two means of expression. And so there was no conflict. Despite my respect for Stieglitz's efforts, and my aroused interest in photography, painting remained my guiding passion.<sup>15</sup>

It seems therefore that Man Ray, despite having brought a totally new attitude to photography, one closer to painting, is still hesitating (in 1963) to give photography its own discrete character. The same attitude arises with cinema later.

Roger Scruton in *The Aesthetic Understanding*<sup>16</sup> proposes a theory of representation whereby the suggestion that photography is a representational art may be refuted. To do so, Scruton differentiates ideal photography from actual photography and proposes a paradoxical position in which painting in particular serves as a wrong starting-point for comparison:

In order to understand what I mean by saying that photography is not a representational art, it is important to separate painting and photography [...] Ideal photography differs from actual photography as indeed ideal painting differs from actual painting. Actual photography is the result of the attempt by photographers to pollute the ideal of their craft with the aims and method of painting.<sup>17</sup>

Though he differentiates ideal and actual painting Scruton does not stipulate which of them is actually polluting photography. He speaks about «ideal photography» as «logical fiction, designed merely to capture what is distinctive in the photographic relation and our interest in it».

He compares the *intentionality* of (ideal) painting and (ideal) photography and comes to the conclusion that if there is, in painting «a certain intentional relation to a subject» it does not need (the subject) necessarily to exist. And if it is a representation of an existing subject, *the gesture of representation is intentional*, not accidental:

The successful realization of that intention lies in the creation of an appearance, an appearance which in some way leads the spectator to recognize the subject.<sup>18</sup>

The idea of Scruton is to show that with photography the intention still exists but is «inversed», more exactly «causal» because «a photograph is a photograph of something»: the subject obligatorily exists and the «intentional act involved» is *not* «an essential part of the photographic relation».

The ideal photography also yields an appearance, but the appearance is not interesting as the realization of an intention but rather as a record of how an actual object looked.<sup>19</sup>

This differentiation works in most of the cases (generally), but not in all cases as e.g. rayographs will prove. In addition to that, the «accidental matter», the causality of the process of photography itself can be put in doubt: a photograph does not necessarily start from a «model» existing in nature, meaning that the questions of causality and intentions are completely relative. When the photographer is constructing a set or composes the lighting he is already interfering with the subject and therefore has a *vision* about the result, as a painter has a *vision* about the final result of his work. *Both are developing that vision within the process of painting or photographing.* That vision is the result of a mental process —which does not exist in nature, which is *independent of the subject or the object*; it finds its source in the experience of the artist and is the result of «conventions» as well. In this way, it is above all experience which modulates the *vision of the painter* and *the vision of the photographer*, not the model.

Scruton sees also that «the causal process of which the photographer is a victim puts almost every detail outside of his control»<sup>20</sup> makes photography a «poor» artistic



medium. It provides therefore a rather conservative perspective compared to the principle of *chance* promoted by Dadaists and Surrealists.

Scruton himself concludes that «the intentionality of the one relation and the causality of the other are quite irrelevant to the standing of the finished product»; why then take the complicated method of splitting photography and painting both in ideal and actual qualities?

The appreciation of photographs and the appreciation of paintings both involve the exercise of the capacity to «see as», in the quite special sense in which one may see *x* as *y* without believing or being tempted to believe that *x* is *y*.<sup>21</sup>

He sees the «problem» basically on the level of representation:

When I appreciate a painting as a representation, I see it as what it represents, but I do not take it for what it represents. Nor do I necessarily believe that what is represented in the painting exists nor, if it does exist, that it has the appearance of the object that I see *in* the painting.<sup>22</sup>

For Scruton the ideal photograph instead, is «a causal process which originates in the subject *represented* and which has as its end point the production of a copy of an appearance», a «substitute for looking at the thing itself».<sup>23</sup>

The photograph lacks that quality of *intentional inexistence* which is characteristic of painting. The ideal photograph, therefore, is incapable of representing anything unreal; [...] the process of fictional representation occurs not in the photograph but in the subject; the photograph does no more than disseminate its visual character to other eyes. [...] But the representational act, the act which embodies the representation thought, is completed **before** the photograph is ever taken. This fictional incompetence of photography is of great importance in our understanding of the cinema; but it also severely limits the aesthetic significance of *representation* in photography.<sup>24</sup>

The observation by Scruton starts from the viewpoint of painting in which the representational act *is completed after the photograph is ever taken*<sup>25</sup>: that is the «problem». In painting the significance of the work lies apparently in the work itself, its representation. The work of a painter is already a finality in itself and its process an act resulting from a certain vision that can be assimilated to a mental *cliché*. Richard Eldridge underlying Dewey notes that «without some presentation of a subject matter as a focus for thought fused to perceptual experience the status of a

work as art is reasonably subject to doubt. The representation itself is not centrally part of the intended focus for attention.»<sup>26</sup> But Eldridge also remarks that «it is unclear how such presentations are achieved, and it is unclear how and why they matter, over and above the normal function of communicating information that is discharged by most representations.»<sup>27</sup>

In photography (and cinema) the process *can* even be much more complex. The painting as a unique piece, an original, can be compared to a piece of music, a symphony or whatever is immutable (but of course an interpretative challenge for future musicians). Photography however lies instead in the world of *direct interpretation of the existing and the ephemeral* whenever its level of representation (representationality)<sup>28</sup> lies in a totally different register: the representational act does not especially become intrinsic to the work but inherent to the process before and after the *cliché*; as Scruton says «the camera, then, is being used not to represent something but to point to it».<sup>29</sup> The *representationality* of the work starts only afterwards, in relation to experience, time, place, interpretation, understanding, emotions, etc. It seems however that Scruton understands that:

The photograph is a means to the end of seeing its subject; in painting, on the other hand, the subject is the means to the end of its own representation.<sup>30</sup>

But I will nuance the discourse of photography by differentiating subject from object: the photograph can be also *a means to the end of representing its object*, for instance the attitude of Man Ray considering the object of photography *beyond the visible* (see further).

Representation is the product of human activity in response to the object or subject matter of the representation<sup>31</sup>

Kendall Walton sees causality in another perspective, as being at the service of creativity related to the process:

For something to be an object of representation (i.e. something that the representation presents), it must have a causal role in the production of the work; it must in one way or another figure in the process whereby the representation came about, either by entering into the intentions with which the work was produced or in some more «mechanical» manner.<sup>32</sup>

The biggest «problem» with painting and photography, and the way Scruton is presenting both—in ideal and actual casts—is to determine the means and the end in question. Scruton speaks about the «typical way in which we are interested in photographs», and he discards «Man Ray's Rayogrammes», but he does not define what is typical and what is not. His concern for the trueness to the facts<sup>33</sup> in photography is frankly inconsistent: who has ever suggested that photography is «true to the facts» and that it tells us «useful things» about the «subject-matter»? No more or less than painting does. The recent developments of photography as (digital) technique and as an artistic means in general completely contradict that view. Scruton ante facto (and before the existence of *photoshop*) is suspicious that the photographer would «proceed to paint things out or in, to touch up alter, or *pasticher* as he pleases»<sup>34</sup>—dodging in and dodging out, diffusing and blurring pictures, etc.—but then «he has now to become a painter, precisely through taking representation seriously» and moves «away from ideal photography toward the ideal of painting».<sup>35</sup> It did not seem to occur to Scruton that the photographer could be a modern painter before his modern medium and his (modern) subject. I shall close this long parenthesis on Roger Scruton by concluding that Man Ray, being aware of these «problems» did not have to «become a painter» after being a photographer, he *was* a painter «before his medium and his subject».

Drawing and painting for me were a relief from my photography, but I had no intention of substitution. [...] There was no conflict between the two—why couldn't people accept the idea that one might engage in two activities in his lifetime, alternately or simultaneously? The implication, no doubt, was that photography was not on a level with painting—it was not art. This has been a moot question since the invention of photography, in which I had never been interested, and to avoid discussion, I had declared flatly that photography is not art, publishing a pamphlet with this statement as the title.<sup>36</sup>

Rosalind Krauss does not help in the discussion either when she writes:

[...] Because Man Ray is the inventor of the Rayograph—that subspecies of photo which forces the issue of photography's existence as an index. [...] But the photogram only forces, or makes explicit, what is the case of *all* photography. Every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface. The photograph is thus a type of icon, or visual likeness, which bears an indexical relationship to its object. Its separation from true icons is felt through the absoluteness of this physical genesis, one that seem to short-circuit or disallow those processes of schematization or symbolic intervention that operate within the graphic representations of most paintings. If the Symbolic finds its

way into pictorial art through the human consciousness operating behind the forms of representation, forming a connection between objects and their meaning, this is not the case for photography. Its power is an index and its meaning resides in those modes of identification which are associated with the Imaginary.<sup>37</sup>

Another point of view to bring to the dilemma of the painter photographer (or the photographer painter) can be put in Duchamp's words «*There is no solution because there is no problem*»<sup>38</sup>: there is no «problem» because to ask if photography is art is first to suggest that someone knows perfectly what art is, and therefore to place ourselves in a vicious circle.<sup>39</sup> The question is fundamentally existential. Setting criteria for art, for instance painting, is as absurd as to compare photography with it. In my opinion photography does not have to fulfil any painting criteria such as *richness of technique or expression, uniqueness*, or even to hide a relative dependence on reality and occasionally from painting. That is what the *gesamtkunstwerk* was about.

The last attitude is of course agnostic, *avoiding* the existentialist paradigm and suggesting simply that photography *is*. It may be seen also as arguing that any *object*, besides being a commercial artefact, can *also* be art, or anti-art. So by the same token commenting on photography as being art or as not being art implies the same attitude to it as to modern art: that photography is to be *seen* and *accepted* as art is a kind of axiom. It is the same position as recognising both the *presence* of the ready-made and the *objet trouvé* as a work of art. To refuse the status of art to photography because it is or can be only a faithful representation of reality, a mere simulacrum of the real instead of being an *interpreted artistic truth, a representation of that reality* is absurd because this status should then also be refuted for a large part of the visual arts before (and after) the modern period including the ready-made.

I nuanced representation with *representationality, a level of representation* that varies from one medium to the other. Richard Eldridge has differentiated between representation and depiction. For him «in the more restricted sense of (*visual*) *depiction*, representationality is clearly not necessary for art»<sup>40</sup> and coming with the example of abstract art he notes quoting Noël Carroll and Anne Sheppard that abstract paintings, most orchestral music, and some abstract video and performance pieces «stand for nothing, but are presented as occasions for concentrated perceptual experiences»<sup>41</sup> and «there is nothing in the sensible world which an abstract painting, a lyric poem, or a piece of music demonstrably represents».<sup>42</sup>

There is «non-representational art».<sup>43</sup> But our «problem» here is not exactly that one,

our «problem» is the photography «of something» or the ready-made both being obligatorily «copies». They take the place of the «original» and pretend to be art. Nor is Eldridge himself in fact satisfied with the «non-representational» argumentation. For Nelson Goodman «denotation is the core of representation and is independent of resemblance.»<sup>44</sup> This is our emergency door.

Eldridge writes:

The resemblances that matter are between looking at an object *o* and imagining or pretending to look at *o* (by or in looking at *w*).<sup>45</sup> The relevant resemblances are mediated by the visual-imaginative game. This further explains why there is no *pure* or *absolute* realism. In painting or photography we must always choose between having a sharp focus on all objects represented throughout the visual field or presenting some objects in focus and some distant objects blurred. Either choice can work within a game of seeing objects «*in*» the representation. But neither corresponds perfectly to how we see. In actually looking at objects rather than visual representations of them, we can refocus our eyes on objects at different distances, thereby changing what is blurry and what is sharp.

Visual representations do not permit this kind of change of focus.<sup>46</sup>

The same thinking could be approached with the camera lens, focal distances and angles of vision which never match with reality.<sup>47</sup> The photographer has very few real creative means at his disposition, but the few that he does have can be combined in a multitude of ways. From that point starts the «game» of connotations and denotations which make photography distant from resemblance. In fact it is the flirt with resemblance (the fluctuating level of representationality) that makes photography interesting.

Our comparison with the ready-made was symbolic but it is precisely the total and flat resemblance of the *Bottle rack* with a bottle rack that make of it (amongst other reasons) an artwork.

Accepting this «ready-made axiom of photography» permits also to compare equally both possibilities and characteristics of painting and photography as *two different means of expression or eventually two poles of the same expression*:

I paint what I cannot photograph.<sup>48</sup>

It seems that Man Ray has always tried to minimize the importance of tricks in photography—and the impact it could produce—because tricks were as natural as «pushing» painting was. When speaking about cinema, Man Ray evades discussion

of photography, but when the question arises in photography, the evasion is toward painting: the pleasure of creating, the process itself, the opportunities of trying/pushing, and the important role of chance.

In the shadow of the theories of representation mentioned above, what could be the specific level of representation, in painting or in photographic visions in the art of Man Ray? The normal start would be to say that his photography starts from a given reality and ends with its *interpretation*; it is a *transfiguration* of reality, a *re-presentation*, a *personal vision* and the launch for his painting an *idea* and its *re-presentation* as well.

Dreams are for the Surrealists an important source of artistic production —called curiously also *creation*. Surrealist automatic production bases its method on Freudian subconscious. Dreams are not ideas but consist of bribes of reality, bribes of *interpreted* reality. The discourse of «photography-reality» and «painting-reality» after Impressionism and Cubism is basically identical. *What happens* is happening *before* or *beyond* reality, through the eye, and eventually, the camera and... the brain (cf. the «*second*» *Cyclops* in the Introduction).

*I photograph what I cannot paint*: photography spreads after 1850: a photographic portrait will always «precede» a painting: camera as replacement of the eye.

*I paint what I cannot photograph*: photography proceeds from a specific vision, but photography is limited within the context of *reality*. A strong vision is demanding a great technical skill.

Man Ray's greatest conflict was his lifelong struggle with the one form of expression in which he had no peer: photography. His unerring eye could pick out a constellation of details and frame them so that they appeared to have arranged themselves.<sup>49</sup>

In addition of *Self Portrait* Man Ray has written a collection of short texts for catalogues, essays, pamphlets, etc. As Vincent Lavoie, who made in 1998 a compilation of Man Ray's diverse writings,<sup>50</sup> remarks, they are rich in views on the development of modern art in the first half of the 20th century. Some of these texts give a good idea of how Man Ray experienced the relationship and the tensions between painting and photography, especially through their specific processes in regard to the result. One of these texts called *Ce que je suis – Photography* was originally printed in *Self Portrait*. It describes the first session of nude pictures made with Alice Prin (Kiki de Montparnasse, plate 21). Man Ray reveals in it clearly that

pictorial tension he had always, how photography and painting were constantly confusing him:

The next morning I made some prints on proof paper exposed in printing frames to daylight. I was satisfied with the results -they really looked like studies for paintings, or might even be mistaken at a casual glance for reproductions of academic paintings. My experience, and experiments with optics, had enabled me to obtain such effects. (In fact, one of the principal accusations against me by sticklers for pure photography, later, was that I confused painting with photography. How true, I replied, I was a painter; it was perfectly normal that one should influence the other. Hadn't I, in my series of airbrush paintings<sup>51</sup>, done before I had taken up photography, produced works that were mistaken for clever photographs? In the true Dada spirit I had completed the cycle of confusion. I know this phrase will make scientists smile, thinking I mean circle of confusion<sup>52</sup>, and that the alliteration will seem affected to readers; I, who have always attempted, above all, to avoid alliteration.)<sup>53</sup>

### [camera-pencil and anti-eye camera]

In 1949 Duchamp wrote about Man Ray:

His paintings of 1913 and 1914 show the awakening of a great personality in his own interpretation of cubism and abstract painting, he took on photography and it was his achievement to treat the camera as he treated the paintbrush, a mere instrument at the service of the mind.<sup>54</sup>

I propose in this paragraph to analyse subsequently how Man Ray's painting and photography are tightly connected. This analysis will be limited to a few concrete, significant examples. I want to show some of Man Ray's main vision concerning frame, themes and composition. I will also try to observe how Man Ray prepares his subject in a way that answers his personal vision, and how the responses he finds to portray that vision are basically the result of calculated risk and chance. For the analysis and depending of the situation, I will use such disparate criteria as poetic content, visual themes, formal devices and composition (framing), symbolic, content referring to the medium itself, introjection, interactive content (with other medium, spectator, collective imaginary, connotation), tricks, optical or chemical properties, perceptual processes, etc.

I have composed a panorama of pictures separated into nine plates (plates 19–27). These are not labels or «categories»: the division is only for the sake of convenience —because separations would be against the logic of my final demonstration, which is that everything is connected, confused and not dissociable, and for this reason too my analysis is not faithful to that «panorama».

- 1° self-portrait (autoportrait)
- 2° portrait
- 3° nude
- 4° fashion (advertising)
- 5° photography (composition)
- 6° working method (photography)
- 7° graphic work (rayograph, aerograph, serigraphy)
- 8° painting (drawing, assemblage)
- 9° installation (assemblage, still-life, object)

This paragraph does not take in consideration the real or virtual movement (kinetics), which can appear in some works under special conditions.<sup>55</sup> Movement will be analysed in the next subchapter. When I have developed both the frame and movement parameters I will be ready to appreciate the vision which has inspired his cinema.

#### [self-portrait]

Portrait was to Man Ray the first real genre he was encountering as professional photographer. Encouraged by the portraits he had made of the Dadaists at his arrival in Paris, in less than one year-time he had opened his own studio of the *rue Campagne-Première*. Neil Baldwin remarks how Man Ray was «voracious in his appetite for portraits. More than anything else, he wanted to understand the play of light and color upon the contours of the human face. [...] He always remained self-possessed, giving the impression of knowing precisely what he was doing as he labored to make his work natural.»<sup>56</sup> His philosophy of portraying avoided artifice:

It's the person who pushes the button.<sup>57</sup>



The manner in which the artist photographs himself can have psychological significance; I have made a selection of self-portraits of Man Ray that have turned out in many cases to become classic portraits, used commonly to represent his public image, at least today. The first is from 1920 and the last was made in the late sixties, a span of nearly fifty years. Besides the real «self-portraits» are also «portraits of Man Ray» (taken by other people) —which accidentally could be also included in some samples of the selection for the reason there are in circulation many uncredited «portraits». For most of the 32 specimens selected I made a personal judgement following the context (pose, objects, composition,...) which led me to believe that there are «real» auto-portraits<sup>58</sup> (plate 19).

The very first particularity I noticed was the *direction* of the photographs: most of the graphic weight and graphic vectors are oriented toward the left edge of the picture. This orientation arises from the direction of Man Ray's gaze, where he is, his body position, the camera tilt, the light, empty space, action, etc. Very few pictures are more neutral (like the chess game) and only one —largely published in the new 1988 edition of *Self Portrait*— was oriented to the right (in it, Man Ray is also in front of a game of chess. The date is circa 1921). When I noticed that particularity, I went to examine the portraits of other people made by Man Ray, but I could not find any similarity in framing. I will only hazard a link here to the theory of the *mirror stage*; the possibility, with a potentially interesting psychological thesis, remains open. In a self-portrait the photographer looks *at the camera*; not *in* the camera. In this case when Man Ray looks to the left in the picture it is in fact to the *right* when posing. In a classical portrait, the right (of the picture) is often linked to the future, hope, happiness, unknown, etc. The left is a view of the past, of the memories, efforts, what has been accomplished. Often, when making a self-portrait, the photographer is unconsciously victim of «the mirror effect» and can misunderstand its importance.

The infant stage proposed by Jacques Lacan produces a psychic response that gives rise to the mental representation of what he called the *moi*. The external image of the «I» becomes an ideal representation of the self. That very subjective perception of the self helps the individual to grow in confidence. The fact that Man Ray adopts an almost unchanged position to the right could have a psychological origin. The inversed image of the self, seen usually in a mirror, when in a photograph contributes to confusion in the interpretation of direction. It seems nonetheless that by looking always in the *same* direction, Man Ray was answering unconsciously to

an old image of his ego. For Lacan, who speaks about a kind of «mirage» in which the «forme totale du corps» appears in «un relief de stature qui la fige et sous une symétrie qui l'inverse» the mirror stage is a gestalt symbolizing «la permanence du je en même temps qu'elle préfigure sa destination aliénante» (the permanence of the «I» at the same time as it prefigures its alienated future) and connects «le je à la statue où l'homme se projette comme aux fantômes qui le dominent»<sup>59</sup>; the symbolic play of masks and «mummies» in Man Ray's self-portraits reinforces that hypothesis. The psychological significance of that gestalt at the individual but also at the social level, with its connection to reality, is described by Lacan as follows:

Il suffit de comprendre le stade du miroir *comme une identification* au sens plein que l'analyse donne à ce terme: à savoir la transformation produite chez le sujet, quand il assume une image, - dont la prédestination à cet effet de phase est suffisamment indiquée par l'usage, dans la théorie, du terme antique *d'imgo*. [...]

La fonction du stade du miroir s'avère pour nous dès lors comme un cas particulier de la fonction de *l'imgo*, qui est d'établir une relation de l'organisme à sa réalité - ou, comme on dit, de *l'Innenwelt* à *l'Umwelt*.<sup>60</sup>

Man Ray's asymmetrical physiognomy is exaggerated on purpose in many cases (e.g. half-beard, tilting) revealing a possible schizophrenic attitude calling for Rimbaud's locution «Je est un autre»:

J'assiste à l'éclosion de ma pensée: je la regarde, je l'écoute<sup>61</sup>

«The emerging subject both delights in the coherence exhibited by its reflection and despairs at its inner sense of asymmetry. In other words, the mirror's surface never provides an «untroubled reflection» of identity. The ideal image in the mirror, this fictional construct of a fully coordinated self, marks the subject's alienation and foreshadows its lifelong existential crisis.»<sup>62</sup> I would like to adduce here as evidence the contradictory and paradoxical attitude in many of Man Ray's statements and in his work in general. We can observe in the self-portraits both a fascination for «je» which is transferred in elegant terms (plate 19, n° 6 and 25) and an almost depressive and suicidal appealing for «the other» which is recognizable by the cynical constructions of the «moi» (plate 19, n° 9, 19 and 20).

Ce développement est vécu comme une dialectique temporelle qui décisivement projette en histoire la formation de l'individu le *stade du miroir* est un drame dont la poussée interne se

précipite de l'insuffisance à l'anticipation - et qui pour le sujet, pris au leurre de l'identification spatiale, machine les fantasmes qui se succèdent d'une image morcelée du corps à une forme que nous appellerons orthopédique de sa totalité, - et à l'armure enfin assumée d'une identité aliénante, qui va marquer de sa structure rigide tout son développement mental. Ainsi la rupture du cercle de l'*Innenwelt* à l'*Umwelt* engendre-t-elle la quadrature inépuisable des récolements du *moi*. [...]

Ce moment où s'achève le stade du miroir inaugure, par l'identification à l'*imago* du semblable et le drame de la jalousie primordiale, la dialectique qui dès lors lie le *je* à des situations socialement élaborées.<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps, Man Ray, connoisseur of psychoanalysis, also sometimes had that possibility in mind —but anyway not before Lacan's theory had been published in 1936-49. But how differently could his (self) portraits, that are in the main either elegant, deformed or theatrical, be interpreted? Jacques Rigaut (1899–1929) who was one of the protagonists of *Emak Bakia* wrote on mirrors and elegance<sup>64</sup>:

Mirror things are models of a type of beauty, that we refer to as elegance. Mirror things are suitable for a perfection fully independent of the individual. Mirror things are not to be found in nature but are rather a product of the disciples of superficiality - that is, in that which appears before the mirror. The compliance to these uncompromising (sic.) adherents of the superficial transforms external reality into an essentially different and elegant something, in a bright and unique beauty.<sup>65</sup>

The visual power of the left and the right in a picture is not symmetrical, nor is the brain. Curiously, the portraits that Man Ray made of other people (plate 20), when looking *in the camera*, vary in their graphic direction, but, a little further on it will be seen that both symmetry and asymmetry are of prime importance in Man Ray's pictures.

Another particularity in the self portraits is the general expression: the intensity of expression grows quite linearly with the passing years, first through props or effects and, later, throughout the expression of Man Ray's face itself. Perhaps, this is not so relevant, because it's quite common with artists, the nearest example being Dalí —with the length and the shape of his moustache.

The use of objects or of one's own artistic works in the background —or foreground— with, perhaps, the desire that they interact or give a new composite picture, is a particularity found in all portraits and fashion sets. Sometimes strong shadows are carefully placed in dialogue with the subject (like «*fantômes*» of the *Je*)

The use of bigger objects balancing the model is also a way of thinking the portrait genre as if it were a still-life.

### [femme-objet]

When he was about 80, in answer to a journalist who had asked him what his most important satisfaction was, Man Ray said, after some hesitation: «...I think women?!»<sup>66</sup> As if he instantly knew the answer but wasn't sure he could give so simple a statement about his career.

Man Ray describes his first meeting in 1921 with Alice Prin (Kiki de Montparnasse):

I explained that I was a painter but could not work directly from a model - it was distracting, she especially would be too disturbing, she was so beautiful. I was already very much upset and troubled. She laughed and said she was used to that - all painters made passes at her. I continued to explain that my method was different from the others - I would photograph her, which was the work of an instant, then study the results by myself and work from them, calmly. [...] Well, she replied, a painter could always modify the appearance of things whereas a photograph was too factual. Not mine, I replied, I photographed as I painted, transforming the subject as a painter would, idealizing or deforming as freely as does a painter.<sup>67</sup>

Kiki, who had posed for many painters, including Utrillo, after at first turning him down, agreed to pose for Man Ray:

Kiki undressed behind a screen that shielded the washbasin in the corner, and came out, modestly holding her hand in front of her, exactly like Ingres's painting of *La Source*. Her body would have inspired any academic painter.<sup>68</sup>

At this stage, Man Ray had not in fact ever properly experienced nude photography, but he had made drawings of nudes during his period at the Ferrer Centre, in New York, in 1912.<sup>69</sup> The first usually considered nude photograph he took wasn't properly a nude photography—though the model was nude—but a parody. It was originally made in 1920 during the last times of New York Dada. It represents a dada figure—half human, half mannequin—known by the name of *Coat Stand* (plate 21). There are in fact three versions of *Coat Stand*, the first with a white stamp in place of the woman's genitalia (*Dadaphoto trademark reg.*, NY-Dada, April, 1921)

with the text upside down: *Keep Smiling*; the second, without the stamp (*Model*), edited in 1925<sup>70</sup>; and the third (*Coat Stand*), showing the same model with the trace of the stamp ripped off the genital area.

Like the photogrammes cut down the film he tried to make with Duchamp, in which the Baroness Elsa Von Freytag-Lorinoven is posing, provocative and nude, the *Coat Stand* cannot be considered as nude photography, because it has a satirical vision, making fun of the classical vision of the body. The photography is subversive and does not follow the conventions of the nude genre. But Man Ray exploits these conventions: the stamp, first in place, then cut off, finally only its trace, reminds us the chaste *feuille de vigne* (vine leaf), with all its connotations. And it is not an accident: the trace remains clear in all later prints.

The nude session with Kiki can be therefore considered as the first contradiction Man Ray has with Dada. This is a «classical» momentum, which remained present all through his portrait photography, and still present for instance with *Chevelure* as late as in 1929<sup>71</sup> (plate 21).

The female body in photography, as an aesthetical or classical approach, is as old as photography itself. Nadar's nudes of *Christine Roux* around 1855 (plate 21) do not basically differ from Man Ray's first impressions of Kiki. However Man Ray quickly searched for new aesthetic solutions, either classical or dada, later called surrealist. These new aesthetic solutions came by chance and were *experienced* first as photographic «faults». The most important trick, solarization, discovered with Lee Miller<sup>72</sup> was helping to turn very conventional classical pictures into extraordinary surrealist «drawing sketches» (plate 21).

By the turn of the thirties Man Ray had established all the basic ways in which he could portray nudes and so turned to do more fashion pictures<sup>73</sup> (plate 22). He became one of the most important photographers of Harper's Bazaar. The use of familiar models also gradually decreased while he oriented himself towards commercial model photography. Meanwhile Surrealism had spread out into big magazines and Man Ray begins to use not only surrealist tricks but also to build complete surrealist sets.

Around 1929 another change came to his manner of sketching the female body: eroticism. Lee Miller was probably the launch of that new important vision which was helped by fashion work.

The nudes he made with Kiki are anything but erotic. From 1929, almost all nudes or portraits of women are instilled with a strong erotic vision (*Meret Oppenheim*,

1933). His erotic vision is quite controlled and clearly premeditated (requisite, decors, positions,...). Gradually tricks such as solarization vanish to give place to a more direct approach to raw appearance (plate 21). Pictures of women of the late thirties generate a lesbian atmosphere (*Ady and Nusch*, 1937) completely replacing the surrealist «complications». From that period Man Ray places all emphasis on the personality of his actors. The final period can be summarised as the «Juliet era» with a majority of black and white and colour photography translated into a strong graphic layout reminiscent of Surrealism (Juliet 1945–50).

The main stages of Man Ray's nude photography can be summarised in four periods:

1° imitation of classic masters - Kiki de Monparnasse (1921-29)

2° creative period ending with eroticism (1929-36)

3° actor emphasis with lesbian touch (1936-1939)

4° graphic period - Juliet (1940-1976)

### [cadrage]

Since 1911 Man Ray during his visits to Stieglitz's gallery had been intrigued by photographs, but he somewhat disapproved of this art being «intensely figurative». The very first reason why Man Ray bought a camera in 1914 was to reproduce his painting work. In fact, it was because the camera of other photographers did not show the soul of his work that he decided to try for himself. He learned very fast that with a camera one can do more than merely duplicate the real but it nonetheless took almost six years to start using a camera in a creative way. *Élévage de poussières* (aka. *Vue prise en aéroplane*, *Dust Raising*, *Dust Breeding*, *Bringing up Dust*, 1920)<sup>74</sup> was the first occasion Man Ray used the camera outside his own studio (plate 23, figures 17 and 18). The creative process of the transposition of natural perception started at once:

I suggested to Duchamp that I pick up my camera, which I had never taken out of my place, and photograph his glass [...] Looking down on the work (the glass) as I focused the camera, it appeared like some strange landscape from a bird's-eye view.

There was dust on the work and bits of tissue and cotton wadding that had been used to clean up the finished part, adding to the mystery. This, I thought, was indeed the domain of Duchamp. Later he titled the photograph: *Élévage de Poussière* —Bringing up Dust or Dust

Raising. Since it was to be a long exposure, I opened the shutter and went out to eat something, returning about an hour later, when I closed the shutter.<sup>75</sup>

Man Ray also explained that the light in Duchamp's studio was very weak. Looking at the picture one can observe that there is considerable depth of field. If the light is weak, the usual reaction of a photographer is to open the diaphragm of the lens to allow for the need for more light. This action has the implication that depth is shortened.

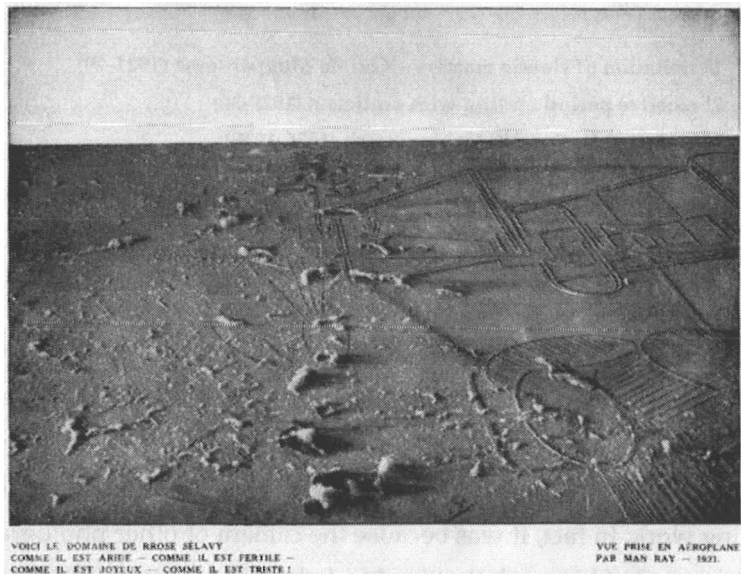


Fig. 17: *Voici le domaine de Rose Sélavy*. *Littérature*, n.s. no. 5, 1 October 1922 , Insert.

In this case, by opening the diaphragm the *landscape* should not look any more like a view «from an airplane» (because a part of the field will be out of focus —something that is impossible from an airplane: the focus then being on the infinite).

In *Man Ray: La photographie à l'envers*, a publication of the Pompidou Center, Alain Sayag writes: «La photographie, forme instantanée d'appropriation du réel, devient le médium idéal de l'exploration d'une autre réalité. La faible luminosité qui oblige Man Ray à ouvrir au maximum le diaphragme et à amplifier la profondeur de champ, le changement d'échelle et le basculement du plan font que ce qui n'aurait

pu être qu'une banale reproduction d'une oeuvre en cours d'élaboration devient un étrange paysage où la poussière et les débris de coton simulent une vaste étendue nuageuse...»<sup>76</sup>

Alain Sayag has indeed understood the aim, but not the means: Man Ray *does not open the diaphragm*, and this is unmistakably what is making that picture exceptional. Man Ray instead of this possibility keeps a small diaphragm and makes the exposure longer —he «opened the shutter and went out to eat». There isn't either any exceptional tilting in the picture but a quite well adapted framing giving a good perspective.

Man Ray gives at least one proof, with this picture: he has early understood that with the camera he can give *illusions* or create a *new reality*.

The photographic tools can be compared to the pencil or the canvas of the painter but they are limited to only a few basic optical and chemical properties (cf. precedent paragraph). In *L'Élevage de poussières* Man Ray has already used at least two of them, framing and depth of field, with success.

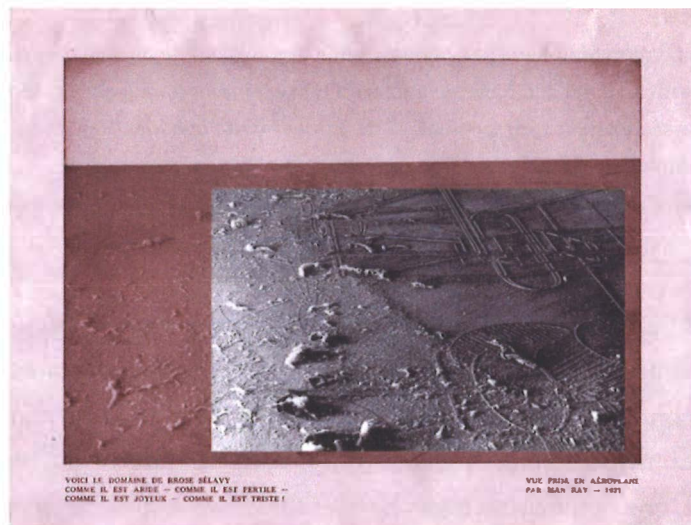


Fig. 18: The Re-framing of *L'Élevage de poussières* (1920)

Because the purpose here is not to analyse the historic development of Man Ray's photography but only to record some tricks and the special vision he has developed through this medium, I propose to do so in the form of an inventory, illustrated by a few examples.



- 1° framing
- 2° composition
- 3° symmetry
- 4° negation
- 5° depth of field
- 6° solarization
- 7° superimposition or double exposure

**1° framing** There are two ways to frame a view: at the moment of doing the photograph or afterwards, when printing, enlarging or editing it. It seems that almost all Man Ray's pictures have been the result of several re-framings and I could hardly find any to convince me it was printed such as the view offered by the negative (plate 24). A closer study of the original negatives ought to be made. Several contact prints with Man Ray's own working marks have been published and commercialised and largely fulfil my purposes. Why re-frame a picture? Emmanuelle de l'Ecotais writes of an untitled photography of 1927:

La dation Man Ray (1994) nous permet aujourd'hui de mieux comprendre la manière dont l'artiste travaillait. Nous en avons un bon exemple ici, puisque nous pouvons comparer la prise de vue et le tirage final. Cette étude montre que Man Ray, comme nous le voyons dans nombre de portraits, recadre son travail sur l'épreuve contact, non pas parce qu'il n'est pas satisfait de son cadrage initial mais dans le but d'atténuer la netteté de l'image.[...] Son objectif, en s'éloignant du modèle, est de gommer la précision des contours de l'image.<sup>77</sup>

I cannot find anything wrong in this theory and the theory of re-framing (not at all favoured by today's photographers because sharpness decreases). This does not concern only portraits or nudes, but every one of Man Ray's photographic productions. It also makes several versions of the same negative and *after-tilting* possible, one of the usual tricks he uses for giving *weight variation* and *perspective illusions*.

I was speaking about the *soul of the objects*. Emmanuelle de l'Ecotais continues her comment about the above picture in a similar vein:

Un léger flou lui permet, quand il recadre et agrandi en tirant, d'obtenir une douceur dans le «dessin», qu'il accentue plus ou moins selon les sujets [...] Ceci toujours dans le même but: donner à l'image photographique la capacité de dématérialiser la réalité. En tronquant un corps, Man Ray le prive de sa nature charnelle. Le corps disparaît, seule l'âme reste.

In many prints the cut is so precise that a little move «inside or outside» the edge makes the picture totally different. Very often Man Ray uses the magnetism of this edge in the composition: he knows the strongest area of the picture and uses it in a graphic and dynamic way.

**2° composition** Man Ray does not retain usually the classic way to provoke the illusion of depth: foreground, subject and background. In fact in most of his pictures he does not need normal depth, which should give only a real duplicate of the life scene. By avoiding the problem of classic depth (where a specific action is usually needed at different grounds), immersing the subject often in a dark/ clear space, he creates a *floating view*. The subject (legs, lips, hair, sheets, hands, leaf, tree, human, etc...) is dematerialized and emerges like an *appearance*, like the objects or decors in entoptic images<sup>78</sup> of a dream (plate 23).

The frame does not usually offer an «extension» beyond the edge, to the exterior, like an impressionist image does (in the impressionist image the artist «cuts a sample» of a larger reality). The «reality» Man Ray cuts is «here or anywhere», not at all linked to its normal function, environment or time (no matter what is beside the stones, the mobile, the lips, etc.). *Transposed realities* —cuts or floaters— in the picture are working like the elements of an *anagram*.

In *Le Violon d'Ingres* (1924), in addition of the very few visual elements (chess board, Kiki, blanket or towel, turban, jewels) Man Ray has succeeded by the use of a graphic mark and an appropriate title to extend the visual composition into collective imagery or into what might be termed the collective imaginary. The picture is an incredibly rich connotation of different signifiers: by her position and the turban Kiki reminds us of *La Baigneuse de Valpinçon* of Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres (1808) or the same character in *Le Bain turc* (1862); the connotation is much deeper than a simple allusion to Man Ray's first loves: painting and Ingres. By using the graphic musical symbols, Man Ray uses the body of Kiki to remind us that Ingres loved the violin, and that the French «Violon d'Ingres» describes a hobby —the word «hobby» being in French «*dada*». In other words Kiki was the «*dada*» of Man Ray, *an object of desire*. The themes of possession, desire and affection often replace the concept of love in his work.

**3° symmetry** Nothing is more symmetric than a chess board... and a pair of legs.

Man Ray's play with the symmetry and the asymmetry of the symmetry is one of the keys to his work: the contrast between black and white, left and right, up and down, straight and upside down, view and reverse view, negative and positive, open and closed: the contrast between day and night, reality and dream.

The symmetry means balance between two divergent tendencies. It is the juxtaposition not only of visual opposites but also of mental opposites such as good and evil or chance and fatality. It is dilemma.

Here, with Man Ray, I am in the centre of the earlier discussion about Hans Richter and the contradiction inherent to Dadaism. The visual solutions and the mental constructions Man Ray offers are all more or less connected to that basic paradoxical concept that anarchy (or mystery) requires order (knowledge). But order cannot be an end in itself. It is strange that the only pictures where I could not find any clear balance between left and right —or even a dialogue— was in the self portraits. The very few «objects» which counterbalance the self portraits are the camera, clock and pistol, shadow, contrabass, portrait of his head, chessboard and (even) woman's image.

If the photographs of Man Ray are in principle symmetrical or balanced, that means also that by an asymmetrical or unbalanced composition he intentionally wishes to emphasize the left or the right (plates 22–25).

In *Le terrain vague* (1929), a clear graphic example, Man Ray uses the shape of the tree not only to balance the left and right elements (the skeleton of the bed and the stairs) but also to give the sky an interesting role. Here is another good example showing that, in their own way, Man Ray's pictures are minimal in terms of theme and level of composition.

In *Space Writing* (1937) only two elements are in opposition: the man and the trace of light (with a clear distribution again of left-right in space). The glass mounting between, on which the light is written has been cut off to create the illusion of a continuing *floating* space.

**4° negation** The use of negative or juxtaposition of negative and positive, black and white themes are frequent (plates 22–25). The most popular example is *Noire et blanche* (1926). The first publication of the positive version was in 1926 in *Vogue* under a different title: *Visage de nacre et masque d'ébène*. Only in 1928 in *Variétés* did the photograph take on its actual title. Man Ray had made several versions of it<sup>29</sup> but was satisfied only with the published version, obviously with the researched result:

a white insipid shadowless face admirably holding the light, both eyes being closed, and in contrast to an African mask. Their positions are also in opposition: one lies, the other stands up. As de l'Écotais observes<sup>80</sup> the title itself brings to mind the relation between text and visual perception. As a title is to be read in the usual way from left to right, the text is first black and then white. But in the picture, however, white comes first. The picture, compared to the title, is thus inverted. A new version in negative (is that the reason of changing of the title?) gives a new level to the contradiction and the concept of inversion. In the negative version, even the left and the right have been inverted, so that the title by a double negation becomes a confirmation of the new *visual reality*, in which, however, we have a reversed reality: black *is* white, and white *is* black. Man Ray gives us a demonstration of total annihilation of perception. *Dada soit-il*.

The consideration of this work can even be done at the level of opposites between sex (white=female, black=male) and cultures (white=classic art, black=art *nègre*). It is nonetheless strange that Man Ray, who has made the different versions with all the above considerations, seems to have neglected to print juxtaposed versions.<sup>81</sup>

**5° depth of field** The case of *Élevage de poussières* remains a very rare picture in which Man Ray has been researching depth, and in fact in most of his pictures there are hardly more than one level in depth, something that is quickly becoming a particularity of the style and the perceptual process. By reframing a picture, what Man Ray seems to do methodically is to cut off parts of the reality and help to transform or deform proportions. In *Les Galets* (1933) Man Ray completely cuts the subject from its environment (plate 23): foreground and background disappear completely so that the whole scale of the object is transformed: pebbles become rocks. The shadow of the left pebble itself becomes a part of the mass and so is not seen as a separate outline. Man Ray follows here one of the surrealist ideas that Surrealism is not another reality, but a *part* of reality. Reality includes Surrealism. We see that Surrealism is first a question of perception. In *Les Chardons* (1931),<sup>82</sup> one of the rare pictures of flowers that Man Ray has made, we observe exactly the same principle: cutting the subject from its environment and giving it an appropriately contrasted lighting. What would usually be considered as discarded flowers become a poetic or fictive subject (plate 23).

**6° solarization** The effects of solarization, discovered at the same period, probably in late 1929<sup>83</sup>, constitute an important step for Man Ray in making the real surreal. Also known by the professionals as the «Sabatier effect», it is technically a partial chemical inversion of the blacks of a photograph obtained by a quick «bath» of light. The principal aesthetic effect is a fine black shape surrounding the subject on a white-grey background. Solarization can be done both during the development of the positive print or during the development of the negative. Man Ray became a master of the latter. The advantage of doing it on the print is to conserve the negative —and the subject— intact. The inconvenience is that all whites become grey and the print loses its contrast. The advantage of doing it on the negative is to avoid the above inconvenience and to keep the freedom to manipulate the print in the normal way (by reframing, multi-exposures, etc.). The inconvenience is the risk of destroying the negative. Here, again because Man Ray used solarization usually directly on the negative, a dada choice was made: let chance decide on the result. We have seen in the portrait-nude section (plate 21) how solarization can give the impression of an artistic sketch (with the fine black edge), a sort of allusion to classic art.

**7° superimposition or double exposure** There are tricks often used by Man Ray both to sandwich two negatives or to make montage photography. By chance again Man Ray found a variation of the classic superimposition effect with *La Marquise Casati* (1922), and he used it again much later in other portraits (plate 20). The story of how the legend or the trick was born is told by Man Ray in *Self Portrait* (and is also discussed by researchers):

I set up my camera and lights, and she sat down at the table on which was an elaborate bouquet of flowers - of jade and precious stones. When I turned on my lights there was a quick flash and everything went dark. [...] I told the Marquise that I'd use the ordinary lighting in the room, but that the poses would be longer and she must try to hold them as still as possible. It was trying work - the lady acted as if I were doing a movie of her. That night when I developed my negatives, they were all blurred; I put them aside and considered the sitting a failure. Not hearing from me, she phoned me sometimes later; when I informed her that the negatives were worthless, she insisted on seeing some prints, bad as they were. I printed up a couple on which there was a semblance of a face - one with three pairs of eyes. It might have passed for a Surrealist version of the Medusa. She was enchanted with this one - said I had portrayed her soul. [...] <sup>84</sup>

Alain Sayag thinks<sup>85</sup> that Man Ray's tale of a lucky find is rather a tall one. The original negative plate of the print has been found in a stock of negatives discovered in 1998. Sayag believes, because the shape of the face on the negative is sharper than the «blurred» picture Man Ray had described, that he actually obtained the three pairs of eyes by a multi-exposure on the final print. The contact print made in 1998 by Jacques Faujour and Daniel Valet *after the discovered negative* and presented to the public in Pompidou Centre does not correspond to the original, but is undoubtedly made of the same negative. However, the print is a *mirror view* and, it is evident, relatively sharp.

I do believe, by comparison with a similar situation I have experienced in my own work, that Man Ray's description is however totally exact. He has omitted to tell us only the complete process (as he often did with other works<sup>86</sup>). There are effectively three pairs of eyes in the negative, probably due to a long exposure and three main positions of the face during the total exposure, two long and a shorter.

If Man Ray had made three exposures I suppose he would have used three times the same exposure time, and in addition to that the linear trace of the bulb light in the pupils —the move between the three main positions of the pupils— proves that the exposure has been done at once (when photographing) and not three times (by multi-printing or multi-photographing).

The softness of the original print in comparison to the new print made by the Pompidou Centre and the fact that the print is a mirror situation suggest that Man Ray has intentionally inversed the negative glass plate in order to blur the whole picture even more<sup>87</sup> —actually exaggerating the imperfection and rendering the result even more mysterious. The idea of *medusa* probably came in the dark room considering the personality of the Marquise.<sup>88</sup> Man Ray used the anecdote in *Self Portrait* showing us how art itself is a relative concept.<sup>89</sup>

### [rayon-crayon]

Usually photography is considered as a medium rendering a three-dimensional perception into a two-dimensional representation by the optical process of a camera. Painting, drawing and all the graphic arts instead start from a two-dimensional surface on which (drawing) techniques to create a three-dimensional sensation have been elaborated. The definition of rayography could be somewhere between.

Objects have to be placed on the surface of the photographic paper, and their shadow will give us a two-dimensional image (plate 25).

Man Ray is said to have discovered rayography<sup>90</sup> also by coincidence:

[...] before my eyes an image began to form, not quite a simple silhouette of the objects as in a straight photograph, but distorted and refracted by the glass more or less in contact with the paper and standing out against a black background, the part directly exposed to the light. I remembered when I was a boy, placing fern leaves in a printing frame with proof paper, exposing it to sunlight, and obtaining a white negative of the leaves. This was the same idea, but with an added three-dimensional quality and tone graduation.<sup>91</sup>

As Neil Baldwin<sup>92</sup> well observes «Man Ray, of course, did not invent the photogram process. William Henry Fox Talbot in 1835 had been the first to make what he called *photogenic drawings, or cameraless photographs*». When in 1922, a few months after Man Ray, Moholy-Nagy, in the Bauhaus, published an article *How to do photographs without a camera*, this was not an invention either.<sup>93</sup> Before Man Ray, at any rate, the photogram was a two-dimensional process, a simple contact print. By using all the space between the light source and the sensitive paper, and using also the possibility to vary the exposure time *and* the light source during the processing, Man Ray was however the first to work with three-dimensional parameters, a much more dynamic vision compared to Talbot's. If the result is nevertheless a two-dimensional print it stands comparison with all other graphic processes, depth or crowding being obtained in a totally different manner than by conventional camera work. Incidentally, the iconography of the rayograph also became non-figurative. The rayograph is undoubtedly the technique which had the most definitive influence on Man Ray when he chose to become a photographer in 1922. With rayographs Man Ray develops the precise use of light as a creative tool. He uses its interaction with matter: opaque, transparent, hard, soft, fluid, etc. He becomes the «*poet drawing and writing with light*».<sup>94</sup>

I have freed myself from the sticky medium of paint and I'm working directly with light itself.<sup>95</sup>

At the end of 1922 a collection of 12 rayographs was published. In parallel, fashion photography for Paul Poiret was soon to become his living (plate 22) and nude photography kept him in close contact with classic painting.

Since he had arrived in France in the summer of 1921 his amazingly diversified painting production had suddenly almost ceased. Not completely, however, as there are a few example of paintings of Paris (*Place de la concorde*, oil, 1924) or the south of France (*Regatta*, oil, 1924, plate 26). Was it only to prove himself or to Kiki de Montparnasse that he was still a painter? Man Ray had indeed, in about ten years, made a long *tour* to arrive at photography. From mechanical drawing (1908) to conceptual objects (*Le Cadeau*, 1921), almost all possible modern painting streams were visited (plate 26) including kinetic art and mobiles.

Despite all his success with photography, and Duchamp's «encouragements» to leave pencils, he had not quit painting completely and probably though he had freed himself «enough» from the «sticky medium of painting» he was not completely convinced he should. He never did.

Between the first American era, ending in 1921, which was influenced by Expressionists and the Cubists of the Armory Show (1913), and also by Cézanne, and 1932, when the surrealist era begins for him in painting, with *A l'heure de l'observatoire- Les Amoureux* (plate 26), a graphic evolution can be observed, a refusal until then to use linear perspective, in fact a straight vision of flat *floaters*, so well embodied by his rayographs. *A l'heure de l'observatoire- Les Amoureux* was a break with the past, photography or rayography, and all painting produced up to that time. It took two years (1932–1934) for Man Ray to put on a large canvas all what he could not express with photography: again «I paint what I cannot photograph».<sup>96</sup> It has been said that it was a «medicine» after Lee Miller's departure. Neil Baldwin has well understood that this painting was a completely new vision in Man Ray's production, deeper and closer to the surrealist philosophy. It was a momentary abandonment of the dada aesthetic. And this time he could say he had «freed himself from the sticky medium of photography». Indeed within ten years (1922–1932) Man Ray's vision had time to mature and the context had in any case completely matured. From 1923, Dadaism turned to Surrealism and around 1929 was also curiously the time Man Ray chose to quit film production definitively. It was also the start of his surreal photography concretized by the process of solarization. Surrealism, in general, was also reinforcing itself with its progressive change of balance from literature to visual arts and society. We can argue that *if* Man Ray ever turned surrealist, it happened then, after the surrealist crisis of 1929 and when the second Manifesto of Surrealism came out.



Unfortunately, Man Ray had lived actively with photography for ten years and had become dependent on it commercially. Against all expectations he was now about to become even more involved with commercial photography in his fashion work.

Man Ray's complete absorption in the task of painting *The Lips*<sup>97</sup> also enabled him to forget his deepening hatred of photography («the drudgery of [his] professional work», as he called it) and to escape in the preferred «high and exacting plane of Surrealist activity. [...] Photography could never serve the same high purpose of painting in helping Man Ray understand himself. This unavoidable truth made Man Ray's ensuing struggle to become accepted as a painter all the more painful.<sup>98</sup>

After he had spent ten years in Hollywood Man Ray settled again in France, at the beginning of the fifties. His professional career as photographer was however over, and he spent more time painting and making objects.

The *Natural Paintings* (plate 26) that he made at the end of the 1950s were maybe the last totally new vision, quite abstract (abstract expressionist?). Man Ray kept on painting. At the end of the 1960s he produced a great number of serigraphy works in which he developed the same themes that he had already been photographing and painting for almost half a century (plate 25).

Everything I see seems to come from something we did 40 years ago. I want to be comfortable and not too busy. What am I striving for? I pursue liberty and pursue pleasure. We all live that way but we don't all admit it. I want the freedom to do everything that comes into my mind, even if it contradicts myself.<sup>99</sup>

One day in 1952 Man Ray went outside his studio and executed a straightforward oil painting of the street (*Rue Férou*, oil, 1952, plate 26)

I made a rather academic painting of the street as I might have photographed it, including the work in a exhibition of my more imaginative work, much to the surprise of some friends. Why I painted such a picture? they asked. I explained that I did this simply because I was not supposed to – that some of my contemporaries feel the urge also to do such a work but do not dare – and I enjoyed contradicting myself.<sup>100</sup>

In practice, Man Ray remained only himself and never accepted completely the political turn of Surrealism: freedom and automatism was only what suited him for some years.

	<b>PAINTING and OBJECTS</b>	<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	<b>CINEMA</b>
bell	X	X	-
black vs white (+/-)	X	X	X
box	X	X	X
cello	X	X	X
chessboard	X	X	X
city-lights	-	X	X
clock (metronome)	X	X	X
dies	X	X	X
egg	X	X	X
eye	X	X	X
hair	X	X	-
hand	X	X	X
Ingres	X	X	X
lamp	X	X	X
leg	X	X	X
lips	X	X	X
mannequin (body)	X	X	X
mask	X	X	X
nail(s) / needle(s)	X	X	X
net	X	X	X
ray(s)	-	X	X
revolver	X	X	X
rope	X	X	X
circle (globe) (ball)	X	X	X
Sade	X	X	-
Shaving	-	X	X
spiral	X	X	X
starfish	-	X	X
musical strokes	X	X	X
woman torso	X	X	X

Table 3: Man Ray's Iconography

In the mid sixties there was a revival of Dada which was undoubtedly a reaction against the prison of Abstract Expressionism and Abstract Surrealism.<sup>101</sup> Man Ray (like Richter and Duchamp) looked at that «fanfare» with amusement (see subchapter 6.3). The times had however changed for them because they (Man Ray and Duchamp) were very comfortable at replicating the same object several times over, a compromise they made «behind their times». In terms of art history Man Ray's later painting and photographic productions are not so significant, of course. But in terms of vision the typical iconography and the themes developed during fifty years became both more conscious and sharper. The visual motives used did not fundamentally change, and were amazingly coherent in respect of the media used, generally speaking painting, the making of objects, photography or cinema (table 3). Table 3 provides a good idea how his themes recur in different media and support the argument that Man Ray's vision in photography or cinema did not fundamentally differ from painting, and on the other hand actually reinforce it in many cases, following the dada principle of mixing all the arts. Some of the themes or motifs (e.g. box, dies, eye, egg, mannequin, parts of the body) link to typical dada or surrealist iconography; we could also add some elements like texts, numbers, newspaper cuttings, palindromes, anagrams, textiles, clothing, etc...) which are obviously more meeting-points of dada thematics and dada techniques.

### [bricolage]

With Neodada and Pop, the use of objects as a conceptual principle became an accepted form of art expression. In 1920, however, it was anything but conventional. For many, even if it could be recognized as an art form, it was still regarded as subversive —as Dada was.

Man Ray partly profits in the sixties from the revival of dada values. From a socio-political point of view, he compared the student agitation of May 1968 to the goal that the Dadaists had in 1915: a breakdown of all traditional values. In 1974, when Andy Warhol made the famous portrait of Man Ray, it was with all the respect —and declaration of the debt— that an entire generation of artists should have paid to the Dada movement.

Man Ray never thought he was doing conceptual installations. The objects he made were created with a sculpture-like vision associated with a subversive and

humoristic aspect. A comparison between Man Ray's objects and Duchamp's ready-mades to any actual *installation* highlights a certain common conceptual approach, at a level lying outside the work itself, a vision obtained by more or less rational associations or purely illogical constructions.

In one corner of the studio at rue Férou was a *bric-à-brac*<sup>102</sup> of different objects that Man Ray used to call *the cemetery*. It was composed of a shelf full of unused objects, parts or small constructions waiting for a hypothetical destination.

The fascination of Man Ray for objects, especially for their uselessness as a symbol of a materialist society is evident (plate 27).

On his first arrival on French soil he had to pass his luggage to the customs:

First the large case was opened. It contained half a dozen canvases [...]. But there was also a strange object - a long narrow box under glass containing various materials, wire, colored wooden strips, a zinc washboard and a title at the bottom: Catherine Barometer. It looked like some scientific contraption. An interpreter was called in, and I explained that as an artist I used this as a guide for my color combinations, not wishing to enter into an exposé of what constituted a Dada object.<sup>103</sup>

Man Ray has never explained what constitutes a *dada object* and what *kind of objects* fall under the label «dada» or in what circumstances. Criteria could be very interesting to establish. Explanations given are often associative. Man Ray continues:

[...] He then picked up a jar filled with steel ball bearings in oil. It bore a label NEW YORK 1920. This, I explained to the interpreter, was a decoration for my studio which I intended to set up in Paris. Sometimes artists didn't have any food, it would give me illusion that there was something to eat in the house.<sup>104</sup>

When Man Ray made *Pain peint* (painted bread, 1958) he used stale loaves of bread and simply covered them with blue paint. According to Man Ray it is an onomatopoeic representation of the fire engine's siren: «children when they are playing say *Pinpin-pinpin*»<sup>105</sup> (in French, in fact *Pin-pon pinpon*). Because of the play on homophones in the French title, Man Ray did not want it literally translated in English catalogues or books. He therefore gave the alternative English title *Blue bread* with a subtitle: «Favourite food for blue birds». The whole idea works like a poetry of sounds.

The conservation, possibly destruction, reconstruction, adaptation, and duplication

of the primary idea are typical characteristics of the Pop object. In 1960 the material of *Pain peint* was painted polyurethane and the edition was made of nine objects. Another group was produced in 1964, in painted plaster in an edition of four, and yet another in 1966, again in polyurethane and again in an edition of nine. A good question would be: is the *Pain Peint* a dada or a pop object?

The ready-mades of Duchamp are of another kind. When Duchamp picked up a urinal and signed the object, he was forcing the viewer to «pay attention».<sup>106</sup> As Neil Baldwin remarks Man Ray was immediately going some steps further, inventing objects that do not work. The first was to keep the object intact, but to submit it as a sculpture and sign it; he was pushing art to the level of a purely mental concept. The second, by constructing absurd pieces, was depriving the viewer of emotional payoffs.

Man Ray's first efforts at object-making —mirrors that did not reflect, buttons that did not work when pressed— advocated a new idea of artistic freedom and became Dada after the fact.<sup>107</sup>

When a critic asked Man Ray *why* the bell of *Self Portrait* does not ring Man Ray simply answered: «That is making *Art* of it». Indeed, if the bell was ringing, the viewer should be satisfied by getting an immediate (and flat) payoff. Instead of that Man Ray pushed him to think out other *solutions* —which probably do not exist. After the object has been consumed as a visual element, it becomes the key to a more abstract concept.

Probably the most complex conceptual object Man Ray ever made was the famous *Objet à Détruire* (Object to Be Destroyed, 1923), especially in its long history.

Cut out the eye from a photograph of one who has been loved but is seen no more. Attach the eye to the pendulum of a metronome and regulate the weight to suit the tempo desired. Keep going to the limit of endurance. With a hammer well-aimed, try to destroy the whole at a single blow.<sup>108</sup>

«With these words, Man Ray declared an art object that was at the edge of his control. The formula for creating the work was given. Reproduction and demolition were sanctioned. Even the emotional content was transferable. This was an object that could provoke and accept the blows of anyone's desire.»<sup>109</sup> Indeed, the original

object of 1923 was destroyed later by students and survived however as conceptual motif. Man Ray had constructed it again in 1932 under the title *Objet de destruction*, in 1945, as *Objet perdu*, in 1958 as *Objet indestructible* (as a conceptual answer to the students destruction), in 1966, as *Dernier objet*, and finally in 1972 as *Motif perpétuel*. The *Objet perdu* (lost object) balances quite surprisingly and ante facto—in 1945—the concept of *objet trouvé* (found object), a postmodernist concept which has repercussions in video with *found footage* (see in chapter 9). A contemporary artist, Larry Kless, defines for us the *objet trouvé* (as film or tape) and the postmodernist ideology:

The use of found imagery or archival material from film or video is a Postmodern discourse in that it is a reappropriation of the past. I work with cultural found objects and artifacts of the past and give them aesthetic value by displaying them as objects of art. These found objects, or imagery are taken out of context and put into a new context. By reappropriating it, the image is incorporated into my point of view and the original meaning is reprocessed and repackaged as new content. [...]

In the tradition of the Dadaists and Surrealists, the densely reworked montage of found footage is a subversive act in the hands of the avant-garde, inspiring many independent works<sup>10</sup>

As the precedent text suggests, the *objet trouvé* or found object ought *not* to be a full synonym for *ready-made*, a remark already formulated by Baldwin. The ready-made always clearly retains an original, still untouched and utilitarian function. Only the context is removed.

The *objet trouvé* is not only displaced from its original context but *interferes with new material or new situations*. The objects of Man Ray are always like that, and at the same time more complex to understand because such interferences, sometimes remote, have to be perceived by the viewer.

With Man Ray, the idea of finding an object and making of it a work of art was pushed to a very interesting level: if any [non-art] object can be considered as art if only perceived as such (Duchamp), art can probably also be reduced to an object [of consumption] and used as ready-made. This gives an interesting historical perspective to the work to come, but also complicates its interpretive level.

Having finished a series of paintings, I turned my attention, for the sake of variety, to the fabrication of objects out of materials picked up by chance, without modifying the original shapes, in the manner of earlier years, like the jar containing steel ball bearings in oil instead

of olives, or the flatiron with a row of tacks on its smooth surface. Assemblages, they have since been called - and imitated, at least in spirit. I named them, Objects of my Affection.<sup>111</sup>

The arrangement of new and old works in a new spatial construction was a method used by Man Ray at any time. Especially objects made with a strong design perspective such as a chessboard or chess pieces, cones, etc., were used in several photographic sets or *still-life*-like installations. Also the symbolism of the object could eventually become important as in *La Fortune* (1946), which he made for the lottery of a surrealist conference.

Man Ray's paintings often reflect a desire for *combination* [compilation] and they appear *installed* with sculptures and objects in several photographs or films. The edge of art disciplines is blurred to the point that it does not matter anymore if the work is a painting, an object or a sculpture (plate 27). With photography the «problem» is even more acute: the surface of a photograph is «flat». If the photograph demands a set [installation] or simply *reproduces another piece of art*, does that then make it a piece of art? With *Ruth, Roses and Revolvers* (1945) which is as well as being an allegorical and satirical still-life photograph about Hollywood, and the episode of the film of Hans Richter (1946), Man Ray shows that what is important is not the paper (or the painting), nor what is to be represented in the picture, but the *trace* of a concept, even a simple idea. The object (such as the painting or the photograph) can be destroyed, but the idea remains and can be replicated. Therefore, the important thing is the idea, not the work. This kind of conclusion accords well with the principle of archiving [reproducing] a work [an idea] dear to Man Ray. It is obviously why Man Ray bought his first camera, a simple «Brownie»: to copy. And that is still the reason why today *performances* or *Land art* are so well sketched, photographed and recorded on video, and their planning and feedback so well archived (plate 12).

In *Self Portrait* he reveals there was one step that he intended to realize some time, a kind of performance:

A retrospective show of early Dada works was held in Paris and the object called Board-walk was borrowed from its owner for the occasion. The show looked respectable - almost conservative by present standards. I had added another object I had conceived in the early years: simply a metronome to the oscillating stem of which I had attached a photograph of an eye that moved with ticking as it swung back and forth. The title was, Object To Be

Destroyed. I really intended to destroy it one day, but before witnesses or an audience in the course of a lecture.<sup>112</sup>

Man Ray did not destroy the object by himself: it had already been destroyed by the students during the '57 exhibition, actually before *Self Portrait* was published. This event had an important psychological impact on Man Ray. He recognised the students' right to destroy the *Object To Be Destroyed*. The object of 1932, *Object of Destruction*, with Lee Miller's eye proving a fatal psychological rupture, like a suicide, was a painful step which had repercussions even more than 25 years later. Perhaps Man Ray was not completely sure, until the sixties, that to some degree *to exist a work does not need to still physically exist*. He probably accepted definitively the ephemeral nature of an object only when neodadaist performances had already taken place. This marks one of the biggest differences between dada and neodada, and in a certain way neodada completed what dada had left unachieved.

## 6.2. Experiments [experiences] in Kinetics

By kinetics in the visual arts two approaches (see in detail in chapter 3) can be understood: the first includes all physically real movements such as mobiles, moving machines, and cinema devices (stroboscopes, kinematoscopes, kinetoscopes, praxinoscope, optic theatre, etc.), the second is the virtual movement engendered by the texture of the image itself.

Of all works by Man Ray, the kinetic work is the most badly conserved. There remain only a few photograms, sketches and texts. Man Ray had however a clear and original kinetic vision that he started to develop at the time of making diverse publications with Adon Lacroix. In *Primer of the New Art of Two Dimensions*, a pamphlet of 1916, he made an interesting sketch resuming the opposition of dynamic and static arts. He writes:

The greater the extent of perception the more concentrated must be the expression.<sup>113</sup>

By concentration he means «the individual desiring to experience all the sensations of life» and that experience concentrated in art. He continues:



Just as the lens sacrifices actual space to focus all of that space upon the plate, so the artist must condense the time and space element to create life's equivalent. This leads his medium to a static condition implying the unity of time and space, that is, a concrete form of two dimensions, which is comprehensible from one point of view in an instant of time.<sup>114</sup>

Man Ray's observed separation of the arts within two main groups (figure 19) led him to believe that «the new art of two dimensions» is only a question of balance between dynamic and static elements, a theory which is rather close to the dadaist «total work of art», and finally to conclude:

The new two-dimensional medium is not merely painting any more than it is merely drawing or color. It is a most universal and concentrated form of expression.<sup>115</sup>

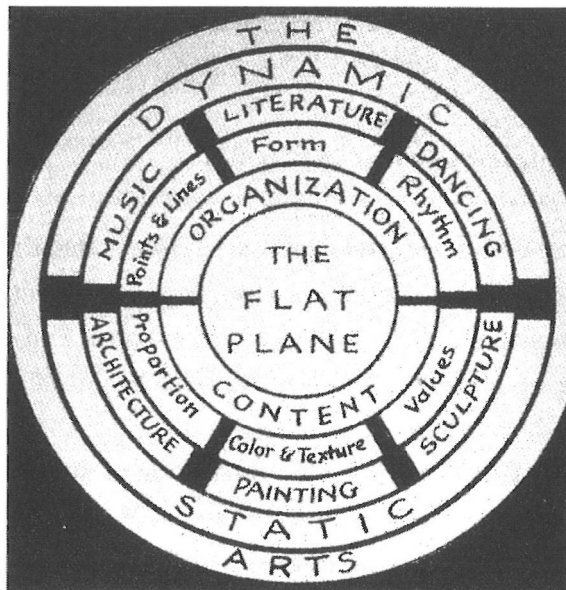


Fig. 19: Primer of the New Art of Two Dimensions (Man Ray's drawing)

An observable particularity is the opposition of organization and content, which suggests also that the sketch itself must be read in a dynamic way, by independent rotation of each circle. Note also the absence of photography and cinema. Could Man Ray have put kinetics in the centre if that discipline had existed?

In 1951 he wrote a short text in *L'âge du cinéma* in which he reveals a (similar) vision, but this time the focus is cinema:

Le monde peut être approximativement divisé en deux parties, l'une mobile, l'autre immobile [...] Lorsque l'art est statique, il nous faut bouger; lorsque l'art est dynamique il nous faut rester sur place.<sup>116</sup>

His first physical contacts with kinetic machines are obligatorily connected to Duchamp and his *Opticeries*.

The prior interest for Duchamp was the third dimension. As we have seen and will discuss again later, the rejection of western perspective (the illusion of depth through lines) is the quintessence of modern painting. Duchamp wanted to create an effect of deepness (a slightly different goal from a simple conventional representation of depth) through the movement of anaglyph<sup>117</sup> spirals painted on discs: the *Rotoreliefs*. Stroboscope effect and anaglyphs are both optical illusions. They have in common the fact that they are constructed by still pictures, but through their multiplication a three-dimensional effect is created. Though the machines of Duchamp are usually confused with kinetic assortments because of their rotating movement, their first goal wasn't properly movement itself, but the illusion of depth through flat surfaces: the turning spirals creating that illusion. In addition to that, the visual aspect of rotating discs, today often recognized as aesthetic experiments by Duchamp, is not essentially an aesthetic research but more or less a simple aesthetic consequence of a mechanical system. It is good to remember that the aim of Duchamp is, after *Nu descendant un escalier*, basically anti-aesthetic. The use of futurist dynamics and the *pseudo-movement* engendered by the multi-image were in fact more ways to escape from aesthetic problems.

I believe that the first real contact Man Ray had with kinetic matter was not dependent on the activities he had with the discs of Duchamp until 1925. His real preoccupation with movement, unlike with Duchamp, is not properly linked with relief (perspective) or stereoscopy but is purely mechanical (*Perpetual Motion*, 1908, plate 25) or interacting with light and the point of view (*Moving Sculpture*, 1920, plate 23). In other words Man Ray was even more concerned than Duchamp about «deepness», meaning not only its representation, but its «presentation».<sup>118</sup> The position, direction, quantity and intensity of light occurred as basic preoccupations in what is Man Ray's recognised kinetic iconography. Painting «systems» such *Revolving Doors*, 1916–17 (plate 25) and their sketch drawings reveal the mechanical worry of presenting his work «in motion» in a way comparable to a cinema device. Patrick de Haas notes<sup>119</sup> commenting on *Revolving Doors* that a text by Man Ray was published in the only issue of TNT (1917–19) under the title *Ombres (Shadows)*:

Si, de trois angles différents, trois rayons de lumière sont projetés sur un objet ou si l'objet est orienté simultanément sur trois angles différents en relation avec un seul rayon de lumière, les ombres résultantes prendront des proportions différentes, bien que leur caractère reste le même.<sup>120</sup>

Patrick de Haas obviously had exactly the same thought about the concept of that painting presentation, namely the interest in the multiple aspects that an object takes on depending on light or the point of view. It led Man Ray to invent a system of presentation obliging the viewer to turn around the set (in a similar way to walking round a sculpture) and in that way transform the painting into a mobile machine, as if it were a kind of praxinoscope.

Two more objects (plate 27) can be classified in the kinetic section as mobiles: *Lampshade* (1919) and *Obstruction* (1920). Both have been destroyed, but Man Ray had fortunately made photographs and replications. The interaction of light and movement can be observed clearly in both mobiles. A similar approach was made with the suspended mobile (plate 28) that Man Ray filmed in *Le retour à la raison*. The interest Man Ray had for pure kinetics and pure cinema remains nonetheless sporadic. The first film of Man Ray *Le retour à la raison*, especially the first sequence, was a real «stroboscopic event» and he was quite astonished himself by the result. The film was made under circumstances of absolute improvisation and chance.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore it was shown with the abstract kinetic film of Richter *Rhythmus* giving to the whole projection an «experimental» character. Man Ray does not speak about *Rhythmus*, probably because he experienced the film of Richter as being a totally different world, experimental, not improvised, therefore rather «anti-dadaist».<sup>122</sup> He evidently was not interested in remaking (or improving) the surprising *cinérayogramme* experience, for the fact is that *Le retour à la raison* remained the only kinetic «experiment» that Man Ray ever made directly on film for the cinema. Even for the second film, *Emak Bakia*, he did not try to bring the «experience» to a new or «improved» level, with new adapted material; instead he made a quick copy in order to use the «best» part of *Le retour à la raison* in his second film. Man Ray never dared to speak about *experimental cinema*, as it sounded too «scientific» for him. He preferred the word *experienced*, which, in his way of proceeding, leads rather to exploit chance and its limits than being forced to seek a predetermined result. This does not mean passiveness, but vigilance.

### 6.3. Times behind Man Ray

#### [pré-surréalisme]

A discussion similar to the one developed in chapter 4 about the differences between Dada and Surrealism could be started again with Man Ray. The questions *How was Man Ray a Dadaist?* and *How was he a Surrealist?* could be asked. When did Man Ray *turn* to become a Surrealist, or did he ever become a Surrealist? The questions are interesting, but I would like to maintain the discussion from Man Ray's point of view, because here *his* point of view and *his* vision are being analysed, not the actual art evolution from Dada to Surrealism. Here Dada is being opposed to Surrealism and not the other way round. To do so is to suppose that *Dada is not dead*. That *Dada is* —despite the coming of Surrealism and later Neodadaism. Man Ray tells us who invented Dada:<sup>123</sup>

Qui a fait Dada? Personne et tout le monde. Je l'ai fait quand j'étais un petit môme, et j'ai été drôlement fessé en conséquence. Maintenant, c'est tout le monde qui a inventé Dada, depuis trente ans passés.

A Zurich, à Cologne, à Paris, à Londres, à Tokyo, à San Francisco, à New York. J'aurais quelques titres à me proclamer l'inventeur de Dada, à New York, en 1912. Bien avant Dada. [...]

Aujourd'hui, on essaye de ressusciter Dada. Pourquoi? Pour qui? Pour pas qui? Dada est mort. A moins qu'il ne soit encore vivant? Mais il est impossible de ressusciter quelque chose qui est encore vivant, comme il est impossible de ressusciter quelque chose qui est mort.

Dadadéfun?

Dadavivant?

Dada est.

Dadaïsme.

It is a fact that *The Ridgefield Gazook* (1915), the pamphlet journal made with Adon Lacroix, precedes *The Dada Manifesto* by three years and even anticipates publications of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich (1916). In *The Ridgefield Gazook* No.0, of March 31, 1915 (the only edition) the following *words without music* can be read:

Hell-e-luyah...Hell-e-luyah...Glory to Comstock...He destroyeth all evil...He destroyeth all art...Hell-e-luyah...Ahem.

...And *ape-ologies* to PICASSO for a drawing of two copulating insects (title: *The Cosmic Urge*)

The meeting with Marcel Duchamp was in September of the same year: Duchamp had already produced his first ready-made *The Bottle Rack* (1914).

Donna [Adon Lacroix] acted as my interpreter but mostly carried on a rapid dialogue with him. I brought out a couple of old tennis rackets, and a ball which we batted back and forth without any net, in front of the house. Having played the game on regular courts previously, I called the strokes to make conversation: fifteen, thirty, forty, love, to which he replied each time the same word: yes.<sup>124</sup>

1915, Yes and Love.<sup>125</sup>

The chronology of Dada speaks in favour of Man Ray: Dada could have been named «*Gazook*»!<sup>126</sup> The movement created in Zurich out of the Cabaret Voltaire (chapter 2) was fully formed only in 1916 (protagonists: Ball, Huelsenbeck, Henning, Tzara, Janco, etc.). The *dada* word (Yes-Yes?) probably started to be used only in early 1916<sup>127</sup> and Man Ray had started as early as 1913 to plan to France.

The movement was rather more linked to the origin of the protagonists than to the place. They were mostly Romanians<sup>128</sup> or young Germans «rejected» by the war. It was really a «spontaneous» generation which arose in Zurich and New York and it would be more accurate to say that it was more of a reaction to the times than a single «Swiss invention» or a movement connected to any particular place. Indeed, Man Ray was not especially attached to the city of New York, and the Ridgefield escapade before New York Dada was significant. The anarchist atmosphere of the Ferrer Center, and not Dada, prepared Man Ray to be subversive. Historically Dada lived in Switzerland too only for a short time, shorter probably than its New York period, and expanded mostly in Germany and France where the post-war context and revolutionary traditions<sup>129</sup> were more propitious.

No, Dada never went to New York. Yes, Yes..., Dada and «*Gazook*» were born independently and almost simultaneously in Europe and America and the historical junction between French Dada and New York Dada was played by Duchamp.<sup>130</sup>

Around 1916-17 Man Ray, who had already mixed up art disciplines, published his booklet, *A Primer of the New Art in Two Dimensions* (figure 19), that Neil Baldwin called his «first true manifesto».<sup>131</sup> He develops in it a theory that may be compared

to what Richter had called *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Neil Baldwin also clearly shares the same opinion, that Man Ray had anticipated Dada:

Man Ray had had the Dada spirit long before the movement took brief but forceful hold in New York [...] Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp were still far from calling themselves New York Dadaists. They did not need to. [...]

Man Ray's first efforts at object-making-mirrors that did not reflect, buttons that did not work when pressed - advocated a new idea of artistic freedom and became Dada after the fact.<sup>132</sup>

A correction could be made in several art history books: Dada spread to the north of Europe but never to New York. New York joined Dada: Man Ray adopted Dada and concluded in his famous letter to Tzara:

dada cannot live in New York, all New York is dada, and will not tolerate a rival.<sup>133</sup>

Dada had absolutely nothing to bring to Man Ray or to the *Société Anonyme*, but a support for the same *revolution*. Like Neil Baldwin I noticed several allusions to the fact that Man Ray played a double game, being in New York «Mister Dada» and still Man Ray —as continued to be the case in Paris. Francis Picabia, who knew Man Ray well from the *Marshall Chess Club* at that time, seems to have understood that aspect of Man Ray as *Dada* and at the same time as «the artist off to the side».<sup>134</sup> Francis Picabia did not list Man Ray as Dadaist in the chart he drew in the *Anthologie Dada, Paris, 1919*. In the chart there were nonetheless over thirty-five names including curiously Corot and Ingres —besides Duchamp.

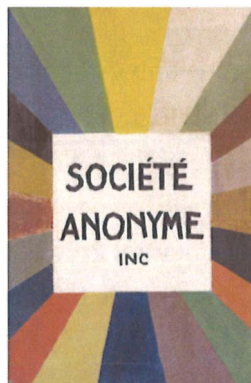


Fig. 20: Société Anonyme Inc., Artist unknow, n.d., (paint on panel).

Katherine Dreier, another actor of the *Société Anonyme*, also confirmed in the first annual report of 1921 that Man Ray was among the artists «belonging to no school, but imbued with the new spirit in art».<sup>135</sup>

The strong personality, the relative independence and the determination of Man Ray were thus in evidence from the beginning.

As Neil Baldwin remarks «It was more comfortable for Man Ray to deny the existence of the Dada movement [in New York] than to admit that he preferred to maintain a stance outside it.»<sup>136</sup> Duchamp played the most important link with the Dadaists. He remained also throughout his life long a close friend of Man Ray. However, once in Paris, despite being introduced by Duchamp to the group of Dadaists and still being welcomed, Man Ray went his own way.

After my first installation in France and Duchamp's return to New York, I did not see him again for two years. When he returned, we renewed contact. It was the last year of the Dadaists' manifestations, involving new dissidences among the group, and the final break, leading into the surrealist movement. Although held in a certain esteem by these groups, he was too little known; he never took part in their activities, nor frequented the cafés where their reunions were held.<sup>137</sup>

Man Ray's relative dependence on the group (financially at the beginning, and because of the language) made him quite neutral: «Man Ray, so continuously dependent upon the kindness of strangers, could not afford to take sides, to alienate either Breton or Tzara. And even as the years in Paris passed, Man Ray was known as the one member of the circle who never feuded with anyone, the one member of the old guard even after it evolved, as it soon would, into the more codified Surrealist effort, who could remain on speaking terms with both Breton *and* Tzara.»<sup>138</sup>

From that status, and being the only American in the group, Man Ray developed a certain opportunist attitude: «[He] never took advantage of it, except by ingratiating himself with people on all side of the table.»<sup>139</sup>

As well in its work, which turned, by encountering real success, more to portrait photography —also a kind of neutral ground, where there were no rivals— Man Ray did not have a dependent attitude toward one tendency or another. In 1923, still trying to paint:

[...] I produced a painting now and then to keep myself in form and also in touch with the current art movements.<sup>140</sup>

It seems that Man Ray did not disapprove of the rise of Surrealism but would have also liked it if Dada went on as if it were «invented» by himself in New York. In Man Ray's opinion, the three great domains of art —literature, painting and music— did not find a sufficient place in Surrealism, at least in its first generation. The «*all meeting of the arts*», *Gesamtkunstwerk* had vanished.

In my studio I installed the radio, which played while I worked, except when I had a visit from one of my Surrealist friends. The Surrealists disapproved of music - there were no musicians in the group - since they were considered of an inferior mentality.<sup>141</sup>

Neil Baldwin confirms that vision: «Man Ray and the Surrealists enjoy an uneasy marriage, points of convergence as clear points of difference. Breton detested the jazz Man Ray loved —in fact, he shunned all music— and Man Ray's flirtations with astrology and spiritualism must have struck Breton as signs of weakness in character.»<sup>142</sup> Duchamp had basically the same problem:

Duchamp returned to Paris in the early Thirties [...] Now and then he did produce a small object or, upon solicitation, a design for a publication of the Surrealists, but it was always in an anti-art spirit, in the manner of the old Dada days.<sup>143</sup>

Sometimes Man Ray speaks of an *association* with the Surrealists:

I can treat them only as groups [...]. First, of course, came the Surrealists with whom I was most closely associated.<sup>144</sup>

Sometimes he did not really make any difference either between the spirit of the two movements, as if they were made of exactly the same spirit:

Joan Miró brought his first stylized, bucolic scenes from Spain, but very soon entered completely into the Dada and Surrealist spirit.<sup>145</sup>

Finally to conclude:

I never considered myself a Surrealist, but I took a parallel course.<sup>146</sup>

By that time, acceding however to the status of older Surrealist, he developed a paternal attitude toward new (younger) fellows:



René Magritte, the Belgian painter, contributed a very personal note to our movement. There were other painters who passed momentarily through the Surrealist aura, retiring to pursue their own destiny, impatient with the movement's exacting ethics. Sometimes they were excommunicated for some deviation before they could make up their minds.<sup>147</sup>

The vision of Man Ray about the evolution of Dada is approximately the same as Hans Richter's: Dada prepared the ground for a constructive and relevant movement, which also turned at the same time political.

What Dada had accomplished was purely negative; its poems and paintings were illogical, irreverent, and irrelevant. To continue its propaganda a more constructive program was needed, at least as an adjunct to its criticism of society. And Breton came up with Surrealism, a word taken from the writings of the dead poet Apollinaire. Dada did not die; it was simply transformed, since the new movement was composed of all the original members of the Dada group.<sup>148</sup>

and further:

The constructive element of this declaration (Surrealism) was its advocacy of new sources for inspiration in writing and the other arts, such as the subconscious [...]. The combative and provocative spirit of Dadaism continued, directed more and more to political society and its representatives. As in the days of Dada, there were frequent violent encounters.<sup>149</sup>

Besides that, the leader had changed, the name of *the* movement had been removed, and the political content had been filled with a program. The differences on the field can be seen, afterwards, as insignificant. In practice Surrealism cannot be disconnected from Dada, they are the opposite faces of the same coin.

A Surrealist gallery was opened; [...] I showed again my things of the Dada period. They fitted in just as well with the Surrealist idea [...] Breton once called me a Pre-Surrealist; I hoped it wasn't in the sense of a Pre-Raphaelite.<sup>150</sup>

If dada imagery fits into Surrealism, the opposite does not work. For instance, the emphasis on dream came later. The solarizations of Man Ray—and also his rayograms— if discovered by the dada method, chance and risk, have no controversial «look» but are surreal from their visual connections with dream «floaters» and transposed parcels of reality. The first really surreal painting of Man

Ray, probably *A l'heure de l'observatoire, les amoureux* (plate 26) does not even recall chance and risk, but is a well planned «mental picture» resulting from a long period of incubation and processing lasting at least two years.

The question of the political content remains. How is Surrealism to be handled today, when the *dream* has completely collapsed and «post-modern» art does not seem capable of assuming a critical position toward modern art and society, a position which turned later to «*anti-production*».<sup>151</sup> The *anti-product*, typically an *average opinion* is best represented by kitsch, a slogan thrown out against current society, well assimilated and highly reappropriated, in fact, a fake subversion. The «political position» of surrealism could not avoid that reappropriation by later groups and in time by its own members. Again the position of Man Ray with his special status of foreigner can show that the political content of Surrealism (for him and a few others) was maybe an accessory, limited to the vision of just one man: Breton. Man Ray avoided the revolutionary and political content of the movement in which he found himself involved. He was *not concerned but not indifferent*. Was he?

I was not required to sign the pronouncements, being a foreigner and liable to expulsion. Free speech was reserved for Frenchmen. If a couple of other foreigners in the movement signed, it was out of bravado, but passed unnoticed.<sup>152</sup>

After reading *Self Portrait*, the reader cannot help thinking that Man Ray always made the right choice at the right time. But in a way it may also be thought that Man Ray remained actually too often a passive witness to the movement, not really *involved* and probably a bit *unnoticed*.

After the war, back in France and after Surrealism had been proclaimed dead, things changed and finally when a new generation found Man Ray's *dada spirit* again, all his work suddenly became completely re-evaluated and was seen not only in the dada-surrealist light but for itself. Just like Duchamp's.

### [nouveau réalisme]

In the preceding paragraph the relation Man Ray had with the Surrealists has been analysed. Because in chapter 4 an overview of Neodadaism has already been made it is natural that the question of what relation Man Ray in his old age had with the French version of Neo-Dada should be asked.

The New Realist manifesto<sup>153</sup> which declared «Nouveau Réalisme nouvelles approches perceptives du réel» came out on October 27, 1960 in Paris.

Bored with abstract art, the New Realists (Les Réalistes Nouveaux), who were also the French version of Pop Art, defended themselves for using reality as such without any representation. Their raw material will be found in the ordinary, from mass-production objects. They «took pieces of reality and included them in their work.»<sup>154</sup> The first New Realist exhibition was held in Paris in May, 1960 and in New York in 1962, the last collective exhibitions in 1963.

Neo-Dada had come a bit earlier to England and America in the late fifties, with Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns as the first leading figures to emerge in Pop Art, a more general label. It has been seen in chapter 4 how their use of collage, assemblage, and the so-called happening made Hans Richter in 1964 question the point zero and the actual situation of the arts in the sixties. Duchamp was questioning the whole trend too:

When I discovered ready-mades I thought to discourage aesthetics. In Neo-Dada they have taken my ready-mades and found aesthetic beauty in them. I threw the bottle rack and the urinal into their faces as a challenge, and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty!<sup>155</sup>

And Man Ray four years later:

Pop is a revival of the spirit of Dada, I'd like to see something I don't understand — something that mystifies me.<sup>156</sup>

Yves Klein (see chapter 5), well known for his blue *Anthropométries* monochromes and Martial Raysse, both members of the New Realists (see chapters 4–5) have also produced films,<sup>157</sup> the first an experimental 16mm in 1957, which is said to be at the origin of the minimal and structural American experimental cinema of the sixties, and the second being one of the French pioneers in video, in the seventies. Like Fluxus they show how adequate film and video are for the «new» visual (pop) art. Taking the case of Martial Raysse, the motifs of his works can be associated with the iconography of Man Ray in his interest in the imagery of old masters —often inspired from the collections of the Louvre. For instance *Made in Japan – La Grande Odalisque* (1964) is a direct and new *pastiche* of Ingres. The deliberate «bad taste», almost kitsch, of the painting is however an anti-aesthetic version going much further than any Man Ray's *Violon d'Ingres* (plate 23) or *Portrait of Juliet* around 1950.

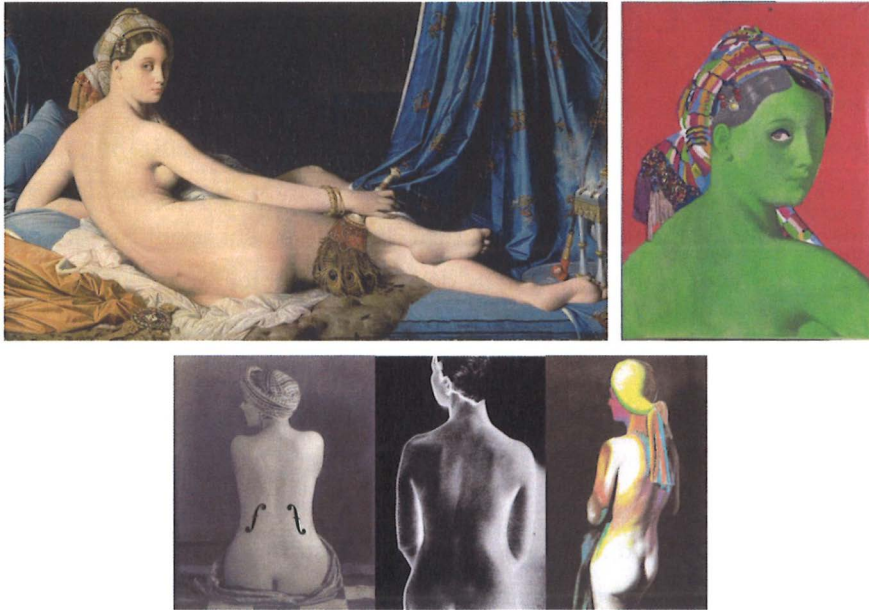


Fig. 21 - 25: J.A.D. Ingres: *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814 – M. Raysse: *Made in Japan. La Grande Odalisque*, 1964 – Man Ray: *Violon d'Ingres*, 1924 – Man Ray: *Solarization*, 1937 – Man Ray: *Portrait of Juliet* c. 1950

The imagery of Raysse, also using women and fashion, recalls Man Ray but the «design» is closer to Duchamp's conceptualism or the Minimalists. For instance, the oil on canvas and a neon light in *Peinture lumière* (1965) bring to mind some assemblages of Man Ray, but with a minimalist touch (plate 12).

These deviations of usual objects familiar to Man Ray or Duchamp are however deriding here not only the object itself or the viewer —the traditional dadaist goal— but also now the entire social system which has produced that object. «La beauté c'est le mauvais goût» and «Les Prisunic sont les musées de l'art moderne» said Raysse.<sup>158</sup> We are effectively now installed in the *anti-production* we have mentioned: subversion and bad taste have become «the» taste.

Duchamp and Man Ray had slightly different opinions on beauty and subversion. For Duchamp it meant a total rejection, for Man Ray a cooking —Man Ray collected objects and ideas in order to (anti)-produce (or to poison). For the New Realists it is rather a complete digestion.

«Man Ray watched this fanfare from the sidelines with bemusement and, for the most part, tolerance, wrote Neil Baldwin, [...] he accepted the Nouveaux Réalistes because he knew their work could not have taken place without his trailblazing.»<sup>159</sup>

[vogue – mauvais goût]

After the preceding paragraph we could make this strange guess: what is the difference between good taste and bad taste, and how are both linked to Man Ray? In the preface of *Man Ray in Fashion*,<sup>160</sup> a publication concentrating on Man Ray's *Harper's Bazaar* years, the sponsors of the exhibition, which was held in 1990 specifically for the occasion, provide a short statement about the singular contribution of Man Ray to the field of fashion photography: «His work for Harper's Bazaar and other publications continues to influence the look and content of today's fashion magazines.»

Here again I find Man Ray's legacy ambiguous: on one hand, through art history and by his collaboration to Dada and Surrealism, and also by his connection with the relatively recent Neodadaists, we have a Man Ray encouraging anti-art ideas, «bad taste» and «bad movies», on the other hand we have a Man Ray walking side by side with commercialism and fine fashion magazines.

The habit Man Ray had of retouching meticulously his portrait and fashion photographs does not support the surrealist theory of automatism either. I do wonder why this aspect of Man Ray has never been examined. All writings about his art praise his «improvisation and eclecticism» or «precision and professionalism» depending on the actual situation which has to be described. This attitude is common in today's art criticism. A picture falls usually in the public domain only after being «manipulated» a hundred times by the media and stereotyped in a category. Rarely are the prime existential reason or the possible purpose of a masterpiece reflected: in fact, the less is known, the greater the critical speculation will be. A masterpiece does not live by itself either, hanging on the wall. It lives through replication and the fabulists of the media. Man Ray knew that:

I shall not be happy until I see it [the painting *The Lovers*] reproduced in full color across two pages in a book on Surrealism. Only then will I be assured of its permanence. I am much less concerned with the preservation of my own originals.<sup>161</sup>

Man Ray came to fashion photography much earlier than what has usually been presented as his golden period, the *Harper's Bazaar* in the mid-thirties. Although Man Ray had come to Paris as a painter,<sup>162</sup> once he was acclimatized to Paris and the French language the *haute couture* became his principal source of income as early as autumn 1921. Neil Baldwin describes how Man Ray started to

slip towards fashion: «Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, like her husband, recognized Man Ray's particularly marketable skills. Times may have been thin for «real» art, but here was a top-flight photographer languishing. She seized the moment, the onset of the fall couture showings, to introduce her American friend to Paul Poiret, dress designer «extraordinaire» [...] He [Poiret] believed quite adamantly that fashion should be «the privilege of the elite».<sup>163</sup>

Soon after the Maison Poiret, it was the turn for Vogue: «At a time when one could live quite well in Paris on one hundred dollars a month, Man Ray was receiving upwards of five hundred and fifty dollars for a picture spread in Vogue.»<sup>164</sup>

*La vogue* is the French synonym for *la mode* which means what is top in terms of popularity for a certain period. It is also a privilege or an inclination towards a particular fashionable. It can also be success. Man Ray was very proud of doing business with the *beau monde* which loved the precarious taste of the moment.<sup>165</sup> The actual dynamic of fashion magazines and cosmetics was the response to a quite large revolution of popular values. Great names such as Coco Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli were part of the large new social phenomenon and were connected with all the current trends of the arts. The magazines' visual and virtual powers were suddenly understood as capable of inducing popular taste and creating the market as well. This powerful control over art and society dynamics in the field of aesthetics has indeed only increased over the last 75 years. The body is «the most beautiful object» wrote Jean Baudrillard in 1970:

Sa redécouverte, après une ère millénaire de puritanisme, sous le signe de la libération physique et sexuelle, sa toute présence... dans la publicité, la mode, la culture de masse ou le culte hygiénique, diététique, thérapeutique dont on l'entoure, l'obsession de jeunesse, d'élégance, de virilité/féminité, les soins, les régimes, les pratiques sacrificielles qui s'y rattachent, le mythe du Plaisir qui l'enveloppe, tout témoigne aujourd'hui que le corps est devenu objet de salut.<sup>166</sup>

The aesthetic values and the myth of pleasure of the mid 1920s when Man Ray started to photograph his models should be considered as the origins of current fashion photography. This uncontested heritage of early fashion photography has over time established itself however as a quite sterile and stereotypical domain. The evolution of the profession can be read about in a Swiss classic *traité de photographie*:

On assiste depuis un certain nombre d'années à un engouement de la jeunesse pour ce métier, conséquence, entre-autres, de films comme *Blow up* et d'émissions de télévision qui ne

montrent que les beaux côtés de la photographie: gagner de l'argent, parcourir le monde, fréquenter de jolies filles, tout en ne donnant pas l'impression de travailler. La réalité est très différente, et ceux qui auraient encore des illusions doivent s'attendre à les perdre.<sup>167</sup>

Indeed, «photography is not art»<sup>168</sup>, depending of course on the point of view. If it is *nostalgic*, then Man Ray did earn big money, travelled a lot between Paris and New York, met «beautiful girls», and was on perpetual vacation:

Not since my youth when I went to school or when I worked for a single employer, have I looked forward to vacation days. When I became my own employer, so to speak, it seemed to me I was always on vacation. Nor have I sought a new setting to refresh my thoughts.<sup>169</sup>

What was for Man Ray a way to earn money was at the same time a search for possible new means of expression, a manner to stimulate his imagination. The actual separation between professional commercial photography and art (creative) photography has grown only from the times of *Blow up* (1966). Michelangelo Antonioni's film does not necessarily give a wrong idea of photography —it is only a stereotype of a bohemian attitude that already existed at the time of Man Ray and was compatible with market laws. A strong and utopian revival appeared in the sixties, with the beatniks and pop culture.

In his film Antonioni tried to question the basic perception process of reality through photography —the labor of a detective. He reveals the impossibility for the camera to render a sensory vision of the real<sup>170</sup>, but shows how the object can be stimulated (and transformed) by the medium. That is precisely the way Man Ray used his camera in fashion and portrait photography. These considerations show how evolutions of taste modulate visual perception.

Aesthetic perception of furniture or art objects evolves naturally with the viewer (the observer or the user). What was yesterday a tasteful object can become vulgar soulless kitsch in time. To keep up with current fashion, methods or ideas is not necessarily the best way of working in contemporary art. Man Ray was making objects when they were not at all accepted as legitimate expressions of an art discipline. In addition to that, his objects were made from ironic associations —if not from *sarcasme*. Objects of the same kind are today mass-produced: kitsch has always had a complex history.

When Man Ray accused the Neodadaists of being «behind the times» he was absolutely right. Or was it the times that were behind Man Ray?

- <sup>1</sup> Interview by Paul Hill and Tom Cooper, originally published in *Camera*, n°2, Luzern, Feb., 1975, in Vincent Lavoie, 1998, p. 23
- <sup>2</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. xiii
- <sup>3</sup> Man Ray's text originally printed in *The Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters*, Anderson Galleries, New York, March 1916; *Art in Theory*, p. 277
- <sup>4</sup> James Gunter, S&S Paris bureau European edition, Friday, January 14, 1966 from S&S archives: *Man Ray in Paris: His heart belongs to Dada* reproduced at: <http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=126&article=23009&archive=true>
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> We are making allusion to the inscription on his grave: «not concerned, but not indifferent»(chapter 2)
- <sup>7</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. xv
- <sup>8</sup> Bricolage—From French *bricole* (trifle); An improvised creation — or seemingly so — something made from whatever materials happen to be available; Bricolage may be related to bric-a-brac; see at: <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/Bp.html>
- <sup>9</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss: *La pensée sauvage*, Paris, Plon, 1962, p. 27
- <sup>10</sup> Etat brut (Breton): means «raw state»
- <sup>11</sup> Man Ray: from an interview of 1951, cited by Neil Baldwin, p. xvii
- <sup>12</sup> Rosalind Krauss: *Notes on the Index, Part 1*, originally published in *October* n°3, Spring 1977(1976); reproduced in *Art in Theory*, p. 997
- <sup>13</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 201
- <sup>14</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. xiv
- <sup>15</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 26
- <sup>16</sup> Roger Scruton: *The Aesthetic Understanding*, London, 1983
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112
- <sup>25</sup> The play with the word *photograph* is intentional: it links to the human faculty of making mental photographs (or visionary images), well represented by the French word *cliché*. As practical example, many painters use photographs as the starting-point for their work. Cf. also Alessandro Barrico's text about Monet in chapter 1.
- <sup>26</sup> Richard Eldridge: *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art*, 2003, pp. 30-31
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31
- <sup>28</sup> Eldridge asks «How is representation achieved in various media?» and «Is representationality even necessary for art?» p. 26
- <sup>29</sup> Roger Scruton: *The Aesthetic Understanding*, London, 1983 p. 113
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115
- <sup>31</sup> Richard Eldridge: *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art*, 2003, p. 44
- <sup>32</sup> Watson quoted by Eldridge, p. 44
- <sup>33</sup> Roger Scruton: *The Aesthetic Understanding*, London, 1983 p. 115
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 181; remark the similarity with the page 201 (note 9)
- <sup>37</sup> Rosalind Krauss: *Notes on the Index, Part 1*, originally published in *October* n°3, Spring 1977(1976); reproduced in *Art in Theory*, p. 997 and at <http://books.google.com/books?id=D5-C2w8n5NwC&pg> p.203
- <sup>38</sup> In *Self Portrait* Man Ray says: «I have no problems, I have only solutions», p. 301
- <sup>39</sup> Attitude comparable to the ironic contradiction: «thank God I'm still an atheist» (Luis Buñuel at: <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/festivals/00/8/miff/bunuel.html>)
- <sup>40</sup> Richard Eldridge: *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art*, 2003, p. 26
- <sup>41</sup> Noël Carroll: *Philosophy of Art: A Contemporary Introduction*, 1999, p. 26
- <sup>42</sup> Anne Sheppard: *Aesthetics: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art*, 1987, p. 16
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17
- <sup>44</sup> Quoted by Eldridge, p. 33
- <sup>45</sup> w=the work
- <sup>46</sup> Richard Eldridge: *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art*, 2003, p. 36
- <sup>47</sup> The angle of vision of the so-called *normal* objective is much narrower than the field embraced by the human sight, but the whole latitude of the field seen in the camera is sharp, contrarily of the human sight which is sharp in a latitude of a angle of only of 1-2°
- <sup>48</sup> James Gunter, S&S Paris bureau European edition, Friday, January 14, 1966 from S&S archives: *Man Ray in Paris: His heart belongs to Dada*, also quoted by Susan Sontag in *On Photography*, 1977, p. 186 and Vincent Lavoie from an interview (Paul Hill, Tom Cooper) for *Camera* n°2, Feb., 1975
- <sup>49</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. xiv
- <sup>50</sup> Vincent Lavoie (presentation): *Man Ray, Ce que je suis et autres textes*, 1998
- <sup>51</sup> Aerographs
- <sup>52</sup> Man Ray makes an interesting allusion to the *gesamtkunstwerk*, a play with the photographic term *circle of confusion* and an allusion to dada poetry.



- <sup>53</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 119
- <sup>54</sup> In a catalogue ed. George Heard Hamilton, 1949
- <sup>55</sup> For instance mobiles or works included in film, or extracted from films (photograms)
- <sup>56</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 101
- <sup>57</sup> Man Ray quoted by Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 102
- <sup>58</sup> Except for the n° 30, 31, 32
- <sup>59</sup> Jacques Lacan: *Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je telle qu'elle nous est révélée dans l'expérience psychanalytique* (XVII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international de psychanalyse, Zurich, July 17, 1949) at: <http://perso.orange.fr/espace.freud/topos/psycho/psysem/miroir.htm>
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> Arthur Rimbaud in a letter to Paul Demeny May 15, 1871 (éd. de la Pléiade p. 254)
- <sup>62</sup> Corinne Andersen: *I Am Not Who "I" Pretend to Be* at: <http://www.google.fi/search?hl=fi&q=corinne+andersen+I+Am+Not+Who++&btnG=Hae&meta=>
- <sup>63</sup> Jacques Lacan: *Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je telle qu'elle nous est révélée dans l'expérience psychanalytique* (XVII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international de psychanalyse, Zurich, July 17, 1949)
- <sup>64</sup> Curiously also one of the themes of the film (Cybèle, see in chapter 8)
- <sup>65</sup> Mathias Fuchs: *Mirrors* at <http://www.svl-eckermann.net/fuchs-eckermann/fluID/fluID.html>
- <sup>66</sup> In Mel Stuart's film: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1997
- <sup>67</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 118
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 119
- <sup>69</sup> And as early as in 1909, after secondary school, in a small academy with nude models (*Self Portrait* pp. 20-24)
- <sup>70</sup> Kunst ISM 1914-24, Zurich, Eugen Rentsch editor, 1925
- <sup>71</sup> Some sources, included the official pages of the Man Ray Trust, give 1937. The techniques used link more to 1929 also given generally for two pictures, made with the same unknown model and called both *Chevelure*
- <sup>72</sup> See note 76
- <sup>73</sup> Already experienced in the twenties at the Poiret house and in advertising
- <sup>74</sup> The title was given by Marcel Duchamp 3 years later; the title is a quite interesting play with words: *élevage* means «breeding», *élévation* means «raising», the word *élevage* do not exist, but the verb form *élever* means to breed and to raise. This play has been very badly understood in the literature. French using *élevage* and English *raising*; Man Ray used (on purpose, I believe) the defect writing *élevage* in French and gives the second sense.
- <sup>75</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 78-79
- <sup>76</sup> Alain Sayag: *Man Ray: La photographie à l'envers*, Centre Georges Pompidou, exhibition catalogue, 1998, p. 10
- <sup>77</sup> Emmanuelle de l'Écotais: *Man Ray: La photographie à l'envers*, 1998, p. 30
- <sup>78</sup> Cf. chapter 5, note 34
- <sup>79</sup> As described by Emmanuelle de l'Écotais in *Man Ray: La photographie à l'envers*, 1998, p. 24
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>81</sup> I could not find any evidence that both prints slightly of different proportions have been exposed or published together with Man Ray's own will. We are going to see that the same kind of idea, pushed in a quite deep level of consideration (deeper than a simple plastic consideration), was abandoned with the inversed and reversed takes of *Le Retour à la raison*
- <sup>82</sup> The photograph has in fact no title and was published only once in 1934
- <sup>83</sup> Is solarization Man Ray's or Lee Miller's discovery is subject of controversy. A Lee Miller's letter to her brother, probably written in 1929 describes the discovery as a pure accident in which both have a part of responsibility (Sayag, 1998). In the darkroom Lee Miller switched on the light by mistake while negatives were still in the developer. Man Ray had the appropriate reflex to stop the chemical reaction by plunging the film rolls in the fixer; Man Ray obviously invented also a name for the trick (Baldwin, 1988, p.158)
- <sup>84</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 130-131
- <sup>85</sup> Alain Sayag: *Man Ray: La photographie à l'envers*, 1998, p. 14
- <sup>86</sup> For example with *Le Retour à la raison*
- <sup>87</sup> A result obtained when the emulsion is not in contact with the print surface (the glass is thick)
- <sup>88</sup> The marquise Casati (Luisa Amman) 1881-1957, was an extravagant aristocrat, friend of d'Annunzio and Robert de Montesquiou. She was in close relation with the Italian Futurists; therefore his positive reaction to the «medusa» of Man Ray is quite natural if we take in consideration the dynamic iconography of the Futurists (see *photodynamism* and plate 3)
- <sup>89</sup> Man Ray, in many occasions has give answers in the same direction, avoiding to «explain» in detail his work, he learned that while a definite answer is missing, the mystery persists. For instance, to a question of a journalist asking why the bell of *Self Portrait* (1916) does not ring the answer was simply: «that is what's making Art of it» (Mel Stuart)
- <sup>90</sup> Also named photogram as general process
- <sup>91</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 106
- <sup>92</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 96
- <sup>93</sup> See the remarks in chapter 2 about Moholy-Nagy; Christian Schad (1884-1982), in 1918 had also made before Man Ray contact prints, called Schadographs.
- <sup>94</sup> To resume Breton's and Moholy-Nagy's views of the photogram technique
- <sup>95</sup> In a letter written by Man Ray to Ferdinand Howald, April 1922
- <sup>96</sup> Man Ray in: James Gunter, S&S Paris bureau European edition, Friday, January 14, 1966 from S&S archives: *Man Ray in Paris: His heart belongs to Dada*
- <sup>97</sup> Another title often given to *A l'heure de l'observatoire- Les Amoureux*
- <sup>98</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, pp. 172-175

- <sup>99</sup> Man Ray in: James Gunter, S&S Paris bureau European edition, Friday, January 14, 1966 from S&S archives: *Man Ray in Paris: His heart belongs to Dada*
- <sup>100</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 299
- <sup>101</sup> See in chapter 4
- <sup>102</sup> French version of *odds and ends* (the French expression emphasizes the heteroclite and plays with «de bric et de broc» parts of diverse origin associated with chance; bricoles)
- <sup>103</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 94
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>105</sup> In Mel Stuart's film: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1997
- <sup>106</sup> A definition of art by John Cage in the film *Die Rache der toten Indianer*, 1993 (dir. Henning Lohner): what is art? —pay attention; what is music? —pay attention to sound; what is visual art? —pay attention to looking, (f)or seeing. Film page: [http://www.medienhaus-hannover.de/distribut/v\\_germ/loh\\_rach.htm](http://www.medienhaus-hannover.de/distribut/v_germ/loh_rach.htm)
- <sup>107</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 65
- <sup>108</sup> Man Ray: *Object of Destruction* This Quarter 5, no. 1, special Surrealist issue (September 1932)
- <sup>109</sup> Janine Mileaf *Between you and me: Man Ray's Object to Be Destroyed - Cover Story* College Art Association, Gale Group, 2004 at [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0425/is\\_1\\_63/ai\\_114632847/pg\\_1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0425/is_1_63/ai_114632847/pg_1)
- <sup>110</sup> Larry Kless at <http://www.canyoncinema.com/K/Kless.html>
- <sup>111</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 282
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 305
- <sup>113</sup> Francis M. Naumann: *Conversion to Modernism, The Early work of Man Ray*, 2003, p. 149
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>115</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>116</sup> Man Ray: *Art et cinéma* L'Age du cinéma n°4-5, 1951, p. 15-16
- <sup>117</sup> Moving or still pictures in contrasting colors that appear three-dimensional when superimposed <http://www.onelook.com/?w=anaglyph&ls=:a>
- <sup>118</sup> Nor is the sculptor concerned by the representation of the third dimension rather than with its presentation
- <sup>119</sup> Patrick de Haas: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 15
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid., the text was originally published in TNT, New York, in 1919, in english. The French traduction was published only in 1935 in Minotaure (n°7) and was dated by Man Ray himself 1916-17
- <sup>121</sup> This point will be discussed later in chapters 7 and 8
- <sup>122</sup> We discuss the film of Richter separately, here we want only to indicate the meeting ground —under the dada label— of two totally opposite processes: the first constructivist, the second improvised
- <sup>123</sup> Man Ray: *Ce que je suis et autres textes*, introduction by Vincent Lavoie, p. 56, the text was originally published for: Dada Dokumente einer Bewegung, Düsseldorf Kunsthalle, 1958 and in *Man Ray, 60 ans de libertés*, Eric Losfeld, Paris, 1971 under the original title *Dadamade*
- <sup>124</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 56
- <sup>125</sup> Cf. in chapter 2; Man Ray: *Marcel and I*, extract of View, n°1, March, 1945 / and *Ce que je suis et autres textes*
- <sup>126</sup> A mythical Peruvian monster who terrorizes children at night; A young man used for old men's pleasure definitions at: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=gazook>
- <sup>127</sup> Cf. endnote 41 in chapter 2: Hans Richter mentions in *Dada, art and anti-art*: «When I came to Zurich in the middle of August 1916, the word already existed and no one cared in the least how, or by whom, it had been invented.» The beginning of Dada is usually mentioned as February 5, 1916
- <sup>128</sup> For the origin of these Romanians see: Tom Sandqvist *Dada East, The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire*, 2006
- <sup>129</sup> See explanations in chapter 1 and 2
- <sup>130</sup> And probably also Picabia
- <sup>131</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 55
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-65 and note 64
- <sup>133</sup> June 1921, letter reproduced in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, pp. 8-9
- <sup>134</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 74
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>136</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>137</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 184-185
- <sup>138</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 84
- <sup>139</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>140</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 185
- <sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 142
- <sup>142</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 126
- <sup>143</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 190-191
- <sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 201
- <sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 202
- <sup>146</sup> Man Ray in: James Gunter, S&S Paris bureau European edition, Friday, January 14, 1966 from S&S archives: *Man Ray in Paris: His heart belongs to Dada*
- <sup>147</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 205
- <sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 214
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>150</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>151</sup> Concept developed by Henri Van Lier: see note 93 in chapter 4
- <sup>152</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 214

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- <sup>153</sup> «Déclaration constitutive du Nouveau Réalisme», signed by Arman, François Dufrêne, Raymond Hains, Martial Raysse, Daniel Spoerri, Jean Tinguely, Jacques de la Villéglé, Yves Klein and later by Christo (see in chapter 4)
- <sup>154</sup> As said the critic Jean-Hubert Martin quoted by Neil Baldwin in *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 328
- <sup>155</sup> Marcel Duchamp to Hans Richter in 1962, cited in Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, pp. 207-208
- <sup>156</sup> Man Ray in: James Gunter, S&S Paris bureau European edition, Friday, January 14, 1966 from S&S archives: *Man Ray in Paris: His heart belongs to Dada*
- <sup>157</sup> See also in Chapter 5 (French experimental film)
- <sup>158</sup> Big-Bang, 2005 at : <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/education/ressources/ENS-bigbang/ENS-bigbang.htm>
- <sup>159</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 329
- <sup>160</sup> Willis Hartshorn and Merry Foresta: *Man Ray in Fashion*, International Center of Photography New York, 1990
- <sup>161</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 210
- <sup>162</sup> The travel to Paris had been sponsored by Ferdinand Howald who had made a deal with Man Ray: the latter should purchase in Paris a series of painting for him. The 500 dollars he was giving to Man Ray was an advance on a possible sale in New York later. Man Ray never satisfactorily fulfilled his contract with Howald: he abandoned painting almost completely in the early twenties and rushed into photography, a paradoxical act if one considers his chronic longing for painting
- <sup>163</sup> Neil Baldwin: *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, pp. 86-87
- <sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131; compare with the sum offered by Howald
- <sup>165</sup> «Busy as a cockroach» he wrote to Elsie , May 9, 1926 (Baldwin, p. 129)
- <sup>166</sup> Jean Baudrillard: *La société de consommation*, 1970, pp.199-200
- <sup>167</sup> Jean Charpié: *Traité de photographie*, 1980, p. 307
- <sup>168</sup> By reference to Man Ray's famous article: *Photography Is Not Art* published in *View*, n°1, April, 1943
- <sup>169</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 184
- <sup>170</sup> The concepts of «real», «true», etc. will be discussed with the theories of vision in the last chapter

# 7. Man Ray



## With the Movie Camera

Le cinéma est un œil surhumain; jamais un œil humain ne peut voir ce que voit l'objectif. Nous avons pensé que le film proposait des possibilités extraordinaires d'exprimer, de transfigurer et de réaliser les rêves. —Philippe Soupault<sup>1</sup>

### 7.1. Survey of Film Period

The very first contact Man Ray had with a movie camera was probably in early 1920 as a «diversion»<sup>2</sup> from painting and when Duchamp asked him to collaborate on the experiment of a film in three dimensions.<sup>3</sup>

It was just before they were to found the *Société Anonyme* with Katherine Dreier.

[...] Duchamp came to me with projects; he had conceived an idea for making three-dimensional movies. Miss Dreier had presented him with a movie camera, and he obtained another cheap one - the idea was to join them with gears and a common axis so that a double, stereoscopic film could be made of a globe with a spiral painted on it [...]. Duchamp decided to develop the film himself; I helped him.<sup>4</sup>

The conditions for the experiment were however too risky and the film consequently failed during the developing. They did save some filmstrips but completely abandoned the attempt at making a stereoscopic film:

Duchamp came in towards evening; we did save some film, two matching strips which, on examination through an old stereopticon, gave the effect of relief. To carry on the experiment, capital was needed as well as several other adjustments to make it practical for public presentation; the project was abandoned.<sup>5</sup>

Another project was launched at that period<sup>6</sup>:

While helping him with his research, I had shot a sequence of myself as a barber shaving the pubic hairs of a nude model, a sequence which was also ruined in the process of developing and never saw the light.<sup>7</sup>

The latter destroyed film —or sequence— ought to be a typical New York Dada film. The initiative for the project is quite impossible to attribute to any one member of the Dada group of New York: Man Ray, Duchamp or the model, who was the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (1874–1927), an eccentric painter and poet. She was publicly a very provocative person with true dada behavior centred against bourgeois conventions. Also known as Else Endell, alias Tara Osrik or Elsa Ploetz, originally born on the German coast of the Baltic sea<sup>8</sup>, her biography is quite obscure: «information is fragmented, contradictory, often made only of anecdotes».<sup>9</sup> Her collaboration with artists such as Ezra Pound, Duchamp and even Berenice Abbot is attributed to the fact that Greenwich Village was a tightly knit community at that time. For example she was also a nude model in the Ferrer Center where Man Ray made his debut. The Baroness has been recently rediscovered by art historians as a pre-dadaist<sup>10</sup> and could support a theory that New York Dada was not only the achievement of the *Société Anonyme* but a disparate amalgam of strong personalities. The real origin of New York Dada could therefore even be founded on a special spirit that existed among artists of Greenwich Village of which only the *Société Anonyme* has come to be remembered by history (see in chapter 2).

These two early films by Duchamp and Man Ray, by their tasks and contents, so different —one was an experiment and the other a provocative «performance»— recall the dada-vision of Hans Richter: the balance between the rational and the irrational or what he called «heaven and hell».

The stereo-film might be placed in the same «experimental» category as Duchamp's *Opticerie* that was also being worked on at that time, and as the later *Anémic cinéma* (1926) —that was started in New York and completed in France with the help of Man Ray.

In his dada-correspondence with Tristan Tzara, in which he anticipates his cinematographic production<sup>11</sup> by signing himself off as «man Ray (sic.), directeur du mauvais movies», Man Ray also sent some photograms of the Baroness nude on photographic cuts.

Man Ray continued filming various experimental projects for Duchamp such as *Rotative plaque de verre* and *Rotative demi-sphère*. After he moved to France on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1921<sup>12</sup> these experiments continued with different wheel installations at the home of Duchamp's brother, Jacques Villon.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile René Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924) was made, and became one of the purest French dada-films. Francis Picabia, Man Ray and Duchamp were its principal actors. The early cinematographic experience of Man Ray could have been only a mess of destroyed film or sporadic experiences for Duchamp if one improvised film in 1923 had not at last been successfully developed —with perhaps the benefit of the «experiences» obtained by the preceding destructions; nor if that film had not been shown during the last *dada-soirée*, *Le Cœur à barbe*, on July 6, 1923. The film, called *Le Retour à la raison*, was originally suggested by Tristan Tzara and became a two-minute impromptu piece. It mainly edits outdoor and indoor scenes familiar to Man Ray and, most importantly, different rushes made with a particularly efficient technique that Man Ray had had experience of before only in photography: the rayograph (here called «cinerayograph»).

The «absolute film» of Hans Richter, *Rhythmus 21*, and Charles Sheeler's and Paul Strand's *Manhatta* were also shown at the same evening.

The screening of *Le Retour à la raison* was not without problems: in only two minutes the film broke twice; Man Ray recalls in *Self Portrait* that his film's second break was the start of the agitation of that evening which also marked the beginning of the end of Dada. In fact the film appeared to be more a controversial joke than a real success among the public, but it revealed Man Ray as «directeur du mauvais movies».

About the break and consequences Man Ray writes:

The Dadaists were joyful - as for me, I knew it (the film) was near the end of my reel, so did not regret the interruption, on the contrary, it may have induced the public to imagine that there was much more to the film, and that they had missed the import of *The Return to Reason*. The episode gave me a new prestige; it was said I had gone into the making of movies. But I put my camera aside.<sup>14</sup>

From that point Man Ray received a few proposals to do more films. Finally, after a break of three years he made only three more films, between 1926 and 1929.

They remained the most important: *Emak bakia*, *L'Etoile de mer* and *Les Mystères du château du dé*.

During 1923 to 1926 Man Ray was in fact involved in several productions of which only a few successfully engaged his talents, namely *Le Ballet mécanique* by Fernand Léger, *Entr'acte* by René Clair, *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films?* by Henri Chomette and *Anémic cinéma* by Marcel Duchamp<sup>15</sup>.

In *Self Portrait* Man Ray insists several times on the negative relationship he developed early with the cinema:

With my Dadaistic approach, I felt that whatever I might undertake in the way of films would be open to censorship either on moral or on aesthetic grounds, in short, bad.<sup>16</sup>

He was also very conscious that cinema was too demanding in terms of responsibilities, cost and social acquaintance. Besides the best known episode of *Ballet mécanique* which originally the producer Dudley Murphy wanted to be filmed (and possibly mounted) by Man Ray, there is a lesser known abandoned project with André Derain (around 1930?) that Man Ray describes in *Self Portrait*:

[...] He had a project for a film, and asked me to help him. There were to be nothing but closeups of heads to tell the story. After engaging a technician to help us solve certain problems, I tried to explain that there would be departures from the usual methods of shooting and even developing the film.[...] The expert, after endless discussions, did not approve of our project. I reminded him that he had been engaged purely as a technical adviser. He ended up by saying that what we wanted to do was impossible. I might have been able to handle the work myself in the days of the silent movies, when I had made some short films using my own ideas and technique.<sup>17</sup>

The following arguments that he uses in the same text reveal the main reasons (that are deeper than the coming of sound) for not collaborating with any cinema production system after 1930:<sup>18</sup>

Then [in the days of the silent movies] it was still possible to make a film as a one-man job, but with the addition of new techniques it was necessary to have collaboration. The idea of getting involved in a lot of hard work discouraged me, too; unless it could be effortless and a pleasure, as making a painting or a photograph had become for me, I would not engage myself in the making of a film. Inwardly, I resented the idea of doing any work even with only one other person. In the pursuit of pleasure, I was willing to collaborate with one other person.<sup>19</sup>

This important confession will be one of our arguments for the final chapters. When we said that Man Ray stopped filming it was not completely true, for in fact he never actually stopped filming until he went to Hollywood during the war (without any overt intention to make films—at least no evidence of it exists). Recently (in 1995) a stock comprising only short films (10 minutes 50 seconds for the

longest and only 53 seconds for the shortest), made in 35, 16, 9.5 and 8mm, was discovered. All must be considered as «home movies» —again there is no evidence that Man Ray had a «project» with them, first from the nature of their topics and their archiving as private rolls.<sup>20</sup> Their screening is a pleasant experience but one that poses a few more questions of interest.

I propose to review first the films which are historically significant (1923–29), and then after that I shall examine the other films for information on his cinematic vision. Finally I will focus the analysis on *Emak Bakia*.

## 7.2. General Points Concerning the Films of 1923–1929

### [le retour à la raison – 1923]

On the occasion of the *Cœur à barbe*, on July 6th, 1923, Tristan Tzara asked Man Ray to take part in the making of a film:

I had some movie sequences which could be projected, and an operator with a projector had already been hired. I explained that what I had would not last more than a minute; there was not sufficient time to add to it. Tzara insisted: what about my Rayographs, the compositions made without a camera directly on the paper; couldn't I do the same thing on movie film and have it ready for the performance? The idea struck me as possible and I promised to have something ready for the next day.<sup>21</sup>

The film is composed of independent shots improvised before *Le Retour à la raison* had been planned by Tzara (originally called *Le Retour de la raison*).<sup>22</sup> These shots are night shots of a fair, of the painting *Danger/Dancer*, of an optic poem, a spiral made of paper, a mobile (an egg box) and of a nude torso in movement «shadow-striped» —Kiki de Montparnasse (Alice Prin), Man Ray's mistress at that time (plate 28). The subjects were filmed with a small camera that Man Ray had bought after his arrival in France and were not filmed with the intention of doing a feature. However, the aesthetic subject —light and movement— is evident.

My curiosity was aroused by the idea of putting into motion some of the results I had obtained in still photography. [...] I made a few sporadic shots, unrelated to each other, as a



field of daisies, a nude torso moving in front of a striped curtain with the sunlight coming through, one of my paper spirals hanging in the studio, a carton from an egg crate revolving on a string —mobiles before the invention of the word, [...]»<sup>23</sup>

The «field of daisies» is strangely missing in the film but appears however in the next film, *Emak Bakia*; it will be seen that it has its importance.

The rest (what is not «sporadic shot») was made with the rayograph technique the day before the performance. It is said that Man Ray completely improvised with time (light), material (film strips) and found objects —like a cook preparing a totally new meal from unknown ingredients:

On some strips I sprinkled salt and pepper, like a cook preparing a roast, on other strips I threw pins and thumbtacks at random; then turned on the white light for a second or two, as I had done for my still Rayographs [...] The next morning, when dry, I examined my work; the salt, pins and tacks were perfectly reproduced, white on a black ground as in X-ray films, but there was no separation into successive frames as in movie films. I had no idea what this would give on screen.<sup>24</sup>

Man Ray had made several shots but had no idea about how to work out a whole film: he was unable to assemble the shots together professionally and had actually no experience of editing film material. In fact his purpose was more to glue the strips together (as a collage) than to cut a film.

The projection was planned to run for only a few minutes and the spectators' reaction would be totally unconsidered. The only «problem» encountered by Man Ray was to deal with «time», not the risk of making a «bad movie»:

The whole would not last more than about three minutes. Anyhow, I thought, it would be over before an audience could react; there would be other numbers on the program to try the spectators' patience, the principal aim of the Dadaists.<sup>25</sup>

The film was not projected anywhere soon afterwards but reappears in 1949, in Knokke-le-Zoute, in Belgium, during a festival of experimental cinema.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile a copy (?) had apparently made its way to America before 1935.<sup>27</sup>

There is, I think, uncertainty about the authenticity of the version(s) of 1935/1949 (and what we can see today). Indeed, first the film became broken during the first projection, then came to be neglected and forgotten as film, and strips were re-utilised in *Emak Bakia*. Some strips were replicated several times (or were re-exposed

as negatives to light new strips).<sup>28</sup> A self-made copy of the rayographs' strips could have been possible but this alternative appears fairly unlikely because the film was intended to be a unique presentation and Man Ray had no use for other copies, nor the motivation for them —he puts his camera «aside».<sup>29</sup> Replicated material, if there was such, could be both identical but reversed or identical but negative (plate 28) and would *necessarily* have to be unique (because Man Ray did not apparently ever repeat the same technique on film).

The impossibility of lighting and developing the film with identical results twice is also evident<sup>30</sup>: not a single new similar exposure can be made without removing salt and pepper in that particularly risky technique. We are thus faced with one positive<sup>31</sup> or one negative considered as «original» and a series of «clones» in negative, positive and inversed (mirror) versions. The common thesis of Man Ray's legendary improvisation is thereby partly discredited. I see three possibilities:

- 1° the film projected at the evening of *Le cœur à barbe* was not exactly the same as the current version and contained only the «original» cinerayographs and «sporadic shots». In that case the variations, explain «tirer 5 fois» and were made for *Emak Bakia* which also reutilises the strip
- 2° Man Ray has «improvised» a quite complex process made from «original» cinerayographs and contact prints film to film to get inversed copies, all done in the hours that followed his meeting with Breton
- 3° the improvisation is pure legend: Man Ray had made the «originals» some time before and made contact prints in a laboratory, an explanation of «tirer 5 fois»

The fact that copies of rayograph strips are in parts more contrasted<sup>32</sup> and the presence of inscriptions support the theory of laboratory work, which in turn means a dismantling of the unique original —as was obviously the situation after the projection of 6 July 1923.

If one is considering the second hypothesis above, then how did Man Ray get the copies ready in a so short time<sup>33</sup> —as described in *Self Portrait*? The third suggestion could include also the first. For I do believe above all that the current version is at least partly a reconstruction that Man Ray made after *Emak Bakia*,<sup>34</sup> and I suspect that every film actually bearing the title *Le Retour à la raison* originates from *material recycled in Emak Bakia*, plus some of the material he had not used for it but which remained from the broken *Le Retour à la raison*. It is also possible that Man Ray «restored» his film when he noticed that it could have some value after the successful run of *Emak Bakia* and the following films (1928 and 1929), and in this case

perhaps has «improved» the sequence with negative-positive variations of the same fragments used in *Emak Bakia*. Is the copy that was «saved» in 1935 (12 years after) for the New York Modern Art Museum in fact that «reconstruction»? If it is, nobody can be sure that Man Ray really did —and probably he did not— edit the film in exactly the same way, *above all when he had already had the experience of Emak Bakia*. And why is the «field of daisies» present in *Emak Bakia* absent from *Le Retour à la raison*? But is strangely present in the description of *Le Retour à la raison* in *Self Portrait*?

Whatever the answers are, *Le Retour à la raison* has had two lives and the point is that after 1935 the film is seen mostly as a dada event.

Personally the first impression I had when I saw the film for the first time (in Brussels, 1977) was that it was a *kinetic approach* rather than «pure nonsense». Through Man Ray's own words I later discovered another aspect (the dada aspect) and I do not completely agree with Deke Dusinberre who wrote in 1997 (partly in the same vein as my initial impression):

Comme d'autres films expérimentaux de l'époque, *Le retour à la raison* tente de donner une forme nouvelle aux idées artistiques du moment, de les étendre à l'expérience rythmique et temporelle du cinéma. L'une des clefs, justement, en est le sens (ou non sens) de l'art, problématique qu' incarnait le mouvement Dada.<sup>35</sup>

The idea of rhythm and temporality —so dear to Richter— came to Man Ray in fact afterwards when he had *experienced* the result (and had probably also seen the films of Hans Richter *Rhythmus 21* presented in the same *soirée*). Man Ray had no film projector and the film was seen for the first time at his public screening:

It looked like snowstorm, with flakes flying in all directions instead of falling, then suddenly becoming a field of daisies as if the snow had crystallized into flowers. This was followed by another sequence of huge white pins crisscrossing and revolving in an epileptic dance, then again by a lone thumbtack making desperate efforts to leave the screen.<sup>36</sup>

This rhythm and temporal aspect (as it comes to any spectator today) wasn't intentional but obscures the dadaistic intention through its aesthetic force. Tzara who had proposed the show did not obviously think about temporality but anarchism. The second life of the film is thus a second context in which the real meaning of the film has become ambivalent in the light of history.<sup>37</sup>

I question also the paternity of the film.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, who was it who had the vision of the actual film? Probably nobody. Neither Tzara nor Man Ray. To reclaim the full paternity of an art idea or a vision one must be more than just the agent of it; one must also be the initiator. But isn't that a common «problem» with most of commissioned works? The title also seems to have been more than suggested by Tzara (because the programme was already printed and the film named before he asked Man Ray to do it<sup>39</sup>); besides, Tzara suggested even the sort of material —the rayographs— that could or should be added to the «film».

The title also could tell by itself what was the original intention. But «retour» can be understood in two ways, as a *comeback* but also as a *turning upside-down*. The differences between articles «de» and «à» in the title versions make a significant difference semantically.<sup>40</sup>

I arrived at the theater (sic.) a few minutes before the curtain went up, brought my film to Tzara and told him that he was to announce it, as there were no titles nor captions. I called the film: The Return to Reason.<sup>41</sup>

Beside the contradiction between what was printed on paper and what Man Ray wrote, there is another contradiction:

1° retour (de) = reason upside down = inverted = annihilation = disorder

2° retour (à) = comeback to reason = recovered = discipline = order

I believe that in the seventies young experimental filmmakers (as DusiBerre and myself used to be) and researchers ascribed more clear intentions to Man Ray than he actually had and of course Man Ray himself used the opportunity in 1963 with *Self Portrait* to give the film an air of mystery.

Like Deke DusiBerre<sup>42</sup> who has also observed the contradiction, I do think that Man Ray's position has in fact been ambivalent. He often deliberately allowed mystifying opinions to circulate about parts of his photographic works and discoveries such as the rayograph and solarization. *Le Retour à la raison* was probably much more *planned* and *logical* than he gave to understand. But this does not necessarily mean that the work wasn't improvised. With the pre-existing material (mobiles, torso, danger,...) but also with the plays on negative positive, the result is a *rational use of chance*. Deke DusiBerre explains this position:

[...] Cette anecdote donna naissance à l'idée qu'il s'agissait uniquement d'une provocation Dada, d'un geste typiquement anarchique, impression ensuite renforcée par les historiens du cinéma expérimental, qui en soulignaient l'importance tout en faisant abstraction et de son contenu et de sa construction.<sup>43</sup>

Keeping in mind the particular construction of the film, I concentrated on closely analysing the shots used later in *Emak Bakia*, first to verify that the takes used are effectively the same (and not merely similar) and I found a new contradiction in the process that Man Ray described.

Further, new light on how the film could have been made was cast by a few frames with more special inscriptions and above all with contact prints of nudes pictures lying all along the film across the frames (plate 28).

The use of two types of pictures, the ones made with a camera and the others cameraless rayographs (here also called *cinérayographs*) and contact prints, provides another key —beyond its shortness and the contradiction mentioned above— for reading the film. A clear construction emerges first from the methodical repetitiveness of *similar* takes edited in positive and negative «flicker drifts», but also in the «sporadic shots» (plate 28) with the movement of the pendulum and positive negative play. Does this discredit my first suggestion, that is to say that the film could have been made up at the *Cœur à barbe* only of single «original» rayographs and «sporadic shots» (without negative–positive «drifts»)? The answer is «not necessarily». But it does certainly mean that if there was a later processing of the first negative rayograph with new exposure and developing, there would be an implication of a rather rational procedure. This could have happened three years later, for instance, but I showed that the work could equally have been carried out in one night without any specialized laboratory. The nature of the genuine film lies somewhere between these extremes.

The inscriptions, obviously instructions to a laboratory, are a mystery and so do not clear up the genesis of the film and for his part Deke Dusinberre is convinced that Man Ray later made up a fable about its genesis and that the film was planned possibly much earlier (suggestion 3° above), a theory providing a totally new, less legendary and less dada approach.

There exists a slightly different hypothesis for the inscriptions, for which there is some confirmation in *Self Portrait*. The mysterious inscriptions could have been made later on the original of *Le Retour à la raison* not for duplicating, «returning»

and inverting the diverse sequences of the original film, but only for «copying» the whole «snowstorm» sequence for *Emak Bakia*.<sup>44</sup> *That theory provides a strong argument for the idea that all the copies with the mysterious inscriptions originated from one negative later than 1926, the year of the making Emak Bakia and are therefore not genuine.* In all the copies of *Emak Bakia* in my own possession, the sequence «in positive» has more black and white contrast than the same sequence in *Le Retour à la raison*,<sup>45</sup> a technical particularity generally pertaining to copies. Man Ray, actually suggests this possibility when he writes how the same sequence was printed up in *Emak Bakia*:

I'd even use the first strips from my Dada film: salt and pepper, pins and thumbstacks, but printed up professionally.<sup>46</sup>

Though he had indeed got some money for the production of *Emak Bakia*, it does not follow that he would have had to make a completely new sequence to remake the «snowstorm», even if *Le Retour à la raison* had been shelved for three years and was perhaps still broken. Moreover, if the sequence had been transferred *directly* to *Emak Bakia*, *Le Retour à la raison* would no longer have been complete. There is a strong possibility that Man Ray repaired the sequences at the same time and probably believed that a new life of the «best part» of *Le Retour à la raison* had begun through *Emak Bakia*. Another argument is that Man Ray himself confused the sequences of both films in his far later description in *Self Portrait*, particularly by putting «daisies» where there were none.<sup>47</sup>

I am therefore convinced that the current version of *Le Retour à la raison* (and 1935/1949 version) are not exactly the same as the film that was presented in July, 1923. Even a possible comparison of the European version and the American version could not resolve that mystery definitively because they both belong to the «second life» of the film.

Perhaps finally Man Ray managed to realize a work of art without necessarily being its initiator. In fact the most interesting phenomenon in *Le Retour à la raison* is not the film itself, but the «flicker drift» of cinerayographs —which was suggested by Tzara (besides the title) and probably without any specific intention but only to fill up the program with a new special «dada-cocktail». Duchamp showed that a banal object could become a work of art if only picked-up *intentionally*. Man Ray showed that art can be made also *without intention* at all: just by doing and *experiencing*.<sup>48</sup> The film is a complete demonstration of organization by *chance*.<sup>49</sup>

## [emak bakia – 1926]

I will concentrate here on some background information because there is a separate detailed analysis of the film in the next chapter.

*Emak Bakia* (plate 29) cannot be analysed without knowing the context in which *Le Retour à la raison* was made, not only because it contains shots of the latter but because its origin and its conception can be compared in terms of style and *sense*. *Sens* in French can be both *meaning and direction*. On the other hand, *non-sens* means: illogical or against any logic (non-sense). Precisely what Dada meant to be. Even the direction —was the beginning the end, or vice-versa?— in which *Le Retour à la raison* ought to be performed was discussed by a few researchers.<sup>50</sup> This problem is not to be considered with *Emak Bakia* which was produced by Arthur Wheeler<sup>51</sup> and well planned even though the result was «speculative»:

Man Ray stockpiled an assortment of film «takes» of Paris that were to figure prominently in his next opus, and he cautioned Arthur Wheeler that the project had to be viewed as purely speculative, no guarantees given to the final quality. Now he was ready to start in earnest on the movie, which he expected to finish in the fall. His projections proved accurate. *Emak Bakia* premiered in November.<sup>52</sup>

The larger part of the film was shot near Biarritz during May 1926. «*Emak Bakia*» is the name of the villa rented for the summer by the Wheelers. In the Basque language it means: «don't bother me!» or «leave me in peace!»

Exterior shooting was done at Wheeler's estate in Bidart, Basses Pyrénées, near Biarritz. There, enjoying the sparkling summer weather and the break from Paris - swimming and lounging on the beach by day and dance parties at night with Kiki by his side - Man Ray doubled up on assignments from *Vogue* and also pursued whimsical ideas for his film. Along with the poet Jacques Rigaut in one key sequence, Kiki was the undeniable star of her lover's new film.<sup>53</sup>

The way Man Ray started to think *Emak Bakia* was with the experience of *Le Retour à la raison*. He retained the improvisation principle but had in addition a more compositional view. Neil Baldwin sees *Emak Bakia* as a step up to *L'Etoile de mer*, a narrative-like intrigue, at least made with the help of a script. *Emak Bakia* however completely avoids the script phase and concentrates on direct (automatic?) montage:

Where «Le Retour à la raison» had been an impromptu sketch drawn at a moment's notice as a favor to a friend, «Emak Bakia» took Man Ray six months, a long time in his scheme of things. He allowed himself to improvise upon earlier compositional principles and work them through. In the process, he paved the way for his next film, the only one he ever made with a narrative based upon an actual text.<sup>54</sup>

The screening was also an expected event, *external* to dadaist or surrealist standards:

The premiere audience at the «Théâtre au Vieux Colombier (sic.)» - albeit only fifty people, including the Wheelers - went along with Man Ray's unusual standards. This time, there were no riots. «Emak Bakia» enjoyed a successful run, travelling on to London and Brussels in January 1927.<sup>55</sup>

Jean-Michel Bouhours and Patrick de Haas who in 1997 did some research, on which this study draws to some extent, have restored some of the material. A short description of the film by Jean-Michel Bouhours is available in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*. As far as I know there have been no other studies on the subject since then.

I shall now provide a short résumé of some important facts concerning the film. The full visual, rhythm, and editing analysis will be made afterwards in chapter 8 with the purpose of proposing a theory on the specific vision of the film.

One new idea for approaching *Emak Bakia* is to think about it from the sound aspect. Indeed, like *Le Ballet mécanique* of Léger,<sup>56</sup> the film was never intended to be shown as a silent film.

An argument could in fact be made that none of the films of the silent period was intended to be shown without music.

*Emak Bakia* was however shown (when it had been rediscovered) often without music or with the «wrong» music. Wrong because Man Ray had himself suggested a few recordings for the film, and not a definitive one. In addition to that the original score cannot be established with certainty. Following his recollection of the first performance of the film, at the *Vieux Colombier* in 1926, there was an orchestra with «a pianist and three other musicians playing tangos and popular French melodies, sometimes relayed by Django Reinhardt's records.»<sup>57</sup> But what Bouhours did not notice is the quasi impossibility of Django Reinhardt (1910–1953) taking part, as he was then aged 16 and his first known recording (banjo) was made only in 1928.



The final sequence began in complete silence and, with the «valse des faux cols» the orchestra was playing Strauss's «*La veuve joyeuse*» (*The Merry Widow*). The only certainty about the original score at the Vieux Colombier is thus *The Merry Widow* of Strauss and the participation of an orchestra.

The discovery in 1985 in the *rue Férou* atelier (the last place of Man Ray) of unknown films of the twenties and 78 rpm records meant to be played with the films suggest only that, his films were always meant a priori to be shown accompanied by music.<sup>58</sup> Man Ray however, did not content himself with one definitive sound version but tried different formulae, and by doing so he also proves that he did worry quite deeply about the relationship between image and music. One of the versions is originally from the forties when Man Ray selected and stored records, mostly jazz, in a trunk with indications they were to be played with his films, and this is the only version which can be regarded as 100% reliable. As late as the sixties Man Ray even made a modern version.

Another fact to be taken into consideration is that between *Le Retour à la raison* and *Emak Bakia* Surrealism had officially started<sup>59</sup>.

Jean-Michel Bouhours writes:

De l'aveu de son auteur, Emak Bakia a été conçu suivant les principes surréalistes: automatisme, improvisation, irrationalité, séquences psychologiques et oniriques, absence de logique et mépris pour la dramaturgie.<sup>60</sup>

and he makes an important comment which I will try to deal with after the analysis:

Et pourtant le film laisse de glace les amis de Breton lors de sa première au Vieux Colombier. Emak Bakia est sans doute moins l'oeuvre composite que l'on a voulu voir et que Man Ray aurait réalisée sous l'influence d'un contexte.<sup>61</sup>

The context in which Bouhours is thinking is an allusion to what Barbara Rose has written about *Emak Bakia* and must be considered in the analysis:

Between the making of *Return to reason*, which is hardly more than an assemblage of unrelated images, and the far more ambitious *Emak Bakia* in 1927, André Breton had published his Surrealist Manifestos, Léger had filmed *Ballet mécanique*, and Man Ray had worked with Duchamp on *Anémic Cinema*. These events obviously contributed considerably to Man Ray's ideas on film.<sup>62</sup>

Maybe, maybe not. I'd like to remember here that Tzara was still very strongly present and he is the one who led Man Ray to prove himself as a filmmaker. The *Ballet mécanique* has never been presented as a surrealist film but as cubist-dadaist. Further, the role of Man Ray in this film has been discussed a great deal<sup>63</sup> with a clear tendency to accept that Man Ray's role in the making of the film was quite important, at least concerning the photographic material.

*Anémic Cinéma* was started before Surrealism and was still strongly dadaist, not at all oneiric which as it has been seen (chapters 2 to 5) is an important mark of early Surrealism. The films *Entr'acte* by René Clair and his half brother Henri Chomette's *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films* (1925), which was a production of the Comte de Beaumont, in which Man Ray also collaborated, can also be added.

The London Film Society showed it in 1926, but soon after Man Ray, Chomette, and the Count had a falling out. Man Ray started after that the production of *Emak Bakia* and Chomette made by himself *Jeux des reflets et de la vitesse* and *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* which historically is considered to be parts of *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films* that today is lost. *Jeux des reflets et de la vitesse* and *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* are considered as *two different parts of the film after the part of Man Ray had been removed*. After a conversation that William Moritz had with Man Ray in 1972, it has been reported that at least a part of the material of *Emak Bakia* *could* come from that splitting of the film. Also the part of Chomette who probably produced the films cited is unsure.<sup>64</sup> Though the question has been well analysed by Moritz and Bouhours, what sort of material is from Man Ray's «part» of the film *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films* and also how much of it was used in *Emak Bakia* remain unclear:

Rien ne permet de savoir si ce projet de scission [with Chomette's part of the film] se réalisa. Il est possible qu'il ait troublé Chomette et Man Ray et que ceux-ci aient alors repris ce qu'ils considéraient comme leur bien. Entre son premier et son second film, Man Ray continua d'expérimenter des rayographies cinématographiques, [...] Quoi qu'il en soit, les séquences de Man Ray intégrées dans *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films*? n'ont pas par la suite été reprises dans *Emak Bakia*. Pour les rayogrammes d'*Emak Bakia*, Man Ray reprendra une partie du *Retour à la raison*. Aucun des portraits photographiques ou des visages anamorphosés décrits ne seront repris dans *Emak Bakia*. En revanche, on retrouve les mêmes ingrédients d'une alchimie...<sup>65</sup>

Whatever the situation may be, all these films are connected by the common means they employ even if not by their raw material. Together they cohere, but have little

to do with Surrealism even though they were made *after* Surrealism had started. They have a personal and unique cinematographic vision:<sup>66</sup>

The cinema is not limited to the representative mode. It can create, and has already created a sort of rhythm...Thanks to this rhythm the cinema can draw fresh strength from itself which, forgoing the logic of facts and the reality of objects, may beget a series of unknown visions, inconceivable outside the union of lens and film. Intrinsic cinema, or if you prefer, pure cinema – because it is separated from every other element, whether dramatic or documentary, is what certain works lead us to anticipate...<sup>67</sup>

*Emak Bakia* echoes the view of Henri Chomette quite well.

For the occasion of the projection of the film of Chomette at the *Studio des Ursulines*, Comte de Beaumont made a speech in which the collaboration of Man Ray can be felt:<sup>68</sup>

Nous avons imaginé un film où l'appareil lui-même rêverait: d'abord dans des jeux de forme pure parmi lesquelles apparaissent quelques visages humains, déformés, mouvants et grimaçants, puis peu à peu plus sereins pour arriver à donner les images de quelques-unes des femmes les plus en vue du Paris actuel, et célèbres par leur beauté et leur talent. ...ces visages apparaissent et disparaissent encadrés d'images poétiques, de fleurs, de paysages de rêves. Certains d'entre eux ont été faits sur le film directement sans le recours d'appareils.<sup>69</sup>

In 1925 only Man Ray could have been doing the *cinérayographs*. Moreover in the programme for the projection at the *Studio des Ursulines* of May 27, 1925 two rayographs by Man Ray's were printed.

The Beaumont–Man Ray–Chomette project although now lost as a project can nonetheless be one of the most significant contexts in which Man Ray started to think about the conception of *Emak Bakia*.

Another context is the Surrealist's opinion of Breton concerning Man Ray at that time (1924). The *Manifesto* makes a very precise list of the artists fully accepted as Surrealists. Man Ray is absent from that list, but Picasso, Duchamp and Picabia are too. Even Max Ernst is. However the list lengthens to include individuals to be taken into «great consideration» (but possibly too individualistic to live in harmony with the group):

...C'étaient (sic.) des instruments trop fiers, c'est pourquoi ils n'ont pas toujours rendu un son harmonieux (Je pourrais en dire autant de quelques philosophes et de quelques peintres, [...] Man Ray ...) <sup>70</sup>

In *Self Portrait*, Man Ray gives a quite precise description of several takes of the film. We shall come back to it later, but at the end of this description he made a quite significant statement (and also 40 years later):

The Dada instinct was still very strong with me. <sup>71</sup>

In another words Dada did not live any more but the *esprit dada* hadn't disappeared yet and this can explain in part the sceptical reaction of the Surrealist's group at the Vieux Colombier to the première of *Emak Bakia*. The film of Man Ray was probably seen as a late dada manifestation.

On the other hand, the differences in the processes of making between Dada and early Surrealism are not very significant —the oneiric vision is to become one of the most typical— but still reside mostly in the approval policy of the group. And Man Ray had made *Emak Bakia without consulting them*.

My Surrealist friends whom I had invited to the showing were not very enthusiastic, although I thought I had complied with all the principles of Surrealism: irrationality, automatism, psychological and dreamlike sequences without apparent logic, and complete disregard of conventional storytelling. At first I thought this coolness was due to my not having discussed the project with them beforehand, as we did in the publication of magazines and the arrangement of exhibitions. It was not sufficient to call a work Surrealist, as some outsiders had done to gain attention - one had to collaborate closely and obtain a stamp of approval - present the work under the auspices of the movement to be recognized as Surrealist. I had neglected this, been somewhat too individualistic. <sup>72</sup>

We shall see in the next chapters that the criteria for placing the film in the category of dada or surrealist cinema and the subsequent philosophic visions they give rise to, are the main keys to explaining this film and its significance in film history.

## [l'étoile de mer – 1928]

The production of *L'Etoile de mer* (plate 30) starts in a totally different context. This time the genesis was not a proposal by a rich relation for an indeterminate project, but rather the vision of an extraordinary, poor and impulsive surrealist poet: Robert Desnos. Desnos, who had the reputation of composing poems under a state of trance, «eked out a precarious living as a newspaperman; dramatic, literary and art critic».<sup>73</sup> As he was about to leave Paris to make a report in the Caribbean, he had a farewell dinner with Man Ray and Kiki. He had written a poem that same day called *L'Etoile de mer* that he started to read after the meal.

Desnos's poem was like a scenario for a film, consisting of fifteen or twenty lines, each line presenting a clear, detached image of a place or of a man and woman. There was no dramatic action, yet all the elements for a possible action. [...] My imagination may have been stimulated by the wine during our dinner, but the poem moved me very much, I saw it clearly as a film - a Surrealist film, and told Desnos that when he returned I'd have made a film with his poem.<sup>74</sup>

The choice of the actors was very simple: themselves, and a neighbour, André de la Rivière.

The film has been sometimes compared to Breton's *Nadja*:

Un grand nombre de ses meilleurs poèmes des années 1920 décrivent des rêves et présentent souvent le poète sous les traits d'un amant placé dans une situation érotique éperdue. L'un des lieux communs de la littérature surréaliste est la rencontre avec une femme inconnue, folle peut-être. *Nadja* est la chronique même des rencontres de Breton avec une telle femme.<sup>75</sup>

Sensuality, subjectivity and smoothness of the camera work are maybe the keywords for this film. The use of a special rough lens gives a quite misty, granular appearance to the picture, which was the main reason —because it was «artistic looking»— why the film passed the censors so easily without too many cuts.

There would be no so soft-focus, nor artistic silhouette effects. I prepared some pieces of gelatine by soaking, obtaining a mottled or cathedral-glass effect through which the photography would look like sketchy drawing or painting.<sup>76</sup>

The existence of official censorship was one of the reasons why Man Ray was always sceptical about cinema. As he had sometimes said he wouldn't have ever succeeded in getting past the censors if he had done the film he wanted really to do. Indeed in some of the «home movies» he made later the subject itself was a real public taboo at that time. *Two Women* (plate 30) is still difficult to obtain —the distribution system's own self-censorship?<sup>77</sup>

This smooth subjectivity, nearly a dream sequence, gives the film all its originality and force, much more than the intrigue itself. Anamorphic distortions already present in *Emak Bakia* are no longer here a way of escaping the rationality and reality of the objects, of rendering space more abstract, but they work more to filter the world by an irrational vision, to remind the spectator of his own subjectivity. Sitney very well points out that between the world's reality and the film's own material, there is a «mass of glass» (lenses) and subjectivity.<sup>78</sup>

Subjectivity is always present in films or photographs, but here in addition to that habitual subjectivity there is also the subjectivity of the poet Desnos and how Man Ray has himself interpreted the poem.<sup>79</sup> Thus Man Ray's vision here does not refer alone to his own model about reality but through the subjectivity of another artist: a second level of subjectivity.

I had to get the visa of the film censors - he [the director of the theatre] was doubtful about showing the nude shots to the general public. [...] There were half a dozen men in the projection room, important looking, some venerably bearded, with government ribbons in their lapels. There was some agitation during the showing, [...], then a long discussion among the jurors. The apparent incoherence of the film upset them more than the nudes, but they admitted that the latter were as artistic as any painting of a nude. They gave me the visa, but suggested the elimination of two short strips in the film, first, where the underwear of the woman undressing passed over her head - the act of undressing was slightly obscene, they thought; secondly, the elimination of the subtitle: One must beat the dead while they are cold.<sup>80</sup>

The use of sexuality here and the common eroticism in narrative cinema are not fundamentally different, even though the purpose of the latter is commercial. Another aim is to provoke, but there is a risk associated with that. Sitney is right when he writes that the camera «protects» the film from the world's reality and sexuality stands between the extremes. He called it «objectif médiateur» —which is, for me, almost a pleonasm:

La conscience aiguë de l'objectif médiateur lors de la prise de vue inhibe constamment l'articulation d'un espace fictionnel dans lequel «l'action» peut avoir lieu. L'alternance de perspectives conventionnelles et de distorsions contraint ce récit d'une rencontre sexuelle et de son obsession fétichiste à entrer dans un espace symbolique.<sup>81</sup>

Sitney remarks also on the *suppression* of the technique of «shot and reverse shot» as if its absence was intentional here. I do not agree with that argument in this case, firstly because before something is suppressed one must suppose that it is already formally present as a function and secondly because it appears restricted to the main kind of narration, an *invention* by Hollywood (and Russian cinema). «Shot and reverse shot» technique is not necessarily used by the whole of narrative cinema, and particularly European cinema in the 1920s. It should be understood as an easy efficient visual convention of narrative cinema, giving the spectator a strong sense of place in relation to the actual action. In *L'Etoile de mer*, because the action is totally disconnected from reality (cf. *Nadja*) and connected only to a symbolic space/situation, the absence of shot and reverse shot is not intentional, so therefore not in itself significant, but rather merely natural, as it is in many narratives of the 1920s.

The film also offers a deeper level of meaning through its captions and Sitney has pertinently suggested Freudian or mythological connotations, especially by placing *L'Etoile de mer* into a Bretonian context. The problem in connecting the film with Breton is that Man Ray defended himself by saying he was little concerned with the group at that time. I will show that the Freudian and mythological theory that Sitney develops is actually also pertinent to the case of *Emak Bakia*.

*L'Etoile de mer* is nonetheless the first fully surrealist film by Man Ray, and definitively distant from the dada spirit. The film also precedes Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou* (1929) and *L'âge d'or* (1930), which were to become the archetypes of surrealist cinema.

### [les mystères du château du dé – 1929]

This film (plate 30) could actually be said to have the merit of avoiding that very archetype of surrealist cinema created by Buñuel's and Dalí's film *Un Chien andalou*. In fact, they were made approximately at the same time —the film of Buñuel in late 1928 and *Les Mystères du château du dé* in January 1929. Both films were premièreed at

the Ursulines on 12 June 1929. If the first meeting of Man Ray and Buñuel was probably in May 1929<sup>82</sup>, I could not find any evidence that Buñuel had seen *L'Etoile de mer* or *Emak Bakia* before making *Un Chien andalou* but I found some curious similarities between a few shots of *Un Chien andalou* and both films of Man Ray—and between the structure of their subtitles.<sup>83</sup> The actual place of *Les Mystères du château du dé* in the chronology of surrealist cinema makes it a very particular and independent work without no comparable antecedent. It should also be noted here that where Buñuel's career as filmmaker starts with *Un Chien andalou*, the career of Man Ray as filmmaker stops. Besides, Buñuel (b.1900) and Dalí (b.1904) are the first generation of Surrealists not to have been involved with Dada.

At the start of the thirties, financially Man Ray's life is easier, with his work moving towards the world of fashion photography (Harper's Bazaar) and productions for big magazines. *Les Mystères du château du dé* is undoubtedly the result of Man Ray's mixture of nonchalance and opportunism, combining, as will be seen, a good relation with the aristocracy and the increasing interest in modern art of another Maecenas, the Vicomte Charles de Noailles.

After each film Man Ray had the conviction that it would be the last. For the same reason as with *Emak Bakia*, Man Ray started however on a new project: he should have no restrictions with reference either to finances or to topics. His freedom would thus again be complete. Produced by the Vicomte Charles de Noailles, the film had a few more aristocrats also who acted as interpreters: Etienne de Beaumont and Henri d'Ursel, their wives and a few others. Their interest in filmmaking as a hobby has been seen from the study of their correspondence e.g. with Man Ray.<sup>84</sup> Henri d'Ursel the same year was making, totally by himself, the surrealist film *La perle* (1929), a film better known in Belgium where he promoted experimental cinema and film seminars.

The main shooting of *Les Mystères du château du dé* took place in a mysterious very large and modern villa, *La villa Saint-Bernard de Hyères* (near Toulon). The villa was designed by the architect Robert Mallet-Stevens in 1923, who was influenced by the *de Stijl* aesthetic, and built with the assistance of a local architect, Léon David. Avant-garde artists designed the furniture. The villa, that today is owned by the town of Hyères, is still surrounded by a cubist garden at the edge of an «enigmatic» old castle abbey. The most important details of this villa relating to the film were its gymnasium and a large pool (plate 30).



Before leaving for the south to open up his château, Noailles gave me a photograph of it - a conglomeration of gray (sic.) cement cubes built on the ruins of an old monastery on the top of a hill overlooking the town and the sea. Designed by a well-known architect of the day, Mallet-Stevens, it was severe and unobtrusive as if trying to hide the opulence that was housed in it. In spite of myself, my mind began to work, imagining various approaches to the subject; after all, it would be best to make some sort of plan if only not to waste effort. The cubic forms of the château brought to mind the title of a poem by Mallarmé: »A Throw of the Dice Can Never Do Away with Chance».<sup>85</sup>

Besides the pleasure of making a movie, Charles de Noailles had the idea of promoting the architecture of his «castle» (the villa). Very aware of the originality of the site he wanted a visual artist more than a professional director to make the film. He did not want a documentary. Indeed, the film is far from a documentary. The descriptive sequence of the villa is possibly too long but the film has the humorous touch of an expressionist detective film or even early film noir, with plenty of poetic allusions.

The casting was planned originally for four people: Charles de Noailles, Alice de Montgomery, Eveline Orłowska and Bernard Deshoulières, but the complete casting pushed the number up to twelve and included Man Ray and the aristocratic couple. Kiki de Montparnasse would not be an actress now as she and Man Ray had separated in the autumn of 1928.

Because *Un Chien andalou* and *Les Mystères du château du dé* were screened at the same première they have been closely compared. Many critics had written about the cinematographic quality of *Un Chien andalou*; the photographic qualities of *Les Mystères du château du dé* were also acclaimed. The critics were nevertheless divided about the cinematographic quality of *Les Mystères du château du dé*.

Léon Moussinac's opinion serves to summarise the cinematographic–photographic dilemma:

C'est l'aspect plastique des images, l'expression intime de celles-ci qui intéresse tout spécialement Man Ray, admirable photographe. Rien de ce qui fait une composition cinématographique, de ce qui commande au rythme d'un film, rien des rapports mathématiques des images entre elles ne semble le retenir. c'est une architecture »au jugé«, qui garde le charme de son incertitude, mais qui ne manque pas, souvent, d'être un peu

lassante, et nous apparaît comme un divertissement inutile. Seule la séduction agit sur l'aspect plastique des images, la volonté et l'esprit qui s'y révèlent, mais ça n'est pas suffisant en cinématographie.<sup>86</sup>

The plastic aspect, the meaning of the title of the film itself and the play of the characters are far beyond the photographic means employed. For the first time Man Ray elaborates a precise script/scenario and he keeps some distance from Mallarmé's poem. He retains Mallarmé's (and again Dada's) idea of letting chance decide. He made that the principal intrigue of the film.

The black and white «digital play» of the characters, dices, balls, swimming shirts, stocking masks, rays and architecture (plate 30) give the film the conflict between the real and the dream: to be or not to be... the real versus the surreal. The inter-titles throw deep «*human questions*»: «Où allons-nous?», «Où sommes-nous?»; Can the real and the dream play in the same game?: «Allons-nous-en, sortons». Mystery and chance are also true actors. The strange games (dices, balls, weights, water juggling, acrobatics, jumping, climbing are all real elements/actions questioning the spectator: «Existe-t-il des fantômes d'action?... des fantômes de nos actions passées? Les minutes vécues ne laissent-elles pas des traces concrètes dans l'air et sur la terre?»<sup>87</sup>

Man Ray's film does not have any illogical moves and even does not question the classical diegesis, so is in this sense opposite to Buñuel's film which does refer to a classical diegesis, but rearranges the scenes in a surrealist order (the epitome of this being in *Le Fantôme de la liberté*, almost 50 years later). In fact, from the beginning the adventure has a clear, temporal function: it introduces the spectator to a dream played with a pair of dice. The spectator follows with the subjective eyes of the drivers the coming to the «mysteries» of the château, or «mysteries» still unknown at the end of the film, which has a blue inversion of the image and an «open hand (end) without dice». Indeed, in 1996 a toned version of the film (blue-brown) was found.

### 7.3. Other Films

In the thirties Man Ray continued to film on his own short home-made movies with diverse small format cameras (9,5mm, 16mm and 8mm). These films<sup>88</sup> can be separated into two groups: those with certainly no intentional artistic goal, in which

Man Ray records for instance bullfights, his atelier, his work, his friends, or himself with Juliet, etc... and the ones made under special —unknown— circumstances, possibly with the idea of using takes later for whatever purpose. I particularly have in mind some takes of the sequence made with Lee Miller around 1930, known under the title *Autoportrait ou ce qui nous manque à tous* and *Poison* (1930–1935) made with Meret Oppenheim, the relative long sequence with the «dancer» Jenny (1938) and, particularly, the undated *Two Women* (1928–1937<sup>89</sup>). This last gives a rather good idea about the film topics Man Ray was really fond of and would have probably made films of in other more appropriate circumstances, namely eroticism and voyeurism. If *Two Women*, that is clearly a 4 minute lesbian<sup>90</sup> film, is from 1928 or soon after, it has to be placed at least partly in relation to the soft eroticism he had already developed with *L'Etoile de mer* and had abandoned, probably because he was aware, after the censorship experience, that filmmaking, in the particular way described below, is not like photography:

L'étrangeté du statut de ces films «personnels», c'est que, s'il est vrai que le label «oeuvre d'art» n'a pas été conféré par l'artiste, ils sont cependant parmi les seuls à ne devoir leur existence qu'au désir exclusif de celui-ci, et non de répondre à une commande extérieure comme ce fut le cas pour *Le Retour à la raison* (Tzara), *Emak Bakia* (Wheeler), *Les Mystères du château du dé* (Noailles).<sup>91</sup>

Curiously Patrick de Haas deliberately forgets *L'Etoile de mer*, probably because the impetus for its production was from Man Ray alone. But actually in *L'Etoile de mer* too there is self-censorship (the special lens used to soft the picture), and behind the film script there is a friend, another artist, Robert Desnos.

Anyway all these «new films» are not properly films, but rather only takes, sequences or possibly film essays, which have probably been rejected.<sup>92</sup> These scraps of film can to some extent clarify some aspects of Man Ray vision: his taste for the female body, especially the legs, anamorphosis, transparency, narcissism, flirting with the camera , etc.

Le corps, dans sa dimension érotique et sexuelle, est très présent dans nombre de ces petits films, qui développent avec humour des composantes narcissiques (cabotinage de l'auteur avec la caméra), auto-érotique (Lee Miller caresse la sculpture phallique Princesse X de Brancusi), voyeuriste (gros plan sur les jambes croisées, décroisées, recroisées de Juliet, longs plans fixes sur les dances de Juliet et Jenny), sadique (mise à mort dans la corrida), exhibitionniste (Man Ray montrant son sexe), et enfin homosexuelle (*Two Women*).<sup>93</sup>

In the summer of 1935 Man Ray was invited along with André Breton and the Eluards to the summer house of a friend, Lise Deharme. At the suggestion of Breton, they started to make a short surrealist film with Man Ray's camera but because of technical problems with the camera they did not manage to shoot the script that had been written by Breton and Eluard. Man Ray saved a few photogrammes from the material but they could never make up a film. The project was called *Essais de simulation du délire cinématographique*.

In 1944, when Man Ray lived in Hollywood, Hans Richter proposed to write and direct a part in his collective film *Dreams That Money Can Buy*. Man Ray was offered a full independent part, the third dream of the film, that he called *Ruth, Roses, and Revolvers*, a satirical vision of Hollywood. It was intended that other directors would take part in the film too.

It was possibly for that reason that Man Ray wrote the script but did not want to be involved in actually making the movie. Other participants were Max Ernst, Fernand Léger, Marcel Duchamp and Alexander Calder. Finally a film in six or seven parts was made<sup>94</sup>: Max Ernst's *Desire*<sup>95</sup> with music by Paul Bowles; *The Girl with the Prefabricated Heart* with Fernand Léger's mannequins; Man Ray's *Ruth, Roses, and Revolvers* with music by Darius Milhaud; *Discs* a new version of Marcel Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs* and *Nude Descending a Staircase* with music by John Cage; Alexander Calder's *Circus* and *Ballets*, mobiles and wire sculptures in motion with music by David Diamond/Edgar Varèse; and finally *Narcissus* by Hans Richter, with music by Louis Applebaum. The co-producer was Kenneth Macpherson and the première of the film was as late as 1948, in New York. It was probably the first feature-length avant-garde film ever produced in America and in addition to that it was also a satire against Hollywood: seven dreams offered for sale by Joe, a poet with a fertile imagination. The dreams are tailored to the unconscious of seven different people. Each dream episode is shaped by one of the contributing visual artists. The part that is by Man Ray, finally directed by Richter himself, lasts about 7 minutes of a total time of 82 minutes.

Hans Richter, [...] wrote me, asking me to do a sequence for the film he was preparing, to which several other artists each contributed a part. With the title »Ruth, Roses, and Revolvers,« I prepared a scenario which I sent him, telling him to do it himself as I was loath to involve myself in movie-making. Richter used my script which was of satirical nature, but

he gave it a psychological twist in keeping with the rest of the film [...]. It was a miracle to see many concrete images formed out of a few words, without any fuss on my part over technical details, reversing the old Chinese proverb that an image was worth a thousand words: in this case, a word produced a thousand images.<sup>96</sup>

From 1929 and the première of *Les Mystères du château du dé*, until 1944, there is a significant lapse of time in which cinema production does not interest Man Ray and he has confirmed the fact in quite a number of interviews. Man Ray did not even dare to approach the studios in Hollywood, his surprising choice of domicile while the war was raging in Europe. He could quite easily have had some introductions, however.<sup>97</sup> Often one of the arguments he had used —a surrealist motto— was that Hollywood cinema had nothing to do with the arts.

[...] He looked [the producer] at me, asking whether I'd like to direct a picture, if that was what I meant; he had a nice little scenario ready to shoot. Again I replied that if I directed a film, it would be with my own scenario. The producer looked puzzled, asked if I wrote as well.<sup>98</sup>

The production system of Hollywood and questions it raised for the artist were not the only reason why Man Ray was avoiding filmmaking. This time he had a good offer from Richter: an independent work, produced by experimental artists and friends, with a free subject and a satire against narrative film —Hollywood. But already after the experience of *Les Mystères du château du dé* Man Ray had understood that cinema involves a great number of participants and the sound had certainly increased that dependence on other people.

I kept to my resolve not to go on with movie-making. Sound was now well established, and the amount of work involved, collaboration with technicians, and all the details of production frightened me.<sup>99</sup>

Man Ray was an individualist and did not want to be embarrassed by compromises. In this case, producing only text for pictures, he could avoid a delicate position yet still enjoy the project.

Mon approche (artistique) me soustrait à l'obligation de me prononcer sur les mérites artistiques du cinéma (projection de la photographie). Ce faisant, je ne cherche aucunement à décliner toute responsabilité quant à mes oeuvres, y compris dans *Ruth*, *Roses* and *Revolvers*, que j'ai tenu à faire réaliser par d'autres.<sup>100</sup>

His early fascination for the movement, before he made films, had progressively vanished.

A book, a painting, a sculpture, a drawing, a photograph, and any concrete object are always at one's disposition, to be appreciated or ignored, whereas a spectacle before an assemblage insists on the general attention, limited to the period of its presentation.<sup>101</sup>

He wanted to enjoy the levels of presentation and representation before they could be altered by the process of interpretation of another director. Enjoyment seems to be the only criterion to become involved in the collective project, his responsibilities being in any case limited.

Since the movies are projection, it amused me to carry the idea to a consistent end, and see an interpretation of it realized by others, so that I could get the same surprise out of it that any spectator would have. (...) I enjoyed the combined role of entertainer and entertained.<sup>102</sup>

Man Ray's position regarding cinema differs considerably from that of Hans Richter, whose early films were much less spontaneous than *Le Retour à la raison*. As early as 1922 Richter was writing in *De Stijl*:

Le domaine propre du cinéma est celui de l'espace en mouvement, de la surface en mouvement, de la ligne en mouvement. Cet espace n'est pas en premier lieu architectural ou plastique, mais temporel, c'est-à-dire que la lumière forme, en modifiant sa qualité (clair, obscur, grand, petit) des espaces lumineux, qui ne constituent pas des volumes, mais transforment en espace, par leur succession, ce qui serait que surface, ligne ou point si l'on interrompait le déroulement chronologique. Le problème du cinéma est l'orchestration du temps. Les possibilités artistiques du cinéma résident dans les tentions qu'on confère au temps. Le cinéma est fait de rythme. Sa forme, en tant que forme temporelle, est toute différente de la forme des arts statiques.<sup>103</sup>

In 1947, Man Ray made a visit to France, mainly in order to see how his work had survived the war. It took a few years more to come back—in 1951—definitively to Paris, at the age of 61. He never made any concession to cinema again—except an appearance in Richter's *Dadascope* (1961)—but curiously actively took part in jury sessions<sup>104</sup> and retrospectives of his work. Experimental cinema in Europe soon experienced a revival and Neodada—the Fluxus period—was coming.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Marie Mabire: *Entretien avec Philippe Soupault* in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et cinéma Études cinématographiques* n°38-39, 1965, pp. 29-30

<sup>2</sup> In *Self-portrait* Man Ray described this time in these words: «With all these diversions, I found little time to paint, besides, I was not in the mood, there was no immediate urgency» (p. 86)

<sup>3</sup> Duchamp, besides kinetics, had been interested in avant-garde cinema (he had played as an actor in New York in Léonce Perret film *Lafayette, We Com*, in 1918 and with Man Ray in *Entr'acte*)

<sup>4</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 86

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Michel Bouhours in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, dates the «destroyed» films of Man Ray and Duchamp in a different order, but in any case both projects took place in the same year from January 1920 to January 1921. In the light of Man Ray's *Self Portrait* analysis (and a few other sources) it seems that the stereoscopic experiment took place in early 1920 and the second (shaving) later in the same year

<sup>7</sup> Except a few photographs which were saved

<sup>8</sup> Tom Sandqvist: Rajamailla, 1990, p. 86

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85 transl. JC

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88

<sup>11</sup> June, 1921, letter reproduced in Jean-Michel Bouhours, *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997 pp. 8-9

<sup>12</sup> Soon after Duchamp went back to France

<sup>13</sup> Gaston Émile Duchamp, 1875-1963 lived in Puteaux.

<sup>14</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 213. Notice that Man Ray's version of the events is discussed by Neil Baldwin, his biographer in *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 123

<sup>15</sup> After Bouhours, (p. 185), the Comtesse Greffulhe also proposes that Man Ray shoots a film about spiritism in Egypt (1925).

The Comtesse (Elisabeth Greffulhe, 1860-1952) was a cousin of Comte Robert de Montesquiou. In high society she promoted many artists, like Rodin and Moreau. She also found the time to take lessons in drawing and photography with Nadar and to play the piano. She probably inspired Marcel Proust's character of the Duchesse de Guermantes in *A la recherche du temps perdu*. ([http://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/biog/Gref\\_E.htm](http://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/biog/Gref_E.htm))

<sup>16</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 213

<sup>17</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 177

<sup>18</sup> Except with Richter —whose situation was similar—in *Dreams that Money can Buy* (1944)

<sup>19</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 177

<sup>20</sup> Jean-Michel Bouhours in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997 pp. 143-149; de Haas discusses the films of Man Ray that he calls «personnels» and remarks that they have the advantage of being totally independent and serving only the will of their author

<sup>21</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 212

<sup>22</sup> See the programme of *Le cœur à Barbe* (reproduced in Bouhours, 1997, p. 27. The title was probably invented by Tzara. «Georg Antheil» (sic.) (who composed music for *Ballet mécanique* in 1924) was intended for the musical illustration of the film; see more in endnote 56

<sup>23</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 210-211

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Deke Dusinberre in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 27

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* To the Museum of Modern Art in New York

<sup>28</sup> An image by image analysis revealed that a strip was marked with the words «tirer 5 fois» in the first frames, a text which has never been cut off (plate 28)

<sup>29</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 213

<sup>30</sup> As the details of the strips in negative and positive prove, (plate 28), obviously copies of the same original were obviously issued

<sup>31</sup> In the case of a reversal film

<sup>32</sup> This is not however a relevant proof if the originals are missing (copies and qualities are various), but it can point in the direction of that theory

<sup>33</sup> The next morning the rayographs were dry, he said; no mention of contact prints film to film

<sup>34</sup> I have been discussing the problem by e-mail with Deke Dusinberre. A comparison of the «American» and «French» copies, he suggested, could perhaps bring some light. Patrick de Haas —who discovered the «nude contact prints»— has not suggested either that «tirer 5 fois» discovered on the same French copy do belong to the original, but he nonetheless presented the material as original. Was it really an original editing of 1923 (I doubt it)? Or was it a reconstruction (made with the duplications produced for Emak Bakia)? The current copies probably all contain the marks included the American— and nobody can be sure about the making of the original version (1923). At least the current film is a genuine editing made between 1926 and 1935.

<sup>35</sup> Deke Dusinberre in: Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 28

<sup>36</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 212. The description will be discussed in chapter 8

<sup>37</sup> The original meaning (goal) and the historical (critical) meaning (issue) are too often mixed in the analysis. A phenomenon that artists very often observe concerning their works (art critics or the public see more or different things than what was originally meant). The aim of analysing factual evidence and through a sympathetic artistic vision will be recalled.

<sup>38</sup> The «erotic neck» (plate 21) picked out of the trash by Lee Miller around 1931 is an analogous example (Man Ray, dissatisfied, had thrown the print he had just made in the trash and Lee Miller «saw» a very interesting «pattern» in it so she picked up the picture from the trash. Is she or he now the author of the photograph? Who had the «vision»?)

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<sup>39</sup> According to Man Ray in *SelfPortrait* p. 212

<sup>40</sup> In English, Man Ray says *Return to Reason*. *Le retour «de» la raison*, could be translated *Return of Reason* or *Return from Reason*

<sup>41</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 212

<sup>42</sup> Based on discussion à propos with Deke Dusinberre (e-mails January, 2006)

<sup>43</sup> Deke Dusinberre in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 30

Dusinberre mentions the works of Jean Mitry, David Curtis and Sheldon Renan

<sup>44</sup> In that case a «master» is in existence somewhere.

<sup>45</sup> There are also inscriptions on the same film which are clearly meant to darken a sequence (noir), plate 28, n°10, and they are «instructions» which do not support the idea of laboratory work for *Le Retour à la raison* but for *Emak Bakia*.

<sup>46</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 220

<sup>47</sup> Deke Dusinberre: «La première séquence de sa description in *SelfPortrait* correspond toutefois à son deuxième film, *Emak Bakia*». Deke Dusinberre obviously didn't notice that «daisies» also appeared in the «shooting of sporadic spots» appearing in *Le Retour à la raison* description.

<sup>48</sup> Man Ray did not like himself the use of *experimental/experimented* but uses the term *experienced* which is actually more passive and fatalistic

<sup>49</sup> That is to say a demonstration of Hans Richter's *balance between heaven and hell* (chapter 2)

<sup>50</sup> Deke Dusinberre in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, *Sens et non-sens*, endnote 4: «la durée et cette description sont établies à partir d'une copie du film acquise en 1975 par le Musée national d'art moderne à Paris. Ne présentant pas de repères indiscutables de sens, le film a pu être inversé droite / gauche tant dans les reproductions iconographiques, qu'au cours de certaines projections publiques. nous avons rétabli dans la présente édition, le sens qui pour des raisons de contenu et de technique nous semble celui d'origine.»

<sup>51</sup> In *Self Portrait* Man Ray explains how Wheeler was fond of his work: «he had every confidence in me and my ideas, was sure I could do something sensational and give the movies a new direction [...]», p. 219

<sup>52</sup> Neil Baldwin, *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 133

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134

<sup>56</sup> *Le Ballet mécanique* is also a musical piece by Georges Antheil, meant for the film but having found an independent and separate life. It was never at that time performed with the film

<sup>57</sup> Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movie*, 1997, p. 41, transl. JC

<sup>58</sup> The case of *Le Retour à la raison* is open, the original score probably silent (cf. endnote 21; there is no evidence that Antheil was playing piano). Later versions use various music

<sup>59</sup> First manifesto of surrealism: 15 October 1924

<sup>60</sup> Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 43

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44

<sup>62</sup> In «Kinetic Solutions to Pictorial Problems. *The Films of Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy*» in *Artforum*, vol.X,n°1, Sep., 1971

<sup>63</sup> Mostly by the American Judi Freeman and William Moritz *American in Paris: Man Ray And Dudley Murphy*, in Jan-Christopher Horak. *Lovers of Cinema. The first American Film Avant-garde 1919-1945* Madison, Univ. Of Wisconsin Press, 1995

<sup>64</sup> Information revealed by letters: 30 December, 1925 and 5 January, 1926 from Beaumont to Yvor Montagu, Fonds de Beaumont, Fondation E. Satie, reported by Bouhours, 1997 p. 53

<sup>65</sup> Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 53

<sup>66</sup> The «absolute films» by Richter in Germany offer another dada cinematographic vision

<sup>67</sup> Henri Chomette, translations and research by Tanya Small and Pip Chodorov at:

<http://www.roberthaller.com/firstlight/chomette.html>

<sup>68</sup> Especially the anamorphous takes and the cinerayogrammes

<sup>69</sup> Archives de Beaumont, fondation Satie (Bouhours, 1997, p. 47)

<sup>70</sup> André Breton: *Manifestes du Surréalisme*, 1924, p. 38

<sup>71</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 220

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224

<sup>75</sup> P. Adams Sitney in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 68

<sup>76</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 225

<sup>77</sup> Distributed actually only by Cinédoc: <http://www.cinedoc.org/htm/collection/fiche-auteur.asp?id=73>

<sup>78</sup> P. Adams Sitney in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, pp. 71-74, 78-82

<sup>79</sup> The complete title of the film is: *L'Etoile de mer, poème* (sic.) *de Robert Desnos tel que l'a vu Man Ray*

<sup>80</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 225. It has to be noted that the French censorship had requested only one deletion (Sitney in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997 —no reference source. In the same work Sitney elaborates on a very interesting and courageous Freudian theory about the title, pp. 61-82)

<sup>81</sup> P. Adams Sitney in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 72, remarks on the similarity with the «dissolving objective» (see in «introduction»: Van Lier, endnote 29)

<sup>82</sup> According to Luis Buñuel, his first meeting with Man Ray and Aragon took place the day before the private projection in the Ursulines on 12 June, 1929 (as quoted in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies* and Luis Buñuel: *Mon dernier soupir*, Paris Robert Laffont)



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<sup>83</sup> This will be analysed further

<sup>84</sup> The letters have been reproduced in Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, pp. 102-121

<sup>85</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 226

<sup>86</sup> Léon Moussinac: «*Sur trois films dits d'avant-garde*», l'Humanité, October 6, 1929 op. cit. in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 90

<sup>87</sup> Inter-titles of the film.

<sup>88</sup> Patrick de Haas in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, footnote: «certains films ont été retrouvés dans son atelier rue Férou en 1985 (...); d'autres furent retrouvés à la même époque par Lucien Treillard dans les archives d'Ady Fidelin, qui fut la compagne de Man Ray de 1935 à 1940.»

<sup>89</sup> 16mm black and white film, was found in a Kodak-Pathé box with the only inscription *N.U 2 Women*

<sup>90</sup> Claudine Eizykman called it *un essai pornographique saphique* at: <http://www.cinedoc.org/htm/collection/fiche-auteur.asp?id=73>

<sup>91</sup> Patrick de Haas in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 149

<sup>92</sup> In 1936, he answered in an interview (Film Art, London, vol III., n°6) why he had «stopped» to do «cinema»: «the sound». At the same period he was, however, still filming with his movie camera; As in art usually, a work exists in the feedback or after publication, and Patrick de Haas (Bouhours, 1997, p. 143) explains how most of the films were found: in original boxes without date or title (if the feedback is considered as inherent to the artwork, these home films do not even fill this criteria)

<sup>93</sup> Patrick de Haas in Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1997, p. 149

<sup>94</sup> Or seven if the parts of Alexander Calder «Ballet» and «Circus» are separated (both interpretations are currently used); Edgar Varèse is mentioned in the credits for these parts

<sup>95</sup> also known as *La semaine de la Bonité*

<sup>96</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 285-286

<sup>97</sup> Some offers to work in big studios were told in *Self Portrait*, but Man Ray did not accept any of them, however Man Ray was continually in close contact with many Hollywood's stars

<sup>98</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 272

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229

<sup>100</sup> In the fascicule of *Dreams that Money can buy* (c.1947) translated in French

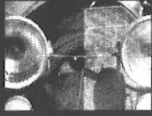
<sup>101</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 232

<sup>102</sup> In the fascicule of *Dreams that Money can buy* (c.1947)

<sup>103</sup> Hans Richter: *Peinture et cinéma*, texts compiled in the catalogue of an exhibition, late sixties, the text was written for *De Style*, 1922

<sup>104</sup> One of most significant figures of the new European cinema, Roman Polanski, was presenting his film *Two men and a Wardrobe* at the 2nd International Competition of Experimental Cinema in Brussels in 1958. Man Ray as member of the jury defended Polanski's film, undoubtedly for its surrealistic touch.

# 8. Emak Bakia



Painting a picture did not involve any great effort nor outlay of funds, by comparison  
—Man Ray<sup>1</sup>

## 8.1. Credits, Technical Data, Shot Analysis and Structure

[credits, technical data]

**Cinépoème, 1926**

**Cinématographic Film 35mm**

**Black and White**

**Duration:** 20 minutes (19:43:11 —without end text «Fine»—)

**Aspect Ratio:** 1: 1,33

**Silent:** with musical accompaniment

**Director:** Man Ray

**Assistant:** Jacques-André Boiffard

**Production:** Arthur and Rose Wheeler

**Location:** Biarritz, Paris

**Shooting:** May, 1926

**Casting:** Rose Wheeler, Kiki de Montparnasse, Jacques Rigaut, Man Ray



**Film Censors' Permission (France):** n°36197 November 9, 1927

**Première:** (private) at *Le Vieux Colombier*, Paris November 23, 1926

**Introduction:** Jean Tedesco

**[principal showings in the 20s]**

- 1927** London Film Society, January 16  
New York Film Guild, March 6  
Brussels and Frankfurt/M (March)  
Paris Ursulines November – January 1928
- 1928** Amsterdam Filmliga  
Lausanne, January 30  
Berlin UFA-theater, February
- 1929** Stuttgart Film und Foto (FIFO)

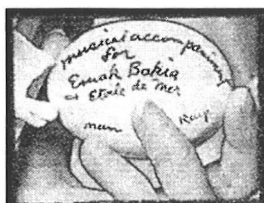
**[music]**

Three different versions have been proposed<sup>2</sup>:

**I. At the première** at the *Vieux Colombier*: live orchestra (4 musicians); the sequence with Jacques Rigaut was completely silent and during the sequence of the dance of the collars the orchestra was playing Richard Strauss' *The Merry widow waltz*

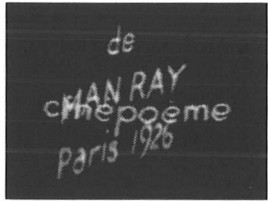
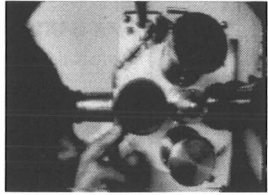
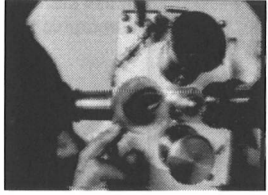


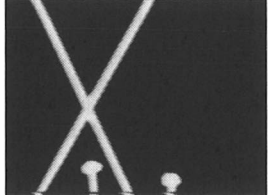

**II. For later screenings** the orchestra was replaced by five blues and jazz recordings (musicians: Stephan Grappely (Stéphane Grappelli), Django Reinhardt, Will Bradley, Pierre Ferret, Marcel Bianchi, Louis Viola) and the record *Merry Widow Waltz* (Victor Continental Orchestra)

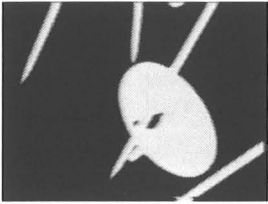
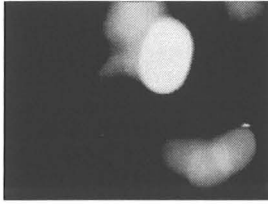




**III. In the sixties**, Man Ray made a new audio version of the film


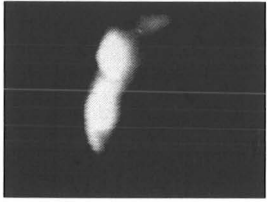






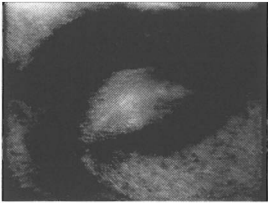
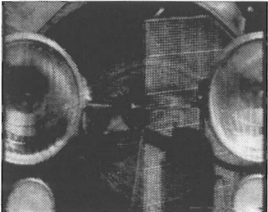
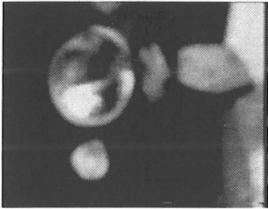

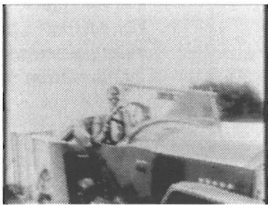

[shot analysis]

Shot n°	Time	Technique	Frame description
1	0:00:00:00		title: <i>EMAK-BAKIA</i>
	0:00:05:06	jump-cut	
2			the title starts to move anamorphic text
	0:00:06:07	jump-cut	
3		superimposition	a new text appears mixed to the former text: <i>cinépoème</i> anamorphic text
	0:00:06:14	jump-cut	
4			
	0:00:06:24	jump-cut	
5			anamorphic text
	0:00:07:12 until 0:00:07:22		text: <i>EMAK BAKIA</i> disappears, only the floating text <i>cinépoème</i> remains
	0:00:15:14	dissolve	


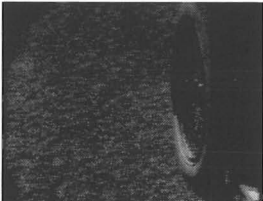
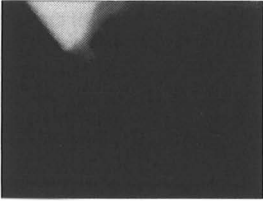


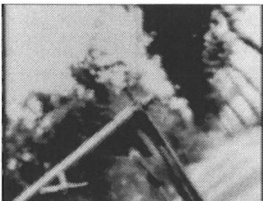
<p>6</p> 	<p>0:00:17:06</p>	<p>end of dissolve</p>	<p>text: de MAN RAY Paris 1926 appearing</p>
<p>7</p> 	<p>0:00:23:01</p>	<p>dissolve</p>	<p>Man Ray ( left ) look into multi-objective camera centre objective black crank movement (right)</p>
<p>8</p> 	<p>0:00:23:05</p>	<p>superimposition</p>	<p>eye in the meddle of the picture</p>
<p>9</p> 	<p>0:00:32:08</p>	<p>cut</p>	<p>eye disappears before cut</p>
<p>10</p> 	<p>0:00:45:14</p>	<p>cut</p>	<p>«salt and pepper» animation</p>
<p>11</p> 	<p>0:00:52:06</p>	<p>tilting movement</p>	<p>daisies movement of pendulum from left to right</p>
<p>11</p> 	<p>0:01:01:06</p>	<p>animation effect</p>	<p>photograms of long nails banimation «dance» effect 4 x</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>0:01:04:06</p>	<p>again</p>	<p>photograms of long nails banimation «dance» effect 4 x</p>


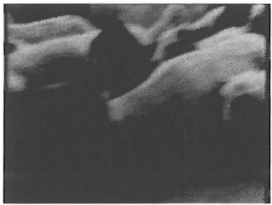
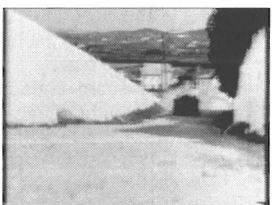
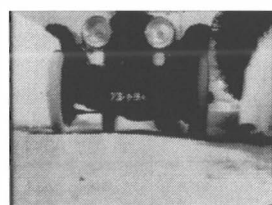
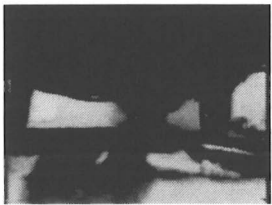

12		0:01:04:14 0:01:13:01	animation effect  cut	similar «dance» with long nails; the first staple appears right in the middle of the picture;  end of nails, only one staple per frame 4 x
13		0:01:38:19	unfocused  cut	unfocused illuminations and balance movement of the camera = carousel
14		0:01:59:07	MLS  cut	focused loop illuminations (cap. letters): ...ALLI AU MILIEU DU BASSIN DE NEPTUNE AU COURS DE DEUX GRANDES FETES...
15		0:02:19:15	MLS  cut	same as shot 14 ...MENNE...AVEC MARCEL DORET++LE JOURNAL ANNONCE+ PARIS+UN...
16		0:03:17:24	CS  fade to black incomplete cut	mobile (crystal?)
17		0:03:27:23	fade from black CS  cut	mobile (crystal?) tuning  right to left movement  black


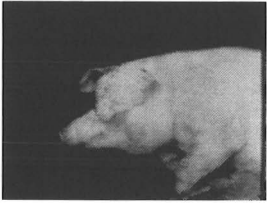

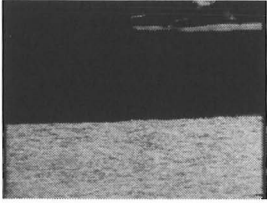

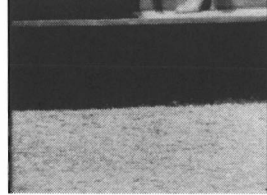
18		0:03:38:03	cut	shadow area gives way to a floating tissue-like area from left to right  retreat of the light area to the former position right to left movement
19		0:03:46:22	unfocused dissolve	unfocused picture made with a lamp (?) as the light source left to right movement
20		0:04:08:04	MCS focused to unfocused cut	lampshade ? turning effect from left to right and right to left the more the turning speed increases the more the picture loses forms (unfocused)
21a				turning movement lampshade and anamorphic objects
21b				
21c		0:04:32:09	cut	the last picture has a more erotic form




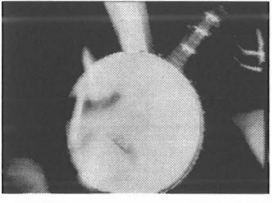

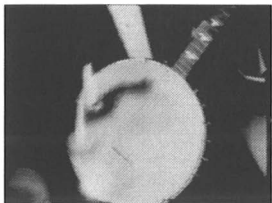
22			ECU	a woman's left eye closed
		0:04:32:13	dissolve...	synchronized with eye opening
23			... superimposition (sandwich effect)	the open eye superimposed with car radiator and half of both lights few blinks of the eye (head shakes a little)
		0:04:42:07	cut	
24a-b			unfocused VBCU traveling up focusing	left front wheel and left lights of the same car (unfocused) trav. up and progressive focusing on the big light
			cut	car's light sharpened just before cutting
25a-c			MCS BCU traveling (fast)	woman driving car the upper part of the picture is "empty" trav. up to head shot (BCU) of the driver
				Driver's head go out of the frame by the right side, empty space remains on the back seat
		0:04:52:00		


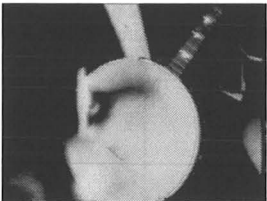

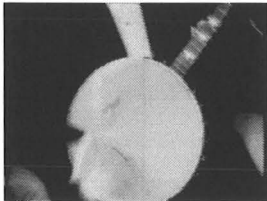




			
26	0:04:54:09	cut	
	0:04:59:17	MS cut	front wheel on the right side of the frame, left side is covered by floor gravel  car starts going diagonal to left/up direction registration n°73-Y-94
27a-c		fast accompanying panoramic	quite abstract aspect of the rear of the car diagonal to right/down direction
		panoramic MCS	man and woman (MCS) in the car, on the country road
		panoramic MCS	car and passengers (MCS) are restricted to the lower right bottom/corner of the picture
28a-b	0:05:03:10	cut	
		tilting great depth of field	inside the car, at the driver's place (one can see the steering wheel and the hands on it)- the car is shaking
		panoramic down	the right hand is as sharp as the trees bordering the road

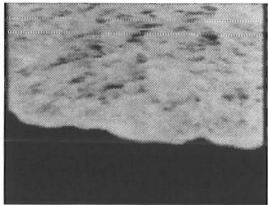


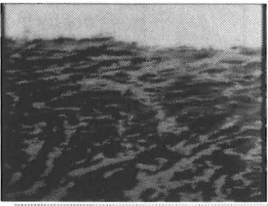
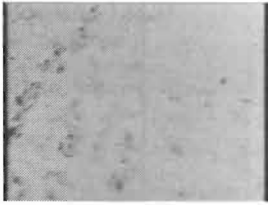
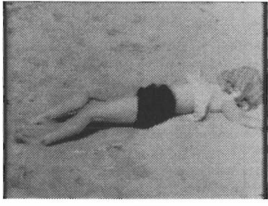
	0:05:15:18	cut	composition is changing to bring the hand and the road into a closer relation; sky disappears out of the picture	
29		0:05:23:16	MLS  cut	sheep crossing the road right to left; shepherd using a stick; after the passage of the animals, the road remains a while empty
30a-c		0:05:23:16	SLS camera on floor level	French countryside village landscape; along a white wall, the car is climbing the hill in the direction of the camera.
	0:05:23:16	SLS camera on floor level	looks like an animal body with two eyes; finally the picture size is no longer only a VBCU  of the registration plate of the vehicle "73-4-94"	
	0:05:33:22	VBCU  cut	the car passes through with the camera under it between the wheels	
31		0:05:34:19	cut	upper view half full size of a pig very short duration (1sec.)

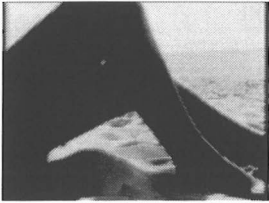
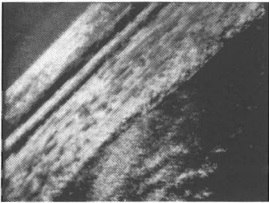


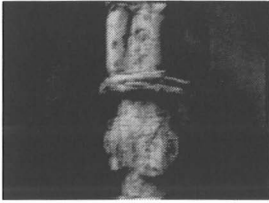
<p>32</p> 	<p>0:05:35:03</p>	<p>cut</p>	<p>insert 9 frames (sky?)</p>
<p>33</p> 	<p>0:05:36:03</p>	<p>cut</p>	<p>shot 31 continuity the pig is moving</p>
<p>34</p> 	<p>0:05:42:11</p>	<p>rotations and tilting</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>shot 32 continuity the sky (?) shakes (as an answer to the movement of the pig) (unsharp trees, building. insert? (12 frames)</p>
<p>35a-e</p> 		<p>CS camera on floor</p>	<p>two-thirds of the lower area of the picture is occupied by the gravel in the upper area lies a woman's foot (pointing to left) on the footboard of the car</p>
	<p>0:05:46:04</p>	<p>[cut]</p>	<p>a woman gets out the car and we see the feet (and the legs) walking out of the picture by the left</p> <p>the gravel remains empty</p>
		<p>[different take]</p>	<p>the same empty picture but with a small inexact place (jump) the same sequence as 35a-b is showed, but another woman's shoe comes into view</p>

			repetition of the sequence is showed with five women (different shoes)
	0:06:10:14	[superimpositions of different takes] cut	repetition of sequence (in superimposition) 9 times until the gravel remains completely empty
	0:06:13:01	SCS cut	dancing legs 1 (woman)
	0:06:14:18	CS cut	playing banjo 1 (man)
	0:06:17:17	SCS cut	dancing legs 2
	0:06:19:07	CS cut	playing banjo 2

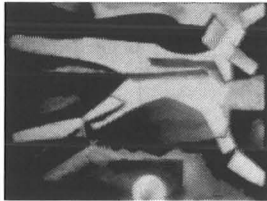
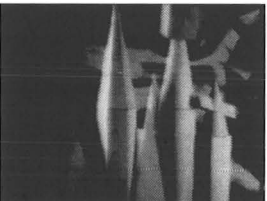




40		0:06:22:09	SCS cut	dancing legs 3
41		0:06:22:18 0:06:22:20 0:06:23:21	CS inter-cut cut	playing banjo 3 black insert (2 frames) (intentional?)
42		0:06:26:24	SCS cut	dancing legs 4
43		0:06:28:16	CS cut	playing banjo 4
44		0:06:58:11	SCS fade to black	dancing legs 5
45		0:07:09:08	MS cut	a woman climbs the stairs of an apartment and goes into the room. Her back is seen by the camera while she walks through the room

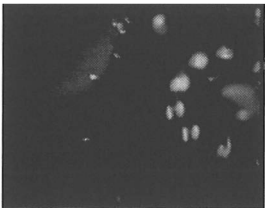


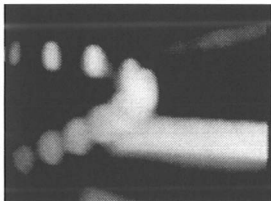


46		0:07:13:08 0:07:16:03	CS (waist) unfocused  focusing  jump - dissolve	unfocused picture of a seated woman (Rose Wheeler) combing herself while keeping a mirror in the right hand  the picture moves into focus (profile of Rose Wheeler)
47		0:07:23:01	CS (waist)   jump - dissolve	the camera is at the same place but the woman appears now 3/4 face lipstick half skirt opens a box of bedroom's furniture
48a-b		0:07:29:00	CS (waist)	the camera is still at the same place she puts the pearl necklace
		0:07:34:24	FS  cut (dissolve)	the woman stands up and goes out by the left (the picture remains empty 8 frames)
49		0:07:43:05	MCS   cut	the woman gets into the picture from left (back) of the camera and look at the landscape left profile (she wears the same skirt and the pearl necklace)
50		0:07:56:13	LS unfocused panoramic  cut	unfocused view of the cliffs and panoramic on the sea

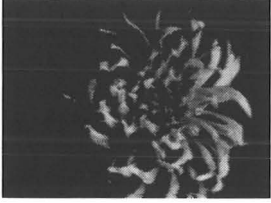


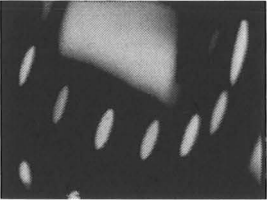
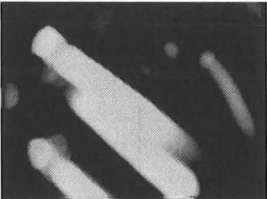

<p>51</p> 	<p>0:07:58:17</p>	<p>MCS</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>the seashore: sand, shells and foam</p>
<p>52</p> 	<p>0:08:02:01</p>	<p>MCS</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>similar shot of the seashore</p>
<p>53</p> 	<p>0:08:05:06</p>	<p>MCS</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>similar shot of the seashore</p>
<p>54</p> 	<p>0:08:13:00</p>	<p>MCS</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>similar shot of the seashore: a wave and the sea horizon (edge)</p>
<p>55a-b</p> 		<p>SCS</p> <p>horizontal panoramic from left to right</p>	<p>sand of the seashore</p> <p>naked legs of a woman on the sand get into the picture as a consequence of the camera movement (feet pointed to left)</p>
	<p>0:08:16:20</p>	<p>cut</p>	<p>the woman lying across the picture</p> <p>the right leg makes a movement up</p>

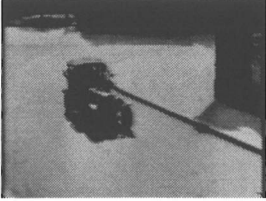
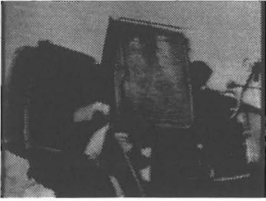

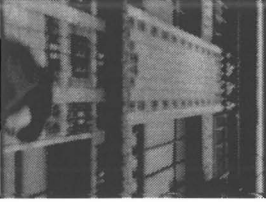


56		0:08:20:12	SCU reverse shot  cut	alternate movements of the two legs
57		0:08:41:01	CS  rotation camera about 270°  cut	reflection in water; sand the camera gives a subjective (tentative of 360° rotation?)
58a-b		0:08:53:08	CS anamorphic lens   superimpositions of several takes (same subject)	anamorphic underwater view with a fish and light spot reflection
59		0:09:49:14	fade in from black CS   end overexposed	cork (ready-made Fisherman's Idol, 1926) «sculpture» turning on itself faster and faster —clock direction— (the sculpture is on the right half while its full shadow is seen on the left half of the picture)
60		0:10:02:20	overexposed superimpositions (same subject) closer (CU)  cut	the ready-made is closer to the camera and the superimpositions covers the shadow in «59» the «sculpture» in the centre of the picture (CU)

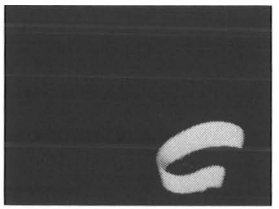
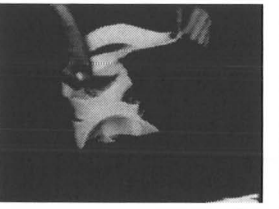
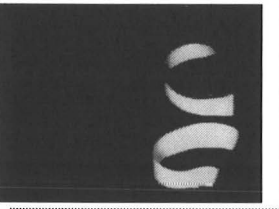
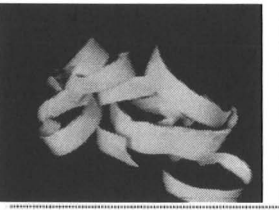
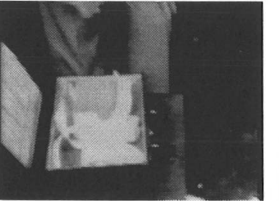




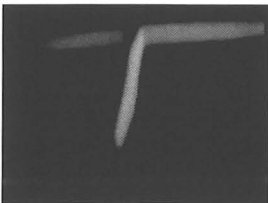
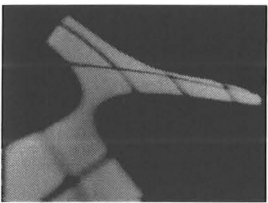
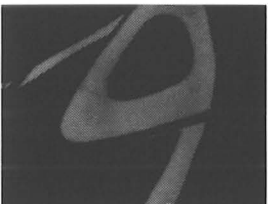
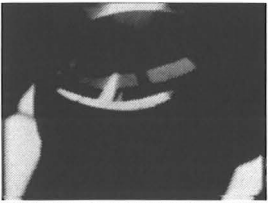

61a		0:10:03:05	first animation	painting of cubist body (Dance, 1915) ball animation at the bottom of the frame
		0:10:06:07	end of 1. anim.	
61b		0:10:07:18	2nd animation begin	animation of geometric cylinders (triangles, hexagons,..) and cones (10 pieces) on the same background as in «61a»
		0:10:50:19	to end 2. anim. cut	
62		0:10:59:13	full length shot animation cut	animation (Homme d'affaires, 1926) "jump" of a figurine
63a-b		0:11:04:1	full length shot animation	from the installation object: <i>Emak Bakia</i> , 1927 dance of objects (geometric forms, dice and EB)
		0:11:14:16	cut	objects disappear from border EB remains alone for about 1 second
64		0:11:20:12	MLS night cut	street illuminations by night an automatic loop illumination text says: <i>CHAQUE SOIR A MAGIC-CITY</i>




65		0:11:40:16	superimposition	rocking of unidentified object (necklace?) superimposition of the same sequence on itself
		0:12:23:02	cut	
66		0:12:35:13	to black cut	same kind of subject
67		0:12:50:03	VBCU	black - behind the tissue is revealed the visage of a woman eyes closed;
		0:12:55:04	dissolve	opens eyes and looks at the camera
68		0:13:02:04	CS	pearls agitation like a snake
			dissolve	
69		0:13:49:05	CS	a mobile turning a cube of glass
			unfocused dissolve	
70		0:14:02:08	VBCU	face of a woman eyes closed she opens her eyes and mouth large smile
			fade to black	

71			CS	a flower (dahlia)
		0:14:10:15	long dissolve	
72a-b			VBCU	face of a woman facing the camera, head moves a bit up and eyes open
				speaks a few words and finally smiles; ring on finger
		0:14:28:11	fade to black	
73				the same unidentified object as in «65» rotation (clock)
		0:15:04:02	cut into black	
74				same kind of images as preceding shot
		0:15:55:04	cut	
75			caption-insert	text: La raison de cette extravagance
		0:16:01:15	cut	

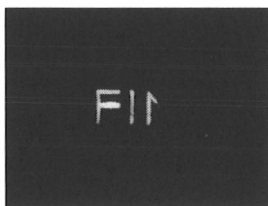
<p>76a-b</p>  		<p>panoramic follows movement of the car</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>driving a car (upper view from the apartment rue Campagne-Première).</p> <p>the car stops before the house and a passenger walks out of the car with a suitcase</p>
<p>77</p> 	<p>0:16:22:00</p>	<p>MLS</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>inside perspective from the first floor (street level) of the house the passenger is <i>in</i> the car and walks <i>again</i> out of the car, stands and look up (to the window of the apartment?)</p>
<p>78</p> 	<p>0:16:24:20</p> <p>0:16:26:14</p>	<p>MS tilting 90° right</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>Man Ray's apartment seen from street level (top floor at rue Campagne-Première) a man with a hat (the car passenger) appears from the left (tilt 90°) and walks BACKWARDS</p>
<p>79</p> 	<p>0:16:32:19</p>	<p>MS &gt; CS camera follows</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>the perspective is the same as in «77», the man starts to move inside the house (walking in the direction of the camera) opens the inside door</p>
<p>80</p> 	<p>0:16:37:04</p>	<p>CU</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>a box containing neckbands (collars) is opened, a hand destroys a neckband and throws it ahead</p>

<p>81</p> 		CU	in continuity the neckband falls on the floor
<p>82</p> 	0:16:38:03	cut	
<p>83</p> 	0:16:44:07	CU	repetition of «80» (new shot) (destruction of a neckband)
<p>84</p> 	0:16:47:00	cut	in continuity: the second neckband falls beside the first both neckbands are animated
<p>85a-b</p> 	0:17:06:13 0:17:08:23	CU	several neckbands (10?) are flying up out one after the other (inverted movement of the film)  finally the picture remains empty and black
	0:17:21:18	panoramic up until VBCU  cut	the suitcase open with all neckbands in it (they came back in the suitcase). the man stands near the suitcase (only the legs are seen)  the face of the man (Jacques Rigaut) he throws out a neckband that he has taken from his shirt in the background stand a man with a black hat

<p>86</p> 	<p>0:17:40:06</p> <p>0:17:59:12</p>	<p>CU</p> <p>superimpositions start</p> <p>cut into black</p>	<p>waltz of the neckbands rotation (clock)</p>
<p>87</p> 	<p>0:18:19:24</p>	<p>CU</p> <p>fast dissolve</p>	<p>the waltz continues neckbands (out of focus)</p>
<p>88</p> 	<p>0:18:34:13</p>	<p>cut</p>	<p>the waltz continues the whites shapes are probably the reflection of the windows of the apartment of rue Campagne-Première in a rotating glass ball (clock mov.)</p>
<p>89</p> 	<p>0:18:42:05</p> <p>0:18:49:01</p>	<p>superimposition of similar takes</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>the waltz continues same kind of picture with the same rotation</p>
<p>90</p> 	<p>0:19:03:21</p>	<p>VBCU</p>	<p>the waltz continues glass ball in rotation with probably the reflections of the apartment</p>
<p>91</p> 	<p>0:19:21:00</p>	<p>fade to black</p>	<p>the waltz continues same kind of picture as in «88» and in «89» with still the same rotation</p>

<p>92a-b</p> 		<p>fade from black VBCU</p>	<p>Kiki asleep (painted eyelids) he stands up a little and look at the camera he opens her eyes</p>
	<p>0:19:32:08</p>	<p>very long dissolve synchronized with the movement of Kiki</p>	<p>and...smiles</p>
<p>93</p> 	<p>0:19:43:11</p>	<p>VBCU  fast fade to black end cut</p>	<p>Kiki reflected upside down rotation movement movement recalls anamorphic <i>cinépoème</i> of the beginning</p>

total time: 19 min. 43 sec. at 24 frames/s



anamorphic text «FINIS»

[structure]

duration in sec.	n	type
023	1	title
009	2	Cyclops camera
066	1	cinerayographs
041	3	illuminations 1
133	1	abstract mobile 1
	4	Cyclops auto
	4	auto / Rose Wheeler
	4	sheep
	4	collision
098	4	auto / legs
048	5	banjo / legs
045	6	Cybèle
	7	seashore
106	7	fishes
105	4	object animations
006	3	illuminations 2
188	1	abstract mobile 2 / portraits
	6	narrative caption
173	6	Jacques Rigaut / collars animation
120	1	waltz
022	2	double awakening

Fig. 26: Structure of Emak Bakia

type 1	abstract or anamorphic 8 min. 50 sec.
type 2	symbolic or allegoric 31 sec.
type 3	caligraphic 47 sec.
type 4	dadaist 1 min. 38 sec.
type 5	rhythmic 48 sec.
type 6	proto-narrative or anti-narrative (surrealist) 3 min. 38 sec.
type 7	oneiric 1 min. 46 sec.

average number of shots per minute: 4-5  
 average time per shot: 12.7 sec.  
 longest shot: 58 sec. (shot 16)



## 8.2. Perception, Meaning and Editing

Very little has been written about *Emak Bakia* in terms of perception, meaning and editing. The film is generally less appreciated than his previous film, *Le Retour à la raison* or his next one, *L'Etoile de mer*. The first of these was historically associated with the decline of Dada, and the second was one of the most oneiric surrealist films, after *Un Chien andalou*, *L'Age d'or* or *La Coquille et le clergyman*.

Arthur Wheeler gave Man Ray the «generous sum of three thousand dollars» to make the film and the full amount was sent straight to an American bank account, at the Trust Company of North America, New York.<sup>3</sup> Man Ray took the film as a vacation, a break from routine, but still as an ordinary commitment. It is also known that Man Ray sometimes asked his sister Elsie to provide him with photographic equipment from America as he was very dissatisfied with the quality of the European equipment. With *Emak Bakia*, he tried out new devices and tricks, which probably originated in the material acquired by Elsie. This material includes special objectives, particularly anamorphic lenses.

I personally consider the film to be the crucial turning-point between Dada and Surrealism in cinema, and much more interesting in that way than any other production of that time. The film —still dadaist, if a choice has to be made — is undoubtedly the only film which could have challenged Buñuel's leverage in surrealist cinema.

Neil Baldwin noticed that in the spring of 1926 *Emak Bakia* was planned to be ready for the following summer and then, exceptionally, Man Ray took «a series of neighborhood snapshots he'd promised Elsie».<sup>4</sup> Neil Baldwin compared these postcard format pictures to the photographs of Eugène Atget, Man Ray's neighbor. The two men admired each other, but the exact influence of Atget on Man Ray's few outdoor pictures is still unclear. From that «postcard-making» anecdote Neil Baldwin jumps to film-making and writes that Man Ray «stockpiled an assortment of film *takes* of Paris that were to figure prominently in his next opus».<sup>5</sup> I could not find any evidence of *takes* made in Paris (or «Parisian rambling»), except a few night shoots (14–15, 64–65). Probably, Neil Baldwin is confusing, as Man Ray himself often<sup>6</sup> did, *Le Retour à la raison* and *Emak Bakia*.

The only takes that are obviously from Paris are from the Rue Campagne-Première, the street in which Man Ray (and Atget) lived. I regard these takes as being in correlation with the one minute 35mm film element known as *Rue Campagne-Première* (probably filmed between 1923 and 1929<sup>7</sup>). I suppose *Rue Campagne-Première* was a cut-off from the same film assortment. The takes used in *Emak Bakia* (76–79) were undoubtedly filmed with the intention of being integrated in the production: they are in fact rather narrative. The protagonists of the film is Jacques Rigaut.

### [la raison de cette extravagance]

The streetview from Man Ray's apartment reminds one quite strangely of the (narrative) street episode in Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou* (a street-scene also filmed from the first floor of an apartment).

Man Ray met Buñuel only shortly before the historical première of *Les Mystères du château du dé* in 1929. The similarity of the scenes is probably pure coincidence, but if there is any influence or allusion, it is then from Man Ray to Buñuel. Could it be that the pseudo-narrative style of Man Ray could have influenced the surrealist film momentum of Buñuel two years later? The question can also be put the other way and we could ask: which film influenced *Un Chien andalou*? Or was Buñuel's film as it were spontaneously generated? I shall try to answer that question in chapter 9. Man Ray's short narrative montage sequence (the coming to the house) takes place after the unique real caption of the film «La raison de cette extravagance» (75) and promises the spectator an «explanation».

Beyond its narrative «look», the sequence is however only *almost narrative*: it is like an *explanation* of an ironic *question-intrigue* without even any question mark —an intentional omission?— obviously a surrealist trap unless we remember that «there is no solution because there is no problem». Indeed the *problematic* sequence following the text does not finally enlighten the spectator at all but rather plunges him deeper into an *absurd action*: a dance of collars—in French *faux-cols*, «false collars» (80–87). False explanation? *Almost narrative*, also, because analysing the film image by image I found in take 78 a quite significant particularity, *anti-narrative* by nature and almost impossible to detect with a normal rhythm of 18–25 images per second: the take does not assume continuity with take 77 or 79 (or if it does, then it

is a monstrous continuity error), and it is «played» backwards. One can see (or guess) that in take 77 Jacques Rigaut, after getting out of the car, looks up to the apartment (seen behind the front door and inside the corridor). Suddenly we see the house from the street as if it was the subjective view of Rigaut's eyes looking up to the apartment. Take 78 poses a real *problem of logic for a possible short continuity, but still does not disturb logical understanding for the spectator expecting continuity* —because the perspective jumps «only» 90° and the walk backwards of the man wearing the hat, who is on the left edge, is not perceptible. Why is take 78 so strangely tilting at 90° and why does Rigaut himself walk backwards in the scene he is supposed to see? Could the take be a *visual slip*?

In any case the take could be considered to be subjective, but only half-subjective, a means used in cinema to identify the spectator close to the protagonist. This take discredits, however, albeit mysteriously the whole sequence as a narrative explanation. The comparison (plate 31) of that short street sequence of the film with the similar perspective in Buñuel's film is interesting if one considers the classical diegesis curve of a drama: the place of both sequences in the narration has to be seen in their relation to the caption. Where Buñuel gives the sequence a pseudo-temporal and pseudo-narrative function («Huit ans plus tard») Man Ray gives the sequence a pseudo-explicative (mental) function («La raison de cette extravagance»). Both sequences are constructed on the premise that the viewer recognizes and understands the sequence as Hollywood parody.

While Buñuel's purpose here is to make a temporal distortion, Man Ray's, through distorting the intrigue (as logical development), is to make an attack on the cause-to-effect form in classical drama (or classical plot) —inherited from Ancient Greece and perpetuated in Western theatre up to Hollywood cinema.

Neil Baldwin talks about «near-realistic» sequences, and as an example he gives one that is «particularly startling, in which Man Ray's trembling handheld camera, during a high-speed open car trip with his hostess, Rose Wheeler, flies through the air over a herd of sheep crowding the provincial country road»<sup>8</sup> (takes 28–29).

I will come back to that take later and show that here too there are contradictions between the different descriptions of the sequence and the actual organization of the shots.

Neil Baldwin remarks that «Man Ray was adamant that there be no script for *Emak Bakia*, no discernible narrative progression, in keeping with his belief that there

generally was no progress in art.» The notion of progress in script writing and montage theory is very interesting and has been discussed by Vertov and Kuleshov. Vertov was «editing without cutting», *because the kino-eye or the cinéma vérité does not allow time manipulation as an editing tool*. Kuleshov, on the other hand, (and later Eisenstein) were soon persuaded that the brain —and human perception in general— work by associations of diverse elements. Eisenstein had called them «atoms» or «attractions». This means that by the association of two distinct realities a third one is constructed. In terms of progression, both theories have developed theories of montage which tend to be descriptive or comprehensive.

The *montage of attractions* is presented as the articulation of a language: cinema language. The question of progress(ion) is still unavoidable when the film refuses any montage theory, because cinema is not only movement but also duration. Yet Man Ray wanted «some sort of progression» for *Emak Bakia*.<sup>9</sup>

The word «progress» itself is vague —what does Man Ray mean by it? Progress *in* art could also be seen as an evolutionary process with aims, assertions, assignments and so forth. Finally, who will provide the decisive assessment? Politicians and critics? Or the artists themselves? Dada is far beyond the questions of posterity. Neil Baldwin almost unintentionally speaks about a «collagist's work».<sup>10</sup> It is maybe ironic, but who can explain where *collage* ends and *montage* begins? Photographic *collage* is usually known as *montage*. For the editing operation («montage» in French) of a film, Man Ray used in *Self Portrait* —for his film *Le Retour à la raison*— the terms «mounting» and «cement» instead of «glue», «cement» being a bi-valent term, the one meaning being «glue» and another «assemblage» or «construction». This could possibly be the key to explaining at least one difference: montage, for instance Heartfield's photographic montage, has the clear, straight task of communication. Obviously the problem in *Le Retour à la raison* was more to put film strip material in the order for projection than to start manipulating the «area» between the strips, a kind of pure *montrage*.<sup>11</sup>

I knew nothing about film mounting with cement, so I simply glued the strips together, adding the few shots first made with my camera to prolong the projection.<sup>12</sup>

But what about the «montrage» of *Emak Bakia*? Man Ray's work must communicate at another level, not at the level of montage, apparently. Baldwin advances pictorial and rhythmic elements: «Nevertheless, there *are* motifs in the film, repetitions of

patterns of light as Man Ray paints with light, exploring more deeply dazzling contrasts engineered to stir the viewer's emotions.»<sup>13</sup>

### [bamak ekanik]

The other level on which Baldwin proposes to start a possible analysis is the poetic level: «Man Ray conceptualized *Emak Bakia* as a cine-poem, assembling the film the way a poet composed, bit by bit, word by word, striving for effect through words resonating with one another, rather than by literal, or expected, meaning.»<sup>14</sup>

Acceptance of this would mean that the method of analysis should be to proceed as in literature: to adapt one's normal way of reading (prose) to the particular case of poetry. The scenes that are like «real life» still bother me as they also bothered the audience with Buñuel's *L'Age d'or*. The label «cinépoème» is not maybe supposed to be trusted *à la lettre*.

The title of the film, *Emak Bakia*, has several explanations —as the word «dada» has had— depending on the situation. «Leave me alone» or «Don't bother me» was one translation from the Basque language. But Man Ray explained that it was *only* the name of the villa where he was shooting the film. In America, a program note informed however the public that, «it was chosen because it sounds prettily and means *Give us a rest*».<sup>15</sup> In French the translation could be *Fichez-moi la paix!* (or *Allez vous faire foutre...*). In both of these last translations there is a clear dadaist connotation.

*Give us a rest* —from what? Was Man Ray presenting his film in the spirit of an intermission? Indeed, *Entr'acte* had just been completed.

As had *Anémic cinéma*. Duchamp's film was made «with words and spirals». There is no reason why Man Ray, who actually achieved Duchamp's film, should radically change his just-developing visual language with the camera. Léger's *Ballet mécanique* also contains the same type of spiral drawing movements made with the camera, and it is no secret that Man Ray was behind the camera of the painter.<sup>16</sup> It is possible that Man Ray, probably eager about the *Ballet mécanique* adventure, «invented» a kind of personal replacement. Strangely, the titles of all the dadaist films in which Man Ray was involved *sound pretty much the same* —and most of them used the same kind of tricks:

Entr'acte (1924)  
 Anemic cinema (1925)  
 Ballet mécanique (1925)  
 Emak Bakia (1926)

EN—AK  
 ANE—MIK—(K)IN—NE—MA  
 BAL—ME—KA—NIK  
 EM—AK—BA—KIA

The use of successive *roulements* (rolling/shifts) and *déroulements* of the spiral can be related to the linearity of homonyms or palindromatic juxtapositions.

These *roulements* and *déroulements* of words (forming sense and nonsense phrase structures) are present in *Emak Bakia*, first in the title, which «sounds prettily» but finally in all the texts/inscriptions, including the loop town illuminations (14,15,64) and above all in the only caption of the film (75). The texts evoke generally moods of selfishness, nonchalance or indifference. As a trademark of Dada —contradiction— *anémic* more or less neutralizes the word *cinéma*, the first being the lack of movement and the second being the essence of movement. For this reason, I should expect to find similar fine play with the «sound» *Emak Bakia*; It is a pair shift rhythm of sound which alternates interestingly between soft (m= female/maternal) and hard (b= male/bestial) consonants, this around a common root represented by a pair vowel-consonant (=ak). The sound reminds one of motion of a train or a machine, possibly a car (with a defective silencer), the last possibility being the most appropriate motif for the film.

++EMAKBAKIAEMAKBAKIAEMAKBAKIAEMAKBAKIAEMAKBAKIAEMAK++

The title thus forms a phonic phrase which soon takes an anamorphic structure in the film like a floating «spiral» or circular movement (1-4). All that is above the roll-illuminations remind one of the text-spiral in Duchamp's works and especially *Anémic Cinéma*. As in Duchamp, spiral phrases are laconic sentences, or pure nonsense in the actual context, but there are often allusions to something erotic.<sup>17</sup> Tom Sandqvist has noticed<sup>18</sup> that in the old popular French expression *passer du coq-à-l'âne*,<sup>19</sup> meaning linking things in an illogical order, and in the tradition of Medieval *fatrasie*, a kind of incoherent poetry made of popular sayings or absurd allusions, sometimes *grotesques*, there is a sense of a rabelaisian mixture of humor and cynicism providing a flavor of pre-dadaist composition.

++...ALLI AU BASSIN DE NEPTUNE AU COURS DE DEUX GRANDES FETES..++(14)  
 ++...MENNE...AVEC MARCEL DORET++LE JOURNAL ANNONCE+PARIS+UN...++(15)

**++CHAQUE SOIR A MAGIC-CITY++(64)**

Man Ray did not plan the texts, of course, but it is a common approach in visual arts to make a passive visual sign into an active one by the simple acceptance of its presence (as with the ready-made). That is also an important part of the dadaist creative process: to allow for risk in the organization of the elements.

In conventional «realist» cinema, regulations in drama have pushed visual communication to the extreme: what is included in a take must *necessarily* be an active element in the action, and if it is not, it must be thrown out.

Filming the town illuminations Man Ray probably had in mind:

**1° a calligramme (plate 32)**

**2° movement**

**3° a possible allusion to silent film captions**

**4° a possible connection with the general iconography of Emak Bakia**

«Le Bassin de Neptune» is one of the pools in Versailles (plate 29), and possibly for Man Ray it was an improvised new allusion to classical art. Neptune leads to water and the text mentions two great parties: *Le Bain Turc* strangely comes to mind once again.

Marcel Doret (plate 29) was a popular pioneer aviator who broke a speed record in 1924. This could be an allegory for (engine) speed, an important theme for the Dadaists.

The well-known Magic-City dance party (*Le bal de Magic-City*) was one of the meeting places for homosexuals and fun-loving people during the *années folles* (plate 29). In around 1923 *Magic-City* was one of the most popular centers of Parisian night life, appreciated for its relative liberty and decadent pleasures.

After the pair caption (14–15) the climate of the takes is rather erotic. After shot 64 at least there is no doubt about the erotic intention. Shot 64 is followed by similar takes (65–66) to those following shots 14 and 15, abstract circular and rhythmic movements in which there is even a hint of a woman's necklace. The next shots reveal the visage (tight head shot) of two women with a flirtatious gaze at the camera (67–70).

Opening eyes (67) and a smiling face (70) precede the close-up of what is presumably a dahlia (71), and possibly a sexual allegory. In shot 72 a third woman's face appears, and with her face straight to the camera she seems to whisper a few

intimate words to it. In shot 75, the text mentions the previous sequences as «extravagant»: obviously an allusion to *a depraved, speedy and wet party at Magic-City*.

### [ciné-double éveil]

Clear as the word «Cinépoème» (3–5)<sup>20</sup> may be today, it nonetheless merits a brief historical consideration. In French the word *ciné* as the shortened form for *cinéma* was first used in 1910. The compound word *ciné-roman* was coined only in 1925. It designated an episodic film or a popular photographic novel made out of a film and published afterwards in a magazine as a «pictured novel». The later connotation (not yet at the time of *Emak Bakia*) of *ciné-roman* is «cheap novel».

The concept of *ciné-poème* at that time is totally speculative and does not at all mean that the film ought to belong to any specific genre. By *Ciné-poème*, Man Ray probably only wanted to demarcate the film from mainstream realistic narrative production.

It was also surely a desire to give the film a surrealist label, poetry being much praised generally by the Surrealists at that time. If the title *Emak Bakia* gives a clear dada connotation, the second title, *cinépoème*, shows instead a desire to balance the film with a surrealist position: it sets the film between normal cinema values (*ciné*) and in its rejection as being merely a copy of the real. The film becomes an interpreted copy, a mental process, a poem.

As Neil Baldwin observes,<sup>21</sup> the need to establish clear connections with the Surrealist's group was great, remembering only the conclusion of the screening of *Le Retour à la raison*.

In 1926 Man Ray was not yet in favour with the Surrealists who considered him a marginal figure, first because of the media he used, second because of his mother tongue, and third probably because of his rejection of constraint.

As an example of the connection with Surrealism, Neil Baldwin cites the final shot where Kiki opens her «real» eyes on which another pair of eyes have been painted on the eyelids. As they open the look of the false eyes vanishes. Neil Baldwin speaks about the typically surrealist «blurred boundary between sleep and waking»<sup>22</sup>,

Man Ray too insists on the fact that he wanted to adopt surrealist principles: «irrationality, automatism, psychological and dreamlike sequences, without apparent logic, and complete disregard of conventional storytelling.»<sup>23</sup>



The use of Jacques Rigaut was a mistake from one point of view:

Jacques Rigaut, the dandy of the Dadas,[...] was looked upon with respect by the group, but had maintained a certain aloofness, and become involved in personal affairs which did not always meet with the approval of some<sup>24</sup>

The sequence of the collars, which follows the arrival of Jacques Rigaut at the building (after the caption «La raison de cette extravagance»), was done as a sign of derision towards the (rational) cinema and in an entirely Bretonian, and not dadaist, spirit. Man Ray explained the «second part» of the film as an improvisation completing the dadaistic «hodge-podge of realistic shots and of sparkling crystals and abstract forms obtained in a deforming mirror.»<sup>25</sup> He needed «a satire on the movies» to balance the «too arty» part of the film.<sup>26</sup> Man Ray gives to understand that the whole idea was improvised at the end of the production, back in Paris. But the sequence was in fact well planned as has been shown by the props, the use of an actor and also the camera angles (76–85):

I sent out my assistant Boiffard to buy a dozen stiff white collars with which I filled a small attaché case. Then I had Rigaut go out with the case, find a taxi and drive back to the studio. The camera was set up in a window on the balcony overlooking the entrance to the studio; I filmed my man as he arrived in the taxi, stepped out and entered the building. In the studio I made a close-up of Rigaut's hands opening the case, taking the collars out one by one, tearing them in two and dropping them on the floor.<sup>27</sup>

In shot 84, the movement of the collars is reversed, giving a surrealist note suggestive of the sequence of the bowler hats in Hans Richter's later *Vormittagsspuk* (1928).

Although the film ought to have been a completely improvised «opus» made in the same spirit as *Le Retour à la raison*, Man Ray planned quite a number of the takes, not by writing a script but by more or less controlling the shooting according to an idea for a sequence or a theme. However, the idea was often the result of an already experienced event:

One of the most interesting shots I made was while being driven by Rose Wheeler in her Mercedes racing car; I was using my hand camera while she was driving eighty or ninety miles an hour, being pretty badly shaken up, when we came upon a herd of sheep on the

road. She braked to within a few feet of the animals. This gave me an idea - why not show a collision? I stepped out of the car, followed the herd while winding up the camera and set it in movement, then threw it thirty feet up into the air, catching it again.<sup>28</sup>

Man Ray describes here shots that have been split into two sequences: first, the herd of sheep (29), filmed out of the car (probably by Man Ray, running with one eye on the road and the other in the camera's view finder) and secondly the collision with the pig (30–34). The «jump» of the camera itself was split into two shots (32 and 34) alternating with a view of the pig lying on the road and moving its head (31 and 33). This short sequence is thus an alternate editing giving the spectator the impression that the «jump» is the subjective view of one of the protagonist of the collision (possibly also of the driver). Anyway, independently of the intention, this short sequence is related semantically to the conventions of narrative cinema. Shot 30 can also be considered to be the subjective view of the pig itself seeing the car driving at it, with the camera on the ground probably as its eyes. *Self Portrait* does not report the «collision» as a collision with a pig but obviously as a collision with a herd of sheep. Various studies on Man Ray give the same picture, for instance Merry Foresta describes the scene as below:

La sensation de voyage sur une grand-route bordée d'arbres continue jusqu'à ce que l'image se renverse, lorsque la voiture semble entrer en collision avec un troupeau de moutons.<sup>29</sup>

Even if Man Ray was improvising when he filmed the shots, the editing suggests a relatively vague intention of storytelling. The means, exceptional for the time (camera on the ground, camera jumping, subjective camera), were by and large experimented with by Abel Gance in *La roue* only three years before, but today they are widely used in conventional narrative cinema.

In *Self Portrait* Man Ray also describes two other sequences which were very well planned and following the collision: the dancing legs sequence (36–44) and the sea-shore (50–55).

There were other more carefully planned sequences: a pair of lovely legs doing the popular Charleston dance of the day, the sea revolving so that it became sky and sky sea, etc.<sup>30</sup>

The same *attracting-montage* (or alternate editing) can be observed here. In shots 36–44, the alternating shots have been cut in dual rhythm and music, five times.

If the shot with the dancing legs is carefully examined an electric turntable is clearly perceptible on the right of the frame. Man Ray mentions a turntable in the props of the film (and he used it also probably to give the carousel effect in other sequences). This means that the dance(r) is not at all improvised, and probably neither is the musician: there are no «Parisian rambling» shots at all.

The music of the Charleston was probably playing from the turntable, a relatively rare and probably expensive piece of equipment at that time.<sup>31</sup>

In an earlier sequence (35a-e) another pair of female legs is seen stepping out of a car. The whole sequence is edited in progressive superimpositions so that the number of superimposed takes is difficult to establish, but there are about four or five. Again this is not an improvised shooting but a well-calculated effect.

Here also Foresta's description seems to go against the actual reality of the sequence:

Des paires de jambes avancement et reculent, montant et descendant du marchepied de la voiture<sup>32</sup>

There are no «backward» or «climbing» movements of the legs.

The sequence was probably invented on location but once the idea was clear, so also was the technique. The camera work demands a minimum of concentration and does not allow surrealist «automatism». Spontaneity is therefore a relative term, making the cinema a difficult art to adapt to surrealist theory: cinema is difficult to constrain within automatic writing. While text writing can be a purely mental process immediately transposable on to paper, film shooting or the adaptation of verses to visual matters demand too high a level of concentration on the actual environment.<sup>33</sup>

In other sequences the function of sound and music were carefully calculated: first in the proto-narrative sequence with Jacques Rigaut and second in the waltz of the collars.

With the former, absolutely no music was used (either in the première nor later). One can imagine the atmosphere of the theatre after a flow of rayographs, fast moving anamorphic pictures, and blues and jazz music; suddenly, when Jacques Rigaut steps out of the taxi, there is no sound except the crackle of seats. Man Ray wanted to ensure the most efficient break possible: a surprising text and the total suspension of music. As in the silent beat in music, silence is observed, and effectively.

The waltz has two functions: parody, and a visual rhythmic climax, the waltz carrying the spectator along in the movement.

Man Ray usually enjoys using his camera as a subjective eye, but sometimes the description he gives of the scene afterwards seems to remain more on the level of what he has seen, thought and remembered than what he has finally filmed.

Shots 50 to 55 scarcely seem to fulfil the description given by Man Ray. The sky is seen briefly at the beginning of the first panoramic view (50) but otherwise remains absent in the whole sequence. The transformations of «sea revolving so that it became sky and sky sea» are simply a vision that is never in fact actually presented, but remained only an intention.

It seems that although Man Ray was planning his film as a series of diverse happenings or situations independent of one other, it was still carefully composed and well planned.

### [fragmentation, dis-connection, articulation]

Edward A. Aiken writes :

The narrative of *Emak Bakia* is expressed through Man Ray's choice of images and the way in which he orders them. For Man Ray, this film was, as he wrote in 1927, «a series of fragments, a cinempoem with a certain optical sequence make [sic] up a whole that still remains a fragment». The film draws its method, structure, and general appearance from two complementary sources: collage and dreams. In both, the juxtaposition of disparate images results in powerful visual statements with a startling ability to communicate outside the bounds of rationality.<sup>34</sup>

The idea of «fragmentation» is confirmed by Man Ray himself when he used the word «disconnected»:

The entire sequence from the time of Rigaut's arrival was preceded by the only subtitle in the film: *The Reason for this Extravagance*. This was to reassure the spectator, like the title of my first Dada film: to let him think there would be an explanation of the previous disconnected images.<sup>35</sup>

«Disconnected» is maybe not appropriate because there are often connections within the visual themes or symbolic meanings.

The aquarium sequence (58) uses the same trick of quadruple superimpositions as in shot 35. It follows logically the theme of water developed with the shore. Man Ray comes back to the theme of the shore after the sequence of the aquarium, but this time with a sculpture, the ready-made *L'idole du pêcheur* picked up from the beach (made of fishing-net corks) (59 and 60). Thus, three sequences apparently disconnected are connected however by one theme: the sea. This «overall theme» itself is connected to apparently insignificant takes such as the illumination-text «au bassin de Neptune», the God of the sea. The unidentified female body lying on the beach (55 56) moves her legs in the sand, connecting visually the close-up of the legs to previous sequences (legs stepping out of the car and legs dancing the Charleston).

The ready-made sculpture *L'idole du pêcheur* —a siren?— also develops a new theme which could be called «articulation» —connected also to the legs— through a series of dada-sculptures and simple animations of basic geometric forms (61–63).

The visual pertinence of geometric forms, the articulated *Homme d'affaires*, the futurist man-robot jumping, the decomposed movement traced on paper (62) (plate 29) and the animated «spiral» (*Emak Bakia* sculpture)(63) are clearly all parts of a more planned «whole» than any evidence of disorganization. With the animated sculpture there are two dice first rolling over themselves, and then falling at the bottom of the picture. Suddenly both dice divide themselves approximately diagonally, to form four half cubes with «spots». Two of them walk away and the two parts left, one of each original die, stick together to form a new die. Technically the animation is a little hazardous, but Man Ray had planned it well and obviously wanted to introduce a visual allegory of chance and numbers. I tried to find a key to resolve a possible «problem» or to find a possible «solution», an attempt that in these dadaist circumstances was probably in vain. But my idea was that while there is no «solution» there must be at least an intention. In the geometric forms (cylinders, cones, etc.) of the same sequence a connection with Cézanne's «permanent abstractions from nature» has sometimes been found.<sup>36</sup> His two-plane cubist painting *Dance*, made ten years before in New York and exhibited in the Daniel Gallery, finds a new role as «tapestry background» to the «dance» of the «permanent abstractions»: Man Ray does not hesitate to rotate the work 90° to the right (plate 29). It is true that the «massacre» of his own painting and the *hétéroclite*

(to use the Lévi-Strauss' word in his definition of *bricolage* in chapter 6) compilation of fragmented works that Man Ray offers to the vision of the spectator do not help one much to perceive a whole, and further small curious details of the life of the objects remain unnoticed. Neil Baldwin mentions the opinion of the critic Gilbert Seldes (*The New Republic*) at that time: «Man Ray's film gone straight to hell with good intentions [...] a few feet of film create a startling, almost ravishing effect, [...] the whole and most of its parts lack significance. There is almost no relation between any hundred feet of film and the preceding or subsequent hundred.»<sup>37</sup> Why did Man Ray construct his film with themes and motives and at the same time create a narrative «climax»<sup>38</sup>, that is to say the caption<sup>39</sup>, which contradicts the existence of any content?

According to Neil Baldwin, the spectator should find something else than a «literal, or expected meaning». For this he proposes «visual motifs» and «patterns of lights». Further, he proposes the film as «a whole that still remained a fragment».<sup>40</sup> The question is: what does he consider a «whole» and what does he really mean by «fragment»?

Man Ray himself in his speech at the first showing of *Emak Bakia* said that the film was «purely optical, made to appeal only to the eyes» but at the same time «somewhat more truculently; this was not an experimental film» that he was offering the public something «final, the result of a way of thinking as well as of seeing»<sup>41</sup>

The text *La raison de cette extravagance* and the following sequence do not offer *pure* (pur, photogénique) cinema like for instance Chomette's film *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* (originally a part of the film made with Man Ray) or Bruguière's *Light Rhythms*, Richter's *Rhythmus* or even some of the films by Germaine Dulac. Nor does the sequence support a story. We could call it «anti-narrative» because it is supported by conventional narrative means and yet it acts against dramaturgy. The last sequence (Kiki's double awakening) also gives the whole film a meaning which goes far beyond (formal) appearances: a meaning which is to be found from the «conceptual» dada-register or surrealist vision, or perhaps from both. The «blurred boundary between sleep and waking», a precisely surrealist formula, is advanced by Baldwin as a possible meaning for the last sequence. The anti-narrative means, for its part, best supports dada motivation: it makes useless what is considered useful.

Il semble que les images mouvantes aient été spécialement inventées pour nous permettre de visualiser nos rêves.<sup>42</sup>

said Jean Tedesco, director of the *Vieux Colombier*, where the film was shown. Thus Kiki's double awakening may be not only a brief surrealist insert, but a real key to reading all the previous scenes, including the «false explanation». The position of the shot, in the ending, supports that interpretation.

It is a cinematographic means which has been used endlessly by narrative cinema to reveal the visions of trance or dreams. A classic example is the sequence in which Professor Borg relates a nightmare he had had in Ingmar Bergman's *The Wild Strawberries*.<sup>43</sup> Man Ray was probably searching for a similar deeper level of understanding and probably did not content himself with a photomontage which speculated only on hazardous juxtaposition. The next film he made, *L'Etoile de mer*, clearly went in this direction, refusing dadaist photomontage as cinematographic editing. A deeper level of comprehension does not necessarily mean a narrative, but could be occasionally *a sense behind the apparent non-sense*. All sequences preceding the double awakening can be interpreted as a suite of *floaters* out of a dream.

Continuing with the example of Professor Borg's description, it is worth noting that the whole sequence can also be seen as surrealist, but it stops being surrealist and only starts to make sense when connected to the previous and following scenes.

The «fragments» suggested by Baldwin (and Man Ray himself) are therefore rather more of a coherent «whole» than a fragmented one.

The «fragments-floaters» have to be seen as full components of the whole film and the film itself as a *real dream* instead of a mere description of one.

Often, the most potent of these visions impress us precisely because they are constructed of elements so completely removed from each other under normal circumstances. It is this process of poetic juxtaposition that unites the otherwise separate realms of dreams, collage, and the cinema. The kinship between collage and film was especially underscored by the Dadaist Raoul Hausmann, who termed his photomontages *static cinema*.<sup>44</sup>

I also want to draw attention here to the important role played by the technical props planned by Man Ray:

Having assembled various accessories, deforming mirrors, an electric turntable, an assortment of crystals, and some special lamps, I went to work at once, neglecting other

photographic commitments. After all, I considered this in line with my routine work, like any other order, [...].<sup>45</sup>

Man Ray's preparation for the film seems thus to have concentrated on technical needs, accessories and tricks, as if he would *transpose* the photographic *floaters* he used into the kinetic medium. This agrees with his own account in *Self Portrait* and was also the view held at that time by some sceptical critics at the première. A turntable was used not only for playing music but for creating pure cinematic images, a little as if it were the «photography» of a mobile: the reproduction in time of an obsessional movement or possibly a play between *photograph* and *phonograph*. Anamorphic, reflected, moving in a cyclic rhythm the images are quite similar, for instance, to the psychedelic repertory of Bill Ham's retroprojections<sup>46</sup> or the cinema developed by Stan Brakhage in the sixties. In fact these psychedelic pictures are supposed to act as support for a vision stretched by the effects of LSD, a kind of artificial way to initiate «innocent» floaters and finally leading the spectator to a «visual trance» (chapter 9).

It seems that Man Ray's idea was first to collect *extraordinary visions* and secondly to bring that fragmentation of *transformed visions* to a common state of recognition: *the dream* or more precisely its revelation (awakening). If the caption promises an explanation or assures a hypothetical solution it is above all a clever way to escape from cause-to-effects logic.

### [un détour à la dérision]

The word *extravagance* is a good choice: if in English it connotes being within the limits of excess, in French the meaning is clearly linked to sense and reason.

**Extravagance: qui sort des limites du bon sens; qui est à la fois extraordinaire et déraisonnable<sup>47</sup>**

When the text promises «a reason for the extravagance» it means the promise of *a reason for the unreasonable*, sense for non-sense. If the non-sense has a sense—such as dreams often let us feel—that is a vicious circle and finally the annihilation of both. This is reminiscent of a small child who asks «why?» after each new answer.



One of the dada-nihilist positions, for Duchamp especially, was that the answer is as useless as the question itself.

We come back here maybe to another aspect of Baldwin's «fragment»: no work of art begins at once, but they are all the result of various happy or unhappy attempts, that are affected also by chance and they provoke as many questions without providing «solutions». That is a fundamental difference between the arts and the sciences, which attempt to give a rational answer to everything, and often believe that they have done so.

In the light of the analysis now underway it seems that *Emak Bakia* no longer belongs entirely to the dadaist repertoire, and cannot be considered a surrealist film either.

Alain Virmaux analyzed surrealist cinema for the critical period 1924–1932. He wondered why surrealist cinema started so late and never fulfilled the promise Breton said it had.

Il arrive que cinémathèques et ciné-clubs présentent sous l'étiquette surréaliste un certain nombre de courts-métrages réalisés autour de 1925, et le public s'est habitué à tenir pour surréaliste toute cette avant-garde muette. En réalité, il y a là abus de langage: une bonne partie de ces films est d'inspiration dadaïste ou dadaïsante.[...] Dans ces conditions, qui peut-on faire figurer dans une école «authentiquement» surréaliste du cinéma? Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray? Là encore, il s'agit d'hommes qui ont milité successivement dans le dadaïsme et dans le surréalisme et dont les films, à cette frontière indécise, peuvent être revendiqués par l'un et l'autre mouvements.<sup>48</sup>

The problem is also a problem of dates: how could a film made in 1925 or 1926, which ought to be classified as dadaist, possibly be so classified when Dadaism is officially dead after *Le coeur à barbe* in 1923 and the birth of Surrealism in 1924?

La plupart des films d'inspiration dadaïste (Entr'acte, Ballet mécanique, Emak Bakia, etc.) datent de la fin de Dada ou lui sont même postérieurs.<sup>49</sup>

Ado Kyrou concludes that Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray are situated at «the cross-road between Dadaism and Surrealism».<sup>50</sup> *Emak Bakia*, at least, seems to me to be the prototype of that historical dilemma. The themes, photography and editing in *Emak Bakia* have been compared to *Ballet mécanique* by Barbara Rose and Judi Freeman.<sup>51</sup>

In 1972 William Moritz<sup>52</sup> discussed the role played by Man Ray in this last film and and his possible influence on it. Most researchers conclude that nowadays it is difficult to ascribe full paternity of *Ballet mécanique* only to Léger or Murphy, as there are strong indications that when Murphy asked Léger to direct the film it had to a large extent already been edited. Léger probably made changes to the original. Man Ray, not only disappointed by the success of the film, was also supposed to have felt thwarted by the whole experience of *Ballet mécanique*. Beyond the participation of Kiki de Montparnasse in the film,<sup>53</sup> there are a lot of strange coincidences and similarities with *Emak Bakia*. I noticed early on<sup>54</sup> that the sound of the title of the film *Ballet mécanique* contains echoes of the very words *Emak* and *Bakia*. The shot with the legs (35) has been compared to the washerwoman climbing the stairs in *Ballet mécanique*, because of the repetitiveness; the same take, however, suggests stronger links with Marey's chronophotography, futurist photodynamics or vortography, links that are reinforced by shot 62. The other shot with the legs of the dancer (36–44) has been compared to the movement of the mannequin's legs around the clock in *Ballet mécanique*. The smile of the actresses (67, 70, 72), has been compared to the smile of Kiki in *Ballet mécanique* (plate 7) again and to the sequence of the portraits in *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films*, the film by Chomette and Man Ray that is believed to have been split in two parts.<sup>55</sup>

### [cybèle et le cyclope]

The most general theme (motif) of *Emak Bakia* is undoubtedly the eye and the look. It is also the overture to the film which begins with the artist looking into the camera (7) and his eye blowing out of the camera objective (8). It continues (23) upon the eye superimposed with the mechanical «eyes» of a car. A Cyclops' metaphor. It ends with the painted eyes and the double awakening of Kiki (92–93). The proto-narrative sequence (see in figure 26 «Cybèle») of the woman climbing the stairs (45) reminds one of the myth of goddess Cybele (Greek Κυβέλη or known in French as *Cybèle*, homonym of *si belle*: so beautiful),<sup>56</sup> or *Magna Mater*, an allegory often used by Man Ray and Duchamp and also a metaphor for Fertility and Earth. The objective of the camera focuses on her (47–48), looking at herself in an antique mirror<sup>57</sup> and follow her at the window, in the light.

I will recall here again, as parenthesis, another character of Greek mythology: the «famous» Polyphemus, the blind Cyclops of the Odyssey.

Cybele is described by Lucretius in *De Rerum Natura*:

*Seated in chariot o'er the realms of air  
To drive her team of lions, teaching thus  
That the great earth hangs poised and cannot lie  
Resting on other earth.*<sup>58</sup>

The scene with Cybele could also be a link to shot 21 and the myth of *Vagina Dentata* and the *Terrible Mother* (or like the siren, a woman who is considered to be dangerously seductive —The Galatian «priests of Cybele» devoted themselves to their goddess by castrating themselves).

Cybele, in *Emak Bakia*, opens the skylight window on to a view of the seashore<sup>59</sup>, in an interesting transition recalling the semantic female allegory of *la mère* (the mother=cybele) and *la mer* (the sea=Neptune). In *De Rerum Natura* the writings on the goddess Cybele end with yet one more link to water and light.<sup>60</sup>

*Truly is earth insensate for all time;  
But, by obtaining germs of many things,  
In many a way she brings the many forth  
Into the light of sun. And here, whoso  
Decides to call the ocean Neptune, or  
The grain-crop Ceres, and prefers to abuse  
The name of Bacchus rather than pronounce  
The liquor's proper designation, him  
Let us permit to go on calling earth  
Mother of Gods, if only he will spare  
To taint his soul with foul religion.*<sup>61</sup>

Could *Emak Bakia* be summarized in *camera obscura*, *laterna magica* and *vagina dentata*, with interchangeable variations: *camera dentata* for instance?

Figure 26 sketches the whole structure of the sequences and overall themes of *Emak Bakia*. Man Ray suggested that the sequences are mounted «in some sort of progression». I have measured the duration of the sequences or groups of sequences forming a theme (for instance, the automobile, the seashore, etc.).

I have also made a distinction in the nature of the sequences, limiting the categories to seven groups, each of which in my opinion has a different function, despite the fact that the themes sometimes overlap with other sequences:

- 1° **proto-narrative or anti-narrative** (surrealist): using a conventional narrative continuity
- 2° **abstract or anamorphic**: using deformed reality in a pure formal abstract goal (cinéma pur)
- 3° **symbolic or allegorical**: the introduction and conclusion of the film which I suppose give meaning to the whole structure
- 4° **dadaist**: the scenes that I suppose were made in a pure dadaist spirit, excluding however cinerayographs and abstract sequences
- 5° **rhythmic**: the sequence where Man Ray cut his film according to the sound
- 6° **oneiric** the sequences where poetic language is predominant
- 7° **caligraphic**: the sequence formed by the texts of night roll-illumination in which literal meaning could have an improvised symbolic meaning according to the motifs or themes of the film

Although the film should be considered definitively as a dadaist-surrealist junction, we can observe a synthetic construction giving a far deeper level of reading than *Ballet mécanique* or any other dadaist film: it does not yet belong to the cinema of Buñuel or Dulac, but it is almost metaphysical.

If the whole structure seemed at first anarchic, a fragmented whole or «a whole that still remained a fragment»<sup>62</sup>, I myself see a clear mechanism of progress(ion). Briefly, that progression does not depend on the themes (which are the function of the scene in narrative cinema, a unity of dramatic progression) but the visual nature of the pictures, vision. This progression starts after the title with a symbolic photomontage (7-8) which links directly to the last sequence of the double awakening (92-93), that is the conclusion of the film, and to an allegory on the vision of Breton: the resolution of dream and reality in absolute reality, surreality. Man Ray, in using the camera (7-8) and looking into it as a parallel reality, suggests that the movie camera is quite a fashionable tool for recording that surreality, a distorted allusion to the common belief that the camera is an objective eye on reality. Cybele, in Lucretius, for instance, is teaching mankind: «That the great earth hangs poised and cannot lie / Resting on other earth».<sup>63</sup> There are various levels of reality. In the last sequence Man Ray suggests with only two strongly symbolic takes that cinema and REM-sleep could be connected (it will be seen in chapter 9).<sup>64</sup>

The contradiction of these two takes with the rest of the film, an apparent absurdity, is therefore evident: this finally imparts meaning to the whole work and provides a key for understanding the overall vision. The classic «step-thinking» of the genesis of an image —perceiving, dreaming and imagining— are completely disturbed. Here surreality transcends reality —and the conventional eye of the camera. Eidetic images (visual memory), hypnopompic images (post-waking memory), hypnagogic images (pre-dream memory) and entoptic images (floaters)<sup>65</sup> fill up the vision of the artist in an anarchic flow of stimuli, these «pictures» working as the basic organisation of surreality.

Excepted the «field of daisies», after the symbolic *exposition* Man Ray plunges the spectator for more than three minutes into an abstract stream of fast cinerayographs and moving mobiles which is suddenly interrupted —*complication*— by a loop of an lit up street hoarding (illumination loop in shot 14) with strange messages, which are in fact flat allusions to the busy everyday life of Paris, a kind of *captions* of an «off-reality», a *plot*. I have shown that these captions could also be allusions to other meanings, other semantic «signifieds», more symbolic this time. But in terms of structure the film *also* works without any of these symbolic messages. These illuminations, for instance, simply by breaking the abstract stream are forcing the spectator to recover «on-reality».

The so-called dadaist sequences have the theme of the vehicle in common: we are here in the most improvised part of the film, a relic in style from *Entr'acte* and *Ballet mécanique*. Is the collision a parody of an *action*? A *conflict*? The rhythmic session (36–44) breaks with all the previous scenes and provokes a kind of sensory *climax*, immediately followed by a proto-narrative and oneiric slow sequences.

The progression from the beginning to that point is therefore a progression from pure cinema to narrative-like cinema and oneiric images (as the title promised). After the oneiric sequence of the fishes, the film seems to take a new turn, to find new ground with object animations very similar to the animations filmed in *Ballet mécanique*. After that, the film seems to work in the opposite direction, like a decrescendo to abstraction again, with the difference this time that it is punctuated by the faces of beautiful women awakening and smiling to the camera... Then again a break: the caption and a new musical climax, *The Merry Widow* of Strauss, and its resolution, the dance of the collars. The *conclusion*, the double awakening, offers to the spectator a symbolic *solution*.

In a version of the film, and accompanying the last shot with the movement of the eyes and the lips of Kiki the word *Finis* (end) can be seen in black letters, melting on her white teeth.<sup>66</sup>

Exposition, complication, conflict, climax, resolution, solution are of course basic concepts of dramatic narrative cinema, and Man Ray certainly did not try to imitate drama. Whether the question is about poetry, music, film or any other art that manipulates time and rhythm, «some sort of progression» seems to be always an advantage. The structure of *Emak Bakia* is unique and certainly still holds some secrets.

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<sup>1</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 219

<sup>2</sup> After Jean Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*

<sup>3</sup> Neil Baldwin in *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 131

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, by «next opus» Baldwin means *Emak Bakia*

<sup>6</sup> cf. the observations made by Deke Dusinberre and myself about the description of *Le Retour à la raison* in *Self Portrait* (chapter 7)

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1998, p. 152

<sup>8</sup> Neil Baldwin in *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 133

<sup>9</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 219-220

<sup>10</sup> Neil Baldwin in *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 133

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze in *Cinéma 2 «L'image-temps»* borrowed the idea of «montrage» from Robert Lapoujade and cites also Bonitzer. He showed that editing became with the time-image, not only the manipulation of the movement in continuity, but the manipulation of units of time. For him the shot, as pure image, always includes the «montage» as element of composition: «Tantôt le montage passe dans la profondeur de l'image, tantôt il se met à plat: il ne demande plus comment les images s'enchaînent, mais *qu'est-ce que montre l'image?*»

<sup>12</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 212

<sup>13</sup> Neil Baldwin, *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 134

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135

<sup>16</sup> The problem is that nobody knows exactly how much of the film Man Ray has filmed. Possibly he filmed the whole «ballet»

<sup>17</sup> For instance in Duchamp's film: «Avez-vous déjà mis la moëlle de l'épée dans le poêle de l'aimée?»

<sup>18</sup> Tom Sandqvist: *Rajamailla*, 1990, p. 247, transl. JC

<sup>19</sup> Observe here the same alternating hard (coq) and soft (âne) sounds

<sup>20</sup> Also written - and should be written - in French *ciné-poème*

<sup>21</sup> Neil Baldwin, *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, e.g. p. 134

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 222

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 220-223

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220, *hodge-podge*: miscellaneous. A term used by Man Ray

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 221

<sup>28</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 220

<sup>29</sup> Turner E. Hutton in Merry Foresta: *Man Ray* (transl. in French by Philippe Mikriammos), 1989, pp. 162-163

<sup>30</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 220

<sup>31</sup> Man Ray mentions the turntable in 1963 in *Self Portrait*, as one of the most important props of that film

<sup>32</sup> Turner E. Hutton in Merry Foresta: *Man Ray* (transl. in French by Philippe Mikriammos), 1989, p. 163

<sup>33</sup> Instead, is film scriptwriting more suitable to the theory of «automatic writing»?

<sup>34</sup> Aiken Edward A.: *Emak Bakia Reconsidered* Art journal Vol. 43, No. 3, Art History and the Study of Film, Autumn, 1983

<sup>35</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 221

<sup>36</sup> Turner E. Hutton in Merry Foresta: *Man Ray* (translated in French by Philippe Mikriammos), 1989, p. 163

<sup>37</sup> Cited by Neil Baldwin in *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, pp. 135-136

<sup>38</sup> Man Ray own word about the part running after the text «La raison de cette extravagance», in *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 220

<sup>39</sup> Subtitle in silent movies, Man Ray uses both terms to describe the current text

- <sup>40</sup> Neil Baldwin, *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 134
- <sup>41</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 221
- <sup>42</sup> Quoted by Jacques B. Brunius: *En marge du cinéma français*, Arcanes, 1954
- <sup>43</sup> A kind of sequence which appears repetitively in the film and close to the surrealist vision of Maya Deren in *Mesher of the Afternoon*
- <sup>44</sup> Aiken Edward A. «Emak Bakia Reconsidered» *Art journal* Vol. 43, No. 3, *Art History and the Study of Film*, Autumn, 1983
- <sup>45</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 219
- <sup>46</sup> Called also *Painting with Light*, Light Sound Dimension Theater, San Francisco
- <sup>47</sup> Definition of *Le Petit Robert* dictionary
- <sup>48</sup> Virmaux, Alain: *Une promesse mal tenue: le film surréaliste (1924-1932)* in Kovacs, Yves: *Surréalisme et cinéma*, Etudes cinématographiques, n°38-39, 1965, p. 110
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126
- <sup>50</sup> Kyrou, Ado: *Le Surréalisme au Cinéma*, 1963, p. 177 : «Deux hommes font la jonction cinématographique entre le dadaïsme et le surréalisme: Man Ray et Marcel Duchamp.»
- <sup>51</sup> Texts published in: Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1998, Judi Freeman original text can be found in Rudof E. Kuenzli (ed.): *Dada and Surrealist film*, 1987, pp. 28-45
- <sup>52</sup> Also quoted in : Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, 1998
- <sup>53</sup> Man Ray never asserted the paternity of the film but made this whimsical remark: «One never borrow his mistress.» (on Kiki's role in the film)
- <sup>54</sup> Later I noticed that Barbara Rose also mentions that «mystery»
- <sup>55</sup> We remember that after the different with the Comte de Beaumont the part of Chomette is supposed to be *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* and the other part probably ended in parts of *Emak Bakia*
- <sup>56</sup> The myth/cult of goddess Cybele: originally a Phrygian goddess, Cybele (Greek Κυβέλη, sometimes given the etymology «she of the hair» (Roman equivalent: Magna Mater or Great Mother) was the Earth Mother goddess who was worshipped in Anatolia from Neolithic times; her male worshippers become her priests by castrating themselves. In *L'Etoile de mer*, Man Ray used Kiki's character as an allegory of Cybele. It is also said that The Great Glass of Duchamp could be an allusion to Magna Mater
- <sup>57</sup> «*Si belle en ce miroir*» sings Marguerite in Faust's opera
- <sup>58</sup> Transl. by William Ellery Leonard at: [http://classics.mit.edu/Carus/nature\\_things.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Carus/nature_things.html)
- <sup>59</sup> This is making a point in favor of Man Ray's description of the seashore sequence (my comment above in the same chapter)
- <sup>60</sup> Another interesting link could be hazardly done with the name of Man Ray itself (Man and Ray)
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> Cf. note 28, Neil Baldwin, *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 134
- <sup>63</sup> A French translation is even more explicit: «aeris in spatio magnam pendere docentes tellurem neque posse in terra sistere terram» is translated by José Kany-Turpin as «Ils montraient par là que le vaste monde est dans l'espace suspendu et que la terre sur la terre ne repose» in Lucrèce: *De la nature* Aubier, 1993, pp.148-149
- <sup>64</sup> REM [rapid eye movements] is the stage of sleep that recurs several times during the night and is marked by dreaming, rapid eye movements under closed lids, and elevated pulse rate and brain activity [http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary/1861700396/REM\\_sleep.html](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary/1861700396/REM_sleep.html)
- <sup>65</sup> We have partly defined these floaters in chapter 6
- <sup>66</sup> I have myself seen a similar version (in a cinema theatre); the description given by Turner E. Hutton in Merry Foresta: *Man Ray* (transl. in French by Philippe Mikriammos), 1989 provides confirmation. During my research sessions I could not find evidence again of the existence of such a version described by Man Ray himself

# 9. The Vision of the Cyclops



L'imperfection humaine, paraît-il, a des vertus plus sérieuse que l'exactitude des machines  
--Man Ray<sup>1</sup>

## 9.1. Fin de siècle

The twentieth century seems to have one desire only, to get to the twenty-first as soon as possible --Umberto Saba<sup>2</sup>

In the foreword of an important Dutch media art exhibition catalogue from 1990, Robert de Haas, opposing arts and sciences, asked: «How powerful is emotion's resistance to reason? Could it be that they are poles of one and the same process, both aimed at the unique moment of creativity?»<sup>3</sup>

Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point.<sup>4</sup>

This *Pensée* of Pascal (1623–1662) is a classic aperçu which finds echoes in a modern version by the Dadaist Hans Arp (1887–1966), less popular, but possibly more balanced, depending on the viewpoint. Both are impenetrable but paradoxically interesting to juxtapose.

Reason is a part of feeling, and feeling is a part of reason.<sup>5</sup>

This is precisely one of the aims of this work, to show that any momentum of an artistic vision is the result of a long process dependent on the tensions between emotion and reason, and on the historical context of the individual.

This context is first personal, related to perception, experience, memory and psychology, and secondly collective and social, and eventually political.



Man Ray's lifelong movement between the values and art of America and Europe started at the end of the 19th century and ended in 1976, during the emergence of a new kind of image, the electronic screen.<sup>6</sup> Only television had already brought to homes an electronic image and in so doing introduced a huge and hugely popular unilateral vision.

In the same catalogue, René Coelho, as curator, wrote :

In modern art history, the term *fin de siècle* is associated, first and foremost, with the end of the 19th century. Now that the 20th century is nearing its end, the term is being used more and more often to mean the end of our own century. [...] There is a specific sort of art which accompanies the closing years of a period.

In the visual arts at the end of the 19th century, one can distinguish a strong reaction to the developments of industry. Many artists attempted to deny the coming of the «machine» and looked backward to the Romantic Era for forms and ideas. Actually, at that point, the visual arts surrendered their innovative role to the applied arts.<sup>7</sup>

René Coelho cites for example *l'art nouveau* and following that idea compares the situation at the beginning of the last century with the development of new (electronic) technology in the 1990s. The idea of comparing «a sort of art which accompanies the closing years of a period» suggests to the reader that «electronic art» could mainly serve the applied arts. At this stage, it is principally possible in the field of electronic communication, and all above with television (or its future form). The change to a new and modern perception of the world (impressionism) and the acceptance of the new aesthetic values created by the machine occurred actually a few decades before impressionism, but it wasn't yet a mainstream view. Even in late romanticism the first imaginative, subjective and irrational exaltation of the machine may be found, for example in the work of Turner. The decisive and final step was taken of course by the Futurists and the Dadaists. So the new dynamic resulted in more than a transformation of perception but of new —modernist— visions, a process that lasted for a long period of about seventy years (1840–1910).

The historical steps were (model 1):

**1° a transformation in art-perception induced by the dynamics of industrial society**

**2° the acceptance of new forms and techniques still linked to bourgeois values**

**3° a total break with bourgeois values and a rejection of previous art forms**

In *Propos sur le Progrès*, Paul Valéry wrote:

Dans la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'artiste découvre et définit son contraire, —le bourgeois. Le bourgeois est la figure symétrique du romantique. On lui impose d'ailleurs des propriétés contradictoires, car on le fait à la fois esclave de la routine et sectateur (sic)<sup>8</sup> absurde du progrès. Le bourgeois aime le solide et croit au perfectionnement. Il incarne le sens commun, l'attachement à la réalité la plus sensible, — mais il a foi dans je ne sais quelle amélioration croissante et presque fatale des conditions de la vie. L'artiste se réserve le domaine du «Rêve».<sup>9</sup>

The classic opposition between art and science (and technology) is easily conceived as interfering with the notion of progress, thereby creating another area of antagonism. There are *deux lieux communs* —two platitudes— as Paul Valéry would say. The notion of *bourgeois* is often linked to the notion of (positive) progress, but as Valéry observes it is linked also to a rational immobility and to conservatism. The scenario is as if the antagonism had formed itself out of another antagonism. This other antagonism is summarised in a famous sentence by Valéry in the same text:

En somme à l'idole du Progrès répondit l'idole de la malédiction du Progrès ; ce qui fit deux lieux communs.<sup>10</sup>

I see in the analysis of the dynamic of progress a kind of quadrature in which the area of the square to be calculated should be the same size of a surface of indeterminate form representing something like a situation-cut or a «slice of time» or a «movement-image» showing society at a certain level of its history. The sides of the square (figure 27) could represent the artist, the bourgeois, the idol of progress, and finally the *malédiction du progrès* (the curse of progress), that is to say dynamism versus stagnation.

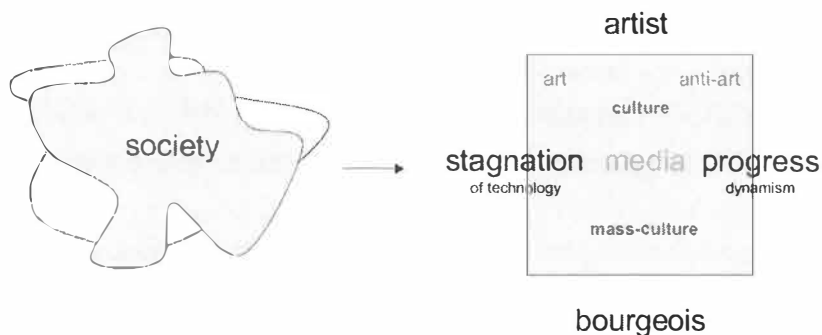


Fig. 27: Quadrature of Progress

The artist as fundamental paradox could be defined as the *one who loves dreaming, fears stagnation and fears rational progress*. The bourgeois as paradox, instead *loves realistic and established policy but still allows a blind positivism which permit him to access all new material comforts and tastes*.

In *Imago* Max Bruinsma underlines another conjectural paradox corresponding to the basic opposition of art and technology (as art and media) and the specific attachment of media art to that paradox (as media and technology paradox). He complicates the model of quadrature that has been suggested by opposing art to anti-art (which is ultimately unimportant if anti-art is considered as integrated to art, but shows nevertheless the effective «resistance» of anti-art as dynamic)<sup>11</sup>

The relationship between art and media and media/ technology is a problematic one, governed by a paradox. The electronic media —because of their reproductive character— do not fit easily into the accepted canon of the fine arts, but to be Art they must be manipulated within the canon. The alternative here would be for the artist to manoeuvre the canon to suit their medium. No easy task since, within the entire field of factors that provoke Art, the artist is but a single contender.

Another complicating factor is that of the strong connotations already attached to the electronic media which are, in essence, anti-Art.<sup>12</sup>

The further complicating factor is that video and electronic media, in general, are considered as well as information support (surveillance and communication) which means by definition a part of the mass media (like books and films, unlike painting) with a social output in education and entertainment. Once accepted as art, by its own reproductive technology, especially when digital, the media are still encountering difficulties of recognition because the *channel of «fabrication»* is the same as the *channel of diffusion*, a bit as if the pencil of the painter was effectively part of his work. It has to be observed that the problem is (still) the same with photography, cinema and music, with all of them having maintained a quite unclear border for half a century between what is considered as art and what is not (such as entertainment).

It could be plausible also that the artist on stage is an entertainer and «himself» only back-stage, but who can trace the precise borderline between art and entertainment? Concerning photography, even the «original» (with the mark of the «unique» like a painting) is questioned today.<sup>13</sup> Might it be a good idea therefore to oppose also the concepts of culture and mass-culture in the quadrature?

The fact that the uniqueness of the artwork clearly decreases in importance with the

development of the mass-media is rather more a problem for the art market than for the artist's creation in itself —his work. It is nonsense to think that a first copy film (from the original negative) is more valuable than the second, etc... At the opposite, from an art-historical perspective, the more copies then exists, the better the artwork will be transferred to subsequent generations, something that is again a paradox but follows the law of *Message is Massage*. Digital technology does not even recognize originals from copies at all any more, as each is a perfect *replica* of the other. Thus, the exact problem is more contextual and does not definitely concern the nature of the work (or product). Anyway, this shows that mass-communication is also altering the relationship between art and technology. But from that aspect, René Coelho seems to be optimistic:

Like their great-grandfathers, a number of artists feel threatened by the development of technology, but instead of turning to the past Romantic forms, the artist of this century feels the need to prove that the efficient, dominating and massifying products of electronics can be turned to other, more beautiful and imaginative purposes.<sup>14</sup>

Could the two *fins de siècle* really stand a close comparison or even a comparable evolution throughout the first years of their respective «following centuries»? —after post-postmodernism we could say «new new century». Seen from far it seems difficult to compare the early role of impressionism with any art tendencies after 1950, and *art nouveau* with any actual leading design of our actual society. A total break with the predominant values of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century has strangely already occurred (in the mid sixties) and failed in almost all its social and political targets (1968). Paradoxically, it was remarkably recuperated<sup>15</sup> in fashion, design and marketing values in the seventies. Technologically, what underlines the period 1860–1910 is *transportation and memorisation*. Where the car freed the citizen, the camera recorded its movement. What underlines technology in our time is mostly *communication and reproduction* (words, images and sounds). The digital era we reached in the nineties was probably, technologically, the ultimate important step (after the step to analog technology) in the *communication and reproduction era* (until a new era starts in the 21<sup>th</sup> century?). The great popular success of the personal computer and its incredible fast technological and sociological development is comparable only to the automobile. Both came to stay.

Jonathan Crary has shown the importance of perception in relation to pure technology, how one induces the other and how finally this process transforms the vision of the artist himself. He writes:

The formalization and diffusion of computer-generated imagery heralds the ubiquitous implantation of fabricated visual «spaces» radically different from the mimetic capacities of film, photography, and television. These latter three, at least until the mid-1970s, were generally forms of analog media that still corresponded to the optical wavelengths of the spectrum and to a point of view, static or mobile, located in real space.<sup>16</sup>

For Crary the process of a new perception started with the change from analog media to digital form (began in the mid seventies) and realised by the turn of the century, almost ten years after he wrote this. He continues:

Computer-aided design, synthetic holography, flight simulators, computer animation, robotic image recognition, ray tracing, texture mapping, motion control, virtual environment helmets, magnetic resonance imaging, and multispectral sensors are only a few of the techniques that are relocating vision to a plane severed from human observer.<sup>17</sup>

Besides that Crary seems to easily mix the terms of vision and perception, which are closely linked to each other, and his analysis demonstrates well the change of perception which is currently still taking place and will be achieved within the next few years (launching new visions). Effectively the «new space», that virtual one, has been and still is first the domain of applied arts including, among others, entertainment, and secondly the domain of a very limited «recognized» artistic avant-garde.

It is not wrong to think that in my model 1 the new forms and techniques of step 2 are represented today essentially by the computer-design concept. Indeed to be updated, everything today has to be transformed into bits (word, music, image). So Art too can only follow that general process (and develop artistic creative connections).

It is a common opinion that nowadays technology develops (too) fast. However, it took more than twenty five years to complete the digital revolution, which corresponds in terms of time more or less to the whole of the postmodernist period. It must be observed that the spread of any technological innovation is often preceded by a long delay in incubation. Market forces are at work, together with a

jungle of standards and patents that constitute a major negative force in the dynamism of progress.

As far as existentialism has no connection to visual art<sup>18</sup> there is no visual art period corresponding specifically to the post-industrial era, except postmodernism, which corresponds in its soul to the crisis of the late sixties.

Renato Poggioli describes very clearly how existentialism is however linked to the avant-garde:

Existentialism shows itself to be avant-garde, even though it appeals to ancient and eternal cultural sources and demonstrates a relative indifference to revolutions in the field of form and technique. From the literary viewpoint its immediate precedent is naturalism; from the ideological viewpoint, expressionism. More mystical than the first, more philosophical than the second, existentialism reveals its avant-garde character precisely through its agonistic and nihilistic tendencies, and by its own awareness of how difficult it is for individualistic and anarchistic nostalgia to coexist or survive within the collectivism of modern life.<sup>19</sup>

Looking at the situation at the turn of this century, everything seems to be happening as if step 1 of my model 1 (a transformation in art-perception induced by the dynamics of industrial society) had remained completely non-existent in the post-industrial context, while step 2 (the acceptance of new forms and techniques still linked to the bourgeois values) and step 3 (a total break with bourgeois values and rejection of previous art forms) had changed places (model 2).

What we still consider as a break (1968) was perhaps only a «vision» of the future (a transformation of perspective). It still perhaps had to be transgressed by new forms and techniques (model 3, step 2) before the artist could react and we could see conventions exploding (or imploding again). As good and sincere as they may have been, the artists of the sixties were looking for new horizons with old (modern) techniques. The near future may possibly show the fusion of the visionary step 1 and the apogee of the digital era (model 3). That vision of a new and irrevocable revolution allows us to consider that the hot years of the sixties were in fact only historically merely a storm in a teacup and all the postmodern period simply a period of transition.

Matei Calinescu confirms the «negative consequences» of an «aborted liberation» on the destiny of postmodernism itself:

Such an optimistic-apocalyptic interpretation of the term post-modern made it fit to receive a prominent place in the revolutionary rhetoric of the 1960s. Evil modernity was dead and its funeral was a time for wild celebration. The modest prefix «post» became almost overnight a highly honorific modifier in the shibboleth of liberation. [...] In the 1960s the fate of postmodernism seemed to have been indissolubly linked to the fate of the counterculture, with its numerous, often contradictory, crosscurrents of anarchism [...] It was in fact during the calmer 1970s and 1980s that postmodernism became a more plausible term in literary and art criticism.<sup>20</sup>

The missing of a demarked avant-garde at the turn of this century shows some similarity with the situation in the 1900s.

Renato Poggioli notes that «avant-garde art can exist only in the type of society that is liberal-democratic from the political point of view, bourgeois-capitalistic from the socio-economic point of view.»<sup>21</sup> But this has also to be considered as a position of resistance against the *tyranny of opinion* which «easily dominates in moral as in cultural matters».<sup>22</sup>

Sartre remembers that *uniformisation*<sup>23</sup> and *standardisation* is a phenomenon meaning «the diffusion of mass culture from the lowest social strata to the highest». It is not less what *globalisation* means at an even bigger scale.

There are sufficient signs today that globalisation is not such a disinterested and democratic process, as it creates at least as many «problems» as it resolves. Just as there are «laws of exception», the avant-garde must be opposed to the official and normative art, that is to say the *art of surface*, as an «*art of exception*».<sup>24</sup> The avant-garde is playing that role of exception in a very political way —by opposition. And Poggioli concludes «that this is precisely the particular tensions of our bourgeois, capitalistic, and technological society which give the avant-garde a reason for existing».

Before the end of the modern century, in addition to an enormous quantity of kitsch, the role of *art of surface* seemed to be played by a type of art which ironically was considered before as avant-garde. That period of more than thirty years —called postmodernism— sees a correspondingly massive and eclectic representation of the *art of surface* in galleries and museums.

The problem is where to find that new avant-garde; is that *art of exception* somewhere in the ghettos of actual society? The problem with avant-garde is that it is often drowned in the masses —meaning that it is submerged by banality— or, simply intentionally underground, thus «invisible».

Possibly a new avant-garde will emerge soon out of the new virtual space of the network, that is already in fact replete with virtual «galleries».

Calinescu has noticed «the fact that a specific phenomenon is characterized in terms of its posteriority to another phenomenon is by no means suggestive of inferiority».<sup>25</sup> Postmodernism implies «an absence of positive periodizing criteria, an absence which in general is characteristic of transitional period». Calinescu also observes ironically that «magically, the prefix *post* seemed to do away with old restrictions and prejudices and free the imagination for new, undefined, but extremely exciting experiences».<sup>26</sup> This means that «post-modernism is merely a extension of the old avant-garde. Postmodernism is, on the contrary, a departure from it».<sup>27</sup> The idea of a transition period (obviously played by postmodernism) suggests that avant-garde exists only by «waves» and appears strongly a short time before the end of a transitional period and preceding a new era. The role of the transitional period —the *art of surface*— should be understood as a «consumer» of the precedent forms and techniques acquired by the avant-garde (here the modern avant-garde) while the avant-garde should be preparing the ground for new horizons. The momentum of the *new* avant-garde is therefore to be expected *in the aesthetic field of the current transitional period but the «targets» are set in new techniques and new ideals; the diffusion via non-classic channel(s) is to be expected.* The new actual techniques are digital, and the channel the Internet. Some visionary opinions speak also about direct connections —flesh connections— with the human brain. Only when the «transitional» begin to stagnate and the avant-garde emerges (this does not mean yet being «recognized») can a break occur.

Fredric Jameson writes:

The postindustrial (and culturally postmodern) society in which we live, has brought about new types of consumption, planned obsolescence; the penetration of advertizing, television, and the media to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society; ...the growth of the great net of superhighways and the arrival of automobile culture<sup>28</sup>

Within twenty something years since these words, the global network has appeared. In postmodernism I see all the characteristics of a very long transitional period (after 1970) which correspond to the establishing of modern art as a formal, eclectic and general spirit that succeeded in transgressing the old world of art and made art a *type of mass-consumption* (literature, music, visual arts).



Postmodernism is not a style or a movement but a period of globalizing and a kind of «decadence» in itself:

Postmodernism's refined eclecticism, its questioning of unity, and its valuation of the part against the whole in this fin de siècle may remind one of the «decadent euphoria» of the 1880s. But the popular code that it conspicuously uses can also make postmodernism look very much like kitsch or camp, with which its adversaries deliberately identify it.<sup>29</sup>

All modern art-movements with a debt to the modern avant-garde are by definition postmodern. No wonder that the artists of the seventies (and still today) are doing approximately the same things that Man Ray and Duchamp did. Except that they do it in an *easygoing* and probably «better» way. Their only problem is that they do it much later, in a context of consumption and entertainment. Their techniques have been recognised by the establishment and the bourgeois «middle-taste» which is also, ironically, its principal audience. The situation corresponds admirably to an acceptance of new forms and techniques still linked to the bourgeois values. The *art of surface* (development of the network) is indeed still linked to the (contemporary) bourgeois values, well represented by high-technology and mass-culture, the society of bits and the most important, the development of a global network.

This means that the techno-electronic revolution that started with television and went through the stages of video and computing, will probably complete itself in a symbiotic relationship with the network. This obviously also means that postmodernism, whose the death has been already many times proclaimed, is not yet completed, but will *consume itself* soon in the current form of the global network, the Internet.

In considering mass-production as the currently leading mark of the bourgeois and believing it to be also the current dynamic for *communication and reproduction*, we can now draw two possible models, of the present situation and a fictive extrapolation, and then compare them to the historic model 1 (1800 to 1900) at beginning of this subchapter:

**model 2**

1° a *missing* phase as visual art discipline (Existentialism)

2° a total break with bourgeois values (aborted)

3° the acceptance of new forms and techniques linked to the bourgeois values created by the computer (or network)

### model 3

1° a transformation in art-perception induced by the dynamics of mass-production

2° the acceptance of new forms and techniques still linked to bourgeois values  
(development of the network)

3° a total reject of mass-production; profits for personalisation / individualisation of the computer upon the uniformity created by the network

The difference between model 2 and 3 is that model 2 is the situation now, which believes that the marriage between digital computing and art-making is already achieved, and model 3 is a *fictive* view of a theoretically possible direct «flesh connection» of computer and human brain, which permits the belief that no state of creation can any longer stand the monopoly of engineering in computer programming and the uniformity involved in the network. To take an example, pre-programmed digital effects in video-imaging are still decisive in the final look of a work, and the artist has more and more programmed effects in use —as tools— but less freedom to create a true personal vision.<sup>30</sup> An engineer never thinks about *distortions* —or if he makes distortions possible they are pre-programmed in clean limits. The computer will free the artist only whenever it will be possible to make one's personal mark in the media, without any copyright control or involvement of mass-production. The «flesh connection» would be an ideal field.

As René Coelho well observes as early as in 1990 a few media artists had already personalized their vision, a «sort» of vision reminiscent of video-pioneers who had experimented in the seventies with analog equipment (chapter 5), providing perhaps a direction in which to look for the new (digital) avant-garde.

The digital instrumentarium is growing more and more interesting, and is providing the impulse to allow the borders between the old, «craft-separated» disciplines to become blurred and uncertain. Combinations of painting, sculpture, music, theater and literature are coming into being.<sup>31</sup>

The aims of Dadaists to blend «all the arts» could have find a way of continuing with the «digital instrumentarium», and it is the strongest vision still at the turn of the century. A question: has the blending, if not the fusion, happened now that we are fully in the «digital era»? The answer accords with Dalí's perspective —there is no solution because no problem— and is yes, and no, and it does'nt matter: what René Coelho meant was not that «craft-separated disciplines» will disappear. But

the avant-garde should be expected in this «blended domain». It is a particular reason for the two *fins de siècle* being so similar. The most interesting works are being produced by musicians working with video or visual artists who extend their main craft (painting to video) to the use of sound or other disciplines.

For instance, Pink Twins, a Finnish duo of musicians has well understood that perspective: «the whole video beating pulse envelops electronic image and sound all together»<sup>32</sup> or in the domain of synthetic images the pioneer William Latham and Yoichiro Kawaguchi whose target is a synergy between art, sciences and nature (plate 34). We are not even speaking here about the possibility of internet art. Another typical attitude, today, of the creative media-artist is to turn the media against itself, with its own weapons, allowing in that way critical (or nihilistic) behaviour.

In 1989, in a prophetic and fictional pamphlet called *Teheran 2050*, *Adilkno*<sup>33</sup> was wondering about what could be the new role of the media artist after the turn to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and following the «inevitable» philosophy of *Perpetual Return of the Same*.<sup>34</sup> Could it be to conciliate at last the dialectic of art and technology?

If art does not seek to represent its own era, it takes refuge in the classics. Eternal truths were said to be lying hidden in myth, truths to which access could be gained by using the most modern means. In our times, too, we see that this is an all but inexhaustible source of motifs and images.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed:

Through uninhibited use of mythology, the *artiste* (sic.) can give us memorable moments in which we pause and regard the present through new eyes. [...]

The media age was the time par excellence for shaking the dust out of the old myths and democratizing them.<sup>36</sup>

As a consequence of that, *Adilkno* believes that the uses of mythology will turn paradoxically more and more into entertainment. Actually, since the nineties until today, this can be clearly observed by the link offered between computer animation or virtual games and whole a historical mythology field (announced in fact already in the eighties by a special genre of *bande dessinée*). *Adilkno* offers however a new immaterialist, deeper (and ironic) real possibility through brain cognition:

The explorer (sic.) who had gone reconnoitring in the brains of human beings and computers were not in the least interested in this form of mythical entertainment. When they entered the timeless media-matrix of the mind, they gained direct access to the complex works produced by the imagination.<sup>37</sup>

The need for an appropriate network of some kind is nonetheless the unavoidable condition for such an artistic evolution. Technological progress and appropriate scientific knowledge in the stratum of the human brain is required.

They had the right equipment, that was all. But that was shocking enough. After observing the cognitive functions of the brain, they penetrated deeper, into the geological strata underlying the sensorium. In this older ground they encountered the screens through which priests, mystics, poets and the founders of religions receive their revelations [...] They were the creators of our present. But that also meant the end of the myth as eternal truth and the dialectics of art in opposition to the exact sciences.<sup>38</sup>

This utopian vision — this is a visionary view, among others, not an observation— will be one of my topics for discussion in the conclusion. When Robert de Haas, opposing arts and sciences, formulated his question «How powerful is emotion's resistance to reason?» he suggested precisely the *process* and the *moment of creativity* as the essence of the work of art —as the creator of our present too. To come back to one of the *Pensées* of Pascal (which does not necessarily concentrates on the specific role of the artist):

La raison agit avec lenteur, et avec tant de vues, sur tant de principes [...] Le sentiment n'agit pas ainsi: il agit en un instant, et toujours est prêt à agir. Il faut donc mettre notre foi dans le sentiment; autrement elle sera toujours vacillante.<sup>39</sup>

We know how mystic the role of the artist can appear if we are considering only the moment of creativity, and if he is more inclined to put his faith in emotion, as Pascal proposes; his role is the role which has been attributed to him for years, providing a kind of counterbalance to science (which is reproached for a lack of spontaneity). But the process? It sounds very scientific, and «slow». In the light of *Adilkno's* utopia the answer to de Haas' question is of course: *the resistance is not against reason, the resistance is against darkness and stagnation, represented by the bourgeois spirit, and the slowness of its reason that is incompatible with spontaneity.*

What the artist needs is a process compatible with spontaneity; art needs emotion to be *balanced* with science and technique as well. As we have seen in the subchapter on Dada, Hans Richter was strict about that point: he called it *the balance between heaven and hell*.<sup>41</sup> He showed that even starting with a categorical «no», and the exclusion of reason, the movement did not carry out a durable refutation of volition, but it naturally developed a kind of concession, *le droit de se contredire*, to *affirm* its absurd and nihilist nature. Equally absurd was the cohabitation of both the «yes» and the «no», but isn't it contradiction that makes art possible: the sky to become «green», a task that was actually completed by the Surrealists? Richter seeks assistance in Descartes' *meditations*, how the latter «attempts to demonstrate the presence of God in human experience in order to give this experience *value*»<sup>42</sup> and to observe how modern science has destroyed such demonstration. A little further he takes the example of Existentialism which «has made a clean break with all emotionally-charged attitudes to the self and to the world» and to observe that «what remains is a mirror in which nothing is reflected but the individual self», and to conclude that «this work of clearance has been undertaken with the conceptual and exploratory tools of a scientific age which regards scientific method as the only secure anchor in a sea of nothingness».<sup>43</sup>

Deux excès: exclure la raison, n'admettre que la raison.<sup>44</sup>

Jonathan Crary confirms also that viewpoint, from a totally new aspect, the aspect of the *techniques of the observer*:

Any effective account of modern culture must confront the ways in which modernism, rather than being a reaction against or transcendence of processes of scientific and economic rationalization, is inseparable from them.<sup>45</sup>

The airbrush works of Man Ray are a good example of how technology and visual arts are linked through the applied arts. *Admiration of the Orchestrelle for the Cinematograph* (plate 25) was made in New York, in 1919<sup>48</sup>, when Man Ray was still working as a draftsman in a company. Here Man Ray adapts a then recent and original advertising technique to produce a pure artistic vision. A catalogue<sup>49</sup> text from 1983 describes it:

Man Ray used techniques developed for advertising technological products to give to the invented machine the glamour that attached to machines themselves. This drawing was prepared by stencils and templates, over which an airbrush was used. Then carefully ruled lines, meticulous lettering, and areas of painstakingly filled-in gouache complemented what, in effect, is a presentation drawing for a manufactured object—but one whose function is irrational and obscure. [...] Man Ray's drawing looks more closely at the workings of machinery than that does; and it does so ironically. It also, however, makes the structure of the machine its own structure. Before this could happen there was required not merely a new attitude and knowledge of technology; also, a new perception of the function of subject matter in modern works of art.

### In Man Ray's own words:

I was planning something entirely new, had no need of an easel, brushes and the other paraphernalia of the traditional painter. The inspiration came from my office, where I had installed an airbrush outfit with air-pump and instruments to speed up some of the work which involved the laying down of large area of color. This could be done much more quickly and smoothly than by hand. Where precise forms had to be contoured, stencils were cut out which protected the areas not to sprayed. It was a process commonly used in commercial work. I became quite adept in the use of the airbrush and wondered if I could use it for my personal painting.<sup>50</sup>

I have shown in this subchapter that the notion of *fin de siècle* is not only a vague period ending the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is also a new spirit that deeply affected human perception through society, technology and art. It can be a suitable way of describing the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also. It seems indeed that this *fin de siècle*, which also ends a millenium as well as the *modern century* is in quite a similar situation in regard to art and the dynamics of society. From 1900 to 2000, the role of the automobile came to be assumed in another way by the computer, for both are the principal extensions of human mobility, the former in real space, the latter in the virtual environment. In both *fin de siècle* the close attachment of art to technology was seen and also the need for any artistic innovation to keep reason and emotion in balance.

The camera came with the modern century, memorizing human mobility, first as movement–image, lately as time–image.<sup>51</sup> In the 21<sup>th</sup> century the computer will possibly extend the eye of the Cyclops to new concrete visions.

In the next part of this chapter I will attempt to summarise the principal artistic visions that the modern century has brought to the observer through cinematic image —and of course Emak Bakia.

## 9.2. Points of View

Je crois que dans l'avenir, l'écran sera un cadre incorporé au mur, une combinaison de cinéma et de télévision. Un véritable tableau mouvant en relief. J'aimerais voir dans un film quelque chose que je n'ai jamais vu, que je ne comprends pas. —Man Ray<sup>62</sup>

### [kino-eye]

Tout ce monde visible n'est qu'un trait imperceptible dans l'ample sein de la nature.  
—Blaise Pascal<sup>63</sup>

The coming of television in the fifties, and the later advent of magnetic videotape meant new departures for diverse categories of non-narrative cinema. Weekly newsreels showed in cinema theatres were however the principal target for edited «news» and short documentaries until the beginning of the seventies. The famous Movietone-news, founded in 1929, did not withstand the hard competition from TV-news so forced Fox-movietone to end its week-news in 1979. The documentary significance of the film-news cannot be ignored: the current newsreel archives contain historical film footage covering most of the world's major events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in an unbroken period of fifty years. This concerns our study as far as modern television daily news conventions, the «immediate» image conventions form a part of the aesthetic heritage of *direct cinema*. The editing of reportages is an intricate mixture of conventions which has been developed during an entire century from the early exotic reportages of the society of the brothers Lumière to the cyclonic flow of informations sent by the satellites today, going through the heritage of the *kino-eye* of Dziga Vertov and his later *kino-pravda*. Also the *cinéma-vérité* of Jean Rouch has brought its «eye» to an aesthetic and a certain ethic of filming the real world. With the explosive spread of television, it is interesting to question if the current position of non-fictional cinema is still a minor genre (the major genre being fictional). It is not unusual to oppose documentary and fiction in a dialectical way, as a dilemma between reality and fantasy, fact and fiction. They have their origin in two

conceptions of the cinema: the first, of Lumière which wanted to record «life», as if the movie camera was an extension of the recording capacity of the *camera obscura* on which had been added the capacity to record the movement; the second, of Georges Méliès, who had seen the cinema as a natural extension of the *laterna magica*. Whereas fiction cinema had established itself early as an unequivocally autonomous narrative media, the frontier between documentary and experimental cinema has been questioned many times. The uncertainty resides in the philosophical and ethical problem of reproducing reality, whether objectively or subjectively. Classic examples are found, after Vertov, with city-symphonies, the films of Jean Painlevé, Grierson, Ivens, Storck, Flaherty, the cinema of Jean Rouch, documentaries like *Nuit et brouillard* and *le Monde du silence* or even some films of Jean-Luc Godard which succeeded to explore that mixed ground of fiction and militant film. More recently some experimental documentaries and experimental films have paradoxically encountered an appreciable commercial success. *Koyanishqatsi* (1983) and *Powaqatsi* (1988) of Sergio Reggio were remarkable in succeeding to bring an experiment to the conventional distribution circuits of the feature film. His more recent film *Naqoyqatsi* (2003) is, said a journal critic, «to be blunt, hard to watch. Meaning is revealed on second viewing, assisted by extra materials on the DVD; deconstructive viewing with DVD controls is also useful. A risky film on the surface, but one that survives dismissal.»<sup>54</sup> The awards given to the film by Michael Moore *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004) which can be considered as political and also as anti-propaganda is still a sign that the mainstream fiction needs subjective connections to reality and experience. These are a few examples to show how the non-fictional cinema is much varied in genres and possibilities (as varied as the fictional). The situation could also be compared with the relation of mainstream literature (the novel) and the *nouvelle* (short experimental), the essay, and the *nouveau roman*. It highlights once again the importance of the visionary role of the avant-garde but at the same time the difficulty to define «avant-garde». Is avant-garde cinema a minor genre belonging to the non-fictional cinema? Or is avant-garde cinema on the margin of both the fictional and the non-fictional? Superimposed on to that basic division —fact and fiction— another viewpoint has to be considered, more theoretical and more philosophical: the formative and realist-lyrical traditions as total opposite ways of thinking. Actually these traditions are to be regarded as active tendencies in *both* fiction and non-fiction films.



«Dziga Vertov was one of the most unorthodox artists in the Soviet avant-garde movement, in both his style, exhibited by his documentary films, and his concept of cinema as a social force and as a medium for artistic expression» writes Vlada Petric.<sup>55</sup> That definition also admirably suits the films of Reggio and Moore (still in different registers). These films are formatively coherent and have a social determination.

Vertov saw cinema as an autonomous art and conceived of a film as a «building» made of numerous units (shots) and appropriate «architectural» procedures (shooting techniques), the meaning and impact of which were to be determined by the image composition, juxtaposition of shots, and cinematic integration of all components, including the narrative.<sup>56</sup>

I see connections in that statement to a totally different kind of cinema, not apparently linked with social targets, or even to documentary —represented for instance, by Man Ray's *Emak Bakia* or Fernand Léger's *Ballet mécanique*. Man Ray wanted to «mount the sequences in some sort of progression» and had «a hodge-podge of realistic shots and of sparkling crystals and abstract forms». Also he needed «some sort of climax» (obtained in the film by the pseudo-narrative sequence with Jacques Rigaut). The connection could be restricted of course to the formal aspect, not the human which seems absent in *Emak Bakia*. Yet, the text «la raison de cette extravagance» and what follows it has a connotation of anarchism. Man Ray's film was to be «a satire on the movies» and a «complete disregard of conventional storytelling».<sup>57</sup> Vertov's too wanted to «reject bourgeois melodramas» (photoplays) which he labelled «an opiate for the people».<sup>58</sup>

Vlada Petric comments on Vertov's masterpiece:

The Man with the Movie Camera is based on the constructivist concept known as «art of fact». This nonfiction film, as its credits specify is «an experiment in the cinematic communication of visible events, executed without the aid of intertitles, without a script, without theater, without sets and actors. It introduces numerous innovative stylistic features through its genuine montage structure, which challenges conventional narrative movies as well as traditional documentary film-making».<sup>59</sup>

It is perhaps useful to remember that the unique caption and actor that Man Ray used in his film were obviously used as an «anti-fact» spirit. The editing conceived as a constructivist montage of «units» is strongly present in both films.

Where Dziga Vertov wanted the newsreels to reflect the everyday life of the people of the Soviet, to be the «art of fact», Man Ray perhaps wanted instead more of an essay on visuality and an «art of anti-fact». Because Vertov wanted to record «life-facts as they are», the montage was also supposed to participate in what he called the *kinofakty*. «This does not mean that the *film-fact* should remain structurally unchanged through the editing process», notes Petric. Man Ray for his part trusted the inexhaustible source of external chance. If the «fact» was missing, Man Ray could provoke it or let the camera «invent», like when he threw once his camera «thirty feet up into the air» (the provoked collision). No one can film an «anti-fact» or a dream. To be filmed, the dream has paradoxically also to become a *kinofakty* (to the extent that any set is real and true as consciousness). Vertov describes the «Film-eye» methods as «pushing art to the periphery of our consciousness». <sup>60</sup> *Emak Bakia* and all the films of Man Ray are at the contrary pushing art to the periphery of the unconscious. The «double awakening» scene in *Emak Bakia* with Kiki's painted eyelids is the clearest symbolic invitation to mix conscious and unconscious states. The *kinofakty* is not necessarily visible (the truth can be hidden from the «eye» of the camera), and only through the montage can the experience of the real be reconstituted. Vertov «demanded his *kinok-engineers* to use his or her camera as an omnipotent eye to reorganize the visible world, by revealing many processes inaccessible to the naked eye, processes made visible only through the *montage way of seeing*, through the *recording of movements composed of the most complex combinations*.» <sup>61</sup>

Here is our primitive *cyclops*: the omnipotent, neutral and recording eye of the camera, at least as far Vertov believed.

Deleuze showed <sup>62</sup> how the shot is a movement-image (*image-mouvement*), that is to say, a mobile cut in time, a modulation in time. By comparison a photograph is an immobile cut, a *moulage*. Deleuze does not make any distinction between the take and the shot, probably because he analyses the final result and could not know what has been cut down from the take. On the other hand he pertinently remarks that through the editing the cinema-image becomes a time-image (*image-temps*). I should remark, agreeing with Vertov and Deleuze, that *some part of the total movement* has vanished when the take has been reduced to a shot.

The movement-image appears to me to be partly also a time-image, meaning that the reduction of the take to the state of a shot is a natural part of the overall process of editing, not an independent or «bonus» operation. <sup>63</sup> Comparing Vertov's editing

to the «Kuleshov» editing of Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko, Deleuze remarks<sup>64</sup> that in the Russian cinema there were «three ways to conceive dialectical editing». Pudovkin is interested in the progression of consciousness (qualitative changes in state of mind); Dovzhenko is «obsessed» by the relation of the parts to the entire work, working by «revelations»; and Eisenstein, who understood that the «units» in opposition are reacting together, works on the progression and the organic unity of the film.<sup>65</sup>

Deleuze sees Vertov as an outsider, more attached to the *matière* than to the *totalité humaine* and concludes that Vertov's method is radically in opposition to the others and that Vertov is more attached to the «heart» of the machine than to human beings. He speaks indeed about a «superhuman» eye:

Chez Vertov, l'intervalle de mouvement, c'est la perception, le coup d'oeil, l'oeil. Seulement, l'oeil n'est pas celui trop immobile de l'homme, c'est l'oeil de la caméra, c'est-à-dire un oeil dans la matière, une perception telle qu'elle est dans la matière, telle qu'elle s'étend d'un point où commence une action jusqu'au point où va réaction, telle qu'elle remplit l'intervalle entre les deux, parcourant l'univers et battant à la mesure de ses intervalles. La corrélation d'une matière non-humaine et d'un oeil surhumain, c'est la dialectique elle-même, parce qu'elle est aussi bien l'identité d'une communauté de la matière et d'un communisme de l'homme.<sup>66</sup>

Vertov has been compared to the French School and its leader Abel Gance; where Vertov uses superimpositions to juxtapose «units», Abel Gance does makes use of a polyscreen. After Deleuze, even if both sometimes use the same tricks like quantitative editing, fast or slow motion, freeze frame, etc. it appears that the French do it always in a spiritual way.<sup>67</sup>

C'est par l'esprit que l'homme dépasse les limites de la perception, et, comme dit Gance, les surimpressions sont des images de sentiments et de pensées par lesquelles l'âme enveloppe le corps, et le précède. Tout autre est l'usage de Vertov pour qui la surimpression exprimera l'interaction de points matériels distants, et l'accélééré ou le ralenti, la différentielle du mouvement physique.<sup>68</sup>

This aspect of the French avant-garde by comparison with Vertov is interesting in relation to Man Ray, but also with the American second avant-garde, the underground, the structural, material and new formal film and the French experimental film (the «third» avant-garde).

Although Deleuze focused his attention relatively little on experimental cinema, his observations are nonetheless exact: the American experimental cinema, with the exception of Deren and Anger, is concentrating its perception on the molecular interactions of the matter, on the physical stuff.

Le cinéma expérimental américain rompant avec le lyrisme aquatique de l'école française, reconnaîtra l'influence de Vertov. Pour tout un aspect de ce cinéma, il s'agit bien d'atteindre à une perception pure, telle qu'elle est dans les choses ou dans la matière, aussi loin que s'étendent les interactions moléculaires. Brakhage explore un monde Cézannien d'avant les hommes, une aube de nous-mêmes [...]. Michael Snow fait perdre tout centre à la caméra [...]. Belson et Jacobs remontent des formes et mouvements colorés aux forces moléculaires ou atomiques.<sup>69</sup>

The material aspect of perception (what Deleuze called *grain de la matière* or *perception gazeuse*, in opposition to *perception liquide* or *aquatique*, that is to say lyric) in the structural film is even more strongly present than it was forty years earlier in Vertov's experimentations. The use of flickering image, loop, negative or toning variations, 360° panoramic or long zoom sequences, scratching and inversions of the film material, anamorphic lenses and obsessive repetition of the same sequence are a few of the tricks that are used in this cinema.

In comparison now with *Emak Bakia*, it is clear that Man Ray had in his film the same «grain» vision. The flickering aspect of the pictures obtained by the traces left by the salt on the developed film, the «epileptic» dance of pins and thumbtacks, in version negative, positive and inversed, the superimposition of women's legs etc., have many similarities with Vertov's «early» experimentations and the American second avant-garde «new» experimentations with film and video.

This comparison of three cuts made in totally different horizons of the experimental film will be complete if we question Man Ray's own comments on his «experience» with cinerayographs —the experiment he made with the salt:

It looked like a snowstorm, with the flakes flying in all directions instead of falling, then suddenly becoming a field of daisies as if the snow had crystallized into flowers.<sup>70</sup>

Isn't that a metaphorical description<sup>71</sup> relating to poetry, expressing an emotion that is in one word *lyrical*? Man Ray was giving a clear indication to the spectator too: *Emak Bakia* is a *cinépoème*. When I first saw the film, the impression *was* that it is

abstract and pure cinema. I never connected the shot of a «snowstorm» with the shot of the «daisies» as if the latter was a metamorphosis of the snow. The famous cinerayograph-sequence was therefore not so «absolute» (as it seems to be for most of the public) and perhaps descends (as it were) to the metaphorical level of Chaplin. The public too is homogenous and both interpretations are definitively relevant. Instead, other scenes are purely oneiric, providing evidence that Man Ray once again succeeds in falling between categories and made in *Emak Bakia* a polyvalent and paradoxical work. Could it be that Man Ray's position was somewhat between the Russian dialectical and constructivist cinema and the French «aquatique» avant-garde represented by directors like Gance, Delluc, L'herbier, Dulac and Epstein? Was the cinema of Man Ray made of «gas and water»?<sup>72</sup>

Même quand le cinéma européen se contente du rêve, du fantasme ou de la rêverie, il a pour ambition de porter à la conscience les mécanismes inconscients de la pensée.<sup>73</sup>

We are back at the point from where we started with Vertov («pushing art to the periphery of our consciousness»). Isn't the periphery of consciousness made of unconsciousness? Isn't an eidetic and entoptic zone?

The French avant-garde, sometimes called «impressionist» or «photogenic», is «mostly interested in the quantity of movement», wrote Deleuze, and «they still are even with a moderate Vertovism»<sup>74</sup> and he gave examples of films by Epstein, L'Herbier and Grémillon in which there are remarkable *fêtes foraines, bals, and farandolles*.<sup>75</sup> Turntable, dancing legs, a car journey and a dance of collars are the «impressionistic farandols» of *Emak Bakia*, all movement-images at the purest level. The movement-image becomes, like Monet's *Nymphaea*<sup>76</sup>, an obsession. «Abstract art had to come out of it» wrote Deleuze and he enumerates after the «rhythmic» *La Roue* (1922) by Gance all the films inspired by the machine: *Ballet mécanique* (1925) by Léger, Epstein's *Photogénie* (1925) and Grémillon's *La photogénie mécanique* (1924). Man Ray was forgotten, probably because he was perceived as ambiguous and dada.

Quand Delluc, Germaine Dulac, Epstein parlent de «photogénie», il ne s'agit évidemment pas de la qualité de la photo, mais de définir au contraire l'image cinématographique dans sa différence avec la photo. La photogénie, c'est l'image en tant que «majorée» par le mouvement.<sup>77</sup>

This statement by Deleuze does not at all accord with William C. Wees, who has precisely studied the case of light and movement in time in the avant-garde cinema. Wees writes:

The concept of *photogénie* simply did not get to the heart of the matter. It directed attention to the image - «the equilibrium of photographic elements» - but not to the properties or «elements» of the image itself. Not, in other words, to the «true essence» of cinema. Other avant-garde filmmakers and critics looked deeper and found cinema's basic principles in three interrelated elements: light, movement, and time.<sup>78</sup>

The case of *Emak Bakia* seemed to have brought the same problem to Man Ray, who was above all a photographer. As Neil Baldwin observes, «the ultimate technological Futurist art at this crest of the machine age, film was the serial extension of photography, the mode of expression Man Ray knew so well. In film, he set up a rhythm of fragments, of randomness coexisting with «beats» of parallel imagery.»<sup>79</sup> The question of the «true essence» of the cinema varies with the point of view, but, as Wees has underlined, the whole avant-garde, from Vertov's definition «film work is the art of organizing the necessary movements of objects in space» to the later definitions by Dulac, Moholy-Nagy, Brakhage, Deren, Gehr, Mekas, Snow, Kubelka or Vorkapich, always particularly takes the following elements (in order of frequency)<sup>80</sup> into account:

- 1° light
- 2° movement (motion)
- 3° time
- 4° space
- 5° rhythm

It has to be remarked that none of these «definitions» consider the narrative and imitative-reproductive aspect of the medium, but concentrate on the question of (physical-material) perception. Could other more psychological elements like the way of seeing, signification, effects of «fluxes» and «impulses» on the human cognition be taken in consideration also, because after all art is not «matter», art is *doing something with matter* — *art is not only perception but vision?*

Wees writes:

Since light moving in time is the common ground of vision and film, perhaps it was inevitable that avant-garde filmmakers seeking the «true essence» of their medium would hit upon the «essence» of vision as well. Avant-garde filmmakers, especially the filmmakers of the 1920s, did not necessarily make a conscious effort to equate the basic elements of cinema with the basic processes of visual perception. Whether they did so or not, their work has been influenced by an implicit equation between cinema and seeing.<sup>81</sup>

Like Cray, Wees uses the terms of perception and vision for a variety of purposes, and the problem is that perception and vision are synonyms to a certain extent<sup>82</sup>, and it is true that vision passes through perception: the omnipresence of the leitmotif of the eye in all the avant-garde cinema and video, like the superimposed eye in the camera lens in Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera* and Man Ray's *Emak Bakia*, are unequivocal.

A very pertinent remark of Wees is the nature of the «eye» represented in these photograms: «Brakhage's emphasis is on «the flesh window» of the human eye, and Vertov's and Man Ray's emphasis is on the «mechanical eye» of the camera. Both make direct reference to the metaphor of the camera-eye and more indirectly to film as (in James Broughton's phrase) «a way of seeing what can be looked at»...».<sup>83</sup>

All this is suggesting that Man Ray's *vision* is adept also (beside being «photogenic» and «poetic») at «mechanical vision» or the *kino-eye*, mostly with some of his themes and only secondarily in terms of technique. We remember here only the uncertainty about the real paternity of the *Ballet mécanique*,<sup>84</sup> and the existing theory which attributes to *Emak Bakia* a siamese significance with the film by Léger. Both of these films are therefore exceptions in the French repertoire of the 20s avant-garde. It must be observed too that *Ballet mécanique* and *Anémic cinéma* are completely rejecting oneiric vision. Once again *Emak Bakia* falls «between».

Pasolini does not oppose fiction to reality but he opposes «poetic cinema» to «cinema of prose».<sup>85</sup> In the case of a normal fiction (*récit*), Pasolini makes a difference between direct and indirect narration, objective and subjective point of view, but for him narration always provides «une puissance du faux», the seductive power of artifice. Fiction is always a «play» in which the objective point of view that pretends to give an impression of «truth» cannot in fact achieve it. For him in poetic cinema the subjective vision of the artist and the «objective vision of the camera» are working in synergy, with the camera operating a «mimesis», acquiring an inner vision proper to the vision of the artist. Pasolini calls it «simulation», a *pseudo-récit*. The poetic cinema

does not pretend to identify itself with the ideal of the real. In poetic cinema, objective images and subjective images lose all distinction, identification and significance in respect of vision. Deleuze sets the poetic vision as a new «*circuit*» (itinerary) or «*bloc*» (system).

Deleuze (like Vertov) distinguishes clearly the ideal of the real from the ideal of the truth or the ideal of the true. The ethnographic documentary is probably the first genre to come after Vertov to operate a system of vision detached from fiction (and conventional reportage) and to try to reach the «ideal of truth». Deleuze observes:

En r cusant la fiction, si ce cin ma [the ethnographic documentary of Flaherty, Grierson and Leacock] d couvrait de nouveaux chemins, il conservait et sublimait pourtant un id al de v rit  qui d pendait de la fiction cin matographique elle-m me: il y avait ce que voit la cam ra, ce que voit le personnage, l'antagonisme possible et la r solution n cessaire des deux.<sup>86</sup>

For Deleuze the problem (of truth) was only displaced from the «true story» to the «real context», but basically was not solved:

Le r cit restait v race, r ellement-v race au lieu de fictivement-v race. Seulement la v racit  du r cit n'avait pas cess  d' tre une fiction.<sup>87</sup>

Petric remembers that Vertov believed that the staged film (fiction) was antithetical to the spirit of revolution. The cinema ought to be the direct reflection of the political goals achieved by the socialist ideal. The principle of *kino-pravda* was established as strategy for accomplishing that alignment with the Bolshevik newspaper of the same name. The Kinoks<sup>88</sup> were forced by this strategy to film the scenes with as neutral an approach as possible, giving the montage the opportunity of «penetrating beneath the surface of the external reality».

Forty years later, the cin ma-v rit  of Jean Rouch is a new approach to the «truth-viewpoint». Deleuze explains that new search:

Ce que le cin ma doit saisir, ce n'est pas l'identit  d'un personnage, r el ou fictif,   travers ses aspects objectifs et subjectifs. C'est le devenir du personnage r el quand il se met lui-m me   «fictionner».<sup>89</sup>



It means in brief that the situation has to be seen *from inside* the topic. The outer eye of the camera, objective or subjective, filming as «we know who we are and we know what (or who) we are filming» ceases to be worth trusting and is replaced by the formula «*je est un autre*»<sup>90</sup> or, probably the ethnologic equation where the camera is in the hands of the protagonists (the Blacks), and the filmmaker (the White) can only state «I don't know who I am—a basic question in anthropology—and *you* (the Black) know *who* (the White) you are filming».<sup>91</sup>

Cinéma-vérité, direct cinema, and candid-eye are concepts of shooting issuing from the kino-eye and kino-truth, with a variable impact on the function of editing.

Petric underlines Jean Rouch's, introduction to Georges Sadoul's 1971 monograph on Vertov, in which he fully acknowledges Vertov's influence on the contemporary non-fictional cinema, comparing Vertov with such great innovators in art as Marinetti and Apollinaire.<sup>92</sup>

The Man with the Movie Camera is an anxious provocation of the man who decided to make a film which we have not yet been able to understand completely and, for this very reason, which has continued to surprise the spectators over the past forty-two years.<sup>93</sup>

Like all the avant-garde which helped the revolution, Dziga Vertov's «formalistic» experimentations were proclaimed unsuitable and inaccessible to the masses.

Vertov could not compromise with his personal vision of the cinema and censorship. «The party's stringent policy «to reduce all tendencies in art to a single one» engaged the entire bureaucratic apparatus «to institutionalize *its own* truth». Such a dogmatic attitude was at odds with Vertov's life-long quest for truth, not only in art but in life as well.»<sup>94</sup>

The belief that montage-editing could bring cinema closer to truth—but what truth, because it remained undefined—and closer anyway than the camera could alone get, still has its adepts today both in fiction and in the documentary. It is in fact one of the dividing lines in the contemporary cinema, especially between American and European cinema, and the result of almost one century of theories and polemics. The coming of television and video and now of digital techniques has brought about a re-evaluation of the importance of the *kino-eye* concept. That re-evaluation is not without political significance; the presence of television in each home and soon its fusion with the network, its eye, that «in the chaos of passing, escaping, converging,

colliding movements,... simply enters into life»<sup>95</sup> is making Vertov a visionary and, in the literal sense, a futurist.

After 1968, Jean-Luc Godard, wanted to break the norms of narrative and commercial cinema. Together with Jean-Pierre Gorin, they founded the *Groupe Dziga Vertov*. The group<sup>96</sup> had Maoist and Marxist approaches. Their method was situated at the crossroad of documentary and propaganda. For instance *British Sounds* (1968) traces English society in 1968. The film opens in a car factory and presents discussions on various topics like sexuality, repression and so on.

Siegfried Zielinski writes about direct television and the vision of Godard in 1968:

Although it only existed in rough beginnings technically and only as utopia aesthetically, what he described, what he practised (sic.) from the principle of production and with regard to the perception of an audience, was essentially television: of course, in a form that this electronic medium has only yet achieved in exceptional cases (sic.) [...] the idea of radically operative film that only became realizable with the advent of the electronic automatic camera together with the continuous recording of a videorecorder. [...] In direct television, representations and representers (sic.) coincide for the first time in time. To drive both levels of reality to a maximum of correspondence.<sup>97</sup>

The instant image also has its own problems linked to censorship and the adepts of kino-eye especially are under constant pressure from it. Modern communication takes place simultaneously like a continuous stream; the social and political «eye» has fast learned to interfere preventively or retroactively and more accurately with artistic or journalistic productions. We have arrived at the point that in theory, or virtually, anyone can film anything, directly and freely (and eventually break the law). Then put it straight on to the Google-video channel without any censorship control. Recently the law has acted in some case retroactively, suspecting that regulations had been transgressed. The paradox is double: first, *the image is kept as a proof*, second, compared to the violence and variety of criminal acts continually and inconsiderately shown in normal narrative cinema of fiction and television, it engages its author fully now. So is the author an actor or an occasional eyewitness? The relatively recent *standardization* and its diverse regulations (called hypocritically globalization) and the general auto-regulations (auto-censorship) inevitably accompanying the digital media is one of the biggest paradoxes of progress: at the same time as it became possible to record *life online* almost automatically, social and ethical obstacles have intervened. The *tyranny of opinion* has never been so strong.

## [kino-raw]

Si le cinéma ne nous donne pas la présence du corps et ne peut pas nous la donner, c'est peut-être aussi parce qu'il se propose un autre objectif: il étend sur nous une nuit expérimentale ou un espace blanc, il opère avec des grains dansants et une poussière lumineuse, il affecte le visible d'un trouble fondamental, et le monde d'un suspens, qui contredisent toute perception naturelle —Gilles Deleuze<sup>98</sup>

«Perspective was the original sin of Western painting»<sup>99</sup> said Bazin. With Brakhage, all the «Western compositional perspective»<sup>100</sup> and the pictorial conventions it supports become an ideological issue, a «cultural concept». As a «cultural concept» perspective implies for Brakhage the loss of individual perception.

In *Light moving in time* William Wees spends one whole chapter concentrating on Brakhage's well know *metaphors on vision: the untutored eye*.<sup>101</sup>

How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye?<sup>102</sup>

I have already alluded to that «innocent» stage of vision in chapter 5. Wees has the originality to compare the metaphor of Brakhage to some of the statements by Huxley, with Arnheim's «undiluted vision» and ...Impressionism. Huxley argues in *The Art of Seeing* that «it is possible by inhibiting the activity of the interpreting mind, to catch a hint of the raw *sensum*, as it presents itself to the eyes of the newborn child.»<sup>103</sup> In *The Doors of Perception* his conclusion on the effects of mescaline is that «visual impressions are greatly intensified and the eye recovers some of the perceptual innocence of childhood.»<sup>104</sup> Rudolf Arnheim in his introduction to *Art and Visual Perception* considers that

We have neglected the gift of comprehending things through our senses. Concept is divorced from percept, and thought moves among abstractions. Our eyes have been reduced to instruments with which to identify and to measure; hence we suffer a paucity of ideas that can be expressed in images and an incapacity to discover meaning in what we see. Naturally we feel lost in the presence of objects that make sense only to undiluted vision, and we seek refuge in the more familiar medium of words.<sup>105</sup>

Following Huxley, perception is only a process in which we have been «learning to see» (in a personal and cultural context):

Returning awareness began with pure visual sensations completely devoid of significance. These, as I can remember them, were not of objects existing «out there» in the familiar, three-

dimensional world of everyday experience. They were just colored patches, existing in and for themselves. [...] What had been at first raw *sensa* and had then become, by interpretation, the appearances of known varieties of objects, underwent a further transformation and became objects consciously related to a self, an organized pattern of memories, habits and desires.<sup>106</sup>

In his argument Wees also uses a suggestion by John Ruskin in 1856 that the artist should seek to recover the «*innocence of the eye*» which Ruskin defines as «a sort of childish perception of these flat stains of color, merely as such, without consciousness of what they signify».<sup>107</sup>

At that time the first steps of Impressionism were soon to be taken. Pierre Francastel has well demonstrated that Impressionism was not only a school with a definite and new technique, but above all a constellation of individuals who had «a new conception about the relation of pictorial representation to reality, [...] impressionist painting, far from being based on a rigorous technique is above all *un état d'âme*».<sup>108</sup> Wees writes that Monet was reported to have said that «he wished he had been born blind and then had suddenly gained his sight so that he could have begun to paint without knowing what the objects were that he saw before him».<sup>109</sup> However he emphasizes that for Cézanne the aesthetic imperative was passing already through an intellectual «model» of experience:

L'oeil ne suffit pas, il faut la réflexion.<sup>110</sup>

But is not a picture nothing but experience? In *Art and Illusion*, Gombrich criticizes Ruskin's arguments on behalf of the «innocent eye».

It is so hard for us to disentangle what we really see from what we merely know and thus to recover the innocent eye, a term to which Ruskin gave currency. [...] Ruskin thought, we do not even see the third dimension. What we really see is only a medley of colored patches such as Turner paints. Had the impressionists really the right to claim that they saw the world as they painted it, that they reproduced «the image on the retina»? [...] The world as we see it is a construct, slowly built up by every one of us in years of experimentation. Our eyes merely undergo stimulations on the retina which result in so-called «sensations of color». It is our mind that weaves these sensations into perceptions, the elements of our conscious picture of the world that is grounded on experience, on knowledge. [...] The innocent eye is a myth.<sup>111</sup>

As Man Ray sometimes innocently remarked the cinema he was doing was not experimental but experienced. It is clear that for Gombrich there is no difference between perception and vision, or at least they collapse in the analysis.

I believe Impressionists did not *see only patches*, they became *sensitive only to patches*. It must be said again that the argument considering *image understanding* or *image making* can be slightly different or even in direct contradiction. Wees and most of the actual writers do not make any difference between the two possible *directions in perception*, meaning that creation implies also perception. The chronic absence of writing about artistic perception specifically, which I supposed precedes «vision», is merely due to the difficulties of distinguishing «anticipation» from «revelation» and mainly because the observation usually bases its analysis on optical, physiological and psychological facts. For J. R. Beloff (quoted by Gombrich) «perception may be regarded as primarily the *modification of an anticipation*».<sup>112</sup> and for W. H. Ittelson and F. P. Kilpatrick (quoted by Wees) «perception is never a sure thing, never an absolute *revelation of what is*. Rather, what we see is a *prediction* - our own personal construction designed to give us the best possible bet for carrying out our purposes in action».<sup>113</sup>

Wees asks if we must conclude then «that the *untutored eye* is a relic of an outmoded theory of visual perception?» Answering carefully in the jungle of «overburdened» opinions and a history of «misunderstandings about the actual processes of perception» he says *yes* and *no*. Perhaps for us the most important is the *no* because it is «no, in the sense that the *untutored eye* is still valid as a metaphor for actual ways of seeing and, therefore, as a source for filmmaking».<sup>114</sup>

Implicitly, therefore, Wees «feels» that in the way of seeing there is perhaps also something else, deeper, personal and less cultural, something «from the soul», even though it is linked to «normal perception».

Jonathan Crary regards perception not so much from the biological, or physiological viewpoint but more in an historical perspective, as an evolution in time and conjecture:

Vision and its effects are always inseparable from the possibilities of an observing subject who is both the historical product and the site of certain practices, techniques, institutions, and procedures of subjectification.<sup>115</sup>

For Crary as has been mentioned in chapter one «the break with classical models of vision in the early nineteenth century was far more than simply a shift in the

appearance of images and art works, or in systems of representational conventions. Instead, it was inseparable from a massive reorganization of knowledge and social practices that modified in myriad ways the productive, cognitive, and desiring capacities of the human subject.»<sup>116</sup> By «classical models of vision» the *Western compositional perspective* (or linear perspective) discussed by Stan Brakhage is to be understood. Crary does not believe in the «rupture» theory, the abandonment of classical perspective and realist model relayed by photography. «We are often left with a confusing bifurcated model of vision in the nineteenth century: on one level there is a relatively small number of advanced artists who generated a radically new kind of seeing and signification, while on a more quotidian level vision remains embedded within the same general «realist» strictures that had organized it since the fifteenth century.»<sup>118</sup> For Crary, the «myth of modernist rupture depends fundamentally on the binary model of realism vs. experimentation»<sup>119</sup> which he sees as erroneous.

Crary suggests that the whole phenomenon of «rupture» (which he does not finally completely reject) begun earlier —insisting on the fact that the «rupture» is the apparent result (in art product) of a deeper crucial phenomenon within human perception. He locates it as early as the beginning of nineteenth century, around 1820, and bases his proposition on the supposition that then «a new kind of observer took shape in Europe radically different from the type of observer dominant in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries».<sup>120</sup> For Crary the revolution did not happen with Impressionism or photography (and cinema), nor through the way things were done (by the artists), but through the way things were seen (by the observer). Rudolf Arnheim wrote in 1933:

Almost every innovation goes through a preliminary phase in which the solution is obtained by the old method, modified and amplified by some new feature. Just as the first motorcars looked like horse-drawn carriages but had motors built in, so the first photographic recordings of motion were based on the traditional still camera, they were done either with one camera on one negative or by a combination of several cameras.<sup>121</sup>

I shall call this phenomenon *the anticipation of perception on vision* (at the individual as well as at the social level; indeed any society is basically evolutionary, not revolutionary —the latter being a special moment finally rounded off by the first. I have deliberately emphasised in the two first chapters of this work a quite large tableau of humanist, aesthetic, scientific and technological interactions with the

evolution in perception and the transformation of vision. Often the works on modernist perception and visions of the avant-garde involve the acceptance of the idea of rupture as an axiom of progress, without thinking that progress does happen continuously, that the «old» and the «new» are contemporary. A town is built of several juxtaposed architectural epochs; instead, architecture books show only successive waves. An invention is often the result of the evolution of a «need» and the combination of that need with other preexisting human «structures». When René Coelho used the locution «a sort of art» to picture the *art fin de siècle*, he did not mean an aesthetic, nor a technological point of view. The connotation was rather centered on philosophical and visionary ways of thinking.

Crary writes:

Rather than stressing the separation between art and sciences in the nineteenth century, it is important to see how they were both part of a single interlocking field of knowledge and practice. The same knowledge that allowed the increasing rationalization and control of the human subject in terms of new institutional and economic requirements was also a condition for new experiments in visual representation.<sup>122</sup>

Crary's argument in *Techniques of the observer* is to say that technology (camera obscura, stereoscopes, phenakistiscope, etc.) induces the manner in which the «observer»<sup>123</sup> perceives the world. This process is supposed to override physiological perception and «form» the eye of the artist (which also perceives all the time, as observer). My point is to state that while this is true, it is not sufficient, for the simple reason that it does not bring the «rupture» (still observed in art) into consideration. *The anticipation of perception on vision* phase brings only a more or less linear evolution and a progressive transformation, precisely comparable to what is happening for the moment with digital technology (which did not appeared in one day).

The separation of the concept of perception and the concept of vision, at least at the theoretical, rhetorical and heuristic levels is difficult but could help to situate divergent opinions. Since chapter two this work has been stressing the oppositions in the arts of reason and chance, and of rationalization and emotion, for other reasons. The rational viewpoint of Crary which emphasizes the technicist perspective is exact, but is, for me, as subjective as Brakhage's viewpoint can be. I do not deny here however that science and technology and the socio-political aspects together influence perception, including the perception of the artist (figure 28). In that way

perception, vision and artistic creation are seen as different aspects of the same process in which emotion is the motor and rational thinking is the fuel (figures 5 and 6 in chapter 1). On the one hand we have knowledge as fuel, and on the other, imagination, desire for innovation and passion, which are the principal dynamics in artistic creation. In this process one can observe that *only a divergent perception will bring a new vision*. I see the role of the avant-garde more in that function than in the role of crafts production. This perspective emphasises also the individual viewpoint which necessarily is inclined to contradict the «establishment» including the actual artistic one (current art and current art education).

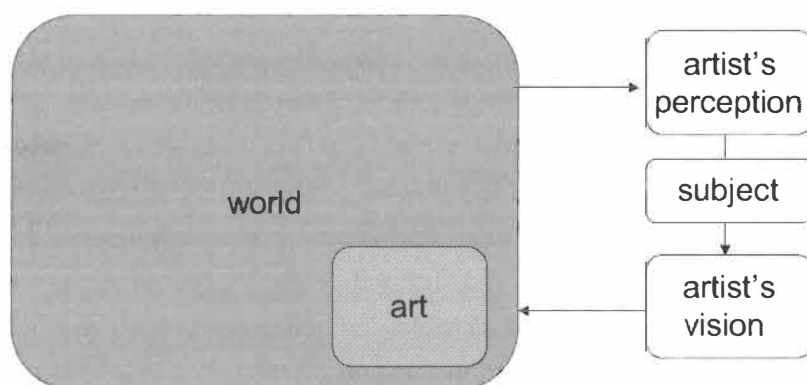


Fig. 28: Perception and Vision of the Artist

If «normal perception» is supposed to be in continual transformation and subjective (everyone lives in a slightly different socio-politico-technological environment), vision also appears to be equally as subjective. Artistic vision is inherently deeply connected to the personal mental faculties, personal experiences of the *subconscious*, the *moi*. The psychedelic experiences of the sixties and the techno-trance of the nineties are only extreme examples of visionary recalling. The use of drugs is considered as a way to «cleanse» the «doors of perception»,<sup>124</sup> to provide access to a primary state of perception (or to the «untutored eye») which could be called perhaps also an *emotional state of perception*. What I propose here to call vision or *total vision* should be both the mechanism, also called *artistic creativity*, and the *artistic aim* (it can be a work or only an ideal). The resulting vision is a *total perception of the self involved in the process of artistic creativity*—and not only the «trance» state, which cannot in any case be sufficient.



Wees writes that «each eye has its own window, framed by eyebrows, cheekbones, temples, and bridge of nose. When both eyes are open these windows overlap, producing an oval «picture window» about twice as wide as it is high. This is what the artist Jim Jackson calls the «framework of seeing», and he shows how it can be used to «frame» flat patches of color derived from the world in front of the eyes.»<sup>125</sup> And meeting my idea of a *total perception of the self involved in the process of artistic creativity* Wees, in the same text, continues: «It is possible to achieve that «primal state of simple perception», which is Jackson's equivalent of «untutored vision», by *becoming aware of everything within the framework of seeing*». Wees adds to this the theory of James J. Gibson which seems admirably suitable to my idea about the two states of perception and the synthesis into *total vision*: «To see in this way is to experience what James J. Gibson has called «the pictorial mode of visual perception». It is a subjective way of seeing that Gibson associates with (in his terminology) the «visual field», as distinct from the «objective seeing» of what he calls the «visual world». In *The Perception of the Visual World* Gibson explains his distinction between «visual field» and «visual world» in terms that could be applied equally well to «untutored» and «tutored» vision. Furthermore, he shows that both ways of seeing are readily observable.»<sup>126</sup> For Renato Poggioli, experiment always precedes creation: «creation annuls and absorbs experimentation within itself.»<sup>127</sup> Gibson explains that anyone can easily experience a transformation of a banal «scenery» into an extraordinary contemplation of the banal surrounding objects. He argues that by making abstraction out of «normal perspective», a table in the room does not appear any more as a «square» surface but «trapezoidal».

It may help if you close one eye. If you persist, the scene comes to approximate the appearance of a picture. You may observe that it has characteristics somewhat different from the former scene. This is what will be called here the visual field. It is less familiar than the visual world and it cannot be observed except with some kind of special effort.<sup>128</sup>

I remember the first time I became myself aware of the phenomenon myself: the scenery I could observe behind a transparent package of yellow *cellophane* did not seem to belong to this world, *but was still real*. By making abstraction out of the «normal reality» I had experienced a «distorted reality», what Gibson calls «visual field». Another typical example is given by the «flat sceneries» observed in binoculars. The «visual world» and the «visual field» are therefore the results of two different kinds of seeing. The second can be effectively an alternative way of seeing

for the modern artist.

A raw summary could unify the terms developed: untutored vision, innocent vision, emotional state of perception, primal state of simple perception and visual field<sup>129</sup> describe the same phenomenon, inseparable from modern art.

What we have called «normal perception» is for Gibson the «visual world» and probably joins the «theory-laden<sup>130</sup> vision» that Gombrich presumes to be the only kind available to human eyes.

Perhaps most important of all, the «visual field» evokes a self-consciousness about the act of perception itself. It is, says Gibson, «an introspective or analytic phenomenon».<sup>131</sup>

This very important comment of Gibson's highlighted by Wees furthers my concept of vision here in the way that the «emotional state of perception» can be considered as one of the keys of creativity:

What we see seems less completely outside of us because we are aware of our special effort to see it [in that way]. The «visual world», on the other hand, seems totally independent of our act of perceiving it. It is simply *there*. In Gibson's terms, the «visual field» derives from «our experience-when-we-introspect», and the «visual world» from «our experience-when-we-do-not».<sup>132</sup>

The surrealist concept of *automatisme* can be also associated with that view. Indeed, Breton speaks about the «*conscience poétique des objets*», meaning probably that they *are*, they *appear* —or they-are-not, they-do-not-appear (as long as we decide):

Je crois à la résolution future de ces deux états, en apparence si contradictoires, que sont le rêve et la réalité, en une sorte de réalité absolue, la surréalité.<sup>133</sup>

and I shall remember Deleuze and Gance:

C'est par l'esprit que l'homme dépasse les limites de la perception, et, comme dit Gance, les surimpressions sont des images de sentiments et de pensées par lesquelles l'âme enveloppe le corps, et le précède.<sup>134</sup>

Wees also uses the concept of phosphene to explain children's «scribblings», an interesting observation that I would compare to the well know habit that many people, not necessary artists, have of doodling —*automatic scribblings*— when

listening to a lecture or speaking on the telephone. «Phosphenes may indeed be an important part of the child's real environment, since he may not readily distinguish this internal phenomenon from those of the external world.»<sup>135</sup> The merging of «internal» and «external» worlds may continue to be visible to the «untutored eye» Wees suggests.

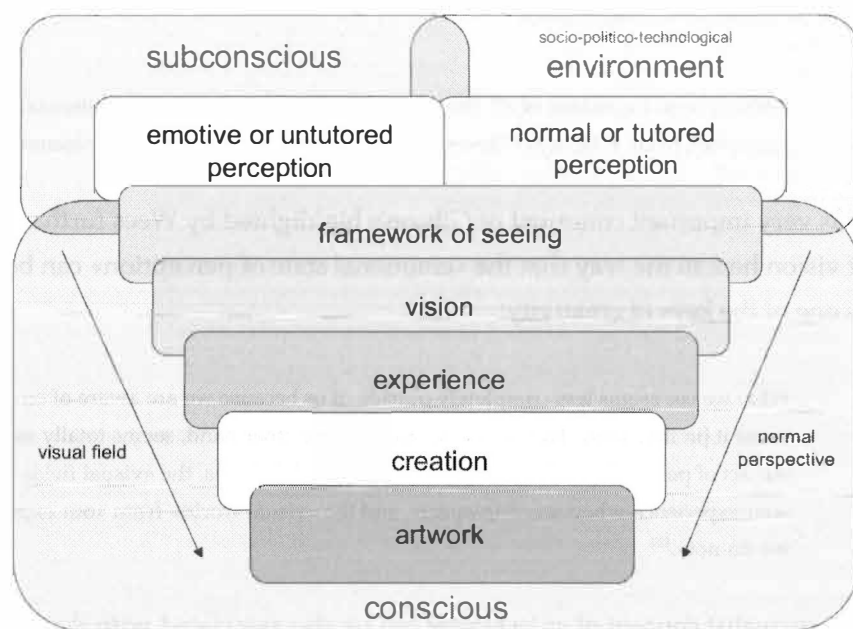


Fig. 29: The Framework of Seeing

Thus vision is not only perception; optically, vision is less than perception: the ability to see, a physiological faculty. But, mentally, vision is more than perception: vision is «merging» of internal and external perception, an image of the world induced by a mental untutored and emotional raw experience *and* the image induced by external tutored circumstances (figure 29).

In this figure the different levels of perception (internal and external sources) are schematized, and also the levels of consciousness driving to the concretization of an artwork within the tensions stressed by personal (visual field) and educated (normal perspective) ways of seeing.

Before questioning the work of Man Ray in regard to the «raw-eye» viewpoint, and since Brakhage was at the center of this chapter's discussion, I will continue to

discuss this theory with the help of the analysis of the untutored eye made by Wees and will try to question the convergences and divergences between structural and material cinema in *Emak Bakia*.

«In Tibetan mandala art, we have some of the best examples of the appreciation of the grainy perception of the eye-brain. The background noise of motion picture systems is very much like that of the eye-brain.»<sup>136</sup>

Wees calls «visual noise» the graininess of the projected film image and notes that «Brakhage, too, has proposed an equivalence between the graininess of film emulsion and the «grainy field» of vision itself but, he notes, his own observations have revealed patterns of «grains» and «dots» that are subtler and more complex than those in the random dance of emulsion grains projected on the movie screen.»<sup>137</sup>

When Deleuze is comparing *l'état liquide* and *l'état gazeux* of the perception of the avant-garde cinema he is speaking also about *grain de la matière* (see in *kino-eye*). He writes:

Pour tout un aspect de ce cinéma, il s'agit bien d'atteindre à une perception pure, telle qu'elle est dans les choses ou dans la matière, aussi loin que s'étendent les interactions moléculaires. [...] Or, s'il y a une constante de ce cinéma, c'est bien la construction d'un état gazeux de la perception, par divers moyens. Le montage clignotant: dégagement du photogramme au delà de l'image moyenne, et de la vibration au-delà du mouvement. Le montage hyper-rapide: dégagement du point d'inversion ou de transformation. Le refilmage ou réenregistrement: dégagement du grain de la matière.<sup>138</sup>

Deleuze observes that re-filming or re-taping the picture increases the «grain» and flattens the picture, producing a texture near the *pointillisme* of Seurat. He speaks about «interaction between points» in the same way that a picture can be rasterized. Deleuze, continuing with the question above writes:

A tous ces égards, le photogramme n'est pas un retour à la photographie, mais bien plutôt, suivant la formule de Bergson, la saisie créatrice de cette photo «prise et tirée dans l'intérieur des choses et pour tous les points de l'espace». Et du travail du photogramme à la vidéo, on assiste de plus et plus à la constitution d'une image définie par des paramètres moléculaires.<sup>139</sup>

A parallel with phosphenes is possible, but the point is that when the image is «grainy», unfocused, or somehow «imperfect» the «tutored vision» has the ability to

correct it. The black and white picture too, for instance, can be reconstructed «in colors» and a too grainy surface can be «readable» to a certain extent. The «problem» has become familiar in recent years with the *pixels*; the question is what constitutes a sufficient amount of information so that the topic may be perceived (reconstructed). Gombrich has considered this question well in *Art and Illusion*. Brakhage made experiments in which there are halo effects, color changes, positive-negative reversal of afterimages and pulsating and spilling over of light into areas of darkness. «Although sights such as these may occur spontaneously to anyone and, like phosphenes, be familiar to all young children, they seem totally foreign to normal or «tutored» vision», says Wees. «When Gombrich declares the «innocent eye» to be a «myth», he is in effect speaking for that part of the mind that refuses to accept *all* the evidence of the eyes; which treats visual «noise» and phosphenes as «problems» and interruptions of «correct» seeing; which ignores the impact of emotions on vision,»<sup>140</sup> he observes.

Not only did Brakhage paint on film, but he also put organic objects like leaves, grass, flowers and moth wings between pieces of clear celluloid and projected them, causing a «flickering» effect from frame to frame. Brakhage represents abstract-expressionism in film painting at its purest level (plate 14).

My point of view was clearly concentrated from the beginning on the vision of the artist, not the «ordinary observer». By this I do not deny that the «ordinary observer» can also experience «visions», and that effectively occurs when he meets the work of the artist. Their respective visions are certainly quite different, and that is the point: I have argued that vision is made of two kind of perceptions, an inner perception (emotive or untutored perception) and an outer perception (normal or tutored perception) and it seems that in the case of the artist the first dominates over the second. However it is not a question here of duality but rather of complementarity, for the artist hardly could isolate himself from the world. Furthermore, «to defend the concept of the «untutored eye» is one thing; to give it artistic expression is another and more demanding task» writes Wees, because the role of the artist is not only to look at the world and art, but to «transpose «innocent» sight from eye to canvas».<sup>141</sup> The cinema apparatus «is a particularly unpromising medium for the expression of «untutored vision» because its mechanical, chemical, and optical parts and processes are designed to produce equivalents of «tutored vision»», remarks Wees. He notes the particular

«resistance» of the lens:

There are also avant-garde films with images that have never been subjected to the perspectival biases of the lens because they were made without cameras—such as the «Rayograms» opening *Emak Bakia* (1926), the scratched and painted films of Len Lye, Norman McLaren, Harry Smith, and Stan Brakhage, to mention a few of the best-known practitioners of these handmade effects. There is also that tour de force of cameraless films, Brakhage's *Mothlight* (1963), with its bits of leaves, grass, flowers, and moth wings taped to the surface of a clear film base.<sup>142</sup>

The first scratched and painted films of Len Lye (plate 13), for instance *A Colour Box* (1935), anticipate Brakhage by nearly thirty years. In *Free Radicals* (1958), he scratched a completely black strip of film, thereby producing an amazing four minutes of black and white animation. His mixed animations with human shapes, as in *Rainbow Dance* (1936) or *Trade Tattoo* (1937) also well depict the lack of depth through flattened linear perspective.<sup>143</sup> It will be seen that Norman McLaren and Harry Smith have to be distinguished from one another too.

The rayograph opening of *Emak Bakia* was made with a recycled part of *Le Retour à la raison* (plate 28). It is a clear example of raw film, a film hand-made «into matter» and without a camera, yet it is «grainy» and «flickery». Is there an «untutored eye» in *Emak Bakia*? Are the «material» of *Le Retour à la raison* and the opening of *Emak Bakia* both the result of the same vision?

It has been seen that *Emak Bakia* has some affinities with the *kino-eye*, mainly through the use of tricks proper to the *kino-eye* (superimpositions, movement, etc.). The general construction of the film, by being anti-narrative in form, made the point of being a reaction against stage film; but it was nonetheless paradoxically «narrative» as a whole structure, starting from A (the cyclops' eye in the camera as «exposition»), moving to B (the text as «some sort of climax») and arriving at C (the *double awakening* as «resolution»).

*Le Retour à la raison* contains mainly cine-rayograph pictures and only a few pictures are taken «in the world» with a camera, yet these pictures are also «grainy» night shots or nearly abstract. As we have seen before, Man Ray did work on an idea proposed by Tzara and in addition to that he improvised the «technique» mostly by intuition. What was Man Ray vision?

I now propose to quote six of his statements (1 to 6):

«My curiosity was aroused by the idea of putting into motion some of the results I

had obtained in still photography» (1); «I made a few sporadic shots, unrelated to each other, as field of daisies, a nude torso moving in front of a striped curtain with the sunlight coming through, one of my paper spirals hanging in the studio, a carton from an egg crate revolving on a string - mobiles before the invention of the word» (2); «It was time to produce something in that direction to offset all the idiocies filling the screens» (3); Man Ray describes carefully also the making of the filmstrips with rayographs, «...as I had done for my still Rayographs» (4); «I had no idea what this would give on the screen» (5).

From (1) to (3) the taste of Man Ray for the unknown and the desire to use it in a non-conventional way may be recognized (he had done the same with the airbrush four years before). In (4) he used a «calculated» effect and in (5) he brings it to a new dimension with an even greater risk. Man Ray had enough experience with the 35 mm negatives and had a clear idea about the result (as a still). The risk was taken at the level of the projection. But how considerable was the risk? «Anyhow [...], it would be over before an audience could react; there would be other numbers on the program to try the spectators' patience»(6)<sup>144</sup>

From (5) and (6) the intention more than the result is underlined. The vision was merely an anti-vision: to produce anything except a conventional movie. The «principles» are intuition, experiment and chance. When filming, the «field of daisies» was not at all perceived as snow that «had crystallized into flowers». It was a «sporadic shot» and it was still when Man Ray *edited* it behind the rayographs: indeed he «had no idea what this would give on the screen», he could not predict the «snowstorm» effect and in fact nobody could because it had never been done before. By the way «the field of daisies» is not in *Le Retour à la raison* but added to the recycled material of *Emak Bakia*.<sup>145</sup> We know the historical result: it is above all what cinema history tells us, that *Le Retour à la raison* is nonsense as film, but also a dada «snowstorm» which became an abstract experiment in —and experience of— perception. For Deke Dusinberre in *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies* it is «the screen which is invaded by minuscule irregular spots, white on black, or black on white, struggling for ten seconds» and it is «the dark flat shadow of a thumbtack going through the empty white screen»: an abstract and kinetic experience that myself I had the occasion to experience in the same «post-psychedelic» years (the seventies), being of the same generation as Dusinberre.

Dusinberre finds out two tendencies of the critics (especially Mitry, Curtis and Renan): to avoid the analysis of abstract films for their content or to place them only in the artistic context (here Dada). He writes:

Jeune critique du cinéma expérimental dans les années soixante-dix, à un moment où «l'avant-garde cinématographique universitaire» prenait son essor, remettant à l'affiche des films tels que *Le Retour à la raison*, je trouvais inacceptables ces comptes rendus paresseux, voire dédaigneux. J'estimais qu'il fallait traiter - qu'il fallait voir le film de Man Ray non seulement comme un geste, mais aussi comme un objet esthétique, dont le sens, tout en étant enraciné dans le mouvement Dada, dépassait ce contexte restreint. En y regardant de plus près, donc, je constatai que les séquences d'ouverture [...] étaient d'une cohérence limpide. Malgré la diversité des images, un motif s'imposait: celui de points et de formes noirs et blancs perchés sur le fil entre l'abstraction et figuration. Cette diversité se construisait harmonieusement grâce au rythme soutenu du montage et à la répétition de certaines images, [...] <sup>146</sup>

To this can be added the opinion of Rudolf E. Kuenzli who said (but it was for *Entr'acte*) that «not the film, but the performance is Dada». <sup>147</sup> Personally I had then the same opinion, but «*looking more carefully*», in the context of this study, my position also began to change (but in the opposite direction). As I explained above, Man Ray could not, in the circumstances I have described, and because he didn't own a projector, know the aesthetic result that could come out of the filmstrips and made the film so attractive —and more particularly the rhythm. He could only take the risk, the chance, which was dada. It is precisely here that avant-garde experimentation and the untutored-eye interact with creation: in the intuition.

Let us take now the same film (or approximately) and (3 years later) let us put it as the opening of a new film, and let us call the new film *Emak Bakia*. Let us edit now the same filmstrip «printed up professionally». <sup>148</sup> Is it the same film? Is it the same «material»? Certainly not. Chance has vanished. Was the material transformed? What was the motivation of Man Ray to use the same «material»? He never told anything about that, at the opposite, for him *Le Retour à la raison* did not exist any longer (as an artwork). It became the part of a «*gesamtkunstwerk*», the dada manifestation of April 6, 1923; still, like many others, Man Ray does not recognize the slightly different editing (although the original rayographs are the same). His descriptions of *Le Retour à la raison* and of the overture of *Emak Bakia* become confused.



There is another difference: *Emak Bakia* begin with the anamorphic title «cinépoème de Man Ray», and, before the «snowstorm» there is the famous superimposition of the camera lens and the eye, which is undoubtedly symbolic. The recycled part of the film is not anymore an abstract filmstrip which ought to last on the screen for about two-three minutes. The editing becomes a *montage of attractions* (plate 29). Rudolf E. Kuenzli gives his own interpretation about the new signification in *Emak Bakia*:

This film is Man Ray's exploration of the camera's potential to transform the familiar world, and thus create surreality. The opening and closing sequences suggest such an interpretation. The film opens by introducing the apparatus of transformation: a film camera rolling film and Man Ray as cameraman next to it. In the lens we see his eye upside down, since he filmed himself filming by aiming the camera at a mirror.<sup>149</sup>

Kuenzli has pertinently observed that the presence of the camera implicitly gives a *significance* to the filmstrip of rayographs: by using a filmstrip made without his camera Man Ray is paradoxically *pointing the film as a product of the camera* and «the film apparatus is thus presented as a mean that is superbly capable of transforming the symbolic order into the imaginary.»<sup>150</sup>

All this comparison of the same film material in *Le Retour à la raison* and *Emak Bakia* gives us now two ways of perceiving the same material. The first is a pure «calculated improvisation» and the second is a work of montage, a mental process. Let us now compare with the structural film, for instance Brakhage's *Mothlight* with its bits of leaves, grass, flowers, and moth wings taped to the surface of a clear film base. It is evident that there is no question here of an editing, but a *collage*, a *bricolage*, a raw manipulation in/on the matter, a chemical/optical operation in/on the «grain». When Man Ray improvised *Le Retour à la raison*, his film was also made «against specifications», that is to say in an abnormal way of working with film. Brakhage writes in *Metaphors on Vision*:

By deliberately spitting on the lens or wrecking its focal attention, one can achieve the early states of impressionism. One can make this prima donna heavy in performance of image movement by speeding up the motor, or one can break up movement, in a way that approaches a more direct inspiration of contemporary human eye perceptibility of movement, by slowing the motion while recording the image. One may hand hold the camera and inherit worlds of space. One may over- or under-expose the film. One may use the filters of the world, fog, downpours, unbalanced lights, neons with neurotic color

temperatures, glass which was never designed for camera, or even glass which was but which can be used against specifications, or one may photograph an hour after sunrise or an hour before sunset, those marvelous taboo hours when the film labs will guarantee nothing, or one may go into the night with a specified daylight film or vice versa.<sup>151</sup>

The problem with *Emak Bakia* is the structure, the «message» and the philosophical dimension, and yet it is a raw film, an untutored vision, by the use of such non-conventional tricks: lenses and mirrors.

*Le Retour à la raison*, instead, does not contain such a dialectical dimension: it is a pure vision. The philosophical dimension is *outside* the work, in dada philosophy. There is another «problem»: it *cannot* be aesthetic —because it is dada— so it *must* be anti-art and rejects the aesthetic «sense» proposed by Dusinberre.

Or we can «return the problem», see it from the other direction: the «problem» is not then in *Emak Bakia* or *Le Retour à la raison* —there are only «solutions». *The problem is in the observer*. That is to say in our «normal» perception, or, in the case of Deke Dusinberre, his «tutored eye». Indeed Dada has lived, and has become an aesthetic too. The «grain» which *was* anti-aesthetic has become aesthetic: the work of Brakhage in the sixties proved it.

We have just seen that on one hand *Le Retour à la raison*, despite the lack of pure (innocent) aesthetic purpose (at least, one has never been established and probably never will be) can be assimilated into the «raw vision», mainly by its method and the rejection of «tutored vision». On the other hand, the intellectual method, the structure and the cohesion adopted in *Emak Bakia*, make it more difficult to attribute to it the label of «innocent eye»; yet *Emak Bakia* uses «taboo» tricks mentioned by Brakhage almost as an integral part of the film: filters, glasses, movements ... and anamorphic lenses. They indeed bring *Emak Bakia* more or less near to «raw vision». Anamorphic lenses were also used by Sidney Peterson in *Mr Frenhofer and the Minotaur* (1949) and in *The Lead Shoes* (1949). Wees notes that the use of anamorphic images «was a direct spin-off of the development of Renaissance perspective and perhaps the first example of artists using the rules of perspective to frustrate ordinary seeing»<sup>152</sup> (as in Holbein's *The Ambassadors*). In the words of Claudio Guillén «this vexing sort of visual trickery was but an extension of the illusionistic power implicit in perspective, and of the notion that the characteristics of vision could control the visible contents of the painting.»<sup>153</sup> In «normal professional photography» the use of anamorphic correcting lenses and different focal length lenses are usual and even not discussed as «disturbing normal vision». The classic

example is given of how professionals describe the «normal lens»: it seems to reproduce a linear perspective that is apparently human (and called a *sin* by Bazin); but in fact the «normal lens» does not reproduce normal vision at all, but a much scantier view. If the photographer uses any lens «against specifications» he can therefore create «abnormal illusions», a locution which is, of course, paradoxical, and is explained by the sharp relationship between perspective and the «tutored eye». Wees notes that «Peterson's anamorphic images are intended to remain uncorrected, with the result that familiar shapes appear grotesquely elongated or unnaturally short and squat. They seem to occupy a space that is too shallow and strangely congealed.»<sup>154</sup> Sitney called them «the realm of dream, memory or a visionary state». For Peterson anamorphosis is «the most subjective of all the branches of linear perspective» and hence a way of emphasizing «the subjectivity of the viewing process».<sup>155</sup> In *Emak Bakia* the effects obtained are similar, and even accentuated by the effects of rotation (turntable) that add to deformations through crystals, lenses and mirrors. The rotation effect had already been tested for its effect on perspective in *Anémic cinéma*, the long project of Marcel Duchamp, made with the help of Man Ray, and finished only a few months before *Emak Bakia*, in August 1926.

Renato Poggioli, writing about deformation, attributes to the avant-garde the role of a *dehumanization of art*, «an aspiration toward a figurative theory of quasi-inorganic or crystallized subject matter».<sup>156</sup> He writes:

In avant-garde figuration there is not only abstractionism and mechanism, but also a new or special way of representing what is human, organic or living. However, that representation is, as we are wont to say, deformed or deforming.<sup>157</sup>

Poggioli argues that deformation is «considered a spontaneous phenomenon, [...] a consciously willed arbitrariness».<sup>158</sup> He argues too that this is not in fact a new phenomenon in art, but in this case probably the consequence of a spiritual breakdown in the Western tradition. He cites Arnold Toynbee who «prefers to see in modernism not a natural process of decay or corruption, but the conscious betrayal of a noble, centuries-old tradition».<sup>159</sup>

The deformation is determined by a stylistic drive, which inaugurates a new order as it denies the ancient order.<sup>160</sup>

In cinema art that «stylistic drive» begins with the French second avant-garde and culminates at the end of the sixties with structural and formal film.

Wees cites a few example of film of the psychedelic period (mid sixties) using the same register of perspective deformations : the «multifaceted psychedelic images» in Tony Conrad's *The Flicker* (1966) and in Paul Sharits's «flicker films», in which «the flatness of the screen can give way to illusory and ambiguous perceptions of depth that have nothing to do with the depth cues of perspective.»<sup>161</sup> (plate 15).

When Deleuze says that Belson and Jacobs «are recovering the molecular and atomic forces from forms and colored movements»,<sup>162</sup> he has a clear idea about the raw constitution of a certain form of cinema, a metacinema, he said. What is that raw, material constitution of the cinema-image?

For Deleuze, it has been seen, the cinema-image is above all a cut in the movement (a part of the movement-image, the mobile cut, itself perceived in time). It is therefore not a real movement but a *faux-mouvement*.

Le cinéma ne nous donne pas une image à laquelle il ajouterait du mouvement, il nous donne immédiatement une image-mouvement<sup>163</sup>

In his analysis of the *movement-image* Deleuze opposes Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945) to Bergson's *Matière et mémoire* (1939).<sup>164</sup>

Deleuze observes that the classical attitudes towards images and movement was to «put the images in consciousness, and movements in space» making it therefore impossible to connect them «simultaneously» within the phenomenon of perception.

Ce qui paraissait sans issue, finalement, c'était l'affrontement du matérialisme et de l'idéalisme, l'un voulant reconstituer l'ordre de la conscience avec de purs mouvements matériels, l'autre, l'ordre de l'univers avec de pures images dans la conscience.<sup>165</sup>

Deleuze joins Crary when he concludes that there are social and scientific facts which have made it possible to displace «movement in consciousness and images in the material world» and asking why the cinema should be outside that evolution. Merleau-Ponty adds the concept of *perception naturelle* in which he defines beings as belonging to the world and perceiving this world «from inside». As a corollary to that, (normal) cinema is perceived as suppressing the natural ground of perception

and opening a world which is its own image (a so-called reflection or parallel similar world).

Avec le cinéma, c'est le monde qui devient sa propre image, et non une image qui devient monde.<sup>166</sup>

The image which becomes «world» belongs to other visual arts. Deleuze admits that phenomenology still considers movement in cinema as a succession of existential *poses* which provides for perception an analogy with the world, but an untrue «copy» of it. The Bergsonian model, notes Deleuze, makes it impossible for cinema to catch real movement but it offers however «instant views on changing reality», *une matière-écoulement*. Deleuze suggests that if perception is only «a deduction from reality» it can be a «deduction of cinematographic reality as well». For Bergson, briefly, anything which *is* molecules and atoms is also an image. Images *are not* in the brain, but *act* on the brain, so that the movement by its «instant poses» can be reconstituted (in the brain). Deleuze defines all images and movement as a whole which is reconstituted as a sort of *plan d'immanence*, a block of time-space:

Cet ensemble infini de toute les images constitue une sorte de plan d'immanence. L'image existe en soi, sur ce plan. Cet en-soi de l'image, c'est la matière: non pas quelque chose qui serait caché derrière l'image, mais au contraire, l'identité absolue de l'image et du mouvement. C'est l'identité de l'image et du mouvement qui nous fait conclure immédiatement à l'identité de l'image-mouvement et de la matière [...] Le plan d'immanence est le mouvement qui s'établi [...], une coupe mobile, une coupe ou perspective temporelle.<sup>167</sup>

Deleuze qualifies that «material» made of time-space as «machinery», the *cinéma-en soi*, the metacinema.<sup>168</sup>

Through the confrontation of diverse theories of perception it has been seen in this paragraph that what I have called *kino-raw* is a kind of experimental cinema linked to the *kino-eye*, a vision of cinema strongly attached to its material existence and to its kinetic and visual essence. But, instead of acting as a mechanical eye at the level of human emotion, it is a much deeper introspection in «the self». Artists most often work directly on film (or video material) without the help of a «normal» camera. This intuitive, self-confident, experimental cinema is also a cinema which avoids self evident realities about the world, with all its social conventions.

## [kino-ray]

Les positions sont dans l'espace, mais le tout qui change est dans le temps<sup>169</sup> —Gilles Deleuze

In *La Pensée sauvage*, Claude Lévi-Strauss defines how thoughts work in a raw state and how this can be observed at the scientific level of a modern society.

[*La pensée sauvage*] codifie, c'est-à-dire classe rigoureusement en s'appuyant sur les oppositions et les contrastes, l'univers physique, la nature vivante et l'homme même tel qu'il s'exprime dans ses croyances et ses institutions. Elle trouve son principe dans une science du concret, une logique des qualités sensibles telle qu'on la retrouve dans certaines activités comme le bricolage.<sup>170</sup>

In the section *kino-raw* I have focused the attention on an «experimental» cinema working with raw material and the subconscious. It has also been seen that the important mechanism of vision was the result of two kinds of perception, the normal and the emotional. The extreme development of untutored vision drove us to a fascinating world of «patches» and «deformations» in which the filmmaker was only an initiator, the final result being a question of chance. This informal vision was the door for abstract expressionism in filmmaking.

In the first sections of this paragraph, which was reserved to the kino-eye, I have, on purpose, left aside another kind of formalist cinema, more abstract and contemporary to the European second avant-garde and the American second avant-garde. This cinema is best represented by Richter, Ruttmann, Chomette, Bruguière, Eggeling, Smith, McLaren, Fischinger and the Themersons, for instance.

To take a step back now to Len Lye (plate 13), whose *A Colour Box* (1935), a scratched and painted film, was said to be an early example of the untutored perception of Brakhage. In the fifties Lye was still doing scratched film, like *Free Radicals* (1958). But another kind of experimental cinema had been started after the war when Lye, who was originally a New-Zealander, had moved from London to New York. *Color Cry* (1952) was a «direct film» made by the «rayogram» method (also called «shadow cast» method): strips of 16 mm film were laid out in a dark room, covered with stencils, colour gels, and objects such as fabrics, string and saw blades, and then exposed (the strips of film were edited by the blues musician Sonny Terry who also plays in the soundtrack). The method —and the result— are already much more elaborated than in the case of a simply scratched film; the imagery is somewhat reminiscent of some constructivist design of the Bauhaus. This especially is interesting: there is no question here of appealing to chance or the untutored eye.

Here the process is the elaboration of a technique which is not improvised but planned. With Smith and McLaren and the Themersons we often observe the same calculation. Loren Means (b.1942), a contemporary artist who has specialized in abstract expressionism painting on film, explains the difference: «Though they could not predict exactly where a particular shape would appear on the screen when the film was projected, they did control the character and size of the shapes themselves, and their relative distance from each other. Both filmmakers tended to use the simplest of shape – dots and lines – and were able to maintain such a level of control over their medium that McLaren in particular was able to design his hand-painted films to accompany preselected pieces of music. This amount of control was rejected by Brakhage, who chose instead to allow total frame discontinuity.»<sup>171</sup>

In *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* Renato Poggioli<sup>172</sup> pays attention to José Ortega y Gasset's «dehumanization» of art, which is attributed to the avant-garde. This «dehumanization» finds a direct application first in the iconoclastic attitude, an attitude —it must be said at once— that cannot be attributed to abstract expressionism. Ortega y Gasset labels the denigrating attitude toward the object as «infrarealism». In chapter 3 we have shown that it is an attitude well appreciated by dadaist cinema which became the door for a vision in deconstruction probably best represented by surrealist cinema (chapter 4). A second attitude of the avant-garde is, at the opposite end, to *overestimate* or *transcend* the object. Ortega y Gasset calls it «superrealism», obviously with the intention to play with the surrealist (and hyperrealist?) idea.

Poggioli argues that «the avant-garde is voluntaristic and cerebral». Furthermore, refuting realism and narration, avant-garde cinema has only two possibilities: to denigrate or escape the «normal perception» or to create a «super perception». For Ortega y Gasset there is also a clear evolution in the successive phases of the history of painting: «First, things are painted; then sensations; and finally (that is, in contemporary cubist, abstract art) ideas.»<sup>173</sup>

Briefly the steps:

- 1° reproduction
- 2° sensations
- 3° ideas

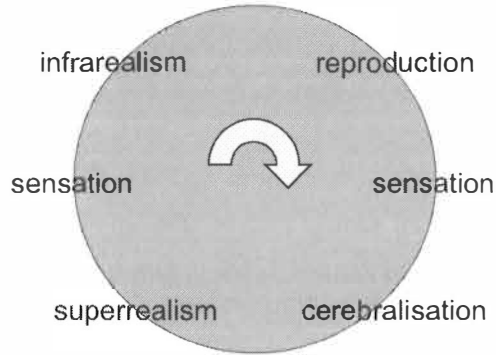


Fig. 30: A Process of Vision (inspired from Ortega y Gasset)

I argue that the problem for the contemporary artist is not in reaching a phase or another —being stuck at a given level— but to go through the whole process and possibly revisit the phases backwards. The cerebralism of *Metaphor of vision*, for instance suggests that Brakhage revisited the phases several time and deliberately intended to communicate on the level of primary sensations. If the dadaist attitude stands undoubtedly on the level «minus one» —the infrarealist attitude— it does not mean that Dadaists were, artistically speaking, under-developed or not capable (of making «true» art). The evolution of Man Ray during the period between 1913 and 1921 gives a clear idea of that process. Man Ray started with *enjivements* —ornamentation— and imitated Cézanne and the Cubists before finding his *dada*. The painting *Rue Férou* (1952) is a deliberate demonstration of «revisitation» (plate 26). From that viewpoint Surrealism «stuck» somewhere «on the way back» between ideas and sensations (politics and subconscious). The end of Dada in 1923 and the start of Surrealism meant a progressive resurgence into «cerebralism» and «voluntarism». Ironically it could be said a real *return to reason*. If the film of the same name was still «infrarealist», *Emak Bakia* (1926) represented probably the passage from level «minus one» to *level zero* (reached with the caption of the film) and his next film *L'Etoile de mer* (1928) was already made with the help of a script (Desnos' poem). *Level zero* is probably Richter's balance between «hell and heaven» or his famous «zero point»: Richter's films too give us material for moving between dadaist extremes. Between the diverse *Rhythmus* (1921–25) and *Vormittagsspuk* (1927–28) there is an evolution from rational thinking to «voluntarist-dehumanizing» attitude (plates 7–9).



The particular cases of Man Ray and Richter are interesting because with their respective films they made opposite kinds of journeys: Man Ray from dadaist vision to oneiric vision and Richter from absolute abstract vision to dadaist vision. Richter went to surrealism in his films only with the late *Dreams That Money Can Buy* (1947).

The problem is one of «abstraction» and «empathy», argues Poggioli, when he cites J. P. Hodin for whom «abstraction would only be an evasion of the real world, whereas empathy, insofar as it is the beginning of artistic creation, is based on the magic significance of the subject.»<sup>176</sup> Poggioli observes that Hodin has marked preference for empathy and also probably for intuition and spontaneity, but mentions a «scientific» or rational approach as possible alternatives:<sup>177</sup>

«Expressionist art and rational art, in the broadest sense of the two terms, are currents in which the moderns' will to form will be manifested.»<sup>178</sup>

If the label *abstract expressionism* indeed balances both tendencies very well, it has to be noticed too that it is the contradiction inherent to Dada which makes dada cinema interesting. As Poggioli observes «most formalism [...] is, paradoxically, iconoclastic and dehumanizing».<sup>179</sup> The starting-point of Richter, who creates only pure geometrical abstract images in the *Rhythms* (1921 to 1925), was rational —most of the figures of the films are squares, obviously of the same nature as Malevich's suprematist compositions (plate 8). In *Filmstudie* (1926) his attention is still abstract, but he now uses eye bulbs<sup>180</sup> —real objects— in a compositional way. Man Ray for his part always reached a pure informal and abstract world through real objects and through improvisation and spontaneity. The result is nonetheless nearly like a view in the microscope: an anarchic bacterial population, for instance, and rather rational in the purity of its elements. The symbolic image at the beginning of *Emak Bakia* represents not only the observer and his eye but also the artist in a close relationship with the instrument of vision: the camera appears like scientific apparatus: it resembles a microscope (plate 29).

Avant-garde art expresses the scientific point of view by way of two alternatives, rather than by the single path of abstract rationalism. No one denies the presence and potency of the latter, which, while it reflects the moment of praxis and technique in futurism and its derivatives, also symbolizes the theoretical and contemplative moment in the scientific thought of cubism and abstract art. [...]

As is well known, modern science is not just technique and theory; it is also empirical-observation and introspection beyond mere experiment and speculation<sup>181</sup>

The duality expression–abstraction is the same duality that occurs between intuition and rationality, and independently of the artistic period or tendency. Both are always present —only the priority differs.

This explains also the interest of the avant-garde towards the progress of science and technology, considering not only the technical advantages but also the importing of a rational dimension to the intuition. Tzara gives a good example with a dada «recipe», a pseudo-rational method to compose a poem:

Prenez un journal.  
Prenez des ciseaux.  
Choisissez dans ce journal un article ayant la longueur que vous comptez donner à votre poème.  
Découpez l'article.  
Découpez ensuite avec soin chacun des mots qui forment cet article et mettez-les dans un sac.  
Agitez doucement.  
Sortez ensuite chaque coupure l'une après l'autre.  
Copiez consciencieusement dans l'ordre où elles ont quitté le sac.  
Le poème vous ressemblera.  
Et vous voilà un écrivain infiniment original et d'une sensibilité charmante, encore qu' inconnue du vulgaire.<sup>182</sup>

The *bricolage* dada is not so far from scientific realities: wasn't the discovery of penicillin in 1928 by the bacteriologist Alexander Fleming a chance discovery from an already discarded, contaminated petri dish? And wasn't a broken wheel on a space vehicle which has helped uncover strong evidence that water did flow on Mars? Improvisations.

Poggioli cites William James' *stream of consciousness* and the concept of *monologue intérieur* as similar scientific «methods». I should prefer however to use *state of mind* for describing the «obliged receptivity» of the artist and the scientist before chance<sup>183</sup> in the process of creation (invention). Poggioli makes a direct link to the surrealist process (or *state of mind*) called «automatic writing» and concludes that «art can be called automatic only if the adjective is understood as a synonym for spontaneous, when the work is considered the product at once of nature and of intelligence: the act of representing the unconscious *can only be a conscious act.*»<sup>184</sup>

Entre l'ordre et le désordre règne un moment délicieux<sup>185</sup>

Paul Valéry said sometimes. The balance in question is of course theoretical and resumes the antagonism between raw art and pure art in general. That opposition is better seen in abstract art as we have seen in chapter 4, with a clear duality of the rational and the irrational. The rational can be understood as an aspiration for purity: an *art for art*. «The modern mystique of purity, wrote Poggioli, aspires to abolish the discursive and syntactic element, to liberate art from any connection with psychological and empirical reality, to reduce every work to the intimate laws of its own expressive essence or to the given absolutes of its own genre or means.»<sup>186</sup> What does that mean in pure or absolute cinema?

Germaine Dulac, described by cinema history books as one of the closest collaborators in Delluc's vision about cinema, made a pseudo-scientific film in 1928, *La Germination d'un haricot*, a study of movement, lines and forms, and in 1929 made three essays of «cinéma pur»: *Disque 957*, *Impressions visuelles* on Chopin Preludes 5 and 6, *Étude cinématographique sur une arabesque*, on the first and second of Debussy's *Arabesques*, and *Thème et variation* after various classical melodies. In 1930 she made six *Illustrations de disques*. She is a controversial figure to the extent that «after becoming a director, she pursued the ideal of creativity firmly linked to her notion of female emancipation.»<sup>187</sup> Her interest in «cinéma pur» must also be nuanced. Beside Nature, Ester de Miro observed, music was also for Dulac a source of comparison: the image could be considered as «if it were a *theme* on which she executed *variations* derived with an intense communication with her subject. She acted as a «sounding board» for their emotions, expanding on reality»<sup>188</sup> said de Miro. *La Souriante Madame Beudet* (1923), a satirical narrative and early feminist film is a good example of this. Later films go to «*abstractions*» and Surrealism. But de Miro questions the level of abstraction in these later films which «however abstract they might appear, were firmly based in reality, either in significance or in a concrete photographic quality».<sup>189</sup>

In *Étude cinématographique sur une arabesque* (1929) Dulac filmed the pirouettes of a dancer alternating with shots of the movements of machines: the influence of the dynamism of Gance in *La Roue* (1922) is still strongly present but Dulac's cinematography also has links to the notion of *visual music*, which is dear to Hans Richter too. The evolution of Dulac from a spiritual level to a more formal level, using «iconic language to transmit sensations,»<sup>190</sup> seems to develop progressively from 1922 when she wrote «my vision is to be simple, true, mobile in the immobility

of things and the apparent calm of the spirit»<sup>191</sup> to the coming of sound.

It was through a slow evolution, based on experience, that I first arrived at the idea of a visual symphony and then to a stronger and more synthetic conception of *cinéma intégral*, music of the eye.<sup>192</sup>

It seems, therefore that the Dulac's relationship with «pure cinema» is limited to a short time—but one that may not be neglected—in her filmography. In fact Dulac herself was not using the label «pur» but «integral»: *cinéma intégral*, which she defined in an article published in the only issue of the magazine *Schémas* that she started up in 1927. The title of this article was *Du sentiment à la ligne*, the literal meaning of which is «from emotion to line» but which can also be translated as «sentiment by the yard».<sup>193</sup> I suggest another interpretation which could be summarised by the pairing «motion – emotion» as a way of describing the basic essence of cinema: «*a consciousness of movement*»—one of Vertov's but also Chomette's main arguments. The text published by Dulac starts indeed with the notion of pure movement: «When the idea of abstract cinema, which is expressed by the visual rendering of pure movement beyond the existing aesthetics, is presented to the greater part of the public [...] it is received with scepticism, if not open hostility.»<sup>194</sup> When Dulac wrote the article she had already abandoned the classical narrative cinema and had just finished or was finishing *La Coquille et le clergyman* (1927)—mistakenly—considered by Alain Virmaux to be the first really surrealist film.<sup>195</sup> Her journey into *visual emotion* was only beginning.

I propose to pick up the principal essential points of the article, using the same unchanged translated text. The text is unequivocal: the principal aims of «integral cinema» are to reach (pure) emotion through visual means and especially through motion.

**1° Integral cinema** is the very essence of cinema considered in its general sense, its inner reason for being, its direct manifestation, seen as independent of the dialectics and plasticity of the other arts

**2° Movement**, (must be) considered in itself and for itself, in its dynamic force and its different measured rhythms

**3°** The movement and its rhythms, already refined in their form, determine the emotion, the purely **visual emotion**

**4°** The **concept of emotion** is not exclusively confined to the evocation of precise actions, but to every manifestation which takes place in both its physical and moral life

5° Movement is not merely a shifting in time and space but also and above all **evolution and transformation**

6° **Lines, volumes, surfaces, light**, depicted in their constant **metamorphosis** are, like the plant that grows, relevant to us if we know how to **organise** them in a way corresponding to our needs and imagination

7° **Lines, surfaces, volumes**, evolving directly without contrivance, in the **logic of their forms**, stripped of representational meaning, the better to **aspire to abstraction and give more space to feelings and dreams**, INTEGRAL CINEMA<sup>196</sup>

With *Jeux de reflets et de vitesse* and *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* (and *A quoi rêvent les jeunes-filles/films*), the films made between 1923 and 1926<sup>197</sup>, which constitute the label «cinéma pur» that we are considering here, Henri Chomette precedes Dulac by a few years. Chomette represents most probably pure cinema and to a large extent meets the criteria above for integral cinema. His cinema cannot yet be considered as such however because it lacks the concepts of metamorphosis and organization. It is nonetheless intrinsically visual and non narrative.

As with Dulac, the aim of abstraction is reached through figurative forms seen from a special angle and within time intervals and manipulation.

I have mentioned (in chapter 7) the mystery surrounding the film that was planned and probably filmed with Man Ray for the Comte Etienne de Beaumont. It was shown in 1926, but apparently only once, as *What do Young Films Dream Of*, at The London Film Society. It is said that soon after Man Ray, Chomette, and the Count had a falling out, which led to Man Ray releasing his part of the film as material for *Emak Bakia* and Chomette his part as *Jeux de reflets et de vitesse* and *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur*. Anyway, at least the first, *Jeux de reflets et de vitesse*, was probably made in 1923 or 1924 (and intended for *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films* that no longer exists). The film seems to be made with a technique of reflections off crystals suggestive of the later light effects in *Emak Bakia*. The Paris metro and the bridges of the Seine which constitute other elements of the film are instead completely absent in the production by Man Ray. Chomette is fond of visual rhythms, bridges, tunnels, railroad lines, speed, time intervals, rotations, tricks, etc.: a direct application of Dulac's «integral cinema» principles.

«The cinema is not limited to the representative mode. It can create, and has already created a sort of rhythm... Thanks to this rhythm the cinema can draw fresh strength from itself which, forgoing the logic of facts and the reality of objects, may beget a series of unknown visions, inconceivable outside the union of lens and film.

Intrinsic cinema, or if you prefer, pure cinema —because it is separated from every other element, whether dramatic or documentary, is what certain works lead us to anticipate...» Chomette said in 1924.<sup>198</sup>

I personally found a great similarity in Chomette's film with the «kinematic» and rather abstract climax of *Entr'acte*, the film his brother René Clair made in 1924 in which Man Ray and Duchamp appear around a chess game (plate 7). The pure cinema should be probably considered in that perspective only as an aesthetic aspect of the dada cinema and not as a genre by itself. Or is it dadaist cinema which should to be removed from history books as a genre?<sup>199</sup> «Dada films» are all made after 1923 (except *Le Retour à la raison* made that year) and seem to fill up surrealist film «emptiness» in film production for five years, a relatively long time for a dead movement. Instead, we could speak about a dada «spirit»: I consider that *Emak Bakia*, *Entr'acte*, and *Jeux de reflets* ought to be seen as different aspects of one and the same cinema, a cinema ultimately quite near to integral cinema, especially from the point of view of their «consciousness of movement». Possibly *Ballet mécanique* too ought to be seen in the same light (with a special position outside the dadaist surrealist group thanks to its director Léger and its producer Dudley Murphy). Another aspect, which the avant-garde intellectualization has obscured is the entertainment function of these films, their humoresque atmosphere. That characteristic could hardly be found in the more cerebral films of Dulac. The entertaining target of *Entr'acte* is clear: it was premiered as intermission (*entr'acte*) for the *Ballets Suèdois* production *Relâche* (written by Picabia) at the *Théâtre des Champs-Élysées*. From that aspect it is above all a dadaist or a «surrealistic comedy» in the vein of *Paris qui dort* (1923–24) the earlier film by René Clair.<sup>200</sup> It seems that «surrealistic comedy» is at some remove from the «reason versus emotion» discussion in which Dulac's «motion and emotion» was at the center. In other words the duality of form and content was emphasized, and it has been seen how Man Ray had his own connection to it. But laughter is said to be a weapon too: surrealist cinema perhaps best proved it to be so with Buñuel later. As «pure cinema» had the propensity to forget its «purity» through humour, «integral cinema» became a discussion about «feeling and feminism»<sup>201</sup> With Dulac, and many more other artists, the use of the term «abstract» «is far removed from subsequent debasement of meaning whereby it is associated with mere formalism; she speaks of an abstraction from life in order to achieve a purity of form and emotion.»<sup>202</sup>

Deleuze writes about «experimental», «physical» and «cerebral»:

Donnez-moi un cerveau [...] Le cinéma expérimental se partage entre ces deux domaines: la physique du corps, quotidien ou cérémoniel; l'«éidétique» de l'esprit<sup>203</sup>, formel ou informel. Mais le cinéma expérimental développe la distinction suivant deux processus, l'un concretif, l'autre abstraitif. L'abstrait et le concret ne sont pourtant pas le bon critère, dans un cinéma qui crée plus qu'il n'expérimente.<sup>204</sup>

The problem with abstraction (in its meaning of «cerebral») in cinema is that the camera has to have an object (or a subject) to film, and objects, by definition, are not abstract; or, to be precise, they can only *become* abstractions. Brakhage or McLaren have found momentary responses of course to that problem, and Man Ray too, when they «filmed» without a camera. But they resolved the problem of «abstraction» in a singular manner: they made «abstraction of the camera», a solution which can be only local or temporary in cinema. Are there other possible attitudes toward abstraction?

I see three kinds (in addition of the direct work on film material):

1° If camera-object relation is considered as intrinsic to the cinema, a solution is to reach abstraction through the essence of cinema itself: movement and time. «Pure cinema» (Chomette) seems to adopt that method, but also Dulac, Clair, Léger and Vertov. Often there are not «pure abstractions» but they are integrated in a more or less narrative structure. In this case the «abstract form» helps to create a climate which can be linked to speed, action or simply to the psychological, near Gance.  
2° A second attitude could be simply to transform or approach the object itself as abstraction (to bring a mutation in perception) or operate that transformations on the level of the camera or the lighting. Man Ray seems to prefer that method though he made rotation effects which rather belong to type 1. Francis Bruguière with *Light Rhythm* (1930) (plate 9) and Ralph Steiner with *H<sub>2</sub>O* (1929) (plate 14) are undoubtedly adept at this method which seems to be favoured by photographers.  
3° A third attitude is to consider images as positions in space and these positions as paintings in time. Here both become abstract: space and time. This seems to be the privilege of painters such as Richter, Ruttmann and Eggeling (plates 8 and 9).  
I have deliberately concentrated my attention on the cinema contemporary to Man Ray but it is evident that the same tendencies could in fact be observed later. The point is the use of basic formal particularities of cinema which are not properly narrative such as movement, time, light, material, space, etc. and which modulate

the vision. These elements are also the elements which in physics constitute wave propagation and diverse laws of waves, reminding one also that cinema is above all an optical display. For this reason and with an oblique look to Man Ray I shall call this kind of cinema *kino-ray*.

L'absence d'image, l'écran noir ou l'écran blanc, ont une importance décisive dans le cinéma contemporain. [...] Ils n'ont plus une simple fonction de ponctuation, à la manière de l'enchaîné, mais entrent dans un rapport dialectique entre l'image et son absence, et prennent une valeur proprement structurale. [...] D'une part, ce qui compte n'est plus l'association des images, la manière dont elles s'associent, mais l'interstice entre deux images; d'autre part, la coupure dans une suite d'images n'est plus une coupure rationnelle qui marque la fin de l'une ou le début d'une autre, mais une coupure dite irrationnelle qui n'appartient ni à l'une, ni à l'autre, et se met à valoir pour elle-même.<sup>205</sup>

In this quotation Deleuze is of course speaking about narrative cinema today, but his source is Brakhage's experimental cinema. Reading these lines, I could not avoid picturing in my mind the suprematist *Black Square on White* by Malevich and thinking how absolute (and pure) a black screen in cinema can be. Rationalism, constructivism and minimalism in the avant-garde cinema of the twenties is best represented by Ruttmann's *Lichtspiel Opus I–V* (1919–1925) and Richter's *Rhythmus 21–25*. In *Rhythmus 23*, Richter first presents two white squares, symmetrically placed on a black background, and, after a few blendings and fragmentations of the figures, *a white square on black*, in motion, seems to come from the black background to the foreground. At the end of the film the same pictures and movements appear inverted, reversed symmetrically in time and in negative: *the white square has become black* and disappears in a «white night». The «absolute cinema» of Richter is the continuation of the roll paintings he had started around 1919:

Le rouleau relève du domaine de l'articulation temporelle, comme le film, mais de manière autre. S'il ne contient pas de mouvement physiologique, il n'en suscite pas moins dans l'esprit du spectateur une tension certaine, comme si, à tout instant, le rouleau pouvait exploser en une action cinétique authentique.<sup>206</sup>

With *Rhythmus* Richter is mainly interested in the movement and all mutations that can be visible or invisible to the eye. In his interest in movement Richter is close to pure cinema, but he is not content to see movement as a simple way to skew vision as the observer often feels is the case in films by Clair and Chomette, and even Man



Ray. He gives movement a form, as does the choreographer, a form that balances the normal forms of usual static painting. In that way his *Rhythmus* echoes suprematism (plate 8).

La rapidité du mouvement confère à l'oeil une âme nouvelle; il vit des choses dont nous n'avions jusqu'alors pris conscience que de manière sporadique et qui n'avaient été traduites dans aucune forme artistique.<sup>207</sup>

Movement, space, time, form, position, rhythm:

Le domaine propre du cinéma est celui de l'espace en mouvement, de la surface en mouvement, de la ligne en mouvement. Cet espace n'est pas en premier lieu architectural ou plastique, mais temporel, c'est-à-dire que la lumière forme, en modifiant sa qualité (clair, obscur, grand, petit) des espaces lumineux, qui ne constituent pas des volumes, mais transforment en espace, par leur succession, ce qui ne serait que surface, ligne ou point si l'on interrompait le déroulement chronologique. Le problème du cinéma est l'orchestration du temps. Les possibilités artistiques du cinéma résident dans les tensions qu'on confère au temps. Le cinéma est fait de rythme.<sup>208</sup>

Over sixty years later, Deleuze said it again briefly:

Les positions sont dans l'espace, mais le tout qui change est dans le temps<sup>209</sup>

Another difference between «pure cinema» and «absolute cinema» is therefore also the question of *organisation of the whole*.

For Dulac the organisation was restricted to space and its transformation under the action of movement; space was organic and recipient of a metamorphosis; movement was a catalyst, not an organic form itself within a changing rhythm. Movement began to acquire formal characteristics with «pure cinema», but it lacked still the calculated and controlled form that it had already acquired with the «absolute cinema» of Richter and Ruttmann from 1919 to 1925. After *Rhythmus 25* Richter made *Filmstudie 1926* (1926), in which spheres (as abstract mineral forms) interfere magically with eyes (as organs) in a surrealist dance. The film announces a move away from rational (absolute) abstraction toward a chaotic dadaist vision best represented by *Vormittagsspuk* (1927–28) in which objects begin to dictate people's actions (plate 7):

Le rôle de l'acteur, dans un film, n'est relativement pas plus important que celui de tout autre objet intervenant dans le film - pour peu que ce dernier contribue à renforcer l'expression<sup>210</sup>

Integral cinema, pure cinema and absolute cinema: I have tried to compare three points of view of the 1920s in the main concerning movement. It has been seen that emotion, expression, feeling or whatever we call the opposite of rational thinking is a perpetual concern of the avant-garde. The artists are engaged in a dialectic between the organic empiricism of making cinema and the theory of cinema itself. Perhaps the cinema that Dulac was looking for is no more «integral» than either Chomette's «pure» filming or the «absolute cinema» of Richter's temporal painting. It is not the place here to define in detail the concepts of purity (or integrality or absolutism) in the arts, but as Poggioli writes it is a search in which all means are permitted (even *bricolage*):

The ideal toward which the mystique of purity tends has nothing to do with purism in the traditional linguistic and stylistic sense - that form of purism served the classical and neoclassical need for elegance and correctness and formulated a series of rigid norms applicable only to the grammar of art. The modern mystique of purity aspires to abolish the discursive and syntactic element, to liberate art from any connection with psychological and empirical reality, to reduce every work to the intimate laws of its own expressive essence or the given absolutes of its own genre or means.<sup>211</sup>

and as special mention for the «absolute» cinema of Richter:

The more extreme avant-garde sometimes preferred to conceive of the mystique of purity precisely in the geometric sense of the image - as a hyperbolic or parabolic curve which transcends the limits not only of reality but those of art itself, to the point of annihilating art in attempting to realize its deepest essence.<sup>212</sup>

As Poggioli has remarked, the fact that images are abstract or figurative, «*nonrepresentational or representational*», does not affect purity. The «means which reflect a new vision more than a new technique» have the «ambition of freeing art from the prison of things, and even forms, has led to terms like nonobjective art»,<sup>213</sup> an art which intends to represent ideas rather than objects. Poggioli remarks that the term is equivocal because unintentionally it is linked to subjectivity, and non-objective art would not work in the visual arts «because the represented is neither idea nor object but simply form and figure».<sup>214</sup>

The particular condition of filming, as I have already written, does not help with the new concepts. The *kino-raw* (which is connected also to *Art brut* and spontaneity) and the *kino-ray* (here linked to the scientific/empirical) are therefore in the same ambiguous position of being «nonobjective». But Poggioli immediately offers some consolation:

But terms like raw art and formless painting, non objective art and nonrepresentational art are valid only in connection with the **state of mind** they emphasize. These states and mentalities are in their turn determined by the dehumanizing tendencies, iconoclasm and deformation. These, then, are nothing but the procedure by which abstract art reduces the forms of living nature to the status of *une nature morte*, with the precise aim of attaining once again a condition of absolute expressive purity or perfect innocence.<sup>215</sup>

The *state of mind* of the *kino-raw* and the *kino-ray* meet in *La pensée Sauvage* of Lévi-Strauss, the characteristics of which are to be both structured and structuring. The primary character of unconsciousness is to function like a language or a structure, but it also constitutes a way to see the world, possibly to (re)build it. The institutional (arts and politics) or material (current taste and aesthetics) environments are conditions which determine its strength.

### [kino-rem]

Je dis qu'il faut être voyant, se faire voyant. Le poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens — Arthur Rimbaud<sup>216</sup>

«On the plane of aesthetic metaphysics, we must examine the doctrines going under the names of the «aesthetic of the dream» and the «poetics of the supernatural», equally dear to the romantic and the avant-garde artist» wrote Renato Poggioli.<sup>217</sup> In *The Theory of the Avant-garde* he dedicates a whole chapter to analysing the relation between Romanticism and the Avant-garde. Romanticism was ambivalent: one foot in the principle of cultural inheritance and the other acting within the revolutionary and destructive moment. Its anti-traditionalism was mainly turned against the classical tradition inherited by Greek and Roman art which finds perpetual renewal in Renaissance art, French Classicism, the Enlightenment and Neoclassicism. But that anti-traditionalism was of course limited by a nostalgic

attitude toward the «beautiful» that was not easily compatible with modern thinking. The same attitude was also observed in the New Style. One of the biggest problems with modernity was that it couldn't carry out tradition and be turned to the future at the same time. Matei Calinescu observes the tension: «Historically, the modernist revolution started as a rejection of the highly ornate architecture that prevailed in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The very notion of the ornament was radically contested: as practiced in the so-called la Belle Époque, the ornament revealed its true parasitic and antifunctional essence.»<sup>218</sup> «Rimbaud himself, even while paying tribute to the value of the romantic heritage, undoubtedly felt the need to deny it» wrote Poggioli.<sup>219</sup>

Quel cloître possible pour ce beau dégoût? [...] l'art est une sottise.<sup>220</sup>

Another point of divergence of romanticism and avant-garde was popularity, a particularity that can certainly not be the attribute of the avant-garde to which was missing that ambivalence of the new and the old.

Poggioli made a very good observation when he said that «we should not deduce that any form of convention is alien to the avant-garde art [...] the avant-garde also has its conventions».<sup>221</sup> The anti-traditional attitude and the unavoidable principle of disorder and chance of the Dadaists became a rule that created a new conventional attitude, which has been often summarised in Rimbaud's words:

Je finis par trouver sacré le désordre de mon esprit.<sup>222</sup>

The surrealist attitude against Dadaism, personalized by the rivalry of Breton and Tzara, suggests also an exasperation with the continuous «anarchy for anarchy principle» of Dada. I have analysed the surrealist moment in preceding chapters first as a post-dadaist institution and secondly as an attempt to clarify what Man Ray's specific vision was in photography and in *Emak Bakia*. I have suggested that *Emak Bakia* should evidently be considered as a turning-point, a dialectical film including both a dadaist attitude and a surrealist vision. Coming a little earlier than *La Coquille et le clergyman* by Germaine Dulac and Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou*, and not being fully surrealist, it must be considered as anticipating surrealist cinema. This is a point of view with the benefit of the hindsight of 80 years later, of course. The momentum of Surrealism in cinema, as historically the Surrealists conceived it,

was *Un Chien andalou*, the first film accepted by Breton as surrealist. *La Coquille et le clergyman* was banished by Artaud<sup>223</sup> and the Surrealists, but rehabilitated in 1962 by Henri Langois and Georges Sadoul:

J'ai longtemps méprisé *La Coquille et le clergyman*, d'autant plus qu'il n'en subsistait plus qu'un court fragment. Et puis, revoyant, en 1962, dans son intégralité, le film redécouvert par Henri Langois, je me suis trouvé injuste. La mise en scène ne fut sans doute pas celle rêvée par Artaud, mais malgré certains défauts, l'oeuvre à fort bien vieilli, a pris de la force avec le temps écoulé, et mérite d'avoir sa place parmi les Classiques du Cinéma Surréaliste.<sup>224</sup>

Jean Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un poète* did not suit the Surrealists any better:

J'ai vu ce film de Cocteau, au Vieux-Colombier, avec André Breton [...] nous nous sommes dit indignés et écœurés. Nous avons, je crois décidé de quitter la salle, pour parler, dehors, d'ignobles contrefaçons.<sup>225</sup>

This recalls the «*accueil froid*» reserved for *Emak Bakia* by the Surrealists (and Georges Sadoul) at that time:

Emak-Bakia, *Le Retour à la raison*, furent toujours plus proches de ses (Man Ray) recherches plastiques, comme peintre et comme photographe, que du surréalisme le plus orthodoxe, qui utilisait alors beaucoup l'assemblage lyrique et scandaleux d'éléments disparates, pour former des poèmes ou des tableaux «beaux comme la rencontre fortuite d'un parapluie et d'une machine à coudre sur la table de dissection»(Lautréamont).<sup>226</sup>

The mark of Surrealism was however often what the Surrealist's group had decided was surrealist. For instance Eisenstein's *Potemkin* was considered at that time by the Surrealists to be a surrealist film because of its «unconditional invitation to revolution».<sup>227</sup>

If Surrealism is (among other things) the abandonment of that «methodical disorder» for a more oneiric vision or a «lyrico-scandalous» content, obviously also present in Man Ray's next opus *L'Etoile de mer*, my argument is that this particularity must be observed in the passage from dadaist cinema to surrealist cinema in general. My purpose in this subchapter is above all to find some general principles by which to understand the evolution from dadaist cinema to surrealist vision in cinema, and to a certain extent to question the bases of that evolution, namely those

attributed to Luis Buñuel. I will try to show that Man Ray had a surrealist vision, here too, *avant la lettre*.

Unfortunately, the task is not so evident: some difficulties have already been encountered in defining a characteristic or typical dadaist vision in filmmaking. Others, like Alain Virmaux, have suggested that surrealist cinema was obviously a «badly kept promise».<sup>228</sup> The common idea (in Europe) is often that surrealist cinema is Buñuel and that the genre stops there.

N'envisageons ici que les films consciemment et exclusivement surréalistes, tels qu'ils ont pu être réalisés, disons entre 1924 et 1932, ceux en somme dont le mouvement (surréaliste) pouvait se proclamer aux heures de sa puissance. Éliminons impitoyablement toutes les œuvres d'avant-garde qui peuvent ressortir à d'autres influences (films abstraits, films purs, films dada, film de poètes). Et demandons-nous ce qui se cache derrière l'arbre Buñuel: le désert ou la forêt.<sup>231</sup>

Alain Virmaux explains how expectations of a surrealist cinema were too high. Firstly, cinema then as an art form represented anti-bourgeois values, and secondly «moving images seemed invented specifically so that dreams could be visualized».<sup>232</sup> The most important disappointment was in the means, because the strength of the cinema became also its weakness. Cocteau said:

Si je raconte qu'un homme entre dans un miroir, on hausse les épaules; mais si je le montre, alors on ne hausse plus les épaules.<sup>233</sup>

Cocteau's observation emphasises the technical nature of the medium (particularly compared with literature, Surrealism's basic form of expression). There is of course a contradiction between technique (photography and tricks, for instance) and surrealist automatism (automatic writing) and it was also one of Man Ray's major preoccupations. For instance he considered himself to have worked with the automatism principle for *Emak Bakia* (which is not considered as surrealist) but rejected improvisation for *L'Etoile de mer* (which is, paradoxically, considered as surrealist).

La technique cinématographique est loin de pouvoir atteindre l'automatisme auquel peut parvenir le langage.<sup>234</sup>

Alain Virmaux also rejects *L'Etoile de mer* as a surrealist film for the same reason, although the film is not a simple «illustration of the poem by Desnos, but the adjunction of one poetic world to another».<sup>235</sup> The point of departure he says is not constituted by images but by «*la chose écrite*», the written piece. For that reason it is impossible to consider it as a surrealist film. Alain Virmaux seems to forget that the text by Desnos is a text and not a dream, so if it is not a representation or an interpretation (something automatism cannot be) it is nonetheless a transposition of mental images into concrete words.

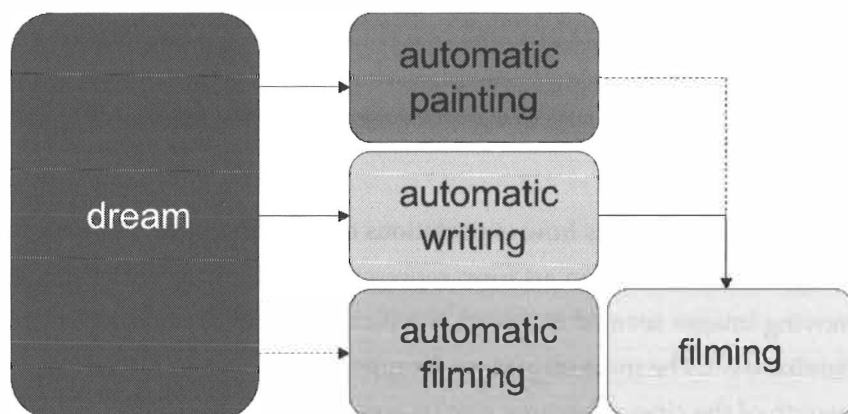


Fig. 31: Surrealist Vision Process in Filming

If writing cannot avoid the object transposition in *la chose écrite* —or painting painted— it is not the case with cinema which presents within its own limits more of a concretisation, a facsimile. Surrealist cinema is not limited to illustrating writings and Man Ray has shown that he could use paintings and objects as well to satisfy his *fantasmes* (fantasies). Surrealist filming though limited technically (the man walking into the mirror) has however the advantage of remaining in the world of images, a world that constitute the world of dreams, all above an amalgam of visual heteroclitic material.

On one hand the technique permits the extraordinary to be shown, but on the other hand it lacks spontaneity:

Le cinéma aurait pu être l'expression idéale du surréalisme si la technique avait pu se révéler plus souple et avait permis plus de spontanéité<sup>236</sup>

Man Ray probably never worked in cinema according to the full principle of automatism, but nor did Buñuel —how could he have filmed Dalí's thinking «automatically» in *Chien andalou*? Buñuel said pertinently that «films seem to be an involuntary imitation of dreams»: <sup>237</sup> an absurd perspective for the modern artist who would not accept imitations or tautology. The principle of automatic writing has been much discussed in regard to surrealist painting too. I believe that the problem with literature, painting or cinema is basically the same: the creation of the work cannot happen *in* the dream, but after the dream. There is an unavoidable disjunction between the dream and its representation which of course is more acute in cinema because we can *see* that the image projected on the screen is a construction and compare the *image* of that construction directly to the non-material nature of dreams.

Il n'est possible de noter la description d'un rêve qu'au réveil. Il n'est pas plus question de fixer directement le rêve sur la pellicule que de l'écrire au fur et à mesure ou de le peindre automatiquement sur une toile <sup>238</sup>

The problems of the disjunction between dream and reality, the dreamed and *the lived remembrance of the dreamed* (which brings to mind the signifier and the signified) are all equally present in cinema in general, so there is no particular need for the film to be surrealist.

A dream in the diegesis has to be *marked* as a dream, otherwise the scene always retains an appearance of conscious reality.

Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* is probably the purest example of that disjunction: the *I see myself who sees myself as a dream of myself* principle is much used in conventional narrative psychological drama. For instance when in Bergman's *The Wild Strawberries* Isaac Borg tells a (surrealist) dream he has had, Borg sees himself in the dream. In the sequence there are in fact already four levels of subjectivity (or interpretations of the dream):

1° the original dream

2° the remembrance of that dream (in Borg's memory) = protagonist's reality

3° the narration of the dream by Borg (Borg himself in the dream), the «apparent» objectivity given to the observer = filmic reality

4° the narration by Bergman: the first dream sequence of the film = script reality

The use of a dream sequence does not therefore make a film a surrealist film.



To be surrealist, the whole film ought to be «dreamed», meaning that in most conventional narrative films the dream sequences are subordinated to a realistic narration, as is not the case in a surrealist film. There are in fact a great number of recent or older films which stand as it were between, on a borderline between the the imaginary and the real, such as a few films by Polanski (especially in the seventies), Lars von Trier, Jeunet and Tim Burton (to give extreme examples):

On sait qu'il est toujours abusif de parler de rêve dans un film. D'abord, nous avons eu à propos de Buñuel et de Bergman même l'occasion de le dire souvent, images et sons relèvent du film seul et non d'un réel ou d'un imaginaire à lui extérieur. Ensuite, le récit d'un rêve ne fonctionne pas comme un rêve, mais comme un récit. Le film peut être la somme ou la concrétisation d'une série fantasmatique de l'auteur, il n'en est pas moins un objet réel dont la nature et la fonction sont en tout éloignées de celles du rêve. [...] Ce ne sont pas les personnages qui rêvent dans le film (ou même rêvent le film) mais celui-ci qui les rêve, qui les raconte.<sup>239</sup>

This consideration does not make surrealist cinema essentially different from conventional narrative cinema. But coming back to the viewpoint of Alain Virmaux on surrealist cinema, after eliminating *Emak Bakia* and *L'Etoile de mer* as not being surrealist films, Virmaux discusses the case of *La Coquille et le clergyman* and of course Artaud's legendary quarrel about the script and its transposition on to the screen. Historically the «quarrel» is important because the film precedes *Un Chien andalou* by one year and to recognise that *La Coquille et le clergyman* is the first surrealist film means that Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou* necessarily loses its reputation as the first surrealist film. After a close analysis of the process of making the film, Alain Virmaux found out, from Artaud's side of his correspondence with Dulac, that their well-known diverging views about the script actually emerged relatively late, just before or after the première. Indeed Artaud had at the beginning implicitly fully accepted Dulac's transposition. Virmaux quotes Ado Kyrou:

Historiquement, *La Coquille et le clergyman* reste le premier film surréaliste, ne devant rien aux recherches de cinéma pur<sup>240</sup>

Why reject *L'Etoile de mer* as a surrealist film only on the principle that the film was made by following a script, and at the same time why try to prove that a much more discussed filmic transposition of an Artaud script by Dulac is surrealist? I do not question that *La Coquille et le clergyman* belongs in the category of surrealist cinema,

but I wish to argue that *L'Etoile de mer* too is undoubtedly surrealist. *Emak Bakia*, being surrealistic, as has been shown, only in the second half after the caption, should assume only an honorary position in surrealist film. The chronology of the premières of the films discussed was as follows (all were after the publication of the surrealist manifesto in 1924):

*Emak Bakia* by Man Ray: 23 November 1926

*La Coquille et le clergyman* by Germaine Dulac: 9 February 1928

*L'Etoile de mer* by Man Ray: 13 May 1928

*Un Chien andalou* by Luis Buñuel: 12 June 1929\*

*Les Mystères du château du dé* by Man Ray: 12 June 1929\*

\*both premiered in Studio des Ursulines in a unique representation

Another perspective for the analysis of the chronology of surrealist cinema is to concentrate on its iconography (plate 31). Alain Virmaux has remarked that it is «impossible to establish with precision a date of conception for the diverse scripts».<sup>241</sup> Though he considers Artaud's script of *La Coquille et le clergyman* as unavoidable, he observes similarities in the iconography of *L'Etoile de mer* and *Un Chien andalou*. For my part in chapter 8 I had revealed similar elements between *Emak Bakia* and *Un Chien andalou* and suggested that Buñuel could even have been influenced by *Emak Bakia*.<sup>242</sup> Artaud's position could as well be attributed to Desnos, who made the script of *L'Etoile de mer* and was premiered only two months after *La Coquille et le clergyman*. And *Emak Bakia* still remains one and half years earlier, with an iconography clearly related to surrealist films: the poetry of the shore, oneiric scenes and the crystal ball (*la boule du voyant* of Rimbaud?) are a few of them.

Le phénomène d'interaction reste indéniable. Il vaut pour plusieurs films. Ainsi le bocal qui contient l'étoile de mer, dans le film de Desnos et Man Ray, n'est-il pas sans rappeler dans *Un Chien andalou*, la boîte où est enfermé le poignet coupé, et surtout la boule de verre où, chez Artaud, l'on voit bouger une tête. En outre, l'étoile de mer et la coquille d'huître appartiennent évidemment au même univers poétique.<sup>243</sup>

Instead of rejecting again *L'Etoile de mer* as a surrealist film, in the analysis Virmaux implicitly recognises that it belongs to surrealist cinematography. I argue here that *Emak Bakia* belongs to the same iconography although it has a connection too to dadaist manipulation in its editing, except for the sequence with Jacques Rigaut which is I believe completely surrealist. *Emak Bakia* therefore belongs to surrealist

cinema not only as an anticipative form in the pseudo-narrative sequence with Jacques Rigaut but also from the characteristics of its iconography. With three films<sup>244</sup> within the crucial beginning of surrealist cinema in the years 1927–29, Man Ray could have been a little better noticed. This view does not weaken the force of the film(s) by Buñuel but it restores a historical perspective in which surrealist cinema is definitively not only Buñuel.

Most of the critics see *L'Age d'or* as the purest and probably the last surrealist film: I shall not discuss that problem here, but it seems after the Manifesto which had followed the film in 1931 that it is the only film which «answered fully the expectations of the Surrealists».<sup>245</sup> Man Ray curiously remains absent from the manifesto. Tzara «found» Man Ray, Breton «found» Buñuel.

I believe that surrealist cinema comprised by more than Buñuel (plate 11) constitutes a kind of comeback for «popularism» and the ambivalence of the romantic attitude that I revealed above and finally, for that reason, first demarked itself from the current experimental European avant-garde cinema and, secondly, reconnected itself with narrative cinema forms. Was Cocteau the initiator? Fortunately what I shall call «pseudo-surrealist cinema» resumed the leadership of a «progressive» tendency inside narrative cinema subsumed within auteur film (*cinéma d'auteur*) or what used to be called in French the *cinéma d'art et d'essais*. Surrealist film mainly influenced fantasy and fantastic genres, or very personal works like *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* by Alain Resnais (1959), *L'Homme au crâne rasé* (1965), *Un soir, un train* (1968) and *Rendez-vous à Bray* (1971) by André Delvaux, *Malpertuis* (1972) by Harry Kümel and animations by the Czechs Jan Svankmajer or, up to the nineties, the Belgian Raoul Servais (plate 11). Auteur names like Roman Polanski could be carefully included (e.g. on account of his taste for the supernatural and paranoia):

Je dois avouer que c'est au surréalisme que je dois ma formation. [...] Aux heures les plus sombres du stalinisme, se passionner pour le surréalisme, c'était avoir du goût pour le fruit défendu...[...] ma peinture se trouvait évidemment surréaliste, mais cette peinture voulait avant tout exprimer des idées. Elle n'était donc pas entièrement surréaliste. Ce fut la même chose pour Deux hommes et une armoire.<sup>246</sup>

A marginal filmmaker like Walerian Borowczyk (1923–2006) with *Goto, l'île d'amour* (1968) is situated between Kafka, Pasolini, and surrealist cinema. Borowczyk's career evolution is quit interesting. He started as a painter, and begun in cinema with short animations. «Evolved from animation to eroticism, the work of Borowczyk is an

aesthetically consistent collection of subconscious and emerging visions from the past. Throughout his career the director has built intriguing and closed realities, in which objects too have a soul.»<sup>247</sup>

A totally different aspect of surrealist influence (and probably partly unintentional too), where dreams are intentionally transformed into nightmares, is to be found in the so-called B-movies, mostly British, American and Italian, typical low-budget and wide distribution popular films, made in the sixties and early seventies. Today they are regarded as cult objects under the genres of the supernatural, horror, zombie, trash, psychotronic, cannibal, etc. (plate 11). The «cream» is represented by the films of Roger Corman and the productions of David Durston, Jerry Gross, William F. Claxton, Brad F. Grinter and Steve Hawkes. The interesting point about these films besides their surrealist *clichés* and relative violence is their social counterpoint «meaning just about everything except the Norm»<sup>248</sup> and therefore their famous problems with censorship.

The intention is far from denigrating surrealist cinema by its later connections with narrative cinema. On the contrary, it is to show that like dadaist cinema surrealist cinema ought to be considered as a transition period far beyond the incomparable originality of Buñuel, or, from another point of view, it must be considered as a *genre*, probably as significant in time as the mark left by the French *nouvelle vague* on the *cinéma d'auteur*.

Faute d'un cinéma vraiment surréaliste, on a dû se résoudre à chercher le surréalisme au cinéma.<sup>249</sup>

But isn't it the basic role of the avant-garde to be «in advance of its own time» and to have «a sense of mission»?<sup>250</sup> ...And finally to change old norms into new ones? From the «experimental» point of view the influences of Buñuel and Cocteau were mostly recognised in the works of Maya Deren (*Meshes of the Afternoon*, 1943) and Kenneth Anger (*Fireworks*, 1947). It has been seen in chapter 5 that in *Meshes of the Afternoon* (plate 11) Deren's and Hammid's perspective is not connected with reality but is above all an introspection:

This film is concerned with the interior experience of an individual. It does not record an event which could be witnessed by other persons. Rather, it reproduces the way in which the subconscious of an individual will develop, interpret and elaborate an apparently simple and casual incident into a critical emotional experience.<sup>251</sup>

The characters «live in a world which is not controlled by material or geographical boundaries; instead, they move in a totally fictive universe, and just as in our dreams».<sup>252</sup> Jarmo Valkola remarked that «although *Meshes of the Afternoon* resembles a dream experience, Maya Deren warns against a psychoanalytical reading of the film,»<sup>253</sup> but emphasizes the mythological perspective:

The intent of this first film, as of the subsequent films, is to create a mythological experience.<sup>254</sup>

From my point of view, both the psychoanalytical and the mythological perspective link to Surrealism. The mythological and the lyrical attitudes often interfere, and in any case there are distinguishing marks of the classical world as well as of Surrealism (and certainly not Dadaism).

Kenneth Anger himself does not consider *Fireworks* (1947) (plate 11) as a surrealist film but prefers the label «film-dream».<sup>255</sup> He had seen *Le Sang d'un poète* and met Cocteau (after *Fireworks*) in Paris. His stay in France, in 1950, made it possible through Henri Langlois and the *Cinémathèque française* to make *Rabbit's Moon* (1950) a version of *Pierrot* (Lunaire) which can be understood as a search for light, a theme that comes back in later films. The character of Pierrot (Pedrolino in his Italian incarnation) was a stock figure in the *commedia dell'arte*, a type of improvised theatre which flourished in northern Italy and elsewhere in Europe from the sixteenth century onwards.<sup>256</sup> So here also we are in the middle of a «lyrical mythology». Light with all its symbolism was an equally important theme in Anger's first film *Fireworks*:

A dissatisfied dreamer awakes, goes out in the night seeking «a light» and is drawn through the needle's eye. A dream of a dream, he returns to bed less empty than before.<sup>257</sup>

The film takes the form of a trance film<sup>258</sup>, in which its protagonist (Anger himself) engages in a hypnotic journey through his own unconscious.

It may be remembered here that Sitney besides the trance film has made different assignments of that American experimental cinema, seeing also «mythopoetic», «lyrical», «structural» and «participatory» subcategories.

Except that in avant-garde and experimental film, from Buñuel to Borowczyk, and from Cocteau to Anger, instead of a narrow definition of surrealism, two continents

within a period over 80 years (the Mexican film history from Buñuel to Glauber Rocha could be listed too) are involved. From 1980 it could have been expected that surrealist cinema would have made a resurgence in the form of video. For thirty years the expansion of video was an adventure which had begun with Fluxus and performance art as a «dadaist renaissance». The point to make is that surrealist cinema has been kept until now rather far from video —unlike the use of «digital effects» in narrative cinema. Is the reason technical (a paradox, if we think that video has freed the cinema from all that cumbersome technical apparatus)? Or is it that electronic image and lyrical poetry are too distant? Bill Viola and Peter Greenaway seem to be both looking in that direction (plate 34). Another reason could be that the costs of filming «dreams» are still too high, an argument early developed by Breton himself, and refreshed by Anger in 2003.<sup>259</sup>

All arguments are probably pertinent, but I believe that the reason for «lyrical decline» is the times: we live in a society in which everything is measured rationally, with money, including fashion, clichés and kitsch. The sixties and the beginning of the seventies which were the golden age of experimental film (super 8 mm) and pioneer video were full of utopia. Today, beside the high cost of building «special sets», the general tendency does not favor such creative so-called underground movements. Artists have to be public, efficient, realistic, recognized, and that «atmosphere» has an unavoidable flattening impact on artistic production. On the other hand there is still an indeterminate «trash culture» which is flourishing in the Web, from which I believe an avant-garde could soon emerge.<sup>260</sup> Since virtual effects have been developed at roughly the same rate as the «digital» and the «trash» the tendency toward *imaginary worlds* and possibly a *deviation from the norms* seems to be progressively reversed, but nobody can yet speak of a revolution of ideas.

In *L'image-temps* Gilles Deleuze used some of the commentary by Antonin Artaud.<sup>261</sup> Both abstract and Hollywood cinema have to be «banished» he says, and the image should have a «direct neurophysiological impact on thought».<sup>262</sup> Artaud was largely disappointed by experimental and surrealist cinema, which were «interesting approximations, but not at all sufficient for fulfilling thoughts».<sup>263</sup> Even dreams he was keeping as «a too easy solution». That point of view rejoins the opinion of Roman Polanski who deliberately had progressively kept at a distance from the surrealist «form» because he wanted to express «ideas»:

Je n'étais donc pas authentiquement surréaliste, puisque le but du véritable surréalisme est précisément de ne pas avoir de signification. Le surréalisme est une façon d'exprimer le subconscient, notre libido, mais ce n'est pas une forme de combat. Les images surréalistes sont des images de rêves, des paysages de tripes<sup>264</sup>

Images? Floaters? Incarnations? What are the dreams? And what are the dreams for the Surrealists? At Rue Férou, in his last atelier and residence, Man Ray had a removable bed-table on which he could promptly make a note of his dreams or make sketches when waking. It is a common experience that dreams are difficult to recall. The dreams occur during what is called the REM-phases<sup>265</sup> of sleep. People every night usually have four or five periods of REM-sleep which are quite short at the beginning of the night and longer at the end. In the morning it is usual to awake while the last REM-sleep is going on and once awake quickly forget all «images» or «sensations». During the REM-stage, the activity of the brain's neurons is quite similar to during waking hours; for this reason, the phenomenon is often called paradoxical sleep. The function of REM-sleep is not well understood and several theories have been advanced in explanation. REM-sleep is probably a phase which helps creating stimuli needed in brain development, a theory which could explain why babies have up to fifty percent of REM-sleep during their total sleep, much more than adults. A lack of REM-sleep causes brain damage. The discovery of REM-sleep as a physiological and neurological effect (1952) is later than Surrealism, which is an interesting observation on the relationship between surrealist sensibility and the rational viewpoint of science. Yet, the Surrealist's interest in dreams is a direct consequence of the theories of Sigmund Freud, whose theories were greatly appreciated including by Man Ray.

We may observe how the memory of a dream which in the morning was still vivid fades in the course of the day, leaving only a few trifling remnants. [...] On the other hand, it often happens that dreams manifest an extraordinary power of maintaining themselves in the memory<sup>266</sup>

We can imagine how Man Ray scrupulously followed «Jessen's advices»<sup>267</sup> (as a quotation by Freud):

The observation of dreams has its special difficulties, and the only way to avoid all error in such matter is to put on paper without the least delay what has just been experienced and noticed; otherwise, totally or partially the dream is quickly forgotten; total forgetting is

without seriousness; but partial forgetting is treacherous: for, if one then starts to recount what has not been forgotten, one is likely to supplement from the imagination the incoherent and disjointed fragments provided by the memory.... unconsciously one becomes an artist, and the story, repeated from time to time, imposes itself on the belief of its author, who, in good faith, tells it as authentic fact, regularly established according to proper methods...

My purpose here is not to discuss the theories of dreams (and their interpretations), but to understand what could be the «atmosphere» during the process of creating a surrealist work, and more specifically what was the *vision* of the artist. In a way, very little has been written about it. Man Ray himself was being laconic when he said:

It has never been my object to record my dreams, just the determination to realize them.<sup>268</sup>

To a certain extent I am not concerned either with absent research which is not relevant to art history but more to theories of creativity. I wish nonetheless to emphasise the unique opportunity for art education to develop with an eye on the field of the psychology of the dreams.

As the statement by Jessen suggests, dreams can be kept under control: a dream in which the dreamer becomes aware that he is dreaming, and can carry on the dream with unbroken awareness is called a *lucid dream*. Dreaming in this state is a skill which can be learned. Lucid dreams, like all dreams, usually occur during REM-sleep. The question here, in this rational–emotional dialectic perspective, is to ask to what extent dreams could be controlled *enough* to stimulate artistic production, and to what extent the same process could bring the artist to a *too important* inhibiting behavior? A question here resumed in Freud's short and frightening statement:

Dream-distortion proves in reality to be an act of censorship.<sup>269</sup>

Deleuze observes that European cinema in particular has developed this kind of supernatural vision in cinema, and it must not be restricted to Surrealism. He writes:

Le cinéma européen s'est confronté très tôt à un ensemble de phénomènes, amnésie, hypnose, hallucination, délire, vision des mourants, et surtout cauchemar et rêve. C'était un aspect important du cinéma soviétique, et de ses alliances variables avec le futurisme, le constructivisme, le formalisme; de l'expressionnisme allemand et de ses alliances variables avec la psychiatrie, avec la psychanalyse; ou de l'école française et de ses alliances variables avec le surréalisme.<sup>270</sup>



Jean Epstein in his writings has insisted on these subjective and oneiric conditions of the European cinema. We observe that it is not a characteristic of the twenties or thirties but continues until the end of the century, far beyond the writings of Epstein. Deleuze sees in that particularity a way in which European cinema has to demark itself from the «image-action» that is proper to Hollywood, but also to reach to «a mystery of times, to link images, thoughts and the camera into the same *automatic subjectivity*»<sup>271</sup> in opposition to the «too objective» conception of the Americans. Deleuze enumerates these subjective sensations which he doesn't limit to the visual and audio channels, but extends to all the five senses; dream is only one of these sensations, which he says is disrupted from memory and movement recognition, but linked essentially to a «panorama of time»:

C'est tout un «panorama» temporel, un ensemble instable de souvenirs flottants, images d'un passé «en général» qui défile avec une rapidité vertigineuse, comme si le temps conquérait une liberté profonde.<sup>272</sup>

After that observation Deleuze turns his analysis more particularly in the direction of Bergson and what Deleuze calls «images-rêve» (dream-images), a concept of great interest in this chapter. Bergson said:

Il y a des états nombreux, tels que l'hallucination et le rêve, où surgissent des images qui imitent de tout point la perception extérieure. Comme, en pareil cas, l'objet a disparu tandis que le cerveau subsiste, on conclut de là que le phénomène cérébral suffit à la production de l'image. Mais il ne faut pas oublier que, dans tous les états psychologiques de ce genre, la mémoire joue le premier rôle. [...] Cette mémoire, pas plus que la perception elle-même, n'a sa condition réelle et complète dans un état cérébral<sup>273</sup>

The sleeper, explains Deleuze, puts his sensations *not* into precise «images-souvenir» (remembrance-images) but within the adjunction of «floaters»:

...des nappes de passé fluides et malléables qui se contentent d'un ajustement très large ou flottant.<sup>274</sup>

These «floaters» and the actual sensation are put together in the dream within a «*vision panoramique*» which constitutes the «dream-image». The «dream-image» becomes actual by a serial anamorphosis of the actual-virtual stages of «*image-perception*» and «*image-souvenir*» meaning that the «remembrance-image», which is

by nature virtual, is actualized in the «panoramic vision». Deleuze insists that the process is not metaphoric and he gives an example that can be compared to Man Ray's «snowstorm and the field of daisies».

Quand le dormeur est livré à la sensation lumineuse actuelle d'une surface verte trouée de taches blanches, le rêveur qui gît dans le dormeur peut évoquer l'image d'une prairie parsemée de fleurs, mais celle-ci ne s'actualise qu'en devenant déjà l'image d'un billard garni de boules, qui ne s'actualise pas sans devenir autre chose à son tour.<sup>275</sup>

In the case of Man Ray the «real salt on the film» became perhaps a virtual picture (actually traces) on film, but re-actualized as a snowstorm when it was becoming a field of daisies.

I have discussed the sequence before and observed that two interpretative ways of seeing could be found, one linked to abstraction and Dadaism, the other to Surrealism. The final conclusion was that the same sequence had to have a different *meaning* whether considering it in *Le Retour à la raison* or in *Emak Bakia*. This interpretation thus finds echoes in the theories of Bergson and Deleuze.

Deleuze finds examples in Dadaism as well as in Surrealism respectively with their archetypes *Entr'acte* and *Un Chien andalou*. I think that dadaist cinema had anticipated the «dream theories» of the Surrealists but simply exploited the «dream-image» as such, not as the actualization of «real» dreams they had had, the latter being a method which became automatic to Man Ray in the late surrealist period. One of the reproaches that the Surrealists made to dadaist films (and *La Coquille et le clergyman*) was the excessive use of all kind of tricks, a particularity which, I agree, remained absent in the films by Buñuel.<sup>276</sup>

Another example of the same kind of anamorphosis was *L'Élévation de poussière* which was to Man Ray his first «dream-photograph», an early photographic vision during New York Dada.<sup>277</sup> Between dreams and visions a distinction must be made. Deleuze arrives at it through the «concept of the crystal» and what he has called the «*image-cristal*», a concept that he has built from the «*cône*» of Bergson. The theory involves not only «*images-souvenir*» and «*images-perception*» but also *time* as a cut between the actual situation *en devenir* (the plane «P» in Bergson's sketch) and the conservation of the memory of the past (the *cône*), with all its stages of actualizations<sup>278</sup> (figure 32).

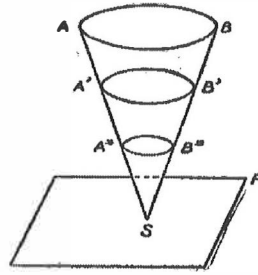


Fig. 32: Bergson's Cone

Le visionnaire, le voyant, c'est celui qui voit dans le cristal, et, ce qu'il voit, c'est le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission.[...] Le cristal en effet ne cesse d'échanger les deux images distinctes qui le constituent, l'image actuelle du présent qui passe et l'image virtuelle du passé qui se conserve<sup>279</sup>

This view can make the artist a prophet of his own past... but don't we say that history repeats itself?

De joie, je devins un opéra fabuleux<sup>280</sup>

### [video-rew]

There is a whole set of new, totally new names. And we see their films only rarely. It's difficult to gain a good perspective --Jonas Mekas<sup>281</sup>

In this section I would like to make a few points about the «new» experimental cinema and its extension in video, a complex amalgam that has developed from structural film (Sitney), new formal film (Le Grice), materialist film (Gidal) and underground film.

Since the mid-sixties it covers a period of over thirty years. We could label it the expanded cinema (Edward S. Small, Youngblood) or meta-cinema or essential cinema (Mekas). The idea is naturally to find a kind of continuation from avant-garde cinema tradition into video-making today.

In chapter 5 it was seen that structural, new formal or materialist film —all labels describing experimental cinema from abstract expressionism up to pop art— represented an escape from traditional narrative devices. The Underground instead represented «an ideology of total liberation and spontaneity, both humanist and

universalising» with «aspiration to the spiritual and the metaphysical»<sup>282</sup> which permitted «fragmented narratives».

At the same time some artists of that generation took an interest in video.

Video art and especially installations must be considered as a new kind of visual art expression closer to painting, performance, sculpture or object installations made in a new dada spirit.

From 1965 until the advent of digital technology, low-budget and free cinema is represented by four technologies and as are the generations of filmmakers:

1° the «Bolex» generation (16mm, S16mm) — Bolex h-16 standard introduced in 1949

2° the «super eight» generation (8mm, S8mm) — introduced by Kodak in 1965

3° the «Portapak» generation (videotape recorders) — introduced by Sony in 1965

4° the «videocassette» generation (camcorders<sup>283</sup>) — VHS: introduced by JVC in 1976

It will be noticed at once that with the exception of the helical scan video tape technology (like the *Portapak*) which was replaced by the videocassette around 1980, all the above formats have existed in parallel until today and still partly do so despite the coming of CD-ROMs and DV(D)s in the nineties.<sup>284</sup>

We should not properly then speak about different generations because in practice they belong to one and the same general spirit that could be termed expanded cinema or video. It is an alternative cinema<sup>285</sup> with emphasis on «personal memory». For Gene Youngblood,<sup>286</sup> in 1970 video mostly differs from film in its electronic essence, not in its aims: a restrictive and possibly a simplistic point of view which was discussed far into the nineties but which has the advantage of showing the relative filiation between film and video (so-called expanded theory).

That point of view is interesting to discuss again from a new fresh historical and not only technological perspective. The question can be as simple as asking what can be done today with video that cannot be done with film, and to reverse the question asking also what the evolution of mainstream cinema has been since the advent of video. As has been observed since Fluxus, video-art split almost immediately into «filming space» and «filling space»: on one side it became in the eighties a low-budget replacement of film, and on the other hand, it went its own route escaping the cinema screen for the spaces of galleries and museums, and eventually their walls (video projections).

The film industry at the beginning developed a strong resistance to video technology, but the situation of normal film editing was completely revised at the beginning of the nineties with off-line editing on video monitors and with Avid-system, a technology rapidly adopted by Hollywood.

The marriage of «movies» with electronic image is not yet completely consummated but nobody can any longer doubt it will be. It is not a secret with regard to digital video effects: narrative cinema needs video (and computers).

To take up now a totally different perspective Jonathan Crary points out that the contemporary observers in cinema theatres have grown up in a totally new environment: they have been TV/video and computer «observers» from their very young age and subsequently have developed a new perception (the new observer cares less about the origin —optic or electronic— of the picture than its actual size and quality).

In a period of over thirty years cinema has been transformed into a sophisticated play between representational and virtual worlds, while the electronic image little by little has been changing the perception of the reference-world (with the idea that «virtual» exists as reference too).<sup>287</sup>

Returning to structural film and to the first videographics by Stephen Berk (structural video?) the question arises of what that new «personal memory» strongly present in «expanded cinema» means; and a deeper question is if can we consider it as avant-garde?

In 1971 Ernie Gehr structural filmmaker wrote:

In representational films sometimes the image affirms its own presence as image, graphic entity, but most often it serves as vehicle to a photo-recorded event. Traditional and established avant-garde film teaches film to be an image, a representing. But film is a real thing and as a real thing it is not imitation. It does not reflect on life, it embodies the life of the mind. It is not a vehicle for ideas or portrayals of emotion outside of its own existence as emoted idea. Film is a variable intensity of light, an internal balance of time, a movement within a given space.<sup>288</sup>

That statement may be seen in opposition to Jonas Mekas' experience:

My first scripts were semi-avant-garde documentaries and narratives. I wrote them together with my brother. And I actually sent them to Flaherty but he said, «Nobody wants to sponsor my own films, how can I help you?» So I gave up very early on that, and just continued

filming, collecting footage, trying to master my Bolex. But as time went, I began reviewing my footage occasionally. **I began seeing that it was like I was keeping a notebook** of my life in New York. [...] I became more conscious of a notebook, diary form. But I did not release anything. I kept looking at my footage, but did not finish anything until an occasion came in '67, when Gerald O'Grady got some money for some kind of festival in Buffalo, and he wanted to include film. It was music, theater, etc. He asked me if I would show some of my film diary. And that's when I put together Walden.<sup>289</sup>

The fact that narrative cinema made a comeback in the avant-garde during the seventies can be considered as a reaction to the non-narrative (or anti-narrative) wave of new formal cinema. Actually, neither narrative nor non-narrative cinema ever ceased to exist, but they had been «artificially» separated by a thin invisible line set by theorists and critics. One was the legacy of surrealist cinema and «Hollywood's underground»,<sup>290</sup> perpetuated mostly by the American underground of the sixties —psychodrama— and the other the legacy of absolute, abstract and meditative cinema. There may be another more social explanation. Films (and video) progressively freed from high costs became also the medium *for saying something*, for developing oppositional themes (I am speaking mostly of the period immediately post '68), a cinema «of people for the people».

Jonas Mekas, with his post-war experience of a «displaced person» from Lithuania, a situation which he has related as a kind of «bohemia», in 2001 explained the problematic «opposition principle»:

I think that I have not seen anywhere recently what we call avant-garde, experimental referred to as oppositional cinema. I think that the dynamics, what made the '60s so exciting was that oppositional aspect. In the same way I would say that bohemia is an oppositional way of life, as compared to the rest of society. This duality is always needed, it produces a dynamic; energy is created. The independent, the avant-garde cinema is the opposition to Hollywood cinema. If you eliminate the oppositional cinema, the same as if you eliminate bohemia, cinema would become dead. [...] Somehow, in the United States, there was and still is, the oppositional cinema. It managed to keep alive, though it seems sometimes like there are three or four years where it falls asleep. But then it picks itself up again. I think we are in a good period now. There is an oppositional cinema.<sup>291</sup>

With «oppositional cinema» we enter a phase in which filmmakers have already taken into account the freedom of the medium engendered on one hand by the possibilities of cinema as pure formal art and on the other by the democratization of the technique, but most importantly narrative is no longer seen as a «handicap» for

expression. Narration rather becomes a vehicle for new «time-images» and ideas. Indeed in the cinema circuits these filmmakers, often women,<sup>292</sup> have developed a new kind of narrative (helped by the *libération de mœurs* in the French *Nouvelle vague*), which can be the diary (Mekas), the integral time (Akerman), the *dysnarrative* cinema<sup>293</sup> (Robbe-Grillet, Duras, Varda) and more recently the film narration as *pictorial performing art*<sup>294</sup> (Peter Greenaway and Sally Potter).

Le cinéma est toujours narratif, et de plus en plus narratif, mais il est dysnarratif pour autant que la narration est affectée de répétitions, permutations et transformations qui s'expliquent en détail par la nouvelle structure.<sup>295</sup>

Dominique Noguez has also seen that tendency:

Le film expérimental est plutôt jusqu'à Snow, Akerman ou Duras, du côté de l'espace et du temps, de la variation sur un thème multiplement répété que de la course aux «rebondissements», des moments «sans rien» - où l'œil a tout loisir de, si je puis dire, se faire son nid dans l'image - que du tape-à-l'œil haletant.<sup>296</sup>

Jonas Mekas explains how his films take a shape:

When I begin to work in the editing room, my method is elimination. I begin to eliminate until what's left is just what I want it to be. Then I begin to change the order, or trim something here and there. Some people have said that I'm careless, random, anything goes. The truth is that what stays in – every frame – is approved by me. The seeming randomness of my filmmaking is actually very deceiving. Because what I film is very precisely determined, chosen by my memory and intuition. And in the editing room it all goes through the Procrustean bed of my editing method. In short: I control absolutely every frame of my film.<sup>297</sup>

Again the point where structure and improvisation meet comes into consideration, the «Procrustean bed» and randomness, modern terms for the rational and chance in Dada,<sup>298</sup> an emphasis of existential introspection of the medium by itself and the visual memory of the artist.

In 1977, when I started my studies in filmmaking, Super 8mm film was at the peak of its popularity. Image quality was poor and quality of the black and white video image of that time was equally poor. There were possibilities in editing, but very limited ones. 16mm film was still therefore the reference format for film schools and

documentary and broadcast professionals. Super 8mm had nonetheless a great impact at the social level: it is the very first time in film history that ordinary people could stand behind the camera and at relatively little expense film ordinary everyday life, and fulfill the dream of making «home movies», a privilege that only a few had had before.<sup>299</sup>

In chapter 5 it was seen that video has strong links through its technological nature to television. The user of Super 8 was often however more of a film fan, as that Super 8 was used as amateur cinema, with the subject found often by chance. The use of video was on the other hand more intentional, usually linked to some precise targets, often politically inclined to the left, feminist or even anarchistic.

Super 8 was a format bringing close personal expression, an intimate vision, a familiar environment and a world radically opposite to the movie-star system and *l'image l ch e*. Independent video around 1968 became employed in opposition to what we have called the *tyranny of opinion* engendered by television, a way of questioning television monopoly and brainwashing. It became a weapon, a militant instrument.<sup>300</sup> An interesting point of view that is often advanced is that video as a new medium was, unlike film, freed artistically from heavy historical conventions. Michael O'Pray though identifies limitations of another kind stemming from its origins:

More importantly, video was born under the shadow of a commercial broadcast television system, dedicated to kitsch and philistinism, which nowadays is graced with the title of 'popular culture'. Its conventional output had none of the vitality cinema had inherited from its nineteenth-century circus and itinerant side-show beginnings. If avant-garde film had to grapple with mainstream cinema, at least it recognised a historical tradition encompassed by the 'art' of such as Vertov, Eisenstein, Welles and Lang. When video art wandered from its primarily modernist practice, there was no similar artistic tradition with which to engage, only the medium itself.<sup>301</sup>

The situation at the beginning of the seventies with video and TV could easily be compared to dadaist-surrealist cinema attitude against Hollywood, and the background too can be found to be similar in Neodadaism and later in punk culture (1978). The eighties definitively brought the democratization of amateur filmmaking and paradoxically the almost total disappearance of low budget film material.<sup>302</sup> A separation between film and video occurred at the same time that VHS was coming. Cinema became again the medium reserved for film professionals and already



recognized avant-garde filmmakers, who progressively became more dependent on the cinematographic industry, and through the established production, financing and distribution system, became less personal or less subversive, or ---even worse--- turned subversion into a consumer product. Fortunately a part of cinema did nonetheless manage to continue producing high quality *dysnarrative* films. Video editing possibilities meanwhile got better and better (I am referring now to the end of the eighties when there was a proliferation of video-clubs). A totally new young generation of «video-makers» grew-up in a totally new environment in which rock, pop, techno, rap and hip-hop cultures started to express themselves through video, mostly in scratch and video clips. An interesting period was 1984–88, because it saw *Subverting Television*<sup>303</sup> that was at its zenith during the *Scratch protest* in 1984, and consecrated in 1985 and 1986 with an compilation anthology *The Greatest Hits of Scratch Video Volumes 1 and 2*. *Subverting Television* was completely re-exploited commercially and neutralized politically by *Channel Four* in the following years. Aesthetic and ideological melding developed much further with the *Music Television* and its monotone «visual noise». The role of commercial television and popular commercially-owned music channels like *Music Television* is rather difficult to link to any avant-garde spirit, not because of their formal aspects, which are interesting in themselves, or in the social expressions they adopt, but above all because of the absence of an artistic and eventually philosophic marginality, and, like Mekas has defined it, an opposition. In short, the *clip* has its own difficulties in struggling against the mainstream when itself it represents the mainstream. Michael O'Pray who has analyzed video culture in England continues his observation above by reflecting on video's relation with avant-garde film:

It is no accident that «scratch video», for example, drew blatantly on the cinema for its raw material, its found footage. This lack of a tradition made itself felt, not so much in the first wave of British video artists, committed as they were to fine-art modernist practices, but in more recent years, when the anti- formalist swing took place among a younger generation of video artists [...]

In many ways, the early British video movement was akin to the avant-garde film sector based at the London Film-makers' Co-operative where formalist, or structuralist, aesthetics predominated; self-reflexivity in the medium was central, as was its oppositional stance. Instead of mainstream Hollywood being the enemy, broadcast television served that function for video art. Gallery exhibition — despite video artists' dissatisfaction with this kind of consumption — predominated, and conceptualist and performance-based art produced much of the best work of the period.<sup>304</sup>

O'Pray, through the existence of the London Film-makers' Co-operative, links a certain video culture to the then existing structural film and sees therefore video art as more or less a continuation of the formalist tradition of the film of the sixties. Video started to tear away only at a later phase after the foundation of London Video Arts (LVA) in 1976. O'Pray confirms however the basic «opposition» of the medium to broadcast television. He describes the later rapprochement to the television aesthetic as such:

Base-line critique of the video and television medium gradually gave way to work of a more varied nature. Colour replaced the crude black-and-white tape, and with the rapid development of video technology, artists perceived the possibility of mimicking broadcast material at least in its superficial visual qualities. [...] «video artists who do not see dominant television as «an irredeemably bad object», but as a source of material (e.g., soap operas) which they might use to their own advantage», were «responding to feminist work, deconstructivist tapes, and interests which were to erupt in scratch video a few years later.<sup>305</sup>

If we must find a definitive avant-garde after the «structural» period, video-scratch in its origins and for a short time perhaps could fill the criteria usually adopted. At least it stands some comparison with previous movements in apparent unity and purposes. Michael O'Pray detects three main characteristics.<sup>306</sup>

1° found footage (recycling ready or found film or video)

2° repeat edit (repetition of visual or audio motives)

3° «anti»-spirit

O' Pray nonetheless immediately warns the reader that the criteria do not stand in every case, and probably only the first criterion is typical. As Erkki Huhtamo has well observed,<sup>307</sup> only technical development has made «copying» existing images and using them as source material possible (1°). In fact it is not a new idea: Duchamp «insulted» Mona Lisa in *L.H.O.O.Q.* in 1919 and the Sex Pistols «saved» The Queen on their album of 1977. Heartfield «cut off» the face of Hitler for his collages and Warhol «advertised» the face of Marilyn Monroe. We could say shortly that scratch-video makers have been putting into video-making a practice that other visual artists had invented before.

The repeat-effect (2°) was used by Léger in *Ballet mécanique*, and Man Ray used it in his own way in the legs' sequence of *Emak Bakia*. Warhol again «repeated» his

subjects. The «anti-spirit» characteristic (3°), is not to blame as such, but it must be observed that the anti-bourgeois attitude no longer seems relevant as revolutionary aims in 1984 after the neodadaist, pop and punk era had occurred, especially in the British context. Perhaps if it had been more tightly connected to the socio-political awakening of the slums, like hip-hop music or graffiti have been, there would have been some real concern with anti-bourgeois values. Erkki Huhtamo writes:

Videoscratchers operate on a second level of reality, on public icons that have been acquired. In this spirit, the background of scratch is mainly our audiovisual environment, above all television, in its continuous audiovisual extension. Videoscratchers belong to the first generation which has grown with television, the electronic adoptee of the familial cell. In this intimate relationship they have developed a «second» nature, conditioned and practical; at the same time they have learned also to offend it and make jokes about it.<sup>308</sup>

It does not seem to me that «videoscratchers», taken as a majority, are especially connected with any artistic or any heavily social problematic group but more or less connected to a post-punk spirit in which it has become nice to offend and throw slogans here and there, and in the same way show the weaknesses and contradictions of society. In a way Huhtamo makes the same observation and his analysis is exact when he writes that «the way videoscratchers have utilized the possibilities of video has to be set in a larger techno-ideological context».<sup>309</sup> He quotes at length Jon Dovey of *Gorilla Tapes*<sup>310</sup> for whom technology is as good as its user. On one hand «capitalist system» produces camcorders and computers which are making a «multiplication» of originals possible, while on the other hand the same system proclaims the free use of images and sounds to be illegal and therefore installs a paradoxical system of copyrights. Scratch must be understood as «the art of sampling» and repeating found images and sounds, in order to make a new original work, with a further signification. With recorded images from television, *Gorilla Tapes* made sharp satirical and political video-collages which could in a way be considered almost as neo-surrealist (plate 32). Erkki Huhtamo, in the same article<sup>311</sup> written in 1989, is already wondering where all this is leading: «we can with good reasons ask how far videoscratchers' manner of manipulating for instance Reagan or Thatcher pictures can work as a radical opposition [...] Moreover, Jamie Reid's situationism of the sixties had already influenced punk-expression, and the Sex Pistols in 1977 had already damaged the image of the queen in a way which is difficult to transgress.»<sup>312</sup>

After over twenty years of *appropriation art*, of «scratch», or what Hal Foster has called «the commodity-sign»<sup>313</sup> I again question (cf. the concept of rear-guard in the Introduction<sup>314</sup>) the significance of the label «avant-garde». I have suggested introducing at this stage of art history a concept of *arrière-garde* (rear-guard) not denoting that this rear-guard is *behind* the times, but that it should be understood as an *alternative* stream rather than a *visionary* one. Jon Dovey actually «disorganizes» video performances today in a very «gesamtkunstwerk» spirit (plate 32): «an ongoing experiment in image music and performance» called *rePUBLICof...*; On the web-pages<sup>315</sup> he advertises «a collision of music, performance, spoken word and dance, all processed on screen in a high-tech, low-fi night of digital cabaret».

rePUBLICof are Bristol's prime innovators in the use of live video for entertainment and consternation; from surveillance to found footage, the messiah is the medage.<sup>316</sup>

British *scratch* was of course in the eighties only one of the well regrouped and distributed new forms of underground which actually brought a transmutation of video and tried to embark on a political softly anarchist direction. In Finland, video art is considered as having started in 1982 with the *Turppi Group*<sup>317</sup> (approximately when I settled in the country). I had already made a video-portrait in 1980 (on a helical scan video tape recorder of the Portapak type), but I had to wait until 1988 to get involved with VHS and U-matic systems (I was then working as the managing director of a videoclub in Kotka). The first years saw indeed a great interest in and development of video all over the country, in galleries and at some festivals, with the peak being the years from 1993 to 1997 (Muu Media Festival, Lahden AV-biennale). After that video-art seemed to disappear as a visual art «component»<sup>318</sup>, probably owing to the rise of media-art, mostly computer and programming based. A good recent example is the Scottish artist Charles Sandison (b.1969), who has been working in Finland for a few years producing purely computer-generated video (plate 32), an «allegorical way of seeing»<sup>319</sup> imitating calligrammes and dadaist optophonetic poems. Today video artists are from so many different horizons that it is rather difficult to identify the various tendencies. An increasing number of them are the first to have had an artistic training specifically within the medium, as graduates in media art, including from filmschools or various kinds of studies in photography. However many visual artists of the seventies and eighties are still active today (plates 32–34). For instance, Eija-Liisa Ahtila (b.1959) uses the walls

with her multiscreen installations in a rather similar way to Peter Greenaway (b.1942) and Isaac Julien (b.1960) —both British and standing between film and video (plate 33). Video art in Belgium (Marie-Jo Lafontaine, b.1950) or in Holland (Bert Schutter, b.1945; Peter Bogers, b.1956) is less spontaneous, less radical, probably more conceptual and constructivist, and more intellectual too<sup>320</sup> in its linking to art history (plate 33). The Frenchman Michel Jaffrenou (b. 1944), *letterist* in the seventies, still active in the domain of performance and video, makes no secret of that the source of his art is a mixture of Duchamp, Méliès and Keaton (plate 33).<sup>321</sup> All the video works of this eclectic world of video of today, often technically sophisticated, lead to the same observations: the electronic image, as such, has become of a so banal that video art, and all the visual arts perhaps, are facing a much bigger crisis than the *new cyclops* was actually encountering at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when *everything was still possible*. Today, a century later, we are in the opposite situation with a deep feeling that *everything has already been done*, and that we only can do it *better* or in *another way* through improving technologies instead of improving our vision.

The return of narration in avant-garde cinema forms in the seventies coincides with the rise of video in its larger sense, a fact that can be easily understood as a conversion of the tradition of avant-garde cinema to the medium of video. In the light of our analysis, the expanded theory is thus relevant for both narrative and non-narrative cinema —both are represented in video. I emphasize the uniformism of current cinema production and oppose it to the *pluralism* of video, arguing that if an avant-garde must be found in marginal cinema it is rather in video than in the current cinema institutions.

The role of video, instead of being merely an alternative medium, must be seen as the principal link with digital and internet art, and must be understood as one of the new manners in which to apprehend today's reality. It follows admirably Foster's model of «deferred action» and «relay of anticipation» coupled with McLuhan's argument that «we have put our central nervous systems outside us in electric (electronic) technology».<sup>322</sup> There is strong evidence that a «visionary» avant-garde must exist within the cybernetic world and —without entering the Oedipal question raised by Foster —the question which at once arises is «what remains of subjectivity»? «Is our media world one of a cyberspace that renders bodies immaterial, or one which bodies, not transcended at all, are marked, often violently,

according to racial, sexual, and social differences»?<sup>323</sup> In a way, the disembodied eye of the Cyclops and Cyborg, the classical and future times, meet in the present. Max Bruinsma is right when he writes (and this summarises, I think, our visual perdition):

The representation of today's reality as a distant, elusive memory is given substance in tapes and installations that show images of stark, tangible reality in an entourage of pictorial quotes from the past. Through this approach the present itself can become a quotation, and thus likewise be assigned to the past<sup>324</sup>

In this long chapter I have discussed many of the main viewpoints on the Cyclops and its vision(s) —as filmic and video images produced in the last century. I argue that each viewpoint is still relevant today in the way this new century has begun with the digital era, and these visions could establish the basis on which a serious video art education could be established.

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<sup>1</sup> *Lorsqu'il y a quarante ans...* in Man Ray, 60 ans de liberté, Eric Losfeld, Paris, 1971. Originally, preface of the catalogue of exposition 12 rayographs / 1921-1928, Shubert & Kapitzki, Stuttgart, 1963, transl. D. M. Gentili, reproduced partly in Lavoie, pp. 83-84

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Renato Poggioli in *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, pp. 69-70

<sup>3</sup> *Imago, Fin de Siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art* (media art) Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst / Mediamatic vol.5 #1&2 (1989-90), p. 9

<sup>4</sup> Blaise Pascal (1623–1662): *Pensées de Pascal* (277)

<sup>5</sup> Hans Arp, cited by Hans Richter in: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 60

<sup>6</sup> Computer imaging and video are here deliberately associated: Apple Introduced the first computer (Apple 1) in April 1976; the first PortaPak, the Sony DV-2400 Video Rover was introduced as soon as 1967 and laser technology started at the end of the seventies as well.

<sup>7</sup> René Coelho in *Imago, Fin de Siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art*, 1990, pp. 11-12

<sup>8</sup> Follower of a doctrine

<sup>9</sup> Paul Valéry: *Propos sur le Progrès*, 1929 in *Regards sur le monde actuel* Librairie Stock, Delamain et Boutelleau, Paris, 1931 online:

[http://classiques.ugac.ca/classiques/Valery\\_paul/regards\\_sur\\_le\\_monde\\_actuel/valery\\_regards.rtf](http://classiques.ugac.ca/classiques/Valery_paul/regards_sur_le_monde_actuel/valery_regards.rtf)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Max Bruinsma: *Mnemosyne's Fin de Siècle in Imago, Fin de Siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art* (media art) Mediamatic vol.5 #1&2 (1989-90) pp. 31-35; in 2007 the argument seems to me weaker than it seemed in 1990

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 32

<sup>13</sup> Many collectors of Man Ray's photographic works have been panicking following the disclosure that dozens of late reprints were sold as originals in recent years, it was revealed in the daily Le Monde on April 7th 1998. See for example at: <http://www.artcult.com/manray.htm>

<sup>14</sup> René Coelho in *Imago, Fin de Siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art*, 1990, pp. 11-12

<sup>15</sup> Recuperation, in the sociological sense (first proposed by Guy Debord and the Situationist movement), is the process by which «radical» ideas and images are commodified and incorporated within mainstream society (wikipedia)

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Crary: *Tehniques of the Observer, On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century*, MIT Press, 1990, p. 1

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Gilles Deleuze has noticed in *Cinéma 2: L' image-temps* that Sartre does not even consider the case of the *image* in his work *L'imaginaire*, in *Cinéma 1 L' image-mouvement*, 1983 he notes Sartre's «anti-bergsonism» (p.90)

<sup>19</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 98

<sup>20</sup> Matei Calinescu: *Five Faces of Modernity*, 1987, p. 268

<sup>21</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 106

<sup>22</sup> Baudelaire op. cit. by Poggioli, p. 106

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<sup>23</sup> Cited in *Theory of the Avant-garde* by Renato Poggioli (p. 126) as *unification*. *Uniformisation* in French means to make uniform (The English translation of Poggioli's remained unclear; *unification* or *confusion* do not seem to me to be the right translation).

<sup>24</sup> To borrow the term used by Renato Poggioli p. 106

<sup>25</sup> Matei Calinescu: *Five Faces of Modernity*, 1987, p. 133

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278

<sup>28</sup> *Postmodernism and Consumer Society*, in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, Bay Press, 1983, quoted by Calinescu p. 294

<sup>29</sup> Matei Calinescu: *Five Faces of Modernity*, 1987, p. 312

<sup>30</sup> The same has been observed by electronic musicians: from analogue synthesiser to digital instruments the experimental and creative possibilities had almost vanished, until the fusion with new analogue sources (turntables, sampling, etc...). For further information see the work of Petri Kuljuntausta: *On/Off*, 2002

<sup>31</sup> René Coelho in *Imago, Fin de Siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art*, 1990, pp. 11-12

<sup>32</sup> Marja-Terttu Kivirinta in *Helsingin Sanomat*, 5 June 2007 about their recent work *Pulse*

<sup>33</sup> The media theorists ADILKNO / BILWET (Foundation for the Advancement of Illegal Knowledge / Stichting tot Bevordering van Illegale Wetenschap) was founded in 1983 as a collective of five artists/authors, Geert Lovink, Arjen Mulder, Basjan van Stam, Lex Wouterloot and Patrice Riemens. They rose from the squatters movement and illegal radio in Amsterdam, about which they published their book *Bewegingsleer* (1991). Their main interest is in Media and Media Theory, about which they write from a critical, speculative and often humorous perspective. <http://www.mediamatic.net/article-5961-en.html>

<sup>34</sup> (Nietzsche's *die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*)

<sup>35</sup> ADILKNO Teheran 2050, *The Artiste and his Media in Imago, Fin de Siècle in Dutch Contemporary Art* (media art) Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst / Mediamatic vol.5 #1&2 (1989-90), pp. 27-30

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Blaise Pascal (1623–1662): *Pensées de Pascal* (252)

<sup>41</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964 (see Chapter 2)

<sup>42</sup> Hans Richter: *Dada, Art and Anti-art*, 1964, p. 91

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.93

<sup>44</sup> Blaise Pascal (1623–1662): *Pensées de Pascal* (253)

<sup>45</sup> Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer, On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century*, 1990, p. 85

<sup>48</sup> Airbrush works are mainly from 1919 and 1920, see also in Man Ray's picture survey: *Hermaphrodite* (1919), *La volière* (1919), *Les trois grâces* (1920)

<sup>49</sup> John Elderfield, *The Modern Drawing: 100 Works on Paper from The Museum of Modern Art*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1983.

<sup>50</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 66-67

<sup>51</sup> The viewpoint of Deleuze will be discussed separately in the second paragraph of this chapter

<sup>52</sup> Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I) Études cinématographiques 38-39, 1965 *Témoignages: Man Ray* p. 45

<sup>53</sup> *Pensées et Opuscules*, in *pensée* n° 72, c. 1660

<sup>54</sup> Mark Suggitt in *The Commonwealth* vol 64, n°1, 2004

<sup>55</sup> Vlada Petric: *Constructivism in Film, The Man with the Movie Camera, A Cinematic Analysis*, 1987, p. vii

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 220 and 222

<sup>58</sup> Vlada Petric: *Constructivism in Film, The Man with the Movie Camera, A Cinematic Analysis*, 1987, p. viii and p. 45

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Dziga Vertov: *The Basics of «Film-eye»*, 1924, quoted by Petric, p. 3

<sup>61</sup> Dziga Vertov's *Kinoks*, 1923, quoted by Petric, p. 4

<sup>62</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1 L'image-mouvement* Les Editions de Minuit, 1983, mainly pp. 36-39

<sup>63</sup> In French the operation named *découpage* precedes shooting and *montage*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 117-121

<sup>65</sup> None of them had succeeded in convincing Stalin of the efficacy of their method on socialist reality

<sup>66</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1 L'image-mouvement*, 1983, p. 60

<sup>67</sup> As an example the classic subjective travelling in Abel Gance's *La Roue*

<sup>68</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1 L'image-mouvement*, 1983, p. 121

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122

<sup>70</sup> Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 212

<sup>71</sup> Concerning cinema and metaphor Deleuze believes that cinema language is more metonymic because it proceeds mainly by juxtapositions. To have a real metaphor both the «dance» and the «storm» should have been present in the montage, in superimposition, intervals or whatever.

Deleuze nuances this idea however, keeping the montage of Eisenstein more metaphorical and the alternate montage of Griffith as metonymic. The essential point here is to understand that the language of the cinema and even if poetical cannot completely substitute «images» for each other; it can only add or juxtapose visual units to each other

<sup>72</sup> Remembering here that the *Emak Bakia* première was in the *Vieux-Colombier*. Jean Tedesco was director of the theatre until 1934. He was the main figure in distributing avant-garde cinema in France: Abel Gance, Griffith, Louis Delluc, Jean Epstein, Marcel L'Herbier, Charlie Chaplin, etc.

<sup>73</sup> Jean Epstein, *passim*, cited by Deleuze in *Cinéma 2 L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 208

- <sup>74</sup> Deleuze in *Cinéma 1 L'image-mouvement*, 1983, p. 61
- <sup>75</sup> French fairs (also called in French «fancy-fair») and popular dance parties
- <sup>76</sup> A beautiful metonymy used by Deleuze describing the eternal theme of Monet
- <sup>77</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1 L'image-mouvement*, 1983, p. 65, Deleuze uses Epstein's terminology «photogénie» and «majorée» (quoted by Jean Mitry in *Le cinéma expérimental*, 1974, pp. 137-138)
- <sup>78</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 12, online: <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft438nb2fr/>
- <sup>79</sup> Neil Baldwin *Man Ray, American Artist*, 1988, p. 136
- <sup>80</sup> The reader is directed to the remarkable inventory of Wees in *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, pp. 12-13; e.g. «Light, color, movement,» «the movement of light,» «the quick projection of light impulses,» «light and time,» «a time form,» «light-space-time continuity in the synthesis of motion.»
- Compiled also in Jacques Coelho: *Introduction to Audiovisual Communication*, 2004, p. 159
- <sup>81</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 13
- <sup>82</sup> I have discussed these concepts in the Introduction
- <sup>83</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 14 and James Broughton, *Film as a Way of Seeing Film Culture* 29, 1963
- <sup>84</sup> And about his collaboration with Chomette and his *cinéma pur*
- <sup>85</sup> Pasolini's parenthesis has its origin in Deleuze's interpretation
- <sup>86</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 195
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>88</sup> Collaborators of «kinopravda»
- <sup>89</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 196
- <sup>90</sup> Deleuze cites Rimbaud, p. 199
- <sup>91</sup> Freely adapted from Deleuze's thinking
- <sup>92</sup> Vlada Petric: *Constructivism in Film, The Man with the Movie Camera, A Cinematic Analysis*, 1987, p. 68
- <sup>93</sup> Jean Rouch: *Cinq regards sur Vertov*, in Georges Sadoul: *Dziga Vertov*, 1971, pp. 11-14, quoted by Petric, p. 68
- <sup>94</sup> Gérard Conio *Debate on the Formal Method, The Futurists, The Formalists, and the Marxist Critique*, 1979, quoted by Petric, p. 69
- <sup>95</sup> Vertov cited by Siegfried Zielinski in *Speaking Digital: media theory practice, Speed Energy the techno-scene of the twenties revisited* at: <http://www.salon-digital.de/particles/paradocs/hyenadays/ziel/index.html>
- <sup>96</sup> The «group» is only constituted until 1972 by Godard and Gorin
- <sup>97</sup> Siegfried Zielinski in *Speaking Digital: Media Theory Practice, Speed Energy the techno-scene of the twenties revisited* at: <http://www.salon-digital.de/particles/paradocs/hyenadays/ziel/index.html>
- <sup>98</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 262
- <sup>99</sup> André Bazin *What Is Cinema?* transl. H. Grey Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, quoted by William C. Wees *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 42
- <sup>100</sup> Quoted by Wees, p. 47
- <sup>101</sup> William C. Wees *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, chapter 3
- <sup>102</sup> Stan Brakhage, *Metaphors on Vision*, New York: Film Culture, 1963, quoted by Wees, p. 55
- <sup>103</sup> Aldous Huxley *The Art of Seeing*, 1942 (1975) quoted by Wees, pp. 56-57
- <sup>104</sup> Aldous Huxley *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell*, 1954, quoted by Wees, pp. 56-57
- <sup>105</sup> Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*, 1974, quoted by Wees, pp. 56-57
- <sup>106</sup> Aldous Huxley *The Art of Seeing*, 1942 (1975) quoted by Wees p. 59
- <sup>107</sup> John Ruskin *Elements of Drawing* 5th ed. London: George Allen, 1895, originally published in 1857, quoted by Wees, p. 61
- <sup>108</sup> Pierre Francastel *L'Impressionnisme*, 1936, (1974), p. 42
- <sup>109</sup> Lilla Cabot Perry *Reminiscences of Claude Monet from 1889 to 1909* *The American Magazine of Art* 18, no. 3 (1927)
- <sup>110</sup> Quoted in Steven Z. Levine *Monet and His Critics* New York: Garland, 1976
- <sup>111</sup> E. H. Gombrich *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 1961-69 (2000), pp. 296-298
- <sup>112</sup> J.R. Beloff: *Perception and Extrapolation*, *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, n°32 May 1957, quoted by Gombrich, p. 172
- <sup>113</sup> W. H. Ittelson and F. P. Kilpatrick *Experiments in Perception*, *Scientific American Offprints* 405, 1951, quoted by Wees, p. 63
- <sup>114</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 65
- <sup>115</sup> Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer, On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century*, 1990, p. 5
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 3
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 4
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 6
- <sup>121</sup> Rudolf Arnheim: *The Thoughts That Made the Picture Move* (1933) in *Film as Art*, new ed. 1997, pp. 175-176
- <sup>122</sup> Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer, On Vision and Modernity in the 19th century*, 1990, p. 9
- <sup>123</sup> Crary pertinently differences observer and spectator. As he remarks *the observer sees within a prescribed set of possibilities, one who is embedded in a system of conventions and limitations*. That is also the the case of the artist.
- <sup>124</sup> To link to Huxley's previous expression
- <sup>125</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 67
- Wees quotes Jim Jackson *Seeing Yourself See: Eye Exercises for Total Vision* New York: E. P. Dutton and Saturday Review Press, 1975, 15-33, passim



- <sup>126</sup> William C. Wees, 1992, p. 68. References on Gibson are not straight of his work but based on the observations by E. H. Gombrich and W. C. Wees in which are large quotations of Gibson's *The Perception of the Visual World*
- <sup>127</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 137
- <sup>128</sup> James J. Gibson: *The Perception of the Visual World* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950, quoted by Wees p. 68
- <sup>129</sup> Or «bracketed perception» a term proposed by Bill Nichols (in Wees, note 47, chapter 3), note that Slavko Vorkapich has also made a distinction between the two perceptions (Ibid.); see also note 122
- <sup>130</sup> Theory-laden refers to the belief that sensory observations are always affected by one's preconceptions
- <sup>131</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 69
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid. I quote here in full the note provided by Wees for sources: James J. Gibson, 26-43, passim. Bill Nichols has proposed similar alternatives (without, however, referring to Gibson's work) under the headings «bracketed perception» («visual field») and «normal perception» («visual world»); see *Ideology and the Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 12-26. Slavko Vorkapich, on the other hand, made explicit use of Gibson's «visual field»/«visual world» distinctions during his lectures on «The Visual Nature of the Film Medium»; see Barbara L. Kevles's extensive account of the lectures in *Film Culture* 38 (1965):2-43 (especially 23-24, 29)
- <sup>133</sup> André Breton: *Manifestes du Surréalisme, Premier Manifeste*, 1924 (1979), p. 24
- <sup>134</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1 L'image-mouvement*, 1983, p. 121
- <sup>135</sup> Gerald Oster, *Phosphenes*, Scientific American 222, no. 2 1970, quoted by Wees p. 71
- <sup>136</sup> Lenny Lipton: *A Filmmaker's Column, Take One* 4, no. 1, 1974, quoted by Wees p. 72
- <sup>137</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 72
- <sup>138</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1 L'image-mouvement*, 1983, p. 122
- <sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 123
- <sup>140</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 74
- <sup>141</sup> Wees quotes p. 75 John Ruskin *Elements of Drawing* 5th ed. London: George Allen, 1895, originally published in 1857
- <sup>142</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 54
- <sup>143</sup> see at: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8358851798178596139>
- <sup>144</sup> (1)-(6) Man Ray: *Self Portrait*, 1963, pp. 210-213
- <sup>145</sup> I have discussed this point in chapter 7
- <sup>146</sup> Deke Dusinberre in: Jean-Michel Bouhours: *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movie*, 1997, pp. 30-31 Cf also this point in chapter 7
- <sup>147</sup> Thomas Elsaesser in Rudolf E. Kuenzli (ed.): *Dada and Surrealist Film*, 1987, pp. 19-20
- <sup>148</sup> Expression used by Man Ray himself in *Self Portrait*, p. 220
- <sup>149</sup> Rudolf E. Kuenzli (ed.): *Dada and Surrealist Film*, 1987, in introduction, p. 3
- <sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 4
- <sup>151</sup> Stan Brakhage, «The Camera Eye,» *Metaphors on Vision*, n.p. quoted also by Wees p. 47
- <sup>152</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 52
- <sup>153</sup> Claudio Guillén: *On the Concept and Metaphor of Perspective* in Guillén: *Literature as System*, 1971 quoted by Wees, p. 52
- <sup>154</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, pp. 52-53
- <sup>155</sup> Sidney Peterson: *The Dark of the Screen*, 1980 quoted by Wees, pp. 52-53
- <sup>156</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 176
- <sup>157</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 177
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-178
- <sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 179
- <sup>161</sup> William C. Wees: *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*, 1992, p. 54
- <sup>162</sup> See in *kino-eye* section
- <sup>163</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 1 L'image-mouvement*, 1983, p. 11
- <sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp. 83-90
- <sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 83
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 84
- <sup>167</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-87 Deleuze note on Bergson: «Dites que mon corps est matière, ou dites qu'il est image...» in *Matière et Mémoire* p. 14
- [http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/bergson\\_henri/matiere\\_et\\_memoire/matiere\\_et\\_memoire.html](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/bergson_henri/matiere_et_memoire/matiere_et_memoire.html)
- in *L'Évolution créatrice* Bergson speaks about *l'écoulement de la matière* and *le mouvement évolutif*; Deleuze quotes the work of Bergson and argues that *L'image-mouvement* and *la matière-écoulement* are strictly the same thing
- <sup>168</sup> A very interesting «existential» question about the basic essence of the cinema. A most conventional definition being that metacinema is a cinema that self-consciously is reminding the audience that they are enjoying a film, or a cinema which is addressed to its own professional milieu
- <sup>169</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 2: L'Image-temps*, 1985, p. 50
- <sup>170</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss: *La Pensée sauvage*, 1962, p. 3X
- <sup>171</sup> Chance Operations: Images by Loren Means (homepage) at: <http://www.haonine.com/loren/>
- <sup>172</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 157 and pp. 175-184
- <sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 184
- <sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 186
- <sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 187, a point of view which could be connected to Bergson's.
- <sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 186
- <sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 187
- <sup>180</sup> Hand painted eyes on ping-pong balls

- <sup>181</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 187
- <sup>182</sup> Tristan Tzara: *Sept manifestes Dada*, (7) Dada manifeste sur l'amour faible et l'amour amer VIII Pour faire un poème dadaïste, 1924 ed. Pauwert, 1979, p. 64
- <sup>183</sup> In French curiously *chance* means «fortune» and *hasard* means «chance» or «luck»; «hazard» is *risque*
- <sup>184</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 192
- <sup>185</sup> Paul Valéry: *Préface aux Lettres persanes*, 1926
- <sup>186</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 201
- <sup>187</sup> Ester Carla de Miro cited and translated by Lucinda Hawkins in *Woman And The Formal Film* article from the *Film As Film* catalogue, 1979, p. 127
- <sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128
- <sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>192</sup> Germaine Dulac : *Du sentiment à la ligne* originally published in *Shemas*, 1927, translated by Felicity Sparrow and Claudine Nicholson in *Woman And The Formal Film* article from the *Film As Film* catalogue, 1979, p. 128
- <sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* Felicity Sparrow and Claudine Nicholson explain three possible interpretations for the title *Du sentiment à la ligne*, from which I retained here only two; the third was a connotation for a change in the cinema industry course: «à la ligne» representing also a «new start». I suggest nonetheless a fourth interpretation that is metaphorical
- <sup>194</sup> I use here further the translation by Felicity Sparrow and Claudine Nicholson of the same text p. 128
- <sup>195</sup> We'll discuss that viewpoint in the next paragraph
- <sup>196</sup> Germaine Dulac : *Du sentiment à la ligne* originally published in *Shemas*, 1927, translated by Felicity Sparrow and Claudine Nicholson in *Woman And The Formal Film* article from the *Film As Film* catalogue, 1979, pp. 128-129; the division of the text in «points» are ours.
- <sup>197</sup> *A quoi rêvent les jeunes filles* or *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films*: the dates are approximate and often diverge from source to another. However the three films (if not only one originally) seem to be made within the period 1923-1927, probably 1924 as such a unique version and 1925 such a split version)
- <sup>198</sup> Henri Chomette Transl. Tanya Small and Pip Chodorov at: <http://www.roberthaller.com/firstlight/>
- <sup>199</sup> Exactly the same kind of argumentation is used by Alain Virmaux for surrealist cinema in Alain Virmaux: *Une promesse mal tenue: Le film surréaliste (1924-1932)* in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I), Études Cinématographiques n°38-39, 1965, pp. 103-133
- <sup>200</sup> But distributed in 1925
- <sup>201</sup> Dulac uses the word «sentiment»/feeling (*Du sentiment à la ligne*)
- <sup>202</sup> Note from the translator in Germaine Dulac : *Du sentiment à la ligne* originally published in *Shemas*, 1927, translated by Felicity Sparrow and Claudine Nicholson in *Woman And The Formal Film* article from the *Film As Film* catalogue, 1979, p. 129
- <sup>203</sup> Deleuze's note: suivant la formule de Bertetto; eidetic: of visual imagery of almost photographic accuracy
- <sup>204</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 2: L'Image-temps*, 1985, p. 265
- <sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260
- <sup>206</sup> Hans Richter in *Magazine of Art*, 1952 in «Hans Richter: *Peinture et cinéma* exhibition catalogue (undated, early seventies)
- <sup>207</sup> Hans Richter, in «G», n°3, 1924 (same catalogue)
- <sup>208</sup> Hans Richter, in *De Style*, 1922 (same catalogue)
- <sup>209</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 2: L'Image-temps*, 1985, p. 50
- <sup>210</sup> Hans Richter, in *Ennemis du film*, 1929
- <sup>211</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 201
- <sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202
- <sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202
- <sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203
- <sup>216</sup> In Rimbaud: *Lettre du voyant* (to Paul Demeny, May 15, 1871)
- <sup>217</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 58
- <sup>218</sup> Matei Calinescu: *Five Faces of Modernity*, 1987, p. 281
- <sup>219</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 47
- <sup>220</sup> Arthur Rimbaud: *Brouillons d'une saison en enfer*, Bon[|r
- <sup>221</sup> Renato Poggioli: *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, 1968, p. 56
- <sup>222</sup> Arthur Rimbaud: *Une Saison en enfer*, 1873 (quoted also by Poggioli twice, p. 56 and p. 195)
- <sup>223</sup> Antonin Artaud was the auteur behind the film of Germaine Dulac *La Coquille et le clergymen*. It is said that Artaud never accepted the transposition to screen, even though it was quite faithful to the script.
- <sup>224</sup> Georges Sadoul: *Souvenirs d'un témoin* in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I), Études Cinématographiques n°38-39, 1965, pp. 18-19
- <sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22
- <sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18
- <sup>227</sup> In *L'affaire de l'Age d'or* text of 1930 reported by Georges Sadoul in: Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I), Études Cinématographiques n°38-39, 1965, p. 17
- <sup>228</sup> Alain Virmaux: *Une promesse mal tenue: Le film surréaliste (1924-1932)* in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I), Études Cinématographiques n°38-39, 1965, pp. 103-133
- <sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104

- <sup>232</sup> Jean Tedesco op. cit. in Jacques B. Brunius, *En marge du cinéma français*, Arcanes, 1954, p. 104, quoted by Virmaux, p. 106, transl. JC
- <sup>233</sup> Jean Cocteau, *Portrait-souvenir*. R.T.F et Librairie Jules Tallandier, 1964, quoted by Virmaux p. 106
- <sup>234</sup> Jean-Marie Mabire *Buñuel et le surréalisme* in *Études Cinématographiques* n°20-21, 1962, p. 60 quoted by Virmaux, p. 107
- <sup>235</sup> Alain Virmaux: *Une promesse mal tenue: Le film surréaliste (1924-1932)* in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I), *Études Cinématographiques* n°38-39, 1965, p. 112, transl. JC
- <sup>236</sup> Pierre Renaud *Un Chien andalou* in *Études Cinématographiques* n°22-23, 1963, p. 156, quoted by Virmaux, p. 107
- <sup>237</sup> Buñuel op. cit. in Ado Kyrrou: *Poésie et cinéma* in *Luis Buñuel*, Seghers, 1962, quoted by Virmaux, p. 107, transl. JC
- <sup>238</sup> Jacques B. Brunius, *En marge du cinéma français*, Arcanes, 1954, p. 109, quoted by Virmaux, p. 108
- <sup>239</sup> Jean-Louis Comolli, 1973, op. cit. in Jacques Coelho: *La valeur du rêve chez Ingmar Bergman*, I.A.D, 1978
- <sup>240</sup> Ado Kyrrou *Le surréalisme au cinéma*, Terrain Vague, 1963, p. 184, quoted by Virmaux, p. 118
- <sup>241</sup> Alain Virmaux: *Une promesse mal tenue: Le film surréaliste (1924-1932)* in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma*(I), *Études Cinématographiques* n°38-39, 1965, p. 122, transl. JC
- <sup>242</sup> No evidence was found but it is quite possible
- <sup>243</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>244</sup> *Emak Bakia* was premiered in November, 1926 but the first public representation in Paris (Ursulines) was almost one year later, in November, 1927
- <sup>245</sup> Virmaux, p. 123
- <sup>246</sup> Roman Polanski in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I), *Études Cinématographiques* n°38-39, 1965, pp. 171-172
- <sup>247</sup> Quotation from SEA: Lauri Lehtinen / Antti Suonio transl. JC
- <sup>248</sup> Quotation from «The Washington Psychotronic Film Society» at <http://www.wpfs.org/>
- <sup>249</sup> Alain Virmaux: *Une promesse mal tenue: Le film surréaliste (1924-1932)* in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I), *Études Cinématographiques* n°38-39, 1965, p. 129
- <sup>250</sup> Matei Calinescu: *Five Faces of Modernity*, 1987, p. 104
- <sup>251</sup> Maya Deren quoted in Veve A. Clark, Millicent Hodson, Catrina Neiman, *The Legend of Maya Deren: A Documentary Biography and Collected Works*, Anthology Film Archives, 1984, pp. 245-246 and Valkola, 1993, p. 120
- <sup>252</sup> Jarmo Valkola: *Perceiving the Visual in Cinema*, 1993, p. 120
- <sup>253</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>254</sup> Maya Deren *Introduction to the Films*, Bleecker Street Cinema screening, Feb. 20 and 21, 1961, published as *Statement of Principles*, *Film Culture*, 22-23, 1961, pp. 161-163, quoted in Veve A. Clark, Millicent Hodson, Catrina Neiman, *The Legend of Maya Deren: A Documentary Biography and Collected Works*, Anthology Film Archives, 1984 and Valkola, 1993, p. 120
- <sup>255</sup> Pip Chodorov: Kenneth Anger's interview for ARTE july, 2003
- <sup>256</sup> Pierrot began as a kind of side-show comedian who took part in the prologues to the regular performances, his specialty being imitations and caricatures. He was also an acrobat and tumbler. His garb was usually entirely white and included a large blouse, a high hat, and a powdered face  
The late 19th and early 20th century saw a renewed interest in themes and figures from the *commedia dell'arte*. They appeared in widely varied locations, in French Symbolist poetry, in Italian verismo opera, in the ballets of Diaghilev and even in the films of Charlie Chaplin. The source of the text for Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* was a cycle of poems in French by the Belgian writer Albert Giraud  
Source: <http://www.lunanova.org/pierrot/history.html>
- <sup>257</sup> In P. Adams Sitney *Visionary film: The American avant-garde 1943-1978*, 1979, p. 97
- <sup>258</sup> See in chapter 5 the description of trance film by Sitney
- <sup>259</sup> Pip Chodorov: Kenneth Anger's interview for ARTE july, 2003
- <sup>260</sup> This point of view will be developed in the next section *video-rew*
- <sup>261</sup> On Artaud's theory of cinema see, for instance Jake Kennedy: *Avant-Garde Meat* in *Film-Philosophy* ol. 6 No. 25, September 2002 also at: <http://www.film-philosophy.com/vol6-2002/n25kennedy>
- <sup>262</sup> Gilles Deleuze in *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 215, transl. JC
- <sup>263</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>264</sup> Roman Polanski in Yves Kovacs: *Surréalisme et Cinéma* (I), *Études Cinématographiques* n°38-39, 1965, p. 172
- <sup>265</sup> Stage of sleep characterized by rapid movements of the eyes (Rapid Eye Movement)
- <sup>266</sup> Sigmund Freud: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1911, transl. A. A. Brill on line: <http://www.195degs.com/ebook/interpretation-of-dreams/766/read-list>
- <sup>267</sup> P. Jessen, *Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Begründung der Psychologie*, Berlin, 1856 cited in Sigmund Freud: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1911, transl. A. A. Brill
- <sup>268</sup> Man Ray's quotation for instance at: <http://www.luminous-lint.com/>
- <sup>269</sup> Sigmund Freud: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1911, transl. A. A. Brill
- <sup>270</sup> Gilles Deleuze in *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 75-76
- <sup>271</sup> «Subjectivité automatique» (Epstein) cited by Deleuze in the same text p. 76 and notes: «Epstein, dans toute son œuvre écrite, a insisté sur ces états subjectifs et oniriques qui caractérisaient selon lui le cinéma européen, notamment français» (Écrits, II, p. 64 sq.)
- <sup>272</sup> Gilles Deleuze in *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 76
- <sup>273</sup> Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*, 1896 (7ème éd. 1939), p. 29
- <sup>274</sup> Gilles Deleuze in *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 77

- <sup>275</sup> Ibid., p. 78
- <sup>276</sup> Observed by Maurice Drouzy in *Luis Buñuel, architecte du rêve*, Lherminier, 1978, p. 40-43, and cited by Deleuze in *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 80
- <sup>277</sup> In chapter 6 the term «sur-real» was used
- <sup>278</sup> Briefly summarised, the theory of Bergson actualizes the past in the present and the present in the past. Time is not chronologic but subjective
- <sup>279</sup> Gilles Deleuze in *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 109
- <sup>280</sup> Arthur Rimbaud: *Brouillons d'une saison en enfer, Éternité*
- <sup>281</sup> Brian Frye: *Interview with Jonas Mekas*, June, 2001 at: [http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/17/mekas\\_interview.html](http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/17/mekas_interview.html)
- <sup>282</sup> *Film as Film*, exhibition catalogue, 1979, in separate booklet
- <sup>283</sup> Mainly BETA, VHS, S-VHS, U-Matic, MII, Betacam
- <sup>284</sup> Kodak ended the production of super 8mm Kodachrome 40 in May 2005 and the VHS cassette, still in commercial distribution in 2006, will end probably in the years 2007-10 and be replaced by the DVD introduced in 2003 (recorders)
- <sup>285</sup> From this point I shall use «cinema» to describe both film and video, and film or video for the actual medium of expression
- <sup>286</sup> Gene Youngblood: *Expanded Cinema*, Studio Vista, London, 1970
- <sup>287</sup> I personally date the momentum from 20 July 1969 with the first pictures of man on the moon
- <sup>288</sup> Yoel Meranda: *Ways of Seeing*, website: <http://www.waysofseeing.org/makers.html> - gehr
- <sup>289</sup> Brian Frye: *Interview with Jonas Mekas* in June 2001 at [http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/17/mekas\\_interview.html](http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/17/mekas_interview.html) (film at: <http://www.re-voir.com/html/mekaswalden.htm>)
- <sup>290</sup> The first use of the term «underground film» occurs in a 1957 essay by the American film critic Manny Farber. He uses it to refer to the work of directors who «played an anti-art role in Hollywood (wikipedia).
- <sup>291</sup> Brian Frye: *Interview with Jonas Mekas*, June, 2001, June 2001
- <sup>292</sup> We link to the book of Patricia Mellencamp: *Avant-Garde Film, Video, & Feminism*, Indiana Univ. Press, 1990
- <sup>293</sup> Dysnarratif: a term taken in use by Robbe-Grillet and also used by Deleuze (1985)
- <sup>294</sup> Raymond Durnat, *Elegance versus vehemence*, Sight and Sound, January 1992, p. 24 quoted by Valkola in *Perceiving the visual in Cinema*, 1993, p. 154
- <sup>295</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Cinéma 2 L'image-temps*, 1985, p. 179
- <sup>296</sup> Dominique Noguez, *Trente ans de cinéma expérimental en France [1950-1980]*, 1982, p. 21
- <sup>297</sup> Brian Frye: *Interview with Jonas Mekas*, June, 2001, June 2001
- <sup>298</sup> A «Procrustean bed» means an arbitrary standard to which exact conformity is enforced; the term is sometimes applied to the pan and scan process of cropping motion pictures for television and home video. Randomness is used to express lack of purpose, cause, order, or predictability in non-scientific parlance. (wikipedia) «Random play» is one of the digital technology new tricks which permit playback improvisations and permutations.
- <sup>299</sup> Thinking of the most popular figure of underground film, Kenneth Anger, who was only twelve years old when in 1942 he got permission to use his parents' 16mm «home movie camera»
- <sup>300</sup> In England: Ant Farm, Global Village, Raindance Corporation, Videofreex; in US: Guerrilla Television
- <sup>301</sup> Michael O'Pray: *Declarations of Independence: Shows, Shisms & Modernism*, Monthly Film Bulletin, January 1988, also published at: [http://www.luxonline.org.uk/articles/declarations\\_of\\_independence\(1\).html](http://www.luxonline.org.uk/articles/declarations_of_independence(1).html)
- <sup>302</sup> By that time television progressively converted from 16mm film format to the Betacam standard
- <sup>303</sup> Our context is British, which was at the origin of the spread to other countries; *Subverting Television* is the name given to a festival which was held in December, 1984, in London
- <sup>304</sup> Michael O'Pray, : *Declarations of Independence: Shows, Shisms & Modernism*, Monthly Film Bulletin, January 1988
- <sup>305</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>306</sup> Michael O'Pray: *The Greatest Hits Of Scratch Video* vol 1 & 2, 1985/86
- <sup>307</sup> Erkki Huhtamo: *Videoraaputus - eli vakavaa pilailua elektronisen ottolapsen kustannuksella*. Peili.2, 1989. pp. 5-9
- <sup>308</sup> Ibid., p. 6, transl. JC
- <sup>309</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>310</sup> Ibid.; *Gorilla Tapes* was the collective name of Scratch Video artists Jon Dovey, Gavin Hodge and Tim Morrison
- <sup>311</sup> Erkki Huhtamo: *Videoraaputus - eli vakavaa pilailua elektronisen ottolapsen kustannuksella*. Peili.2, 1989
- <sup>312</sup> Ibid., p. 7
- <sup>313</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 114
- <sup>314</sup> The concept of *rearguard* (opposite to vanguard) or Post-Avant-Garde has been quoted by Suzi Gablik in *The Reenchantment of Art*, 1991
- <sup>315</sup> rePUBLICof digital cabaret, Web Site at: <http://www.republicof.net/event.htm>
- <sup>316</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>317</sup> Hannu Eerikäinen: *Videotaide Suomessa: taiteen laidalla, eturintamassa vai ei kenenkään maala?* in *Suomalaista Videotaidetta*, AV-arkki, Helsinki, 1993 pp. 4-37 (p. 12)
- Turppi Group comprised Marikki Hakola, Lea and Pekka Kantonen, Martti Kukkonen, Jarmo Vellonen
- <sup>318</sup> Hannu Eerikäinen used the word «nomad» describing the maturity phase
- <sup>319</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 116 quotes Benjamin
- <sup>320</sup> A link to the discussions about ADILKNO at the beginning of this chapter
- <sup>321</sup> Michel Jaffrennou, *Les années performances*, Interview by Bernard Girard (in French) at: <http://www.mytv7.net/video/iLyROoafvFA.html/> and videos at: [http://grandcanal.free.fr/video\\_82\\_01.html](http://grandcanal.free.fr/video_82_01.html)

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<sup>322</sup> Marshall McLuhan: *Understanding Media*, 1964, p. 60 also quoted by Foster p. 220

<sup>323</sup> Hal Foster: *The Return of the Real*, 1996, p. 221

<sup>324</sup> Max Bruinsma: *Mnemosyne's Fin de Siècle* in *Imago, Fin de Siècle* in *Dutch Contemporary Art*, RBK, Mediamatic, 1989, p. 33

# Conclusions



## Prospective Perspectives

In meta-reality, all realities are possible realities, as all identities are possible identities, as knowledge and practices are possible absurdities. --Tom Sandqvist<sup>1</sup>

Like the central idea of Alfred Jarry's *pataphysique*<sup>2</sup> my conclusions will be centred on the relation between the problems of the «normal» world and the responses that can be provided by the imaginary one. My purpose is to question the equilibrium between scientific-technological knowledge and pure artistic expression. I suggest that art in our times can be still considered as helping to maintain a relative equilibrium, despite the undeniable dominance of scientific, technological, social, political and commercial knowledge and their applications that seem sometimes to provide today the only approved rational models. I see the actual crisis of the arts as a consequence of the fact that culture, in general, has been definitively institutionalised and has been placed in a cul-de-sac called *entertainment*, which, I admit, has also helped considerably to avoid a total collapse of the arts. Such a position for the arts in society is not new as has been seen in the bourgeois attitude I described at the beginning of this study: the bourgeois out of fear of losing control of their world have a vested interest in positivist values—including in avant-garde art. The current copyright systematisation and the monolithic education and state funding for art may be regarded as some of the expressions of that need for control. The avant-garde of the twenties and the underground of the sixties were *active pataphysical* movements having, beyond their attempts at subversion, an active and public role, and a certain *control* on the social and political forces in society, that is to say a critical attitude, nowadays missing or ineffective. For instance, the underground movement (1967–71) had the serious ambition to emerge in a transformed society, and not to remain «underground» permanently. The loss can be associated with the social movements around 1968, but as Suzi Gablik

has observed<sup>3</sup>, the failure is probably due, like the dadaist alternative, to the fact that the weapons of these movements were the weapons of the bourgeois system turned against its own troops. The underground movement was aware of using public media like cinema, radio and television, but by irritating the public opinion with a calculated cynicism, was actually burying itself (even deeper). Its shadow went commercialized. The new media seem to provide actually a new ground for critical and alternative perspective. Yet entertainment and cultural institutionalizing still represent the «rational» pole that prevent that alternative, or as Gablik wrote, in 1991, «we live in a society that has drastically narrowed our sensitivity to moral and spiritual issues; the problem we face is how to deal with a belief structure that has blocked both psychological and spiritual development.»<sup>4</sup> Beside the point that this observation is correct, Gablik proposes new anti-individualistic values, and a kind of positivist, social, ecological spiritualism. In short, she believes that by changing the nature of art, we can change the nature of society. So believe the politicians with good and evil intentions. As has been seen the artist's vision is only one of the smallest active forces in the system, and artist's perception is only slightly more «acute» than the average perception in a global system (figure 5 and 6 in chapter 1 and figure 28 in chapter 9). I have also pointed out that the accuracy of the artist which is reputed to be inseparable from emotion and intuition, an individual quality, is however always involved in a more complex relation with the rational and the social: he never escapes it. Without completely contradicting Gablik, who seems to blame only individualism, I believe that the current stagnation of the avant-garde has in fact nothing to do with the individualist character of modern art or vice-versa, artists having always succeeded in making contortions to avoid official and social structures and this is also the *raison d'être* of the avant-garde. But the stagnation originates more deeply in the fact that the structures of society themselves—including the structures of the art world— have become unbreakable.

My point was to show that video can provide, among other solutions, a possibility to reattach an emotional and critical eye on the world we are living in in the new century.

In the preceding chapter the main artistic visions that the eye of the camera has brought to our senses during the course of one century have been discussed. I shall briefly summarise them here, but adapted to video:

- 1° video as a eyewitness on the actual world: a social viewpoint (kino-eye)
- 2° video as an introspective mean of the self: a psychological viewpoint (kino-raw)
- 3° video as a pure visual art tool: a formalist viewpoint (kino-ray)
- 4° video as a visionary eye: an irrational viewpoint (kino-rem)
- 5° video as a rearguard instrument: a postmodern viewpoint (video-rew)

### [video as art education perspective]

From the first gesture of a child pointing to an object and simply naming it, but with a world of intended meaning, to the developed mind that creates an image whose strangeness and reality stirs our subconscious to its inmost depths, the awakening of desire is the first step to participation and experience. –Man Ray (The Age of Light)<sup>6</sup>

The psychology inherited from C.G. Jung considers human creativity both as a typical human characteristic in cultural history and as a distinct and special kind of activity. A given culture can be recognised by this particular activity: the arts. The process of creativity which accompanies the arts is induced by the given culture and conversely the process itself participates in defining this culture. The inner position of the observer is one of the difficulties in an objective analysis of creativity in our time.

In a late essay<sup>6</sup>, Erich Neumann (1905–1960) tries to provide an explanation for so-called «degenerate art» and the «chaos of our civilization», and to discover their correlative significance. If «modern art is an authentic expression of our time, the question arises: is it still art in the same sense as all previous art»? He warns:

We are speaking of ourselves. If this art is degenerate, we too are degenerate, for innumerable individuals are suffering the same collapse of the cultural canon, the same alienation, the same loneliness [...]. The disintegration and dissonance of this art are our own; to understand them is to understand ourselves. If the need for expression has its source in the intensity of the experience, how can modern man, whose world is menaced by chaos, do other than give creative form to this chaos?<sup>7</sup>



Nearly fifty years later, with media arts and particularly «internet art» the situation has not clarified at all, as a dense «rhizome» has replaced the «chaos», but Deleuze's concept of *rhizosphère* itself already requires some updating.

My concern here is with creativity, art education and more particularly video making, a field that could be regarded as at the crossroad of painting, cinema and electronic arts. I could begin by investigating what has been done in each of the fields of art education, filmmaking and multimedia art education and what still has to be done.<sup>8</sup>

Another position however is to see video as an autonomous discipline, which has its own answers to specific ethical and psychological problems that are not at all the same problems that former traditional visual arts have had, including cinema —nor that specific vision of the internet. I shall consider video as the meeting ground of traditional visual arts and the new media; or in other words as a stage of modern (or postmodern) art turning electronic and digital, and supposing that video will be subject to further developments in digital artistic vision and hypermedia<sup>9</sup> (figure 33).

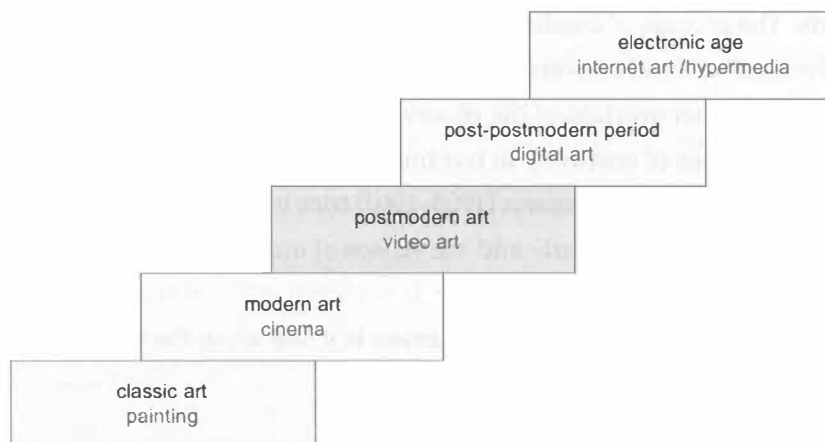


Fig. 33: Video as Postmodern Visual Art

For the psychological viewpoint of Neumann, the individual creative function of the unconscious is subordinate to archetypes of the collective unconscious, at least in the case of traditional art. He writes:

The archetypes of the collective unconscious are intrinsically formless psychic structures which become visible in art. The archetypes are varied by the media through which they pass - that is, their form changes according to the time, the place, and the psychological constellation of the individual in whom they are manifested<sup>10</sup>

Adapting the situation to our time and video, it is interesting to ask what kind of archetypes video art recalls. A great part of the overview on video that I have provided insists on characteristics which accompany the medium, namely its lack of long history and secondly the early connection within performance art of the sixties including its opposition to television culture. From the end of the eighties one can observe a political bias moving from the left to the right in the role of television, and the concerns over its content and aesthetics have consequently increased.

Television, which traditionally has been a one-way medium in the sense that it has not had much real feedback, has progressively tried to reduce that inconvenience by setting up amateur participation. Actually television today is preparing itself for a future fusion with the internet which is, by definition, interactive. I personally think that prospective video art must be seen in that light. If video has no long history it has however a firm base in postmodern culture, which itself has its own «archetypes». A current changing role of video (in general) is shown very clearly in the recent development of global video channel types (*Youtube* or *Google video*), whose development is coupled with the orientation of the internet. Video art, as a reflection of this new kind of communication, is at the moment in chaotic hands, and could acquire an avant-garde function, but probably still has a long hard road ahead before it seriously assumes responsibility. The apparition of a global and interactive communication system has another important consequence: the bias towards the right described above is inverted from right to left with the appearance of the possibilities for video via the internet, and that means above all that the classical model for an «ideal broadcasting» becomes obsolete. The recent use of internet video channels as a kind of «cinéma vérité» for social criticism and politics is an historically social event that could be compared for instance to the formation of workers' unions at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The internet as a public forum is a very serious phenomenon which must not be neglected. It concerns the arts and art education too. For the moment, the situation is rather unpleasant due to the low technical quality and superficial

achievements: a «trash» phase must be passed through and the chaos must organize itself, following natural laws of expansion. We can easily imagine in the near future the expansion of systems of distribution of independent, low budget and artistic video works of quality.

Neumann has observed that art development —since primitive times— has made a clear evolution from «original anonymity» towards «individualization»<sup>11</sup> which is a paradox when one bears in mind that communication in society was developing at the same time towards anonymous media.

He insists on remembering that «each individual is artist, dancer, singer, poet painter and sculptor; everything he does and his way of doing it, even where a recognized individual possession is involved, remains an expression of the group 's effective situation.»<sup>12</sup> The Internet is a «place» where both anonymity and individualization are realized. Because of this, video must be considered as a new form of individual artistic expression among the others; the role of video will also be the main role assumed by the visual arts in electronic media. It is not the role of painting or cinema or even digital photography. However digital photography probably will keep its actual ambiguous function and could develop even a greater affinity with video.<sup>13</sup>

Video can assume the individualizing role much better than cinema which is a collective art with a high collective conscious level. Video, instead, is an individualized art with a high collective unconscious, a role assumed before by the underground cinema.

Man Ray, as I have shown, was very conscious of the fact that cinema had been requiring a high level of collective thinking and social skills from him that he did not have. His art, and that of Duchamp, can be seen as much more individualistic than even the works of other Dadaists and Surrealists in general, because it is not subject to any compromises. Surrealists as a political group *before* being an artistic «organisation» put pressure on the group. For them art ought to be automatic, therefore «unconscious», but the individual «unconscious» level was further largely controlled by the «consciousness» of the group. There is a paradox and it is a paradox which reveals the role of self-censorship.

As Tom Sandqvist has remarked «the main characteristic of the *oeuvre* (sic.) of Duchamp is that besides his very strong tendency for theorizing about art, he

never developed any particular art theory as Kandinsky, Mondrian and Klee did»<sup>14</sup>. One recalls the doubts Man Ray had too concerning Kandinsky's painting. The interpretation of the observer in the face of a work of art is neither the equivalent of the intention or the concretisation of a work, «the intention is not seen in the work because the work is only the result of what is left, a residual part of the process.»<sup>15</sup> The tensions between pragmatism (experience) and theory (systematisation) converge on the grounds of «transpersonal conflict». Neumann generalizes:

Not the ego and consciousness but the collective unconscious and the self are the determining forces; the development of man and his consciousness is dependant on the spontaneity and the inner order of the unconscious and remains so even after consciousness and unconscious have entered into a fruitful dialectical relation to each other.<sup>16</sup>

Further, the creative power seems to Neumann to be subject to the collective unconscious forces like an «instinctual drive». He presents the collective and individual forces as a «transpersonal conflict»; he writes:

The creative impulse springs from the collective; like every instinct it serves the will of the species and not of the individual [...] Creative phenomena range from the lowest, unconscious stages of ecstatic frenzy and somnambulism to the highest level of conscious acceptance, in which the artist takes full responsibility and a formative, interpreting consciousness plays an essential part.<sup>17</sup>

Suzi Gablik warns:

Many of the difficulties and conflicts we experience as personal are related to the framework of beliefs and standards of behavior provided by our culture to serve as guidelines for individual lives. We tend to pattern ourselves and our world view after our culture, taking as self-evident certain beliefs, values and behaviors; thus, if our model of culture is faulty or disordered, then we ourselves are disordered in precisely the same way. Since cultural conditioning strongly influences individual behavior and thought, to begin to move toward a different framework of assumptions that would change the basis of our experience is extremely difficult.<sup>18</sup>

The idea of connecting creativity with consciousness and unconsciousness and within a conflict between the self and the collective is very interesting,

especially in the field of arts. The artwork of video can therefore be appreciated as an introspection (a mirror of the self) and a way of dealing with the collective (a window open to the world).

L'art est ce qui rend la vie plus intéressante que l'art<sup>19</sup>

This sentence quoted by France Hanin summarises the dialectical relationship between the artist and the world. Often one hears that «television is a window on the world», but that also means that we are here, and the world is there. With video, the existence of the «self» and its relation with culture can be realized as an ideal. Hanin rejoins that perspective when she affirms:

De fait, la création artistique n'est pas une «chose en soi»; sa valeur essentielle étant au contraire la relation étroite qu'elle entretient avec les événements de l'époque et l'existence de ses contemporains. Il ne faut pas croire que la compréhension de l'art contemporain passe obligatoirement par une connaissance de l'histoire de l'art<sup>20</sup>

Through the dialectical relation of consciousness and unconsciousness, the collective and the individual levels of cognition, through the balance of rational and spontaneity, video is the perfect *zeitgeist* medium<sup>21</sup> in art education. Culture is not cult. Art is a dialogue favouring a critical vision. Video can perform that function better than any audiovisual media can so far today and seems to be the only visual art medium that assumes a bridge between the old, analogical way of thinking of the world of film and the new developing digital media art, and yet it has an audio and time dimension. The explosion of video clubs in the late eighties, for instance in Finland, was a sign of that direction, but the connections with the cultural life were not open; in fact in the eighties and the nineties in the cultural circuits there was still a division between art disciplines (and the rest of society) and it must be acknowledged that there is still today. Video seems to be the best possible medium for unifying all visual arts, music and the stage with digital and internet art. Through the aesthetic and cognitive experience of video, the artist who is also perceiver and observer can develop new visions. Jarmo Valkola has stated the psychological importance of the work of art on art education *and* the community when he concludes in his book:

The perceiver is involved in the levels of perception, emotion and cognition, and they are more or less bound up together. [...] Works of art plunge us into an aesthetic, cognitive, and playful type of interaction. They also renew and enlighten our perceptions, thoughts, and other mental processes because thinking about art is a kind of mental exercise. Art can be understood as the mind's urge to understand, to discover, to invent, to make real, and to give meaningful shape of objects under scrutiny.<sup>22</sup>

As Man Ray himself thought, (video) art favours the awakening of desire and it is «the first step to participation and experience». The social and political are linked to this participation, and the individual and psychic to experience. In summary, beyond unifying the arts, video connects to society better than any other visual art, and in a global context of communication.

### [dvd-ram / blu-ray]

Of course, there will always be those who look only at technique, who ask «how», while others of a more curious nature will ask «why». Personally, I have always preferred inspiration to information. —Man Ray<sup>23</sup>

Digital video disc (DVD) is a new video standard to have opened the millennium. There are at least two ways to understand the term «digital image» (or digital video): the first, as a digitalized «capture» of reality, the «analogue world», that is to say to put reality into a sequence of bits; the second is an «artificially created» image of the world, that is to say to organise bits into a «virtual reality».

The use of the terms «artificial image» and «digital image» (by artists, critics and theoreticians) is somewhat vague and subject to shifts in meaning, which is not surprising, as the development of new technologies is often accompanied by semantic uncertainties. The analogue image results from the «capture» of reality in the form of continuously varying intensities of light. The digital image is based on numbers or abstract signs. The so-called «artificial» is an image that has been calculated and constructed. These last two terms are often used interchangeably.<sup>24</sup>

By being digitalized, the most important consequences for the «analogue world» are artistic and philosophical and not, as is often believed, improvements in quality and definition (in its reproduction), or even in its

processing. The digital representation of a previously «analogue world» in the new standardized processing of digitalization is intended to comply with the world of computer data, thereby allowing for further manipulations regardless of whether the original image was either analogue or artificial (figure 34).

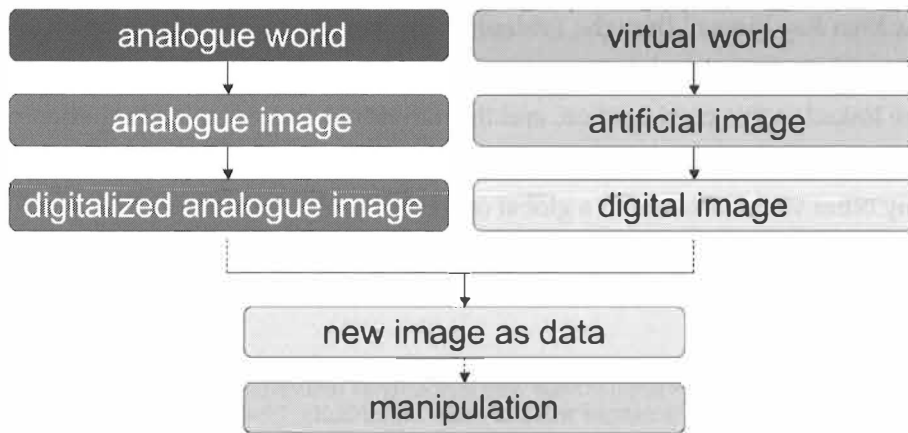


Fig. 34 Analogue and Digital Images

The biggest impact is the loss of a *reference* world: each new level of representation takes the state of an original. This means «personalization» and interpretation, so in that sense a return in to the «primitive» world of painting. This could mean also a technological overestimation, a wave of euphoria that could be named «digikitsch». In that perspective a reevaluation of analogue virtues is also needed —we could call it the «pure» image (raw image) but also *bricolage*.

Technology obliges the artist to use new tools, and with them to create new visions. If the process was restricted to that statement, we could easily draw the conclusion that the engineer is at least half responsible for the resulting «vision». «The role of media art is generally to implement new technologies and at the same time to question their goals. Art's new function is, on the other hand, to join different media, something that is possible with digital technology».<sup>25</sup>

Interactive «*gesamtkunstwerk*» between digital media (and digital data) is possible and in fact has never been so easy. The question is how far do we

regard interactive the images, video, sounds, texts and graphics which are easily packaged into similar bit sequences, as the rudiments of abstract reality or as volatile data. Random access memory (RAM) means that the storage of these volatile data can be both read and modified by the user<sup>26</sup>; put simply, it means digital raw material submitted to the perception of the artist and permitting a *bricolage*. This can be an electronic *bricolage* but the possibilities of interaction with analogue forms of art cannot be discounted either. Media installations and performances must be understood inside the technology of a media but also in its immediate and further periphery. As Pekka Ranta observes in 1998:

The rapid and constant evolution of media technology is making media art pluralist but difficult to embrace as a definite whole. This concerns also the evaluation of its content. From the point of view of art criticism, media art is difficult to assign to the fields of traditional arts. Media art however wishes to be regarded as visual art, the criterion being its presence, not its technology.<sup>27</sup>

In current media-art education one can often observe the temptation to approach the subject through the technological aspect of its expression and therefore sometimes leave the «presence» aside. Beyond the trivial statement that technology must be approached mostly as a tool that is proper for expressing artists' wills, I argue, and Man Ray generally demonstrated it, that technology must be by-passed. The misuse of a technique paradoxically opens up new possibilities.

Video art has been in existence for about forty years, which is not long, but long enough for the results to be assessed, especially as analogue media through media-installations and performances, and as an alternative way of thinking the cinema.

Digital technology, if not a forbidden fruit, remains nonetheless an easy temptation for the media artist. Florence de Mèredieu is even more categorical and does not seem happy about a purely digital art:

Ordered, controlled, corseted -the digital image inherited all the properties of academicism long ago. It is only by combining with other forms of expression, disrupting them or providing them with a framework, that it has become interesting

And, probably from an art education perspective, she continues:

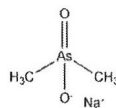


The development of interactive installations and virtual environments has also made a significant contribution to the revival of the visual arts. The participation of the viewer is increasingly called into play in works that stimulate all the senses. Artworks now resemble constantly evolving collective rituals, and art is becoming more theatrical and media oriented. It is having an increasingly conspicuous effect on the world around us, invading the environment through events and interactive installations in our cities.<sup>28</sup>

With this assessment she joins my fifth, «postmodernist» vision (video-rew) and the psychological point of view of Neumann that I started these conclusions with. But she warns however about the menacing «filter» of the unconscious collective that I have already evaluated. In fact she adds to the *tyranny of opinion* the *tyranny of engineers* (called here technicians):

Occasionally, «artworks are developed by technicians with a purely practical goal in mind [...] Technicians become unwitting artists and sometimes end up being drawn into the business of creating art. The world is becoming aestheticized. Art is spreading in society, at the same time being diluted by a sort of capillary action which is becoming increasingly uncontrollable. This will delight some and worry others, but one way or another it looks as if we are on the brink of a major transformation of society.<sup>29</sup>

To balance the *tyranny of engineers* there is a medicine: *cacodylic acid*.



### [cacodylic eye]

L'Art est partout, excepté dans les temples d'Art, comme Dieu est partout, sauf dans les églises. —Francis Picabia<sup>30</sup>

*L'Œil cacodylate (Cacodylic Eye)* of Picabia (plate 4), the famous painting with 56 signatures, is perhaps one of the most enigmatic initiatives by Picabia but also the most allegorical dada work. Made in 1922, it echoes a poem of his written in 1918 and dedicated to his doctors<sup>31</sup>:

*Sa parade dont l'ébullition a des bornes impitoyables  
faisait cortège d'un œil cacodylate rose vif  
dans ma vie de suralimentation suisse.<sup>32</sup>*

*L'Œil cacodylate* can represent a trauma, a cancer, a manifesto of nausea, but as has been sometimes suggested a hunting tableau too. The participation of Man Ray who had signed it «Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies», was also enriched by his photographs (glued by Picabia on to the oil canvas):

*Femme à la cigarette* (c. 1920) and two pictures of the tonsured head of Duchamp (plate 23). The strange painting, like a «graffiti» on the plaster-cast on a broken leg full of friends' signatures, presages the dissolution of Dada, Picabia having already distanced himself from the imminent direction of the movement and from Breton whose signature is significantly absent.

For us today *L'Œil cacodylate* can represent an allegory of the work of art in general, in its contextual dimension, once again without pretending to try to define what constitutes art and what is «not art», but refining its ephemerality, how vision is *caduque* (deciduous).

*L'Œil cacodylate* works like a petition without claiming anything but a revolt against the order, menacing changes or stagnation. As does urban graffiti. A comparison of the spirit of Picabia's painting and wild-style graffiti art could be interesting. «Graffiti writing breaks the hegemonic hold of corporate/governmental style over the urban environment and the situations of daily life. As a form of aesthetic sabotage, it interrupts the pleasant, efficient uniformity of «planned» urban space and predictable urban living. For the writers, graffiti disrupts the lived experience of mass culture, the passivity of mediated consumption.»<sup>33</sup> Graffiti is sabotage, just like the *Cacodylic Eye* was a Picabia's public sabotage of Breton.

The legality of graffiti comes first into question, but besides the aesthetic (or anti-aesthetic) expression it is the controversy which becomes interesting, rather than its legality. The «cacodylic eye», the attitude, supposes an *opposition* but also a *statement*: that is to say a negative (destructive) force preceding a positive (constructive) recognition. It is thus a sharply critical eye for a deeply critical but also original vision; like cacodylic acid, it is a herbicide, a defoliant. It disturbs, and it particularly disturbs rigid structures, like academism and occasionally the world of engineers. The acerbic attitude

against electronic devices and digital techniques could therefore be one of the marks of a new iconoclastic attitude. The «cacodylic eye» also supposes a critical perception of the structures of the art world today: what is standing between the artist and his public, such as art schools, art criticism, art research, art competitions and awards, museums, galleries, state funding, media circus, technicians, engineers etc. One of the advantage of video art until now was its total disconnection from any rigid criteria of availability or acceptability as a work of art, a situation which is far from being the case with cinema, which has to go through a rigid system of financial, commercial, social, political, moral and aesthetic compromises.

Satire, irony, parody are simply a laugh, which simultaneously represents fragmented and dispersed reality, or more exactly a certain seriousness gushing out of it. That laugh is an arrow shot between seriousness and existential understanding, in a world that controls the interplay of chance and the lottery of paradoxes.<sup>34</sup>

Eventually iconoclasm, verve, cynicism, provocation and self-destruction too could be brought into the description of the avant-garde.

### **[in(de)structible cyclops]**

Cut out the eye from a photograph of one who has been loved but is seen no more. Attach the eye to the pendulum of a metronome and regulate the weight to suit the tempo desired. Keep going to the limit of endurance. With a hammer well-aimed, try to destroy the whole at a single blow - Man Ray<sup>35</sup>

In *Self-Portrait* Man Ray describes the same object and its allegorical meaning: how destruction was source of instruction and how indestructible it became (1957):

A retrospective show of early Dada works was held in Paris [...] The show looked respectable –almost conservative by present standards. I had added another object I had conceived in the early years: simply a metronome to the oscillating stem of which I had attached a photograph of a eye that moved with the ticking as it swung back and forth. The title was, Object To Be Destroyed. I really intended to destroy it one day, but before witnesses or an audience in the course of a lecture [...]<sup>36</sup>

A group of student from the *Académie des Beaux Arts* came and announced to

the visitors of the gallery that «this was a protest against the Dadaists and the Surrealists».

...one grabbed the metronome and disappeared with it [...] I was summoned to the police station the next day and asked if I wished to prosecute, but I refused [...] The papers quoted me as saying I would have done the same at their age.<sup>37</sup>

Then came the insurance expert:

First he offered to replace the cost of the metronome, a trifle. I pointed out that one did not replace a work of art, a painting, with brushes, paints and canvas. He conceded the point [...] I might, with this money, buy a whole stock of metronomes. [...] instead of *Object To Be Destroyed* I'd call it *Indestructible Object*.<sup>38</sup>

A remarkable analysis of the object by Janine Mileaf has revealed the strong emotional and psychological resonance of the work that are further amplified by Man Ray's sexual proclivities revealed in the storytelling of *Self-portrait*.

Although contrived by the artist as a surrogate for his violent emotions, *Object to Be Destroyed* becomes a judge and provocateur that prompts acts of aggression even at the risk of its own demolition [...] By excising the eye of Miller from a photograph, Man Ray did violence to her surrogate. [...] The back-and-forth motion of the metronome's pendulum models its capacity to reposition agency among the artist, object, and viewer. With each stroke, the object asserts its capacity to aggress its maker or viewer, but also tempts that person to take control and destroy the work. These shifting loci of agency can be theorized in terms of the social order and the individual psyche<sup>39</sup>

It's a common thought that art is a creative human activity having a peaceable and therapeutic effect. Following C. G. Jung it often also involves an aggressive momentum: «In order to be creative, rather than being just constructive, one must occasionally also destroy.»<sup>40</sup>

Recent researches<sup>41</sup> have been formulating that demolishing, usually coupled with aggressiveness —not necessarily violence— can paradoxically also be a creative behavior, a phenomenon that could be attributed for instance to graffiti artists in the public urban milieu.

We have observed rather clearly with Dadaism the importance of destruction —called philosophically *nihilism*— as a starting-point of the creative process.

Not only cleverness and originality, but also nonconformity and subversiveness, accessorially coupled with perverse tendencies seem thus the elements favouring creativity in modern arts.

As Poggioli had observed the modernist movements which are regrouped under the label *avant-garde* had developed their own conventions and appeared soon as a new form of academicism, an evolution which over time has favoured an increasing extremism. I have suggested the concept of *rear-garde* as a way of describing it. The Bauhaus was a relatively short experience as a blend of expression, destruction and construction, which has had wide repercussions on art education today. The Bauhaus does not seem however to fulfil the needs of contemporary art expression, which has more to deal with an increased extremism<sup>42</sup> or simply commercialism. Besides, the modern arts have been developing all the time in the direction of intellectualization: intellectualized intuitive processes and pure expression, so that today *irrational components of creativity, like intuition, have become a more or less controlled part of the process of rational thinking*. At the same time the larger public was generally left behind and aware in the main only to the entertainment factor of art.

Must art be taught as a palette of «technical skills»? When the artist's creativity is controlled by rational thinking, and when he or she is highly educated, the artist is supposed to be a connoisseur, so how can he or she escape being conservative and imitative? Must art take an active part in art education development or vice-versa? We have observed that art is a little parcel of the world and artistic vision is only a perspective on it. Does art education belong to that little parcel, or to another little parcel of that world, and can it influence artistic perception? (figure 35)

Obviously there is no question any more of only «natural gifts» and «technical skills» for the contemporary artist but of an open-minded attitude, the need for endurance in the process of creation, which mean all psychological, social and physical skills too, aspects which only seldom appear in the mass-media. The mass-media still however promote an atmosphere of entertainment which interferes with the work of the art teacher.

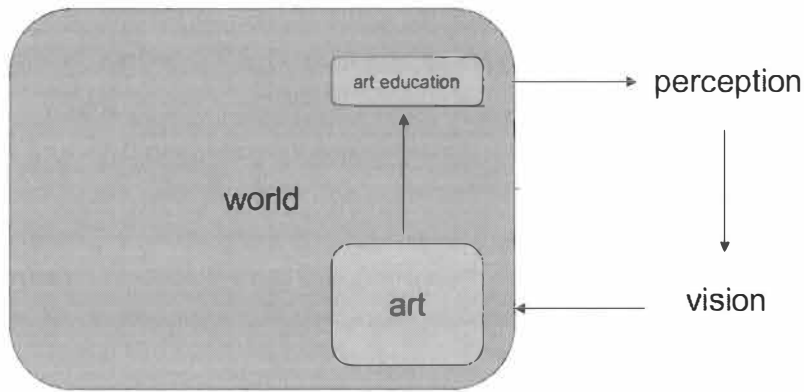


Fig. 35: Artistic Vision and Art Education

In the field of general education at the end of the eighties Shulman and Stodolsky<sup>43</sup> provided evidence that the topic taught was of prime importance when assessing the type of teaching and teaching results. However in the same work E.W. Eisner writes:

The vision I hold of teaching, a vision that puts a premium on constructive ingenuity in an array of tasks that have no single best method, moves teaching into a realm of craft. Since the decisions made by teachers have moral consequences for students, teaching is [...] «a moral craft.» Teaching, I would add, not only is a moral craft; at its best it is a performing art. It is an art that depends on refined sensibility, imagination, flexibility, taste, and highly sophisticated skills. At its very best, it generates an aesthetic form of experience for both teacher and student.<sup>44</sup>

Several artists who work also as art teachers have encountered some major problems by involving their artistic life with teaching. Others have experienced art making and art teaching as creatively coupled occupations. For Eisner the principal (teaching) tasks are:

- 1° **constructive inventiveness**
- 2° **pluralism**
- 3° **target purchase**
- 4° **variation in methods**

The historical visions of avant-garde cinema and video that I have analysed in this work provide a large palette of possibilities for fulfilling Eisner's tasks.

As a subjective approach art education however must be seen, I think, in a larger humanistic, historical, scientific, political, and social context. This means extending (video) art education to other fields than the visual—to literature or music, for instance, to ethics, psychology and sociology. Jarmo Valkola extends this to a general concept of interactivity:

All the sciences are in a way or another closely interrelated, and they combine a historically changing system. The unity and interaction of sciences will reflect the objective togetherness of them. The reality has dialectical connections, and one of those connections is called art.<sup>45</sup>

The question is not to discuss realities of art and science, but to design art and science experiences in the field of education. The rational and methodological perspectives in art and in sciences are not especially demarked from each other.<sup>46</sup> Both bring into play creative processes and determined tasks. Rational thinking must be activated by spontaneous intuition and sensitive experience while «primitive» and uncontrolled aspirations must be catalysed as sources of inspiration and constructive methods.

The relation between collective unconsciousness and the identity of the individual concretised by the role of institutions cannot be avoided.

Pasi Sahlberg writes:

Modernisation concerns all of society: financial, cultural, scientific, political and for this reason also education [...] modern institutions have in fact sacrificed individual identity for the sake of prosperity. The development of the individual's personality and identity cannot however be separated from the social environment of his life.<sup>47</sup>

The equilibrium between scientific-technologic knowledge and pure artistic expression was at the centre of Bauhaus ideology. The most important influence of the Bauhaus was however the way in which it put knowledge into practice, and in this way how it had an enduring influence in the fields of the applied arts and the design industry. The consequence was a re-evaluation of the role of the artist in society, but at the same time that role was disconnecting the deeply personal aspirations. Man Ray and the avant-garde made no consensus of opinion about this.

From the eighties, theories of creativity<sup>48</sup> concentrate not only on «natural gifts», thinking and concentration skills but also on many more elements

involved in the phenomenon of creativity, like abstract thinking, a critical mind, inspiration, impressionability, imagination, originality, inventiveness, logical thinking, motivation, knowledge, skills in expression, experimentalism, spontaneity, sensibility, productivity, mood, disposition, adaptation, self-confidence etc. It provides evidence that art education is itself not only a discipline linked with creativity but is contextual like art. Sahlberg<sup>49</sup> asks with irony if the teacher is an independent artist or a team player.

He presents Huberman's metaphor<sup>50</sup> where the teacher is an independent artisan working in a school community. He examines a school's complicated environment as an institutionalized unit and as a result believes that student's development could perhaps succeed without any precisely formulated targets. He believes in spontaneity and cooperation between teachers, where each is above all making independent choices dependent on and appropriate to the actual context.

I have emphasised Neumann's «transpersonal conflict». What is true for the artist seems to me true too in the field of art education.

The rational methods developed in the Bauhaus are still worthy of critical discussion today. But the most important elements are what the teachers of the Bauhaus and the 1920s avant-garde have shown to be of central importance: identity, intuition, experience, temperament, risk and the right for contradiction and opposition for instance are also skills involved in the process of vision. Man Ray's *transpersonal conflicts* made exactly the same point. He never gave the lecture he promised, but his *metronome* beats forever.

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Sandqvist: *Rajamailla*, 1990, p. 255, adapt. / transl. JC

<sup>2</sup> Term invented by Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), which describes the *science of imaginary solutions*

<sup>3</sup> Susi Gablik: *The Reenchantment of Art*, 1992

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4

<sup>5</sup> In *The Age of Light, Photographs by Man Ray, 1920-1934*, 1934; Originally published in French in *Le Minotaure*, n° 3-4, december, 1933

<sup>6</sup> Erich Neumann: *Art and Time in: Art and Creative Unconsciousness*, 1959, p. 121

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Video as *interactive video* in the field of computers and hypermedia

<sup>9</sup> Video as a tool in a large information database; Hypermedia: A technique permitting the organization and linking of information stored as text, image and sound (Florence de Mèredieu: *Digital and Video art*, 2005)

<sup>10</sup> Erich Neumann: *Art and Time in: Art and Creative Unconsciousness*, 1959, p. 82

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83

<sup>13</sup> Digital photography has brought ambiguity to the concept of representation (and manipulation); «photograph» and «still-photograph» (still-video) as digital data is identical

<sup>14</sup> Tom Sandqvist: *Rajamailla*, 1990, p. 231, transl. JC

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232



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- <sup>16</sup> Erich Neumann: *Art and Time in: Art and Creative Unconsciousness*, 1959, pp. 89-90
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98
- <sup>18</sup> Susi Gablik: *The Reenchantment of Art*, 1992, p. 3
- <sup>19</sup> Robert Filliou, quoted by France Hanin in *Animations culturelles: Entretien avec France Hanin Mac's Avant-projets*, March 2000, p. 12
- <sup>20</sup> France Hanin, p. 12
- <sup>21</sup> A medium fully adapted to its time
- <sup>22</sup> Jarmo Valkola: *Aesthetic & Cognitive Perceptualism*, 2000, p. 133
- <sup>23</sup> A popular aphorism by Man Ray which has as origin probably a less told episode of Chinese sages facing a siren, in *Self Portrait*, p. 194
- <sup>24</sup> Florence de Mèredieu: *Digital and Video art*, 2005, pp. 96-97
- <sup>25</sup> Pekka Ranta, 1998 in: <http://www.ulapland.fi/home/pranta/laudatur.htm> (transl. JC)
- <sup>26</sup> Florence de Mèredieu: *Digital and Video art*, 2005, p. 233
- <sup>27</sup> Pekka Ranta, 1998 in: <http://www.ulapland.fi/home/pranta/laudatur.htm> (transl. JC)
- <sup>28</sup> Florence de Mèredieu: *Digital and Video art*, 2005, p. 228
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229
- <sup>30</sup> Francis Picabia: «L'œil cacodilate.»(sic.) in William A. Camfield: *The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia* (The Art Bulletin XLVIII Sept.-Dec. 1966)
- <sup>31</sup> Around 1916, Picabia had developed signs of neurasthenia, he was sent in 1918 by his doctors in Switzerland and he was not allowed to paint. In Zurich he met the Dadaists.  
[http://www.picabia.com/biograph/bio\\_vf\\_p3.htm](http://www.picabia.com/biograph/bio_vf_p3.htm) see also note 2 in my introduction.
- <sup>32</sup> Francis Picabia: «Cacodilate» (sic.) in *Poèmes et dessins de la fille née sans mère*, 1918
- <sup>33</sup> Jeff Ferrell, *Crimes of Style* (<http://www.graffiti.org/faq/werwath/werwath.html>)
- <sup>34</sup> Tom Sandqvist: *Rajamailla*, 1990, p. 255, transl. JC
- <sup>35</sup> Man Ray, *Object of Destruction* This Quarter 5, no. 1, special Surrealist issue (September 1932): 55
- <sup>36</sup> Man Ray *Self Portrait*, 1963, p. 303
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Janine Mileaf: *Between you and me: Man Ray's Object to Be Destroyed - Cover Story* Art journal, Spring, 2004, published also at: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-114632847.html>
- <sup>40</sup> Quoted by Gorazd V. Mrevlje: *From Aggressiveness to Creativity* Journal of Analytical Psychology Vol. 49, Feb.2004, pp. 103-112 on line:  
<http://www.blackwellsynergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.00218774.2004.0443.x?cookieSet=1&journalCode=joap>
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> «Kill»-videos, trash-films, pornographic and snuff-videos maybe mentioned
- <sup>43</sup> Doug Boughton; E.W. Eisner & Johan Ligtvoet *Evaluating and Assessing the Visual Arts in Education*, 1996, p. 78 forward
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>45</sup> Jarmo Valkola: *Aesthetic & Cognitive Perceptualism*, 2000, p. 7
- <sup>46</sup> Jacques Coelho: *The Theoretical and Practical Approaches of Rational / Intuitive Paradox in Art Education: The Experience of the Bauhaus and the Experience of Teaching Visual Arts Today*, 2001, pp. 4-6
- <sup>47</sup> Pasi Sahlberg: *Opettajana Koulun muutoksessa*, 1997 pp. 45-47, transl. JC
- <sup>48</sup> R. Haavikko and J-E Ruth: *Luovuuden ulottuvuudet*, 1984
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>50</sup> M. Huberman: *The Model of the Independent Artisan in Teachers Professional Relations* in J.W. Little & M.W. McLaughlin *Teachers' Work*, 1990

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# Appendix

## List of the European Second Avant-Garde Filmmakers

### ESAG [european second avant-garde]

**Blakeston, Oswald** (1907–1985) British avant-garde filmmaker of the Pool Group (see HD and Macpherson) made in 1927 *Ido Like To Be Beside the Seaside* (with Kenneth Macpherson).

**Bragaglia, Anton Giulio** (1890–1960): futurist filmmaker and photographer, theater director and set designer. At age of seventeen he worked as assistant director alongside Mario Caserini and Enrico Guazzoni. Besides his photodynamics inspired probably by the work of Jules Marey, directed in 1916–17 several films: *Thais*, *Perfido incanto* (Perfidious Enchantment, lost film), *Il mio cadavere* (My Corpse).

**Brecht, Bertold** (1898–1956) in 1922 made a film with Erich Engel: *Mysterien eines Frisier salons*.

**Bruguière, Francis** (1879–1945): American photographer living in London; After *Theory* (1925) he made *Light rhythms* (1930) with the British Oswald Blakeston\*, a commercial film *Empire Buyers are Empire Builders* (1931) and a probably lost film *The Way*.

**Brunel, Adrian** (1892–1958): Brunel was an eminent director in the twenties, and co-founded Minerva Films with Leslie Howard. His best-known films include *Blighty* (1927), *The Constant Nymph* and *The Vortex* (1927) and *While Parents Sleep* (1935). He was a founder of the London Film Society, a body formed to evade the stringent pre-war censorship which prohibited many classic Russian films from being seen on British screens.<sup>1</sup> «Intellectual» of the twenties' cinema and a close friend of Alfred Hitchcock (they formed the hate Club together). He is represented by a series of cruelly witty short parodies on the film genres of the time.<sup>2</sup> Adrian Brunel finds his



place in this list because of often being associated with avantgardist British silent cinema, but he does not properly belong to the «other cinema». His place could be besides French Impressionism and German Expressionism.

**Brunius, Jacques B.** (1906–1967): surrealist filmmaker; co-direction with Edmond T. Gréville of *Elle est Bicimidine* (1927); *La Lisette, C'est le mai, Les Hommes* (1929); in 1931 from a screenplay by Roger Vitrac *Voyage aux Cyclades*; made films still in the fifties. Two films of the thirties were made with the voice of Robert Desnos (*Record 37* and *Sources noires*). *Violons d'Ingres* is from 1937.

**Buñuel, Luis** (1900–1983) Buñuel worked as assistant director for a few years before producing his own surrealist film *Un Chien andalou* (Andalusian Dog, 1928), one of the first full surrealist films. It was made in collaboration with Dalí. Buñuel was very critical of the Spanish avant-garde for its allegiance to traditional forms. In fact the arrogance of his criticism towards the Catholic church, bourgeois conventions and puritanism made him above all else a Surrealist. He rejected the avant-garde's usual emphasis on form. It is perhaps the reason why Buñuel can be kept as a full Surrealist because his Surrealism is the nearest in form *and* content to the aims of Breton. *L'Age d'or* (1930) was a sound film which consecrated him through controversy and critical scandal, but assured him a contract with MGM which he finally turned down. His next film was a documentary made in Spain, *Las hurdes: tierra sin pan* (1932). After 1946 he contributed to neorealism in the Mexican cinema but made a comeback in Europe with surrealist feature films after 1958 with *Nazarin*. During the sixties and the seventies he criticized the Catholic Church and Fascism with *a.o. Viridiana, Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie, Le Fantôme de la liberté, ect.* His production more or less surrealist ended only in 1977 with his last film *Cet Obscur object du désir*.

**Carrington, Dora** (1893–1932) British painter, member of the Bloomsbury group of artists and thinkers, which also included among others Roger Fry, Duncan Grant\* and Vanessa Bell. She participated to the avantgardist film *Dr Turner's Mental Home* (1929) co-directed with Beakus Penrose.

**Chomette, Henri** (1896–1941): the brother of René Clair\*: between c. 1923 and 1927 directed three films which are so-called pure cinema (*cinéma pur*), a term which links firstly to the use of the medium for the medium's sake (intrinsic cinema); *Jeux de reflets et de vitesse* (aka *Jeux des reflets et de la vitesse*, Plays with Reflections and Speed, 1923–1925), *Cinq minutes de cinéma pur* (Five Minutes of Pure Cinema, 1925–26), *A quoi rêvent les jeunes filles* (aka *A quoi rêvent les jeunes films* aka *Of What Are Young Ladies Dreaming*, aka *What do Young Films Dream Of*, 1923–1926). They isolate images and then bundle them together into unorganized, sequential effusions of editing. «Like fauve, cubist, and abstract painting, might exist without reference to more realistic modes like literature or theater, or to the world it photographed».<sup>3</sup> The films are an abstract play with light using the same techniques as Man Ray. There is a hypothesis about there having been a co-production with Man Ray.

**Clair, René** (Chomette, René-Lucien, 1898–1981): originally took small parts as an actor in several episode films such as Feuillade's movies at the beginning of the twenties. Assistant to Jacques de Baroncelli before starting at age 25 *Paris qui dort* (Sleeping Paris, 1923–24), the film appearing as an experimental comedy compiling tricks such as freeze frames and slow and fast motion. *Entr'acte* (Intermission, 1924) the next film he made, based on a script by Francis Picabia, was intended to be projected during the intermission of the ballet (by Picabia) *Relâche* (Performance Cancelled). It is par excellence the first collective and budget dadaist film, and was made after Man Ray's *Retour à la raison*. The film saw the collaboration of Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp\* (among others) playing chess on an open roof. The music was made by Erik Satie, who was also an actor in the film. After 1925, Clair was making only commercial narrative films in which only humour remained from the dadaist chaotic contradictions. His fantasy was maybe as close to Méliès and to Chaplin.

**Cocteau, Jean** (1889–1963) Cocteau made his first film *Le Sang du poète* (Blood of the Poet, 1930) privately financed by the Vicomte de Noailles, as was Buñuel's *L'Âge d'or*(1930) which had provoked a scandal. The influence of Surrealist films of that time was clear in *Le Sang du poète* but the dialogues and the free-form episodic imagery make of it a very personal ambivalent narrative and non-narrative no-mans-land. Virtuality and dream work in the film as an absolute poetic source. For

Kenneth Anger the poetry of Cocteau works by finding images which are like hieroglyphs —a kind of visual equivalent of the words. His next film *La Belle et la bête* not before 1946, remained strongly poetic and traces of Surrealism can be found.

**Cohl, Emile** (1857–1938) The pioneer of the animated film in France, he explored the boundaries of photography and animation, mixing them together and often using the photography *as decor*. For that reason he doesn't properly belong to the formalist stream I am analysing (his starting-point is not in visual arts)<sup>4</sup> *Course potirons*, *La Vie à rebours* (1907); *Fantasmagorie* (1908) etc.

**Corra, Bruno** (Corradini, G. Bruno, 1892–1976) made abstract experimental films *Cinepittura* (Cine-painting) and *Musica cromatica* in the years 1910–12 with his brother Arnaldo Ginna, but today the films are lost. The films anticipate the works by Richter\*, Ruttman\* or Len Lye\* (painting straight to film).

**Dekeukeleire, Charles** (1905–1971) Belgian filmmaker who made the pure formal *Combat de boxe* (1928); poetical, rhythmical and erotic film *Impatience* (1928). The next film *L'Histoire du détective T.* (1929) was more realistic, but *La Flamme blanche* (1930)<sup>5</sup> was a mixture of poetry and social satire. Like Storck\* he turned to social documentary-making in the thirties.

**Dickenson, Desmond** *C.O.D. – A Mellow Drama*, directed in 1929 by Desmond Dickenson, Lloyd T Richards, Gerald Gibbs and Harcourt Templeman, is an affectionate burlesque parody of the Expressionist art film and the more recently rediscovered *Equation : X + X = 0* (Robert Fairthorne, Brian Salt) and presages the rise of the abstract film.

**Duchamp, Marcel** (1887 1968) The kinetic experiments he made with optical constructions (1920) and moving optical devices, (1921) during the New York-Dada period, *Rotary Glass Plates* (1920) and *Rotary Demi-sphère* (1925) filmed by Man Ray find a way to the cinema in the palindromic title *Anémic Cinéma* in 1925. The main idea of the film was to inscribe dadaist sentences in spirals on disks and to alternate them with optical disks (giving an illusion of depth). Finally, a sequence of nine disks were inscribed alternating with eccentric circles creating also optical

centripetal and centrifugal illusions. The cinematographic experiments of Duchamp stopped at this stage. Man Ray in fact finished the film.

**Dulac, Germaine** (born Saisset-Schneider, 1882–1942) Founded the Delia film-company in 1915 with Albert Dulac and began directing films (she was the second French woman director after Alice Guy). As First Avant-garde director, in 1919 she became a leading figure in the impressionist movement with *La Fête espagnole* and *La Souriante Madame Beudet* (1923). However she moved as ESAG director with the Surrealist and formalist films she made after 1927. *La Coquille et le clergyman* (The Seashell and the Clergyman, 1927) from a script by Antonin Artaud is the first and one of the most important films of the early Surrealist cinema with Man Ray's *L'Etoile de mer* (The Starfish, 1928) and Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou* (Andalusian Dog, 1928); the next films she made are not properly Surrealists but a good example of pure cinema: *Disque 927*, *Germination d'un haricot*, *La Princesse Mandane*, *Thèmes et variations* (1928), *Etude cinématographique sur une arabesque* (1929), *Disque 957* (1930), etc. Dulac argues for a cinema free from all visual arts and literature (pure and intrinsic cinema). In the same way as Richter\* and Eggeling\* she tried to construct her experimental films «according to the rules of visual music».

**Eggeling, Viking** (1880–1925) Started to work in Zurich in 1915, and during the dada-period developed his *Generalbaß der Malerei* (Figured Bass of Painting) an attempt at «musical painting» that was followed up by Richter after they meet in 1918. They moved to Germany together and started to work on *Horizontal-Vertikal-Orchester* which remained uncompleted. After 1921 was in contact with the Constructivists and the *November Gruppe*. With the help of Erna Niemeyer succeeded in completing *Diagonalsinfonie* (1923–25), in fact his only finished work. It is considered to be only a stage that Eggeling intended to pass through but it was nonetheless a «source of inspiration for others and made their own work less difficult».<sup>6</sup>

**Fischinger, Oskar** (1900–1967) Developed a wax machine for the production of film images (sold to Walther Ruttmann\*). Worked on abstract wax figures and swirled liquids for abstract motion pictures. In 1923 went to Munich where he made several films of his own (the films are lost). *Seelische Konstruktionen* (Spiritual Constructions, 1926–30) and *München-Berlin-Wanderung* (Munich-Berlin Walk, 1927) and *R-1. Ein*

*Formspiel* (R-1. A form-play, 1927?) belong to this period when he was also working in Berlin for the UFA (with Fritz Lang). He was very active in experimentals during the thirties and forties with, among other titles the *Studies*, *Komposition in Blau*, *Optical poem* and *Motion Painting n°1* in American experimental film. He was there one of the great moving forces near Maya Deren and Kenneth Anger.

**GINNA, Arnaldo** (Corradini, Ginanni 1890–1982) See Corra

**Graeff, Werner** (1901–1978) Enrolled at the Bauhaus and met Hans Richter\* and Viking Eggeling\*; member of *de Stijl* and *Novembergruppe*; worked with abstract films near to the geometrical absolute films of Richter: *Komposition I/22 und II/22* (1922)

**Grant, Duncan** (1885–1978) English Camden Town Group Painter, member of the Bloomsbury group of artists and thinkers, which also included among others Roger Fry, Dora Carrington\* and Vanessa Bell.  
Made a 5 min. abstract film, which is possibly the first British experimental.

**Grierson, John** (1898–1972) Inspired British producer at the Empire Marketing Board, the GPO Film Unit, and later in Canada. As director he made only *Drifters* (1930) and *Industrial Britain* (1933) with collaboration of Robert Flaherty.

**H.D. or Helga Doorn** (Doolittle, Hilda, born Aldington, 1886–1961) British writer and poet, pioneer of the abstract film in Britain with the (now lost) *Wing Beat* (1927), the first «free verse film poem». HD was possibly influenced by the writings of Virginia Woolf, another member of the above-mentioned Bloomsbury group, in an 1926 essay on cinema's potential in modernism. HD belonged to the Pool Group.

**Ivens, Joris** (1898–1989) Dutch documentarist active in many countries but his first films are experimental documentaries near Storck\* and Dekeukeleire\* thus very formalist and poetic such *De Brug* (The Bridge, 1928) and *Regen* (Rain, 1930). *Industrie Symphonie* (Industrial Symphony, 1931) was influenced by the films of Ruttmann\* that he had seen in the *Film-liga* of Amsterdam.

**Larionov, Mikhail Fedorovich** (1881–1964) Russian Avant-garde (Neo-Primitivist and Rayonist). In contact with Apollinaire but also the Futurists; settled in Paris in 1919. Turned to more dynamic arts such as theater, dance and ballet. *Drama v kabare futuristov n°13* (Drama in the Futurist Cabaret n°13, 1913) a Cubo-futurist collective film by Kasianov, Larionov, Goncharova and Burilik (destroyed). «A parody on the prevalent genre of the film guignol».<sup>7</sup>

**Léger, Fernand** (1881–1955) French Cubist (Tubist) painter. *Ballet mécanique* (1924) is the only film he made but the work remained one of the most significant dadaist and avant-garde film. Originally commissioned by the American Dudley Murphy it had to be made by Man Ray<sup>8</sup> but this last only filmed a part of the material, the rest being filmed by Dudley Murphy himself. Léger transferred the cubist vision, the Futurist's mechanical dynamism and the dadaist visual noise to film. His ability to play with forms, rhythms and close-ups had a fully original result. The film is organized around seven sections. Each section playfully employs objects whose size and movement rhythmically counterpoint one another within the composition or by edited juxtapositions.<sup>9</sup> The film uses photograms, totally abstract drawings, object animation, loops, etc.

**Livet, Roger** (1907–1970): Belgian, *Fleurs meurtries* (1928–30) is a 7 minutes film made with René Magritte, recently re-discovered by the Cinémathèque Française.<sup>10</sup>

**Lye, Len** (1901–1980): New-Zealander, experimental filmmaker; doesn't belong properly to ESAG, but started anyway to be active in England after 1928 with the Samoa abstract figures animation made «without camera» *Tusalava* (1928–29), the first «scratch» film. *A Colour Box* (1935), a commercial painted directly on film, was distributed by John Grierson\*. Active in the thirties in England, in the forties and fifties in America. Len Lye is one of the few significant figures in British cinema between the wars. He is as important to «informal» animation as Griffith is to the traditional narrative film. Lye's achievement was to free animation from the «mechanical» frame by frame process-making it as direct and immediate in its creation of images as «live» photography.

**Macpherson, Kenneth** (circa 1903–1971) British avant-garde filmmaker founder of the Pool Group (with Oswald Blakeston\*) originally publisher of books but after

1927 also of films such *Wing Beat* (1927) of HD\* and his own *Moonkey's Moon* (1928–29); *Borderline* (1930) was compared to Buñuel's *L'âge d'or* (1930) or Cocteau's *Le sang d'un poète* (1930) but had no sound or dialogue (though there were characters).

**Magritte, René** (1898–1967) Belgian surrealist painter, made two films with Paul Nougé in 1928: *The Space of Thought* and «another film» untitled.

**Moholy-Nagy, László** (1895–1946) One of the most important figures at the Bauhaus became interested in kinetics as early as 1920, before his Bauhaus period (after 1923), by building his *Licht-Raum-Modulator* (Light-space modulator), a kinetic sculpture. During his Bauhaus-period he carries out only one personal film *Berliner Stilleben* (Berlin Still Life, 1926) but had made scripts such *Dynamik der Großstadt* and the book *Malerei, Photographie, Film*. By his writings he anticipated many of the theories of modern films and his ideas about «simultaneous cinema» (poly-cinema) were particularly innovative and influential. The post-Bauhaus period was followed by the films *Alter Hafen Marseille* (Old Harbor of Marseilles, 1929) and *Lichtspiel, schwarz-weiß-grau* (Lightplay: Black-white-Gray, 1930) and *Großstadt-Zigeuner* (Big city-Gypsies, 1932).

**Montagu(e), Ivor** (1904–1984) does not properly belong to the ESAG, but was active with silent films in Britain. *Bluebottles* and *Day-dreams*(1928) are made after H.G. Wells.

His production of the Progressive Film Institute with Norman McLaren during the Spanish Civil War *In Defence of Madrid* (1936) was the first of the Progressive Film Institute's Spanish Civil War films. McLaren and Montagu went to Spain in November 1936 and filmed in colour, but there were no resources for printing it in colour so the film was distributed in Britain in black and white. The colour footage does not survive. *Madrid Today* (1937) was a propagandist documentary.

**Painlevé, Jean** (1902–1989) father of the scientific film. In 1927 directed *L'oeuvre d'épinoche* intended to supply to a speech at the *Académie des sciences* (Paris). The 200 films he made concentrate on sea fauna. After Brigitte Berg<sup>11</sup> there is an obvious link between Painlevé and the Surrealists. He had intended in 1921 before starting filming to become a doctor but hating the social establishment and especially the

school system he escaped to the cinema and the marine world. First he was an actor, then a director in a way of realising his independence. Painlevé meets Alexandre Calder and Ivan Goll (revue *Surréalisme*), but does not accept some ideas of André Breton's. Painlevé invented several special effects common today in scientific documentaries. His films are at the opposite of the anthropomorphist way of seeing nature (i.e. Walt Disney).

**Pfenninger, Rudolf** (1899–1976) Swiss illustrator, interested in film experiments from 1918, moved to Munich. After 1923, he started to work as a drawer and made paintings. Worked in 1925 in the Film Department of Munich, but was interested also in radio engineering and in sound. He had an influence on the coming experimental filmmakers McLaren and Fischinger\* (thirties and forties) His first films at the beginning of the thirties, *Barcarole* and *Serenade* (1932) are puppet films. He developed special sound and music techniques (synthetic composition) for actions performed by puppets. Later films were animations of «drawn music».

**Protazanov, Yakov** (1881–1945) Russian futurist and constructivist; first film made in 1909; *Aelita* (1924) is about a voyage to the planet Mars. He was also active in France.

**Reiniger, Lotte** (1899–1981) Not properly an avant-garde filmmaker but has influences through her principle animation work *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* (1923–26) which used silhouette technique. It is the first feature-length animated cartoon in the history of film. She worked with Walther Ruttmann\* in the twenties and left Germany in 1936 to work in England in Grierson's G.P.O Film Unit and later in France.

**Renard, Noël** (?) *Balançoires* (1928, 25 min.) is one of the films that the Cinémathèque Française has re-discovered and restored in recent years. It belongs with several rare early avant-garde films made by filmmakers such as Roger Livet\* and Alfred Sandy\* that are shown again at experimental film festivals.

Renard has participated 1929–31 as adapter and scriptwriter for films by Julien Duvivier and Christian-Jaque. He is also recorded to have made a short incursion into Belgian Flemish film production and he worked in French comedies until 1938.



**Richter, Hans** (1888–1976) Richter studied at the University of Berlin, in the Hochschule für Bildende Kunst in Berlin and at the Weimar Academy. In 1913, he distributed the German Futurist Manifesto, and in 1914 worked for «Der Sturm» (in the review *Die Aktion*). Being discharged from the war in 1916 on medical grounds, he went to Switzerland where he became one of the pillars of Dada. The scroll-pictures started with Eggeling after 1918 in Zurich led him into filmmaking. His first absolute film *Rhythmus 21* wasn't showed before 1925 in a *Novembergruppe* matinee under the name *Film ist Rhythmus*. He completed also *Rhythmus 23* and *Rhythmus 25*. Then, obviously influenced by dada-films (Man Ray, Clair\*, Léger\*), he started producing films in a dada spirit. The first of them *Filmstudie* (1926) is still a transitional work, half pure formal and half dadaistic. But *Vormittagspuk* (Ghosts Before Breakfast, 1927–28) is above all a full dada work. The next film *Inflation* (1927–28) was less irrational because it had a clear symbolical message; *Rennsymphonie* (1928) is an experimental documentary; *Zweiggroschenzauber* (Two-penny magic, 1928–29) was a commercial of less interest and *Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich* (Everything Turns, Everything Moves, 1929) was Richter's first sound film. *Everyday* (1929) was filmed for a meeting of the avant-gardists in London. Eisenstein was among those who worked with Richter.

After the World War II, Richter made American films with Man Ray, Duchamp, Léger, Arp and Calder: *Dreams that Money Can Buy* (1946), *8x8* (1956), *Chesscetera* (with Milhaud and Duchamp) and *Dadascope I–II* (1961–67).

**Ruttman, Walther** (1897–1941) Originally architect and painter; he worked on theory of film and wrote articles such *Malerei mit der Zeit*. He stopped painting in 1918 and started to make four absolute films: *Lichtspiel Opus 1–4* (1919–25). *Falkentraum* (Dream of the Falcon, 1923) was filmed for a scene of Lang's *Nibelungen* and *Das Wunder* (The Wonder, 1925) was a commercial(? as before). His masterpiece is undoubtedly *Berlin. Die Sinfonie einer Großstadt* (1927) which applied the abstract and montage principles of the Opus-films to realistic photographs.<sup>12</sup> The next film *Melodie der Welt* (World Melody, 1929) was a sound experiment. Later on, Ruttman worked also with Abel Gance and in 1934 became a director of the UFA on «cultural, industrial, commercial and propaganda films».

**Sandy, Alfred** (?) Made three short films in 1928: *Prétexte* (5 min.), *Essais cinématographiques* (1 min.) and *Lumière et ombre* (5 min.); these last two films have been described by Henri Langlois as belonging to the vision of René Clair and Germaine Dulac—a cinematographic transposition of surrealist arguments by Francis Picabia and a script by Artaud in the tradition of dadaist film, especially *Entr'acte*.

**Seeber, Guido** (1879–1940) One of the most famous of UFA's cameraman; Helmut Herbst called<sup>13</sup> him «master of 1001 tricks». For the exhibition «Kino- und Photo-Ausstellung Berlin 1925» he presented an historical section, which included equipment from his own collection, and a commercial entitled *Kipho*, which can lay claim to the status of an avant-garde film.<sup>14</sup>

**Soupault, Philippe** (1897–1990) He made three short untitled films c. 1922 with Walther Ruttmann\*; the films have been destroyed.

**Storck, Henri** (1907–1999) Belgian documentarist. Made in 1928 a short surrealist film,<sup>15</sup> a poetic story of a pair of glass eyes *Pour vos beaux yeux* (For Your Beautiful Eyes, 1928), *Images d'Ostende* (1928) and *La Mort de Vénus* (Death of Venus, 1930) in collaboration with Félix Labisse. *Idylle à la plage* (1931) was a commercial transposition of the later which provoked scandal. Storck also made the hand-painted film *Suzanne au bain* (now lost).

**Survage, Léopold** (Sturzwage, Liepold 1879–1968) Lithuanian, naturalised French, pioneer in kinetics, studied music and art in Moscow, moved to Paris in 1908, was close to Léger and Apollinaire. In 1912–13 made *Coloured Rhythms* which he intended for a film project supported by Apollinaire and Cendrars but it was aborted because of the outbreak of war in 1914.

**Szczuka, Mieczyslaw** (1898–1927) a member of the constructivist Polish group *Blok*, elaborated an abstract film concerned with shifting relationships between hand-drawn geometrical shapes and lines. The work has a strong influence of Bauhaus aesthetics in general and recalls *Diagonal symphony* by Viking Eggeling. In 1925 Szczuka began *He killed, You Killed, I Killed*, which can be considered as the first letterist work, but was not completed because of Szczuka's premature death in 1927.

**d'Ursel, Henri** (Henri d'Arche, 1900–1974) Belgian surrealist director<sup>16</sup> living in Paris in the twenties, made *La Perle* (1929) after a script by Georges Hugnet (who was also an actor in the film). In 1937 back in Brussels he founded the Prix de l'Image, the precursor of the experimental film festivals; then, in the aftermath of the war, he founded the Séminaire des Arts, which for 22 years was to remain the most prestigious of Belgian ciné-clubs. Count d'Ursel was the friend of Henri Storck and Charles Dekeukeleire, and he was also vice-president of the Royal Film Archive for 25 years. He is one of the few Belgian surrealist filmmakers (Ernst Moerman, Pierre Charbonnier and Marcel Mariën). Henri d'Ursel and his wife were actors in Man Ray's film *Les Mystères du château du dé*.

<sup>1</sup> BritMovie directors' index: <http://www.britmovie.co.uk/biog/b/005.html>

<sup>2</sup> I.a Cineteca del Friuli: [http://cinetecadelfriuli.org/gcm/previous\\_editions/edizione1998/britain.html](http://cinetecadelfriuli.org/gcm/previous_editions/edizione1998/britain.html) (page deleted in 2007)

<sup>3</sup> John L. Fell: *A History of Films*, 1979

<sup>4</sup> P. Adams Sitney: *Cinéma graphique et cinéma subjectif in Cinéma dadaïste et surréaliste*, exposition itinérante» Centre G. Pompidou, 1976, dir. by A. Sayag and C. Blanchon

<sup>5</sup> Deke Dusinberre gives 1928 and Ado Kyrrou 1930

<sup>6</sup> Adolf Behne: *Zehn Jahre Novembergruppe*, Kunst der Zeit, 1927

<sup>7</sup> Jay Leyda: *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film*, 1973

<sup>8</sup> The controversy is explained in chapters 7 and 9

<sup>9</sup> A dadaist «method» (concept of balance?)

<sup>10</sup> The Pompidou center gives this information for the film: «de Roger Livet et Jean Calvel 1928-1930 / 7' / 35mm / son / Une suite d'images et de scènes d'un humour tout ensemble insidieux et direct (avec un rien de vulgarité). Les Danois ont ajouté au générique qu'il est inspiré de la peinture de Magritte. [...] Mais Magritte ne connaît pas le film, et Livet m'écrit qu'il n'a jamais songé à rapprocher *Fleurs meurtries* de Magritte. Christian Dotremont.» [René Magritte said to Christian Dotremont that he never saw the film, while Roger Livet denied any influence by Magritte. However, the depictions of the latter's paintings, which have become surrealist icons, are many. The first part of the film seems an early reflection on the invention of cinema. The feature was quite popular in the early fifties, as is shown in several ads about its screenings which took place in Paris in 1953.]

<sup>11</sup> Les indépendants du premier siècle, biographies [http://www.lips.org/bio\\_painleve.asp](http://www.lips.org/bio_painleve.asp)

<sup>12</sup> Siegfried Kracauer has criticised the film for its superficiality, but he notably hasn't understood the visual rhythm and montage structure. The film is rather visual and has nothing to do with documentary.

<sup>13</sup> Helmut Herbst: *Das wandernde Bild*

<sup>14</sup> Walter Schobert: *The German avant-garde film of the 1920's*, Goethe-Institut, 1989

<sup>15</sup> Ado Kyrrou: *Le surréalisme au cinéma*, 1953

<sup>16</sup> The Surrealism of the film is discussed by Ado Kyrrou in *Le surréalisme au cinéma*, 1953. The film has been shown regularly however in the surrealist screenings at the Brussels film museum. The script is surrealist and the film itself makes use of typical surrealist images.

# Compared Chronology

This chronology has been compiled by comparing different sources, e.g. *Man Ray, directeur du mauvais movies*, Centre G. Pompidou, 1997 and Man Ray's own biographical work *Self Portrait*, 1963. Neil Baldwin's biography on Man Ray has also been consulted. In addition, chronologies available on the Internet have been made use of, not only concerning Man Ray but also of experimental cinema, Dada and Surrealism.

Some records of Man Ray's are of dubious reliability: as Juliet Man Ray concludes in the «afterword» of the '88 edition of *Self Portrait* «...He wasn't a historian ...and concerned with dates or statistics, or with posterity.» (Hans Richter, Neil Baldwin and others have noticed some contradictions with the dates and facts Man Ray gives).

While the brief HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL RECORD is necessarily centred on France because that is the central context in which Man Ray lived, it is also to some extent set within an international context. Besides the arts and literature some scientific, technological and cinematographic events assist in specifying dates. The chronology starts mostly with photography and cinematography; concentrates on modern painting and later on marginal film and video pioneers.

After 1945 the chronology ceases to record dates of birth (because the artists are firstly too numerous to list, and secondly they do not include pioneers who are the subject of this study).

## MAN RAY [a biography]

## happened at the same time... [from early photography to digital video]

1824  
1829-32  
1839  
  
1833-67  
1853-  
1854  
1855  
1857  
1858  
1860  
1863  
  
1864

Joseph N. Niépce first photography print  
Joseph Plateau: stroboscopy  
Niépce and Daguerre: photography  
Hippolyte Bayard first exhibition  
W.G. Horner (zootrope)  
Nadar's photographic studio  
Birth of Arthur Rimbaud  
Roger Fenton: Crimé War's photographs  
Baudelaire: *Les fleurs du mal*  
Nadar: *Portrait of Charles Baudelaire*  
Edouard Manet: *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*  
Jules Verne: *Cinq semaines en ballon*  
Jules Verne: *Voyage au centre de la terre*  
Birth of Alfred Stieglitz

1870		PRUSSIA-FRANCE WAR
1873-84		<b>Paul Cézanne</b> begins to reject romanticism
1874		Muybridge kinetic studies
1875		<b>Impressionists</b> first group exhibition
1878		Georges Seurat and divisionism
1879		Birth of Jacques Villon (Gaston Duchamp)
1880		Eastman (film acetate)
1881		Birth of Jean Crotti
1882		Emile Reynaud (praxinoscope)
1883		Birth of Francis Picabia
1882-87		Birth of Leopold Survage
1885		Birth of Viking Eggeling
1887		Birth of Guillaume Apollinaire
1888		Birth of Pablo Picasso
1889		Birth of Germaine Dulac
1890	Aug. 27	Birth of Theo van Doesburg
1891		Jules Marey Chronophotography
1892		Muybridge <b>Animal Locomotion</b> (published)
1893		Georges Seurat: <i>Un dimanche après-midi dans l'île de La Jatte</i>
1894		Birth of Marcel Duchamp
1895		Renoir and Degas go out of impressionism
1896		Birth of Hans Richter
1896-1898		Erik Satie 's (1866-1925) first compositions
1897		Peter H.Emerson: <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>
1898		Birth of Jean Cocteau
1898-1905		Eiffel Tower
1899		Exposition Universelle in Paris
1900		Death of Vincent Van Gogh
		Gauguin to Tahiti
		Death of Arthur Rimbaud
		Death of Georges Seurat
		Peter H.Emerson: <i>Death of Naturalistic Photography</i>
		First cinema studio (Black Mary) and Edison (Kinetoscope)
		First film copyright
		Lumières and the cinématograph
		<b>Paul Cézanne: La Montagne Sainte-Victoire I</b>
		Edward Munch: <i>The Scream</i>
		Birth of Paul Eluard
		Birth of Henri Chomette
		Birth of Dziga Vertov
		Birth of André Breton
		Birth of Antonin Artaud
		Birth of Tristan Tzara
		Alice Guy's films for Gaumont
		Méliès: <i>L'auberge ensorcelée</i> (dish animation)
		Birth of Louis Aragon
		Birth of Philippe Soupault
		Robert Paul: <i>Come Along, do!</i> (film in 2 scenes)
		Birth of René Clair
		Birth of Sergei Eisenstein
		Claude Monet's Nymphéas
		Robert Paul: <i>Human Flies</i> (filming upside down)
		Exposition Universelle in Paris
		Birth of Luis Buñuel
		Birth of Oskar Fischinger
		Pablo Picasso goes to Paris
		Max Planck: Quantum Physics

			Flight of the Zeppelin Radio transmission Death of Nietzsche Freud: <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> Husserl: <i>Studies in Logics</i>
1901			Robert Paul: <i>Marley's Ghost</i> (film in 13 scenes) Leopold Survage studies at Moscow Academy Birth of Len Lye (New-Zealand) H.G.Wells: <i>The First Men in the Moon</i> Méliès: <i>20000 lieues sous les mers</i> Muybridge Chronophotography (published)
1901-1904			Picasso's blue period Alfred Stieglitz's urban photography
1902			Méliès: <i>Le voyage dans la lune</i> (30 «tableaux»)
1903			First film-thriller (GB) and first western (USA) Birth of Joseph Cornell (USA) Birth of Kenneth Macpherson (GB) Death of Paul Gauguin and exhibition at the «Salon d'automne» in Paris Alfred Stieglitz founds «Camera Work» (mag.) Eugène Atget: <i>Versailles</i>
1904	Starts secondary school, courses in free drawing and mechanical drawing Calligraphy and typography course as hobby		Méliès: <i>Voyage à travers l'impossible</i> Paul Cézanne: <i>La Montagne Sainte-Victoire II</i> Matisse: <i>Luxe, calme et volupté</i> Birth of Salvador Dali Death of Marey and Muybridge
1905			<b>Gallery 291 opens in New-York</b> Van Gogh and Seurat retrospective, Salon des Indépendants, Paris The «Fauves» exhibit in Paris «Die Brücke» first exhibition in Dresden
1905-1907			Picasso's pink period Death of Paul Cézanne
1906			Matisse at the «Salon d'automne» Russian Art in «Grand Palais»
1907	Drawing and lettering continue		<b>Pablo Picasso: <i>Les Femmes d'Alger</i></b> Cézanne at the «Salon d'automne» Anti-realists and anti-symbolists exhibitions in eastern Europe Birth of Franciszka Themerson (1907-1988)(Pol)
1908			Henri Bergson: <i>L'évolution créatrice</i> Méliès' top production (45 films a year) Leopold Survage comes to Paris Le Bargy (Films d'Art) Edward S.Curtis: portraits of Indians Alfred Stieglitz starts to exhibit in his gallery
1909	Spring Finishes secondary school Summer Paintings Fall Refuses at last a scholarship for architecture, works in a kiosk, a press, an advertising agency and finally at a bookpublisher as typographer Takes classes in a small academy with nude models)		First International Congress of Film professionals Sarah Bernhardt: « <i>La Dame aux Camélias</i> » D.W.Griffith firsts productions <b>Marinetti: <i>Manifesto of Futurism</i></b> Matisse paints <i>Dance and music</i> for Shchukin Hans Richter in Weimar Academy of Art Max Linder productions in France Guillaume Apollinaire: <i>La chanson du mal-aimé</i> Death of Nadar
1910			In Moscow, Kandinsky, Malevich and Primitivists exhibit with French Cubists Frères Séeberger: <i>Les inondations de Paris</i>

			Birth of Marie Menken (USA)
1910-11		Paints in <b>Francisco Ferrer Center</b> Through <b>gallery 291</b> and <b>Alfred Stieglitz</b>	Birth of Stefan Themerson (1910-1988) (Pol)
1911		Gets involved with modern arts, specially European e.g. Rodin, Cézanne, Brancusi, and also collages by Picasso In Ferrer Center meets Loupov Takes the name of Man Ray Alfred Stieglitz's photographs intrigue MR	Marcel Duchamp paints in the way of Cézanne and Fauvism, friendship with Francis Picabia, knows Guillaume Apollinaire and Fernand Léger, <b>Section d'Or</b> group Robert Delaunay: <i>La tour Eiffel</i> Duchamp turns to Cubism «Der Blaue Reiter» first exhibition in Munich «Plasticist» group (eastern Europe) <b>A.G.Bragaglia: Futurist Photodynamism</b> Hans Richter in connection with Futurists Birth of Hy Hirsh (USA)
1912		Brings model in family's home Moves to Loupov atelier Exhibits some works in <b>Ferrer Center</b>	<b>Marcel Duchamp: Nu descendant un escalier</b> Duchamp rejects the use of pencils Wassily Kandinsky: <i>Concerning the Spiritual in Art</i> Futurists painters in Paris Braque and Picasso first collages Fernand Léger: <i>Woman in Blue</i> Birth of Dwinell Grant (USA) <b>Jacques-Henri Lartigue: Dclagc on pleine vitesse</b> Sinking of the Titanic
1913		Moves to Ridgefield, New Jersey where he lives in community for a while with Samuel Halpert and Alfred Kreymborg. Dreams about creating a rural culture-center in Ridgefield Still works part-time for the same book editor	Viktor Sjöström: <i>Ingeborg Holm</i> Charlie Chaplin: <i>Make a Living</i> Louis Feuillade: <i>Fantômas</i> Casimir Malevich and <b>Suprematism: Black Square on a White Ground</b>
	February	Modern Art Exhibition «Armory show» marks MR	<b>Armory Show, New York:</b> Cézanne: <i>La montagne bleue</i> , Duchamp: <i>Nu descendant un escalier 2</i> Picabia: <i>je me sentais touché comme si j'avais exposé parmi eux</i> Georges Braque <i>Musical Forms</i> Duchamp rejects any form of painting or drawing techniques Duchamp's <i>Time and Space Calculating and Bicycle Wheel</i> Plasticists and Italian futurists exhibit in Prague beside Picasso Duncan Grant: <i>Abstract Kinetic Painting with Sound</i> In Russia Futurists made <i>Film in Cabaret</i> Kasianov: <i>Drama at the futurist Cabaret n°13</i> Leopold Survage (film project): <i>Rythmes colorés</i> Albert Einstein: <i>On the Theory of General and Limited Relativity</i>
	August	Meets Belgian <b>Adon Lacroix</b> (Donna Lecœur) when she's visiting Ridgefield with her husband Loupov Donna Lecœur (DL) settles in Ridgefield Introduces MR to French poets such as Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Apollinaire, Mallarmé <i>Donna's portrait</i>	
	September	Community dislocates, DL stays in Ridgefield alone with MR still working part-time in NY	
1914	March	The Little Review (NY)	<b>Duchamp first ready-made <i>Bottle Rack</i></b>
	May	Married to Donna Lecœur (until 1919) buy his first camera (for reproducing his works)  <i>A.D.MCMXIV</i>	<b>WORLD WAR I BEGINS</b> First review of Russian Futurists Delaunay and Simultaneism Leopold Survage: <i>Colour, Movement, Rhythm</i> Duncan Grant: <i>Abstract Kinetic Collage Painting with Sound</i> Birth of Norman McLaren (GB)
1915	March	The <b>Ridgefield Gazook</b> (unique publishing)	<b>291</b> review's first publication (Alfred Stieglitz) Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes: <i>Young Woman</i> Casimir Malevich: <i>Manifest of Suprematism</i>

	April	<i>A Book of Divers Writings</i> : MR: illustrations & <b>Adon Lacroix</b> : poems	Ezra Pound poems: <i>Lustra</i> Vorticist exhibition in London Jean Crotti, Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp in NY
	June		D.W. Griffith: <i>Birth of a Nation</i> First films of Germaine Dullac
	September	Meeting with <b>Duchamp</b> in Ridgefield	
	October	First personal exhibition at the <b>Daniel</b> Gallery	
	November	Moves back with DL to NY, Lexington avenue, still working part-time	
1916		<i>The Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with her Shadows</i> Invited to exhibit among others at the Daniel Gallery	<b>DADA MOVEMENT</b> , (Tzara, Zurich) <b>Cabaret Voltaire</b> Guillaume Apollinaire: <i>Le poète assassiné</i> Barcelona: first publishing of Francis Picabia's and review <b>391</b> founded Bathing Girls Louis Feuillade: <i>Judex</i> D.W. Griffith: <i>Intolerance</i> First dada-evening Hans Richter joins the dada group Death of August Rodin « <b>De Stijl</b> » founded in Den Haag (Theo van Doesburg, Mondrian,...) Birth of Maya Deren (Kiev) Birth of John Whitney (USA) Apollinaire organises Survage's first one-man show Duchamp: « <i>Apolinère Enameled</i> » <i>Mechanized Rotary Glass Plates (Revolving Glass)</i> Francis Picabia: <i>Parade Amoureuse</i> Duchamp is refused with his « <i>Fountain</i> » Alvin Langdon Coburn: <i>Vortograph</i> André Kertész: <i>Le nageur</i> First dada Review in Zurich (7 issues) Duchamp's reviews: The Blind Man and Rongwrong Marinetti <i>Futurist Dance</i> manifesto <b>RUSSIAN REVOLUTION</b>
	Fall	Moves to 26th street with DL	
	December	Second personal exhibition at the Daniel gallery <i>Autoportrait</i> (wall installation with a bell)	
1917		Still working part-time Moves with DL to a new room near 8th street Rents also a roof studio Friends circle composed mostly of Duchamp, Joseph Stella (1877–1946) and Edgar Varèse (1883–1965)  <i>Revolving Doors</i> (serial paintings) <i>Suicide</i> (aerography)	
	April	Salon of independent artists, exhibits and retracts <i>The Rope Dancer...</i>	
	July	Collaboration on <i>Rongwrong review</i> (Duchamp)	
	October		
	November	Third and last exhibition at the Daniel Gallery with <i>Revolving doors</i>	
1918-20		Relationship with Donna starts breakdown	Dziga Vertov: <i>Cinema Weekly</i> First public readings of the Club Dada in Berlin
1918		(DL meets Luis Delmonte)  Leaves his employer and goes live alone to a larger studio in a basement near to his former place (relationship to DL goes on until 1920–21) Decides to make a living with portrait photography while continuing painting First portraits are Donna's daughter Esther	<b>Tristan Tzara: The Dada Manifest</b> In NY Duchamp works with Léonce Perret <b>Guillaume Apollinaire: Calligrammes</b> Fernand Léger: <i>Les disques</i> Death of Guillaume Apollinaire Le Corbusier and Purism In Barcelone first exhibition of Miró Ultraism and Vibrationism Ezra Pound: <i>Pavanes and Divisions</i> Erik Satie: <i>Socrate</i> <b>END OF WORLD WAR I</b> Hans Richter meets Viking Eggeling Hans Richter's scroll-paintings: <i>Prelude</i> Duchamp back to Paris, integrates the French dada group including already Tzara and Breton Duchamp gives mustaches to <i>La Joconde</i> André Breton and Philippe Soupault: <b>Champs magnétiques</b> (first surrealist work) Der Zeltweg review (Zurich) with photograms of
1918	November		
1918-19			
1919		MR and <b>Adon Lacroix</b> (text) realize a visual poem <i>La Logique assassine</i>	
	March	Publishes <b>TNT</b> review (with Henri S.Reinolds and Adolph Wolff) works of Adon Lacroix, Man Ray, W.C.Arensberg, Philippe Soupault, Marcel Duchamp,...	



		Christian Schad <i>Der Dada</i> periodical founded (Hausmann) <b>Bauhaus founded</b> Le Corbusier: <i>L'esprit nouveau</i> Germaine Dulac: <i>La fête espagnole, La cigarette</i> Robert Wiene: <i>Das Kabinett des Dr Caligary</i> Walter Ruttmann: <i>Opus 1</i> Death of Auguste Renoir TREATY OF VERSAILLES Pevsner and Gabo: <i>Realist Manifest</i> Tristan Tzara moves to Paris (to the group «Littérature» with Francis Picabia) Aragon: <i>Mouvement perpétuel</i> First International Dada Fair in Berlin Dada <i>Almanach</i> (Huelsenbeck) Walter Ruttmann: <i>Opus 2-4</i> (1924) Hans Richter first attempt on film Viking Eggeling: <i>Horizontal-Vertical Orchestra</i> Dziga Vertov: <i>Kinocki</i> Duchamp back to NY, <b>Société Anonyme</b> with Man Ray and Katherine Dreier Dada-Festival in Paris Tristan Tzara: <i>Cinéma calendrier du cœur abstrait</i> Duchamp creates Rose Sélavy and makes: <i>Rotary Demi-sphere, Precision Optics Belle Haleine, Dust Collecting/Raising/Breeding Jean Cocteau: Poésies</i> Francis Picabia publishes in review 391: <i>The Admiration of The Orchestrelle for The Cinematograph</i>
1920	January	MR's first made- objects and readymade <i>Lampshade</i> (destroyed)  Begins to correspond with <b>Tristan Tzara</b> <i>L'égnime d'Isidore Ducasse, Danger-Dancer</i> MR and Duchamp try to built a stereoscopic camera and make a kinetic film
	April	Opening-exhibition of <b>Société Anonyme</b> Exhibit a new <i>Lampshade</i>
	May	
	June	
	Fall	MR photographs Duchamp's works  <i>Moving sculpture</i> MR and Duchamp make a pamphlet-film in which they cut off the pubic hairs of the baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven
1921	April	
	June	Writes to Tzara that Dada cannot lives in NY MR «directeur du mauvais movie»
	July	<b>MR moves to Paris</b> Duchamp introduces MR to the Dadaists  Assists Duchamp to realize kinetic works with Bicycle's Wheels
	September	Signature « <i>Man Ray directeur du mauvais movies</i> » on Picabia's work Meets Paul Poiret Introduced to Jean Cocteau
	November	Begin to do regularly portraits of visitors e.g. Erik Satie Makes the firsts <b>rayographs</b> e.g. <i>Rose-sel à vie</i>
	December	Personal exhibition at Philippe Soupault's gallery « <b>Librairie Six</b> », mostly american works <i>Admiration of The Orchestrelle for the Cinematograph, Cadeau (The Gift)</i> Moves to Montparnasse Meets Kiki de Montparnasse
1922	January	The spiral and wheel works of Duchamp under the appellation of <i>anémic cinéma</i>
		<b>New York Dada</b> by Duchamps and Man Ray <i>Procès Barrès</i> by André Breton Duchamp is coming back to France Salon dada in Paris Constructivism is founded Abel Gance: <i>La roue</i> Louis Delluc: <i>Fièvre</i> Hans Richter: <i>Rythmus 21</i> Piet Mondrian: <i>Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue</i> Paul Klee at the Bauhaus Francis Picabia: <i>L'Œil cacodylate</i> Honegger, Léger and Canudo: <i>Skating Rink</i> (by the Swedish Ballet)  <b>November group</b> (including Berg, Brecht, Richter, Eggeling, Hindemith)  Tristan Tzara's theatre piece: <i>Le cœur à gaz</i>  In «De Stijl» a call for «Elementarist Art» (Richter, Arp, Puni, Hausmann, Moholy-Nagy)  Projection of Duchamp's short experimental films Duchamp leaves again Paris for NY Moholy-Nagy's <b>photograms</b> and

		<p><i>Space and Light Modulator</i>  Dziga Vertov: <b>Wir Manifesto</b>  Werner Graeff: <i>Partitur I &amp; II</i>  In Rome, Pannaggi: <i>Futurist Mechanical Ballet</i></p>
	<p>Fashion photography for Paul Poiret until he was bankrupt (1926)  <i>Marquise Cassati</i>  MR portraits become famous, most guests of MR's studio are photographed (e.g. Tzara, Cocteau)</p>	<p>review <i>Le cœur à barbe</i>  Viking Eggeling: <i>Diagonal Symphony</i>  <i>Le cœur à gaz</i> is published in Berlin (in Der Sturm)</p>
	<p>On the request of Jean Cocteau, photographs of Marcel Proust (dead)</p>	<p><b>Dada-Constructivist Conference, Bauhaus</b>  Marcel Duchamp: <i>The Large Glass</i>  Henri Bergson <i>Durée et simultanéité</i>  Death of Marcel Proust  Jean Cocteau: <i>Vocabulaire</i>  International Faction of Constructivists  Manifesto of international <b>constructivism</b></p>
	<p>Rent an atelier rue Campagne-Première near Eugène Atget atelier and Maurice Heine</p>	<p>Robert Flaherty: <i>Nanook of the North</i>  Dziga Vertov: <b>Kino Pravda</b>  F.W.Murnau: <i>Nosferatu</i></p>
Fall	<p>First publication of rayograph in «The Little Review» <i>Rose-sel à vie</i></p>	<p>Kandinsky at the Bauhaus  Leftist Front of Art is founded</p>
December	<p>Publication of 12 rayographs in <i>Champs déli-cieux</i> (album published by le cœur à barbe) foreword by Tristan Tzara</p>	<p>Birth of James Whitney (John W., 1917)(USA)  Birth of Jonas Mekas (Lit)</p>
1923	<p>Berenice Abbott becomes MR's assistant (until 1926)</p>	
July	<p>At the Theater St.Michel, Le Cœur à barbe presents a film by MR: <i>Le retour à la raison</i>  Dudley Murphy proposes MR directing a film; some sequences are shooted</p>	<p>René Clair: <i>Paris qui dort</i>  Hans Richter: <i>Rythmus 23</i>  Marcel Duchamp back to Paris (until 1942), concentrates on chess and chance  Fernand Léger: <i>Les esthétiques de la machine</i>  Honegger: <i>Pacific 231</i>  E.Mendelsohn: <i>Dynamics and Function</i>  Birth of Harry Smith (USA)</p>
	<p>Dudley Murphy turns to Fernand Léger and starts shooting <i>Le Ballet mécanique</i>  Lives in the same hotel as Duchamp near his studio, rue Campagne-Première</p>	
1924	<p>Duchamp works to new <i>rotative demi-sphère</i>:  The new optic machine is installed in MR's atelier. MR published in the review 391 last issue photographs of the machine (ready only in 1925)</p>	<p><b>Aleksander Rodtshenko's montage photographs</b>  Marinetti publishes: <i>Futurist and Facism</i>  Mieczyslaw Szczuka: <i>Abstract Film</i>  Dziga Vertov: <i>Kino Eye</i>  Sergei Eisenstein: <i>Strike</i>  Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand: <i>Manhatta</i>  <b>André Breton: Premier manifeste du surréalisme</b></p>
October	<p>MR brings an anamorphic mirror to the «Bureau of Surrealist Researchs»</p>	<p>«Bureau de recherches surréalistes» opens  Fernand Léger: <i>Le ballet mécanique</i></p>
December	<p>Duchamp and MR are the actors of <i>entr'acte</i> (chess)  <i>Ciné-Sketch</i> «tableau vivant» from Cranach, directed by Picabia and Duchamp, photography by MR  <i>Le Violon d'Ingres</i> published in «Littérature»</p>	<p><b>Erik Satie's ballet: Relâche</b>  René Clair: <i>Paris qui dort</i> and <i>Entr'acte</i>  Last issue of the review 391 (n°18)  Adrian Brunel: <i>Crossing the Great Sagrada</i></p>
1925		<p>Sergei Eisenstein: <i>The Battleship Potemkin</i>  <b>First Surrealist's Exhibition</b>, Paris gallery Pierre  Fernand Léger: <i>Composition</i>  Chaplin: <i>The Gold Rush</i>  Death of Erik Satie  Death of Viking Eggeling  Henri Chomette: <i>Jeux de reflets et de vitesse*</i>, <i>Cinq minutes de cinéma pur</i>  Francis Bruguière: <i>Theory</i></p>
March	<p>MR filming <i>Ciné-portraits</i> sequences of Henri Chomette film* The film has had different appellations, opening in may</p>	

		Adrian Brunel: <i>The Typical Budget Cut it out; a Day in the Life of a Censor</i> Guido Seeber: <i>KIPHO</i> Hans Richter: <i>Rythmus 25</i> Waither Ruttmann: <i>Opus 5</i> Jean Cocteau: <i>Jean Cocteau fait du cinéma</i> Projections of pictures with sounds and perfumes on the barge «Orgues» (Poiret) Len Lye emigrates to London and works extensively with the <b>GPO Film Unit</b> under John Grierson's direction Mieczyslaw Szczuka: <i>He Kills, You kill, I Kill</i> (1925-27) Dimitri Kirsanoff: <i>Ménilmontant</i> André Kertész moves to Paris
May-June	Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes publishing in «Les Feuilles libres» a study of MR with 4 rayographs	
December	Proposition for shooting a film on spiritism in Egypt (unrealized)	
1926	January	Opening of the «Studio des Ursulines» which becomes the most important center for experimental films in France
	March	Opening of the Surrealist Gallery Abel Gance: <i>Napoléon</i>
	May	Fritz Lang: <i>Metropolis</i> Hans Richter: <i>Filmstudie</i>
	August	<b>Marcel Duchamp: <i>Anémic cinéma</i></b> Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: <i>Berlin Still-life</i> Alberto Cavalcanti: <i>Rien que les heures</i> Aragon: <i>Le paysan de Paris</i>
	November	André Breton: <i>Légitime défense</i> Paul Eluard: <i>Capitale de la douleur</i> Philippe Soupault: <i>Georgia</i> Death of Claude Monet Luis Buñuel assistant to Jean Epstein Anthony Stewart: <i>Sashascopes</i> Birth of Jordan Belson (USA) Birth of Robert Breer (USA) <b>Picasso turns to Surrealism</b>
1926-1935		Sound coming in cinema
1927	<i>Emak Bakia</i> is showed in London, Brussels and Frankfurt	
	June	Max Ernst: <i>Vision provoquée par une ficelle que j'ai trouvée sur ma table</i> « <b>Mobiles</b> » of Calder Hans Richter: <i>Inflation</i> Henri Chomette: <i>A quoi rêvent les jeunes films</i> Walther Ruttmann: <i>Berlin, Symphony of a Great City</i> Joris Ivens: <i>A Study in Movements</i> Jean Painlevé: first scientific documentaries Oswell Blakeston: <i>I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside</i> Kenneth Macpherson: <i>Foothills, Wingbeat</i>
	August	René Magritte joins the Surrealists Paul Fejos: <i>The Last Moment</i> (USA) Death of Eugène Atget Martin Heidegger: <i>Sein und Zeit</i> Jacques-Henri Lartigue: <i>Bibi, Marseille</i> Luis Buñuel: <i>Un chien andalou</i> Germaine Dulac: <i>La coquille et le clergyman, Disque 927, Thèmes et variations, Germination d'un haricot</i> Hans Richter: <i>Race Symphony, Vormittagsspuk</i> Hans Arp: <i>Configuration</i>
	November-January	Projections of <i>Emak Bakia</i> in Studio des Ursulines with <i>La glace à trois faces</i> (Epstein) and <i>Amours exotiques</i> (Léon Poirier)
1928	<i>Emak Bakia</i> is showed in Brussels, Lausanne, Genève, Amsterdam, Berlin	
	February	Begins to shot <i>L'étoile de mer</i> (with kiki) while Robert Desnos (script) is in Habana  Photography for sequences of the film <i>Paris-Express</i> or <i>Souvenir de Paris</i> by Pierre Prévert

May	Première of <i>L'étoile de mer</i> at studio des Ursulines	Carl Dreyer: <i>La passion de Jeanne d'Arc</i> Oskar Fischinger employed by UFA for the film <i>Frau im Mond</i> by Fritz Lang Len Lye: <i>Tusalava</i>
	Photograms of <i>L'étoile de mer</i> in Close-up	André Breton: <i>Nadja</i> (illustrations of MR) Aragon: <i>Le traité du style</i> Robert Desnos: <i>La place de l'Etoile</i>
Summer-Fall	Kiki has a justice affair. MR visits her in prison in South of France. After that Kiki goes back to her home in Burgundy painting and writing her own biography. Back to Paris it is to be published, but she wandered out off MR	Birth of Andy Warhol (USA) Joris Ivens: <i>De Brug</i> Kenneth Macpherson: <i>Monkey's moon</i> Adrian Brunel, Ivor Montagu: <i>Brunel and Montagu</i> Ivor Montagu: <i>Bluebottles</i> Ivor Montagu, Frank Wells: <i>Day-dreams</i> Alfred Sandy: <i>Lumière et ombre</i>
September	«Le cinéma et les arts décoratifs» MR's interview in «L'amour de l'art» (n°9)	
October-January	<i>L'étoile de mer</i> is showed with other films in Studio des Ursulines	
December	Projections of <i>L'étoile de mer</i> in Madrid (with <i>Greed</i> and <i>The Jazz Singer</i> )	
1929	<i>L'étoile de mer</i> in Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts (with <i>Prison</i> and <i>Patineurs</i> )	
January	Presentation of <i>L'étoile de mer</i> by MR in the weekpaper «Vu»: <i>L'étoile de mer, un film étonnant</i>	
April	Boxing World Championship is filmed by MR and Ernest Hemingway Projection of <i>L'étoile de mer</i> in Genève with <i>Opus</i> (Ruttmann) and a film by Lotte Reiniger	Dimitri Kirsanoff: <i>Brumes d'automne</i> Joris Ivens: <i>Regen</i>
May	Meets <b>Luis Buñuel</b>	Đziga Vertov: <i>The Man with a Movie Camera</i>
June	<i>Les mystères du château du dé</i> is showed in private at the Studio des Ursulines at the same time than <i>Un chien andalou</i> by Buñuel and Dali Public presentations of <i>Les mystères du château du dé</i> with Borzage's <i>The River</i> and Painlevé's <i>L'Oursin</i>	Germaine Dulac: <i>Etude cinématographique sur une arabesque</i> László Moholy-Nagy: <i>Marseille Old Harbour</i> Hans Richter: <i>Alles drecht sich, alles bewegt sich, Tuppenny Magic, Everyday</i> Ralph Steiner: <i>H<sub>2</sub>O</i> (USA)
June	Stuttgart: <i>Emak Bakia</i> , <i>L'étoile de mer</i> at FIFO-exhibition (also showed <i>Pluie</i> (Ivens) and <i>diagonal symphony</i> (Eggeling) MR meets <b>Lee Miller</b> , they spent the summer in Biarritz at the Wheelers	John Grierson <i>Drifters</i> Lloyd Richards, Desmond Dickenson, Hill Sinclair: <i>C.O.D. —A Mellow Drama</i> Beakus Penrose, Dora Carrington: <i>Dr Turner's Mental Home</i>
July	«Close-up» publishes 4 photographs of <i>Les mystères du château du dé</i> «Bifur» (Paris) publishes 3 pictures from a film in preparation by Man Ray	FINANTIAL CRASH in NY Buenos Aires: French avant-garde film festival: participating e.g. MR, René Clair, Francis Picabia, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, Germaine Dulac
September	Projection of <i>L'étoile de mer</i> in La Sarraz	La Sarraz, Switzerland: «Premier congrès du cinéma indépendant»
November	Interview with MR in «Cinéa-Ciné pour tous»	Birth of Kurt Kren (Austria) Birth of Michael Snow (Can)
December	Meets Sergei Eisenstein 4 «pornographic» pictures are published in «1929» (Brussels), with poems by Benjamin Péret and Louis Aragon and seized by custom	
1929-1932	Lee Miller (LM) is MR's assistant First <b>solarizations</b> , rayographs, superimpositions, photographic still-lives, portraits	Oskar Fischinger begins his <i>Studies</i> especially attempted to music pieces
1930		<b>André Breton: Second manifeste du</b>

			<b>surréalisme</b>
			Surrealist review: <i>Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution</i> (dir. André Breton)
			Marinetti: <i>Manifesto of Futurist Cuisine</i>
			Oswell Blakeston and Francis Bruguière: <i>Light Rhythms</i>
			Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: <i>Lightplay: Black-White-Grey</i>
			First films of Joseph Cornell
			Franciszka and StefanThermerson: <i>Pharmacy</i>
			Jean Cocteau: <i>La voie humaine</i>
			Jean Vigo: <i>A propos de Nice, Paris roi de l'eau</i>
			Joseph Von Sternberg: <i>Der Blaue Engel</i>
			German UFA turns to products mountain films while most of the expressionist school move to Hollywood
			Ralph Steiner: <i>Surf and Seaweed, Mechanical principles</i> (USA)
			Lewis Jacobs: <i>Mobile Composition, Story of a nobody</i> (USA)
			René-Jacques, François Kollar, Marcel Bovis and Henri Cartier-Bresson: photographs of the thirties
			Lee Miller establishes herself as a photographer with her own studio (rue Victor Considerante)
			Tatlin works on flying machines <i>Letatlin</i>
			Birth of Dieter Rot (Ger)
			Buñuel's <i>L'âge d'or</i> is forbidden
			Brussels. «Second congrès du cinéma indépendant»
			Oswell Blakeston and Francis Brugière: <i>Empire Buyers are Empire Builders</i>
			Walther Ruttmann: <i>In the Night</i>
			Birth of Joyce Wieland (Can)
			Death of Theo van Doesburg
			Jean Cocteau: <i>Le sang d'un poète</i>
			Saint-Exupéry: <i>Vol de nuit</i>
			Herman Weinberg: <i>Autumn Fire</i> (USA)
			Lee Miller at Elstree Studios, London
			fashion photography in The Bioscope and Vogue
			Lee Miller exhibits at «Groupe annuel des photographes», galerie de la Pléiade, Paris
			Lee Miller meets egyptian Aziz Eloui Bey
			III. REPUBLIC: Murder of Paul Doumer, President of France, new President: Albert Lebrun
1931	November	Drawing by MR on the Buñuel's film program In the same opening there is 3 paintings which are destroyed by some of Buñuel opposants (ligue des patriotes et ligue anti-juive)	
	Novembre	Hans Richter programs <i>L'étoile de mer</i> at Berlin Kurfurstendamm	
		Signs a petition in favour of <i>L'âge d'or</i>	
		Portfolio <i>Electricité</i> commissioned by the «Compagnie parisienne de distribution d'électricité»	
		<i>L'étoile de mer</i> is projected again in studio des Ursulines with <i>The Blue Angel</i> (von Sternberg)	
1932	March	Participates to NY exhibition Julien Levy gallery	Surrealist exhibition Julien Levy Gallery
	April	<i>L'étoile de mer</i> is projected	Luis Buñuel: <i>Las Hurdes</i>
			Lee Miller's first exhibition at gallery Julien Levy «Modern European Photography»
			Franciszka and StefanThemerson: <i>Europa</i>
	July	In Brussels at «Club de l'écran» retrospective of MR's works	Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: <i>Sound ABC, Gipsy</i>
		LM leaves MR	Lee Miller closes her Paris studio and returns in november to NY where she sets up new studio
			Lee Miller's second exhibition (with Charles Howard)
		About his relationship with LM starts a large	Group exhibition Man Ray, Roger Parry, André

	painting: <i>A l'heure de l'observatoire - Les Amoureux</i>	Kertész Paris couture houses dictate fashion trends more and more in NY (in magazines such Harper's Bazaar, Vogue,...) William Randolph Hearst: publisher of the Harper's Bazaar, hire Carmel Snow away from Vogue. Carmel Snow appoint Daisy Fellowes as Paris editor; It is the artistic link of the magazine to photographers in Paris and later MR Hans Arp: <i>Constellation</i> André Breton: <i>Les vases communicants, Le revolver à cheveux blancs</i> Germany: RISE of HITLER STAVISKY's case Marcel Duchamp uses the term «mobile» Cartier-Bresson exhibits in NY' Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: <i>Architecture Congress Athens</i> Oskar Fischinger: <i>Komposition in blue</i> André Breton: <i>Hourra l'Oural</i> Max Ernst: <i>Couple zoomorphe</i> Jean Malraux: <i>La condition humaine</i> Birth of Stan Brakhage (USA) Birth of Bruce Conner (USA) Birth of Ken Jacobs (USA) Birth of Margaret Raspé (Ger) First films of Norman McLaren Janusz Brzeskif and Kazimierz Podsadecki: <i>Beton</i> BAUHAUS ends in Germany
1933	MR shoots a short film about Brancusi (also friend of Duchamp)	Calder: <i>Mobile, acier et aluminium</i> Death of Jean Vigo: <i>L'Atalante</i> (posthume) Birth of Peter Kubelka (Austria) Jay Leyda: <i>Bronx Morning</i> Max Ernst: <i>Portrait érotique voilé</i> Paul Éluard: <i>La rose publique</i> Jean Cocteau: <i>La machine infernale</i> Regular projections of dada, surrealist or experimental films in «Le Club de l'écran» in Brussels <b>Marcel Duchamp turns to surrealism</b> Duchamp's <i>Boite verte</i> HITLER Reichsführer PARIS: violent demonstrations
1934	MR works for <b>Bazaar</b> (until 1937) Publication of a retrospective book «Photographs by Man Ray 105 works 1920-1934» Portrait by Picasso, texts by MR, Breton, Eluard, Rose Sélavy and Tzara	André Kertész moves to the States Death of Casimir Malevich Birth of Christo (Bul) Oskar Fischinger wins the Grand Prix at Venice and special prize at Brussels with <i>Komposition</i> He is under attack from Nazi government
1935	February MR definitively involved with fashion photography, publications in magazines (advertising) <i>Facile</i> 13 photographs by MR, poems by Eluard	Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: <i>Life of the Lobster</i> Franciszka and Stefan Thermerson: <i>Musical Moment, Short Circuit</i> Len Lye: <i>A Colour Box</i> Len Lye makes 13 experimental films in London until 1944
	August At Lise Deharme's country house (Montfort-en-Chalosse) shoots a few scenes with Breton and Eluard. Photographs are published in «Cahiers d'art» but the Surrealist film <i>Essai de simulation du délire cinématographique</i> remains uncompleted	
	October Meets <b>Adrienne Fidelin</b> (Ady) in Antibes (lovers until 1940) Starts again to paint	
1936-40	Trips to NY for fashion and around Europe for portrating	Norman McLaren worked with <b>GPO film unit</b> in London

		Gradually MR's use of color in photography Summers in Antibes with Picasso, Eluard,...	CIVIL WAR in SPAIN Norman McLaren: <i>Hell Unlimited, Defence of Madrid</i> (as photographer) Oskar Fischinger goes to Hollywood Technicolor Charlie Chaplin: <i>Modern Times</i> Capa's photography about Spanish civil war Salvador Dali: <i>Premonition of Civil War</i> <b>International Surrealist Exhibition, London</b> <b>Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism, Museum of Modern Art, NY</b> Bernanos: <i>Journal d'un curé de campagne</i> Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: <i>New Architecture of the London Zoo</i> Birth of Hollis Frampton (USA) Moholy-Nagy and new Bauhaus, Chicago Birth of Takahiko Iimura (Japan)
1936		<i>Lanterne sourde et muette</i> is exhibited in Gallery «Ratton», Paris Participates to London Surrealist Exhibition  Participates to NY exhibition	
1937	Summer	Visit of Lee Miller and Roland Penrose Antibes Kodak's experiences <i>La Garoupe</i> and <i>Course landaise</i> are some of the 16mm film shoot in Kodachrome <i>La photographie n'est pas l'art</i> (12 photographs by MR and text by Breton) <i>Les mains libres</i> (drawings by MR and poems by Eluard) <i>Portrait of Ady</i>	Marcel Duchamp exhibition in Chicago Jean Renoir: <i>La grande illusion</i>
1937-1938		Rent a Flat in Antibes (taken in use later by Picasso) and buy a house in St-Germain-en-Laye Stays in the South of France	Pablo Picasso: <i>Guernica</i> Yves Tanguy: <i>Sun on Cushion</i> André Breton: <i>L'amour fou</i> NY Modern Art Museum photographic exhibition
1938		«Maître des Lumières» in Surrealist Exhibition  <i>La Fortune</i> Fall From Antibes back to Paris Works on collections of fashion Exhibits the paintings made in Antibes	<b>International Exhibition of the Surrealists In Paris, Beaux Arts</b> René Magritte and Paul Delvaux Lee Miller's photography in the Balkans Jean-Paul Sartre: <i>La nausée</i> Marcel Carné: <i>Quai des brumes, Hôtel du Nord</i> Franciszka and StefanThermerson: <i>The Adventures of a Good Citizen</i> Douglass Crockwell: <i>Fantasmagoria I-III</i> (1938-40) (USA) WORLD WAR II BEGIN
1939	September	<i>Le beau temps</i>	Duchamp gives <i>L'obligation de Monte Carlo</i> at NY modern museum Norman McLaren works on animations in NY Birth of Pat O'Neill (USA) Birth of Jozef Robakowski (Pol) Birth of Paul Morrissey (USA) Joseph Cornell: <i>Rose Hobart</i> Saint-Exupéry: <i>Terre des hommes</i> Jean-Paul Sartre: <i>Le mur</i> Jean Renoir: <i>La règle du jeu</i>
1940	June	Closes his studio and leaves Paris for Spain, Portugal and finally fly to NY Adrienne stays in Paris	WEHRMACHT in PARIS, France divided Lee Miller leaves Egypt, goes South of France and then to London working for Vogue
	July	Arrives in Hollywood, meets <b>Juliet Browner</b> (JB) paintings, objects mostly from former ideas Meets Henry Miller, William Copley, Al Lewin,...	Duchamp: <i>Boite-en-valise</i> Birth of Wilhelm Hein (Ger) (Birgit Hein, 1942) Birth of Malcolm Le Grice (GB)
		Gets propositions for working in film industry but refuses. Shoot a little 8mm movie with JB	Dwinell Grant: <i>Composition 1-5</i> (1940-59)

1941		Aragon: <i>Le Crève-cœur</i> Jean Cocteau: <i>Allégories</i> Death of Robert Delaunay James and John Whitney: <i>Variations</i> Norman McLaren joins the <b>National Film Board of Canada</b> , creates an animation unit: he makes about 80 films on the period 1941-72
1942		Henri Chomette is killed in Rabat Duchamp moves definitively to America Jurgen Roos: <i>Flugten</i> Death of Germaine Dulac Birth of Peter Greenaway (GB)
	November	FRANCE is being OCCUPIED by Germany MARECHAL PETAIN Paul Eluard: <i>Poésie et Vérité</i> Albert Camus: <i>L'étranger</i>
1943		St.Exupéry: <i>Le petit prince</i> JP Sartre: <i>L'être et le néant</i> Simone de Beauvoir: <i>L'invitée</i> Jean Cocteau: <i>L'éternel retour</i> Franciszka and StefanThermerson: <i>Calling Mr. Smith</i> Maya Deren, Alexander Hammid: <i>Meshes of the Afternoon</i> James and John Whitney: <i>Abstract Film Exercices 1-5</i> The <b>Gryphon Group</b> (Willard Maas, Marie Menken and Norman McLaren): <i>Geography of the Body</i> Jurgen Roos: <i>Hjertetyven</i> Birth of Paul Sharits (USA)
1944	<i>Ruth, Roses and Revolvers</i> (script for a sequence of Richter's <i>Dreams That Money Can Buy</i> )	Lee Miller's photo-journalism (War's picture and articles for Vogue stories) Duchamp begins: <i>Given : 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating gas</i> Simone de Beauvoir: <i>Pyrrhus et Cinéas</i> JP Sartre: <i>Huis-clos</i> Death of Wassily Kandinsky LANDING OF NORMANDIE Maya Deren: <i>At Land</i> Birth of Werner Nekes (Ger) Birth of George Landow (USA) Birth of Guy Fihman (Fra)
	June	Len Lye: 7 films for «March of Time» series (NY)
1944-51		Maya Deren: <i>A Study in Choregraphy for the Camera</i> Franciszka and StefanThermerson: <i>The Eye, The Ear</i> Marie Menken: <i>Visual Variations on Noguchi</i> Birth of Mike Leggett (GB) Birth of David Dye (GB) Birth of Peter Weibel (Austria) Birth of Klaus Wyborny (Ger) Death of Robert Desnos
1945		YALTA CONFERENCE GERMANY SURRENDERED GENERAL DE GAULLE, PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT ONU founded in San Francisco
	February	
	May	
	June	



	August		HIROSHIMA ATOMIC-BOMB Max Ernst: <i>Euclide</i> JP Sartre: <i>L'âge de raison, Le sursis</i> Sartre founds «Les temps modernes» INDOCHINE WAR IV. REPUBLIC: Vincent Auriol Hans Richter: <i>Streams That Money Can Buy</i> Maya Deren: <i>Ritual in Transfigured Time</i> Sidney Peterson: <i>The Potted Psalm</i> Death of Alfred Stieglitz Death of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy Jean Cocteau: <i>La belle et la bête</i> Douglass Crockwell: <i>Glen Falls Sequence</i> Hollywood: At Esquire Theater, opening of Luis Buñuel: <i>Gran Casino</i> First film of Jordan Belson: <i>Transmutation</i> First film of Kenneth Anger: <i>Fireworks</i> Sidney Peterson: <i>The Cage, The Petrified Dog, Horror Dream, Clinic of Stumble</i> Douglass Crockwell: <i>Long Bodies</i> John Whitney: <i>Journal</i> Max Ernst: <i>Rêve de révolution</i> Albert Camus: <i>La peste</i> Invention of holography PLAN MARSHALL
1946		Double wedding ceremony (MR-JB and Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning) Lee Miller and Roland Penrose visit MR and JB	
1947		MR and JB visit Paris and St Germain-en-Laye to inspect if MR's works have survived the war	
1948		Shakespearean Equations	Jean Cocteau: <i>Poésie</i> Maya Deren: <i>Meditation on Violence</i> JP Sartre: <i>Les mains sales</i> Maurice Merleau-Ponty: <i>Sens et non-sens</i>
1949	December	Exhibition in Bill Copley's gallery Beverly Hills MR: Film retrospective at «Festival international du film expérimental et poétique» Knokke-Le-Zoute (Belgium)	Death of Antonin Artaud Luis Buñuel: <i>El Gran Calavera</i> NATO TREATY Communistes of Aragon begins Sidney Peterson: <i>Mr Frenhofer and the Minotaur, The Lead Shoes</i> Jurgen Roos: <i>Det Definitiv Aslag På Anmodningen Om Et Kys</i>
1950		<i>Portrait of Ava Gardner</i> <i>Portraits of Juliet</i> (retouched and colored)	Jean Cocteau: <i>Orphée</i> Luis Buñuel: <i>Los Olvidados</i> Albert Camus: <i>Actuelles</i> (1950-53) Jean Genet: <i>Un chant d'amour</i> (film) Jurgen Roos: <i>Spite Horizonter</i>
1951	March	Definitive return of MR and JB to Paris Atelier 2bis rue Férou	Jackson Pollock: <i>Echo Number 25</i> Isidore Ison: <i>Traité de bave et d'éternité</i> Maurice Lemaître: <i>Le film est déjà commencé?</i> John Whitney: <i>Celery Stalks at Midnight</i>
	May	MR's own presentation on his films <i>Art et Cinéma</i> is published in «L'âge du cinéma» (n°2)	Tristan Tzara: <i>Le poids du monde</i>
	August-	In «L'âge du cinéma» (n°4-5) publication of a text	Karlheinz Stockhausen: <i>Kreuzspiel</i>
	November	by MR <i>Cinémage</i>	
1952			Georges Mathieu: <i>Painting</i> Cinerama and 3D Relief film visions Len Lye: <i>Color Cry</i> (USA) Gil J. Wolman: <i>L'anti-concept</i> Guy-Ernest Debord: <i>Hurlements en faveur de Sade</i> Tristan Tzara: <i>La face intérieure</i> first film of Stan Brakhage: <i>Interim</i> first film of Robert Breer: <i>Form Phases</i> (1954) Death of Paul Eluard

1953			<p>Death of Francis Picabia Cinemascope and Wide screen film visions RENE COTY: French President Samuel Beckett: <i>En attendant Godot</i> Alain Robbe-Grillet: <i>Les gommies</i> Aragon at the direction of «Lettres Françaises» Karlheinz Stockhausen: <i>Kontra-punkte</i> Victor Vasarely: <i>Etude cinétique sur écrans transparents</i> Hans Richter: <i>Minotaure</i> Deaths of Dziga Vertov and Matisse Lee Miller's photographs for the book of Roland Penrose: <i>Picasso, his Life and Work</i> Robert Breer: <i>Image by Image</i> (1954-56) First film of Peter Kubelka: <i>Mosaik im Vertrauen</i> WAR OF ALGERIA</p>
	December		
1954	October	In Basel, Switzerland, retrospective of MR's films at 2nd Festival du «Film de Demain»	
	November		
1955			<p>Luis Buñuel: <i>Cela s'appelle l'aurore</i> Jean Cocteau: <i>Clair-obscur</i> Death of Yves Tanguy Death of Fernand Léger Joseph Cornell: <i>Gnir Rednow</i> John Whitney: <i>Lion Hunt</i> First film of Marcel Hanoun EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET founded</p>
	June		
1956			<p>Ingmar Bergman: <i>The Seventh Seal</i> Henri-Georges Clouzot: <i>Le mystère Picasso</i> Agnès Varda: <i>O saisons, ô châteaux</i> Hans Richter: <i>Passionate Pastime</i> Death of Jackson Pollock Tristan Tzara: <i>Le fruit permis</i> Robert Breer: <i>Cats, Motion Pictures, Recreation I</i> First film of Ken Jacobs Peter Kubelka: <i>Adebar</i> John Whitney: <i>Performing Painter</i> First film of Michael Snow: <i>A to z</i> Firsts television emissions</p>
1957			<p>Victor Vasarely: <i>100 F.</i> Hans Richter with Jean Cocteau and Calder: <i>8x8</i> First short by Roman Polanski: <i>A Toothy Smile</i> Len Lye: <i>Rhythm</i> First film of Kurt Kren: <i>1/57 Versuch mit synthetischem Ton</i> Death of Constantin Brancusi Michel Butor: <i>La modification</i> Samuel Beckett: <i>Fin de partie</i> Robert Breer: <i>Recreation II, Jamestown Baloos, A Man and His Dog out for Air, Par avion</i> Marie Menken: <i>Hurry, Hurry!</i> First Film of Mike and George Kuchar</p>
1958		Member of the jury of 2nd «compétition internationale du film expérimental», Brussels MR loves Polanski's <i>Two Men and a Wardrobe</i>	<p>Rupprecht Geiger: <i>OE 247</i> Luis Buñuel: <i>Nazarin</i> Tristan Tzara: <i>La rose et le chien</i> Stan Brakhage: <i>Anticipation of the Night</i> Joseph Cornell: <i>What Mozart Saw on Mulberry Street</i> First film of Bruce Conner: <i>A movie</i></p>
		Natural Paintings	

		Alfred Leslie, Robert Frank and Jack Kerouac: with Allen Ginsberg as performer): <i>Pull my Daisy</i> (USA)
		Len Lye: <i>Free Radicals</i> (USA)
		Peter Kubelka: <i>Schwechater, Arnulf Rainer</i> (1958-60)
		Death of Jean Crotti
	June	V. REPUBLIC: Charles De Gaulle Brussels «Exposition Universelle» Russian Sputnik
		Jean Genet: <i>Les Nègres</i>
		Panavision film vision
1959		Luis Buñuel: <i>La fièvre monte à El Paso</i>
		Maya Deren: <i>The Very Eye of Night</i>
		Stan Brakhage: <i>Window Water Baby Moving, Sirius remembered</i>
		Marie Menken: <i>Dwightiana</i>
		Jean Renoir: <i>Le déjeuné sur l'herbe</i>
		Jean-Luc Godart: <i>A bout de souffle</i>
		Alain Resnais: <i>Hiroshima mon amour</i>
		Death of George Grosz
		Robert Breer: <i>Eyewash</i>
1960		Yves Klein's anthropometries
		Jean Cocteau: <i>Le testament d'Orphée</i>
		Alain Resnais: <i>L'année dernière à Marienbad</i>
		Michelangelo Antonioni: <i>L'Avventura</i>
		Stan Brakhage: <i>The Death, Dog Star Man</i> (1960-64)
		First film of Ron Rice
		Robert Breer: <i>Homage to..., Inner and Outer Space</i>
		Death of Hy Hirsh
1961	MR's objects and text of <i>Revolving Doors</i>	Frank Stella: <i>New Madrid</i>
	Appears in the <i>Dadascope</i> of Richter	Hans Richter: <i>Dadascope</i>
		Luis Buñuel: <i>Viridiana</i>
		Death of Maya Deren
		Last films of Oskar Fischinger
		Stan Brakhage: <i>The Art of Vision</i> (1961-65)
		Robert Breer: <i>Blazes</i>
		Bruce Conner: <i>Cosmic Ray</i>
		Len Lye: <i>Particles in Space</i> (1961-66)
		Peter Kubelka: <i>Unsere Afrikareise</i>
		Guy-Ernest Debord: <i>Critique de la séparation</i>
		First film of George Landow: <i>Two Pieces For the Precarious Life</i>
1962		Andy Warhol: <i>Marilyn</i>
		First film of Jonas Mekas: <i>Guns of the Trees</i>
		Eino Ruutsalo: <i>Kineettisiä kuvia</i>
		Robert Breer: <i>Horse over Teakettle, Pat's Birthday</i>
		First films of Takahiko Iimura: <i>Junk, Dada 62, De Sade, 6x6,...</i>
		Maurice Lemaître: <i>Un soir au cinéma</i>
		Dieter Rot: <i>Dot – Letter</i> (1956-62)
		First film of Jozef Robakowski: <i>6,000,000</i>
		Nam June Paik: <i>Zen for Film</i>
		<b>Fluxus</b> starts in NY
		Independence of ALGERIA
1963	publication of <i>Self Portrait</i>	Jesús Rafael Soto: <i>Horizontal Movement</i>
		Roy Lichtenstein: <i>Whaam!</i>

- George Segal: *Cinema*  
Stanley Kubrick: *Dr Strangelove*  
Eino Ruutsalo: *Kaksi kanaa*  
Maurice Lemaître: *Pour faire un film*  
Stan Brakhage: *Mothlight*  
Robert Breer: *Breathing*  
First film of Joyce Wieland: *Larry's Recent Behaviour*  
First film of Mike Leggett: *The Lark*  
First film of Pat O'Neill: *By the Sea*  
First film of Robert Nelson  
Paul Morrissey: *Taylor Mead Dances*  
Marie Menken: *Mood Mondrian, Notebooks, Go Go Go*  
Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell experiments with magnetics on TV: *Transformed TV Set*  
Death of Jean Cocteau  
Death of Tristan Tzara
- 1964  
Richard Lester: *A Hard Day's Night*  
Stan Brakhage: *Songs 1-30* (1964-69)  
Robert Breer: *Fist Fight*  
Bruce Conner: *Report*  
First film of Alfredo Leonardi  
Michael Snow: *New-York Eye and Ear Control*  
Harry Smith: Early abstract films are compiled  
Andy Warhol: *Kiss, Sleep, Eat*  
Paul Morrissey: *Civilization and its Discontents*  
Terry Riley: *In C*  
Firsts Portable Video Tape Recorders  
VIETNAM WAR BEGINS
- 1965  
Article on MR *Tous les films que j'ai réalisés...* in «Etudes cinématographiques» n°38-39  
Donald Judd: *Stark*  
Death of Le Corbusier  
Roman Polanski: *Repulsion*  
Richard Lester: *Help!*  
D.A.Pennebaker: *Don't Look Back*  
Bruce Conner: *Vivian*  
George Landow: *Film in which There Appear...*  
First film of Werner Nekes: *Tom Doyle und Eva Hesse*  
First film of Peter Weibel: *Welcome*  
Maurice Lemaître: *Au-delà du dé clic*  
Marie Menken: *Andy Warhol*  
Andy Warhol: *Empire, 13 Most Beautiful Women / Boys, Vinyl*  
Early films of Bruce Nauman and first public performances with video
- 1966  
Sol Lewitt: *Structure*  
André Delvaux: *L'homme au crâne rasé*  
Michelangelo Antonioni: *Blow-up*  
Sony's VTR: portapak  
Eino Ruutsalo: *Human Signs*  
Robert Breer: *66-70* (1966-70)  
Raoul Servais: *Chromophobia*  
Andy Warhol: *Couch, Kitchen, My Hustler, Hedy, The Chelsea girls*  
First film of Tony Conrad: *The Flicker*  
First film of Hollis Frampton: *Manual of Arms*  
First film of Malcolm Le Grice: *China Tea*  
First film of Warren Sonbert: *Amphetamine*  
Paul Sharits: *Ray Gun Virus*

1967                      Exhibition at the American Center, Paris

Marie Menken: *Lights*  
Duchamps signs *Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas*  
Death of Hans Arp  
Death of André Breton  
FRENCH ATOMIC-BOMB  
Andy Warhol: *Electric Chair*  
Bruce Nauman: *The True Artist Helps the World*  
*Super 16mm film format (Sweden)*  
Luis Buñuel: *Belle de jour*  
Jacques Tati: *Playtime*  
Walerian Borowczyk: *Goto*  
Death of Oskar Fischinger  
Death of René Magritte  
Maurice Lemaître: *Moteur!, Le film de demain*  
Eino Ruutsalo: *ABC 123, +plus -minus*  
Werner Nekes: *Schwarzhuhnbraunhuhn schwarzhuhnweisshuhnrothuhnweiss oder put-putt*  
Andy Warhol: *\*\*\*\*, Bike Boy, I, A Man*  
John Whitney: *Permutations, Homage to Rameau*  
Joyce Wieland: *Sailboat, I a raison avant la passion*  
First film of Dore O (with W.Nekes): *Jüm Jüm*  
First film of Yvonne Rainer: *Volleyball*  
First film of Martial Raysse: *Jesus-Cola...*  
First film of George Rey: *Tryptique*  
Robert Nelson and GD: *Grateful Dead*  
Bruce Conner: *Looking for Mushrooms, Breakaway, The White Rose, Liberty Crown*  
French process of color television  
Beatles: *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*  
Steve Reich: *My Name Is*  
First film of Peter Gidal: *Room*  
First films of Giovanni Martedi  
First films of Wilhem and Birgit Hein  
Kurt Kren: *15/67 TV*  
Harry Smith: *The Tin Woodman's Dream n°16*  
Experiments of Stan Vanderbeek with the moviedrome (1967-1972)

1968

Duchamp, his wife and John Cage play electronic chess in Cage's performance  
Death of Marcel Duchamp  
Death of Leopold Survage  
Death of John Heartfield  
Luis Buñuel: *La voie lactée*  
Stanley Kubrick: *2001, Space Odyssey*  
Stan Brakhage: *Scenes from Under Childhood (1968-70)*  
Robert Breer: *PBL n°2&3*  
Andy Warhol: *Lonesome Cowboys, Blue Movie*  
Paul Morrissey: *Flesh*  
Bruce Conner: *Ten Second Film*  
Maurice Lemaître: *Pellicule, Chutes, Une œuvre*  
Valie Export First films and videos  
Marie Menken: *Excursion*  
John Whitney: *Experiment in Notion Graphics*  
Jacques Monory: *Ex*  
Paul Sharits: *N:O:T:H:I:N:G.; T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G*

S:TREAM:S:S:ECTION:S:S:ECTIONED  
 (1968-70), *Razor blades* (1965-68)  
 Takahiko Imura film-loops and installations  
 First film of Ernie Gehr: *Morning*  
 First films of Franz Zwartjes: *Dolls, Sorbet, Birds, A Fan, Face, Breakfast*  
 Pat O'Neill: *Genesis I-III* (1968-70)  
 Carolee Schneemann: *Fuses, Plumblin*  
 Robert Frank: *Me and my Brother* (with **Allen Ginsberg** as performer)  
 Joyce Wieland: *Rat Life and Diet in North America*  
 Otto Piene and Aldo Tambellini's first video: *Black Gate Cologne*  
 Bruce Nauman's Video performance: *Violin Tuned D.E.A.D.*  
 May  
 STUDENT'S AGITATION in Paris  
 first french computer  
 1969 Oct. 4  
**Surrealism is proclaimed over (as organisation) in «Le Monde»**  
 Roman Polanski: *Rosemary's Baby*  
 Pier Paolo Pasolini: *Porcile*  
 Richard Lester: *The Bed Sitting Room*  
 Ken Russell: *Women in Love*  
 Dennis Hopper: *Easy Rider*  
 Michelangelo Antonioni: *Zabriskie Point*  
 Federico Fellini: *Satyricon*  
 André Delvaux: *Un soir, un train*  
 Stan Brakhage: *The Horseman, The Woman and the Moth*  
 Bruce Conner: *Permian Strata*  
 First films of Guy Fihman and Claudine Eizykman  
 Maurice Lemaître: *Votre film, L'écrevisse mathématique*  
 Jonas Mekas: *Walden*  
 Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow: *Dripping Water*  
 John and Michael Whitney: *Binary Bit Patterns*  
 Ken Jacobs: *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son* (1971)  
 First film of Antonietta Pizzorno  
 Marguerite Duras: *Détruire dit-elle*  
 Bruce Nauman: *Live Taped Video Corridor*  
 First video works of Jud Yalkut  
 First videotapes of William Wegman  
 Ira Schneider and Frank Gillette: *Wipe Cycle*  
 Bruce Nauman: *Lip Sync, Walk with Contraposto*  
 Fly of the Concorde  
 GEORGES POMPIDOU: French President  
 First Human on the Moon  
 1970  
**New-York: first video-art happening**  
 Christo: *Valley Curtain*  
 Robert Smithson: *Spiral Jetty*  
 Luis Buñuel: *Tristana*  
 First video synthesizer (Shuya Abe and Nam June Paik)  
 Imax film vision (Canada)  
 Hollis Frampton: *Zorn's Lemma*  
 Michael Snow: *La Région centrale* (1970-71)

		<p>John Whitney: <i>Osaka</i>  Paul Morrissey: <i>Trash</i>  Frans Zwartjes: <i>Spare Bedroom, Through the Garden, Spectator</i>  Mike Leggett: <i>Sheepman and the Sheared</i> (1970-75)  Maurice Lemaître: <i>Toujours à l'avant-garde de l'avant-garde jusqu'au paradis et au-delà, Un film à faire, Un programme d'avant-garde, Positif-négatif, notre film</i>  Death of Mark Rothko  First film of Bill Brand: <i>Tree</i>  First film of Larry Gottheim: <i>Blues</i>  First film of William Raban: <i>Sky</i>  First videos of Douglas Davis: <i>Numbers, Street Sentences</i>  Dennis Oppenheim: <i>Aspen Projects</i>  First video of Dennis Oppenheim: <i>Hair Piece</i>  General Idea: <i>Light On</i>  Keith Sonnier: <i>Video Wall Projection, Painted Foot, Light Bulb and Fire</i>  Vito Acconci and Kathy Dillon performance: <i>Manipulations</i>  First video of Vito Acconci: <i>Corrections</i>  First performances of Joan Jonas  Dennis Oppenheim: <i>A Feed-back Situation</i>  Michael Snow video installation <i>De la</i> (1969)  First film of David Dye: <i>Mirror Film</i>  First film of Ryszard Wasko: <i>The chair</i>  Hollis Frampton: <i>Hapax Legommena I-VII</i> (1971-72), video: <i>Travelling Matte, Memoranda for a Dream of Magellan</i>  Paul Morrissey: <i>Andy Warhol's Women</i>  First film of Margaret Raspé: <i>Schweineschnitzel</i>  First film of Rishi: <i>Apollonia</i>  Paul Sharits: <i>Analytical Studies I-IV</i> (1971-76)  Ernie Gehr: <i>Still</i>  Frans Zwartjes: <i>Moving Stills</i>  Death of Marie Menken  Death of Kenneth Macpherson  Death of Richard Huelsenbeck  Dimitri Devyatkin: <i>The Video Tunnel</i>  First videos of Bill Etra  First videos of Bill Ritchie  Steve Reich <i>Drumming</i>  Pink Floyd: <i>Meddle</i></p>
1971	<p>Retrospectives exhibitions in  Bymans van Beuningen Museum Rotterdam  Galleria Schwarz Milan</p>	
1972		<p>Luis Buñuel: <i>Le fantôme de la liberté</i>  Harry Kümel: <i>Malpertuis</i>  Andrei Tarkovsky: <i>Solaris</i>  Stan Brakhage: publication of <i>The Brakhage Lectures</i>  Frans Zwartjes: <i>Living</i>  Robert Breer: <i>Gulls and Buoys</i>  Hollis Frampton: <i>Apparatus Sum, Tiger Balm, Yellow Springs</i>  Paul Morrissey: <i>Heat</i>  First film of Chris Welsby <i>Wind Vane</i>  First film of Anthony McCall: <i>Landscape for Fire</i>  Heinz Emigholz: <i>Schenec-Tady I-V</i> (1972-77)  First film of Guy Sherwin: <i>Newspaper</i></p>

1973

Kurt Kranz: realising of 3 films made in the late twenties: *20 images in the life of a composition; Black:White/White:Black, The Heroic Arrow*  
Steve Reich: *Clapping music*  
John Arvanites: *Sand*  
Joan Jonas: *Duet*  
Eric Cameron: *Keeping the Camera in Contact with the Model's Body (1972-74)*  
Dimitri Devyatkin: *Steeps Turns –Cybermatic Rap, Sachdev*  
Ed Emshwiller: *Scape-Mates*  
Alvin Lucier: *The Queen of the South*  
Hermine Freed: *Two Faces*  
Jochen Hiltmann: *Video-Tape II*  
Ed Rusha: *Mercy*  
Ad Reinhardt: *Black Painting*  
Death of Pablo Picasso  
Lee Miller guest of Lucien Clergue at Arles Photo Festival, deputizing for Man Ray  
Maurice Lemaître: *Une copie mutilée*  
Peter Greenaway: *H is for House*  
Guy-Ernest Debord: *La société du spectacle*  
Bruce Conner: *Five Times Marilyn*  
Tony Conrad: *Deep Fried 7360*  
Hollis Frampton: *Less*  
Paul Morrissey: *L'Amour*  
William Raban: *Diagonal*  
Skip Sweeney and Joanne Kelly: *Vidance*  
Giovanni Martedi: *Cinégraphie, Films sans camera (1973-76)*  
John Whitney: *Matrix I-III (1971-73)*  
Joyce Wieland: *Solidarity*  
First film of Jean-Christophe Pigozzi: *La vierge de Bagdad*  
John Arvanites: *Dots*  
Bill Etra: *PDP11-10- Abstractions on a Bedsheet*  
Stan Vanderbeek: *Newsreel of Dreams*  
Jeffrey Spalding: *Scanning Lines*  
Noel Harding: *Three Pieces for Circuits*  
Harold Orlieb: *Television I*  
William Wegman: *Spelling Lesson*  
USA go out of VIETNAM  
Sensurround and Dolby System  
VALÉRY GISCARD D'ESTAING: president of France (until 1981)  
Death of Raoul Hausmann  
Luis Buñuel: *Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie*  
Andrei Tarkovsky: *The Mirror*  
Maguerite Duras: *India Song*  
Stan Brakhage: *Text of Light*  
Robert Breer: *Fuji*  
Chris Welsby: *Seven days*  
Jacques Monory: *Brighton Belle*  
Hollis Frampton: *Solaria Magellani (1974-76)*  
Maurice Lemaître: *Image*  
Dore O: *Kaskara*  
Peter Weibel: *Komxxikxxxxx*  
Jean Pascal: *F2*

1974

Andy Warhol paintings and serigraphy devoted to MR



Ryszard Wasko: *A-B-C-D-E-F 1-36*  
 First films of Pierre Rovere: *Remous, Black and Light*  
 Michael Snow: *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot*  
 Paul Morrissey: *Flesh for Frankenstein, Blood for Dracula*  
 Dennis Oppenheim: *Mittens*  
 Stephen Beck: *Cycles, Anima*  
 Linda Benglis: *Female Sensibility*  
 James Byrne: *Handheld*  
 Peter Campus: *Shadow Projection, Mem*  
 Bill and Louise Etra: *Lady of the Lake*  
 Joel Glassman: *Dreams*  
 Nancy Holt: *Points of View*  
 Beryl Korot: *Dachau 1974*  
 Susan Milano: *Video Swing*  
 Keith Sonnier: *Animation II*  
 Walter Wright: *A Tape for Susan*  
 Ed Emshwiller: *Thermogenesis, Pilobolus and Joan, Scape-Mates*  
**Open House**  
 Nam June Paik: *TV Garden*  
 first video of Martha Rosler  
 Stan Vanderbeek: *Time Tunnels*  
 Colin Campbell: *Hindsight*  
 Philip Glass: *Music in Twelve Parts*  
 Peter Greenaway: *Windows*  
 Agnès Varda: *Daguerréotypes*  
 Stan Brakhage: *Gift, The Stars Are Beautiful*  
 Malcolm Le Grice: *After Manet, After Giorgione –Le déjeuné sur l'herbe*  
 Giovanni Martedi: *F.S.C. (1975-78)*  
 Anthony McCall: *Long Film for Ambient Light*  
 Guy Sherwin: performances with super 8mm  
 John Whitney: *Arabesque*  
 Nam June Paik: *TV Buddha*  
 John Arvanites: *Perceptions of a physiognomist –a study of projections*  
 Frank Gillette: *Quidditas*  
 Joan Jonas: *Twilight*  
 Andy Mann's *X-Matrix* models  
 Dennis Oppenheim: *MIND-TWIST*  
 Charlemagne Palestine: *On the Run*  
 Ira Schneider: *Bits, Chunks & Pieces*  
 John Sturgeon: *Egyptian Access*  
 Stan Vanderbeek: *Moaning Lisa*  
 Gary Hill: *Rock City Road*  
 Martha Rosler: *Semiotics of the Kitchen*  
 Lisa Steele: *Internal Pornography*  
 Brian Eno: *Discreet music*  
 Death of Hans Richter  
 Death of Max Ernst  
 Giovanni Martedi: *Bienvenue Elizabeth, A Natalie-Prélude-Arabesque-Ouverture, Anathalie-Toccatà, Film Inexistent Janus*  
 Paul Sharits: *Epileptic Seizure Comparison, Tails, Declarative Mode*  
 Guy Sherwin: *Short Film Series*  
 Frans Zwartjes: *It's me*  
 Michael Snow: *Breakfast*

1975

1976 Nov.18 **Death of Man Ray** at the age of 86

			Mary Ashley: <i>Eat Your Totems</i> John Baldessari: <i>The Italian Tape</i> David Cort: <i>Interactive Videospace Environment Images</i> Tom Dewitt: <i>Cathode Ray Theater</i> Davidson Gigliotti's landscapes Rebecca Horn: <i>Pencilmask</i> Jack Krueger and Paula Barr: <i>Sonya</i> Shigeko Kubota: <i>Video without Video</i> Antonio Muntadas: <i>Emision – Recepcion</i> Richard Serra: <i>Boomerang</i> Bill Viola: <i>Amazing Colossal Man</i> Video-sculptures of Ben Tatti Electronic image sequences of Woody Vasulka Center GEORGES POMPIDOU opening
1977	March	Milano. ZARATHUSTRA, Arte incontro <b>Man Ray</b>	Dolby Stereo 70mm Luis Buñuel: <i>Cet obscur objet du désir</i> André Téchiné: <i>Barrocco</i> Peter Greenaway: <i>Dear Phone</i> Bruce Conner: <i>Monogoloid, Crossroad</i> Malcolm Le Grice: <i>Blackbird Descending (Tense Alignment)</i> Maurice Lemaître: <i>50 bons films</i> Werner Nekes: <i>Lagado</i> Peter Weibel and Valie Export: <i>Positiv Negativ Transfinit</i> Martha Rosler: <i>Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained</i> William Raban: <i>Wave Formations</i> Guy Sherwin: <i>Sound Track, Railings, Musical Stairs</i> Death of Lee Miller
	April	New York. Kimmel/Cohn Photography Arts <b>Man Ray Vintage Photographs Solarizations and Rayographs</b>	Founding of the Netherlands Media Art Institute First experimental films of Jacques Coelho Brian Eno: <i>Music for Films, Ambient I</i> Guy-Ernest Debord: <i>In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni</i> Peter Greenaway: <i>A walk through H, Vertical Features Remake</i> Pat O'Neill: <i>Foregrounds</i> William Raban: <i>Autumn Scenes</i> Paul Sharits: <i>Episodic Generation</i> Ryszard Wasko: <i>ABCDEFGHIJK</i>
	May	Paris. Centre Culturel Americain <b>Photographies des années 20 et 30</b>	Andrei Tarkovsky: <i>Stalker</i> Malcolm Le Grice: <i>Emily Third Party Speculation</i> Chris Welsby: <i>Shore Line (1977-79)</i> Raoul Servais: <i>Harpya</i> Ryszard Wasko: <i>Constructivism in Poland 1923-30</i> Paul Morrissey: <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i> Peter Greenaway: <i>The Falls</i> Stan Brakhage: <i>Murder Psalm</i> Death of Len Lye
	November	Milano, Luciano Anselmino <b>Man Ray unconcerned but not indifferent</b>	
1978	December	Tokyo <b>Photo dada Man Ray</b>	
1979	October	Frankfurt am Main. The Frankfurter kunstverein	
	-December	<b>Inventionen und Interpretationen</b>	
	November	Tokyo. Galerie Watari <b>Man Ray / Rayograph 10</b>	
1980	February	Birmingham. The Birmingham Museum of Art	
	-March	<b>Man Ray: Photographs and Objects</b> New York, Prakapas Gallery	
	April-May	Tokyo, Zeit-Foto Salon <b>Man Ray's World</b> Paris, Artcurial	
	December	Geneve. Galerie Sonia Zannettacci	

1980-85		Video U-matic
1981	Exhibition at Centre Georges Pompidou <b>Man Ray</b>	Video Home Standard (VHS and Beta) Compact disc (CD) digital audio Home-computers
1982-83	Exhibitions in Tokyo, New York, Paris San Francisco, Brussels, Rotterdam, Kyoto, Los Angeles, Parma, Barcelona, Milano	<b>Death of Louis Aragon</b> First commercial video-distributions (VHS) cinéphotographie (Führer and Eizykman) <b>Finland: Turppi-group</b> <b>Death of Luis Buñuel</b>
1983		
1984-85	Exhibitions in Tokyo, New York, Piran, Apeldoorn, Siracusa, Palermo, Seta	
1985-95	Exhibitions in Los Angeles, Firenze, Lund Milano, Paris, Leipzig, Musashino, Ravenna, Hamburg, Osaka, Lausanne, Zurich, Tokyo, Washington, Milwaukee, Bologna, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Geneve, Nagoya, Boston, Williamstown, Antwerpen, Palm Beach, Wolsburg, London	CD-rom video Betacam and Mini Laservision HiFiTV (Europe) digital animation photo CD
1985	In the studio of rue Férou founding of unknow films and music records	
1986	<i>Man Ray cinéaste</i> at «Trois Luxembourg»	
1989		<b>Death of Salvador Dali</b>
1990		Photochoy <b>Death of Philippe Soupault</b>
1991		
1992		computer editing (AVID) World Wide Web released by CERN analog mobile phones
1995	More films are founded in Adrienne Fidelin's archives	Digital Video (DV) and Digital Video Disc (DVD)
1996-2000	Exhib. in Tokyo, Wien, Nagoya, Nice, New York, Istanbul, Vincennes, Sollentuna, Milano, Los Angeles, Toronto, Paris	
1996	A new version (tooned) and the rushes of <i>Les Mystères du château du dé</i> are founded	<b>Death of Ré Soupault ( born 1901)</b>
1997	Mel Stuart and Neil Baldwin make the film: <i>Man Ray, American Artist</i> CD-ROM <i>Man Ray-Fautographe</i> Retrospective <b>Man Ray</b> in Nice, at the Musée d'Art Moderne	
1998	Exhibition at the Grand Palais, Paris: <b>Man Ray, la photographie à l'envers</b>	
2000-1	Exhibition in Museu do Chiadossa, Lissabon: <b>Man Ray</b>	
2002		<b>Death of André Delvaux</b>
2003		<b>Death of Stan Brakhage</b> digital photography spread interactive digital mobile phones
2006		<b>Death of Nam June Paik</b>
2007	december <i>Man Ray «cinéaste du mauvais movies»</i> at «Trois Luxembourg», Paris	blu-ray

# Media

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## [specialized works about man ray, surrealism, dada]

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## [films by man ray]

- 1923 **Le Retour à la raison** 35mm, 2 min., b&w, silent (cast: Kiki).  
1926 **Emak Bakia** (cinépoème) 35mm, 20 min., b&w, silent, music (cast: Rose Wheeler, Kiki, Jacques Rigaut, prod.: Arthur and Rose Wheeler, ass. cam.: Jacques-André Boiffard).  
1928 **L'étoile de mer** 35mm, 15 min., b&w, silent, music (script: Robert Desnos, cast: Kiki, André de la Rivière, Robert Desnos, ass. cam. Jacques-André Boiffard).  
1929 **Les Mystères du château du dé** 35mm, 25 min., b&w, silent, music (cast: Alice de Montgomery, Eveline Orłowska, Bernard Deshouillères, Charles de Noailles, Marie -Laure de Noailles, Marcel Raval, Lily Pastré, Etienne de Beaumont, M. et Mme Henri d'Ursel, Jacques-André Boiffard, Man Ray, prod.: Vicomte Charles de Noailles, ass. cam.: Jacques-André Boiffard).  
1923-29 **Rue Campagne-Première** 35mm, 1 min., b&w, silent  
1929 **Corrida** 9,5mm, 4:50 min., b&w, silent  
1930 **Deux Femmes / Two Women** 4:00 min.  
1930\* **Autoportrait ou ce qui nous manque à nous tous** 9,5mm 10:50 min., b&w, silent cast: Lee Miller, Man Ray) \* Autoportrait 1936 16mm b&w 6:30 min.  
1933-35 **Poison** 16mm, 2:40 min., b&w, silent (cast: Meret Oppenheim, Man Ray)  
circa 1935 **L'Atelier du Val-de-Grâce** 16mm, 1:50 min., color, silent  
circa 1937(1935) **Course(s) landaise(s)** 16mm, 9 min., color, silent (cast: Ady Fidelin)  
circa 1937 **La Garoupe** 16mm, 9:10 min., b&w, color (cast: Picasso, Paul Eluard, Nusch Eluard, Cécile Eluard, Emily Davies, Valentine Penrose, Roland Penrose, Man Ray).  
1938 **Ady** 16mm 53 sec., b&w, silent (cast: Ady Fidelin, Man Ray)  
1938 **Dance** 8mm 7:33 min., b&w, silent (cast: Jenny)  
circa 1940 **Juliet** 8mm 3:43 min., b&w, silent (cast: Juliet Browner, Man Ray)

## [a few films about surrealism, dadaism, man ray and his time]

- A Life in the Day of Man Ray Director, Written and presented by Edward Mullins. Edited and directed by Mathew Reinders, Collection L. Treillard USA 1994 (interview, 1961) 55 minutes  
Avant-Garde - Experimental Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s, directed by Roger Barlow and Harry Hay  
Das Bauhaus, director unknown. 1967, 20 minutes  
Das Bauhaus - ein Mythos, directed by Julia Cave, 1994, 45 minutes  
Les Années 20 - Le temps des Illusions, directed by Claude-Jean Philippe, France 1978  
2 bis rue Férou - Man Ray, directed and written by François Lévy-Kuentz, France 1989, 26 minutes  
Ich Lebe in der Gegenwart - Versuch über Hans Richter, directed by Erwin Leiser, Switzerland, 1973, 45 minutes  
Dada, Surréalisme et Cinéma, directed by Claude-Jean Philippe, France, 1977  
Dada e neo-dada, directed by G. Angella, Italy, 1964, 13 minutes  
Dada Manifest - DA DA - ein Alphabet des deutschen Dadaismus, directed by Helmut Herbst, Germany 1969, 65 minutes  
Man Ray photographe, directed by Claude Fayard, France, 1961, 36 minutes  
Man Ray, sa vie, son oeuvre, directed by Deidi von Schaeuwen, Heinz Schwerfel, France, 1984, 52 minutes  
Man Ray, Prophet of the Avant-Garde, directed by Mel Stuart, written by Neil Baldwin, prod. William Cartwright, USA, 1997, 60 minutes  
Man Ray, La vie et l'œuvre, directed by Jean-Paul Fargier, Centre Georges Pompidou, France 1998, 52 minutes  
Man Ray, Les Films de Man Ray, compilation by the Centre Georges Pompidou, sound reconstitution, 1998

## [cd-rom about man ray]

- Man Ray, over 600 works, 30 min audio, Man Ray Trust - ADAGP - Telimage 1995  
Man Ray-Fautographe, éd. Telimage, Paris, 1997

## [world wide web]

(Updated: January 4, 2008)

## Man Ray

### Man Ray and His Work (basic links)

[www.manray-photo.com](http://www.manray-photo.com)  
[www.manraytrust.com](http://www.manraytrust.com)

### The Getty Museum

<http://search.getty.edu:18765/museum/query.html?col=museum&nh=5&pw=100%&lk=1&qt=Man+Ray&Go.x=6&Go.y=4>  
<http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artMakerDetails?maker=2036&page=1>

### Man Ray's Films

<http://www.ubu.com/film/ray.html>

### More Works

[http://www.artchive.com/artchive/M/man\\_ray.html](http://www.artchive.com/artchive/M/man_ray.html) - images  
[www.geh.org/amico2000/htmlsrc/manray\\_sld00001.html](http://www.geh.org/amico2000/htmlsrc/manray_sld00001.html)  
[http://foto.alice.it/gallery/foto\\_dautore/q\\_t/man\\_ray/dadaismo\\_man\\_ray/](http://foto.alice.it/gallery/foto_dautore/q_t/man_ray/dadaismo_man_ray/)

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<http://www.etudes.photographie.com/4-noteslect.html>

Janine Mileaf. *Between you and me: Man Ray's Object to Be Destroyed - Cover Story* Art Journal, Spring, 2004

[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0425/is\\_1\\_63/ai\\_114632847](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0425/is_1_63/ai_114632847)

James Gunter. *Man Ray in Paris: His heart belongs to Dada*  
S&S Paris bureau European edition, Friday, January 14, 1966

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in *Theses and Dissertations about Anarchism (2007)*

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### Man Ray Letters and Album , 1922-1976

<http://archives.getty.edu:8082/cgi//findaid/findaid-idx?sid=cbb20600489ef8a6a61dda830e7c6890;c=utf8a;idno=US%3A%3ACMaIG%3A%3A930027;view=reslist;idno=US%3A%3ACMaIG%3A%3A930027;subview=standard;cc=utf8a;byte=25172261;focusrgn=contentslist>

### Man Ray's Exhibitions 1977-2000

<http://www.geocities.jp/manrayist/ecollection2.html>

## Dada and Surrealism

<http://www.peak.org/~dadaist/>  
[http://www.cavi.univ-paris3.fr/Rech\\_sur/c\\_surr.html](http://www.cavi.univ-paris3.fr/Rech_sur/c_surr.html)  
<http://dadaparis.blogspot.com/>

<http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/collection.html>

## Experimental Cinema and Video

### General sources

<http://www.ubu.com/film/index.html>

<http://ukvideoart.tripod.com/>

<http://www.roberthaller.com/firstlight/>

<http://www.wv.nl/>

<http://www.experimenta.org/>

[http://www.iaa.upf.es/reerca/sintesi\\_imatges/cinexp/cinexp1.html](http://www.iaa.upf.es/reerca/sintesi_imatges/cinexp/cinexp1.html)

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-art-photography-video.htm>

<http://www.hi-beam.net/mkr/fmhome.html>

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<http://www.waysofseeing.org/struct.html>

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<http://www.olats.org/pionniers/pp/fischinger/filmoFischinger.php>

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<http://207.56.97.90/index.html>

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<http://www.fredcamper.com/Film/BrakhageS.html> - Mothlight

<http://www.av-arkki.fi/web/index.php?id=25>

### Books on line

William C. Wees. *Light Moving in Time Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film*

<http://content.cdlib.org/xtf/view?docId=ft438nb2fr&brand=eschol>

Gene Youngblood: *Expanded Cinema*

<http://www.ubu.com/historical/youngblood/index.html>

### Articles

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### Solarization

<http://www.cchem.berkeley.edu/wljeme/Chapt3.html>

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**PICTORIAL SURVEY**

Plates

## Plate 1. Vision in Transformation

1. Great Exhibition of the Crystal Palace, 1851
2. Georges SEURAT La Tour Eiffel, 1889
3. Victor HORTA Hôtel Tassel, Brussels, 1892-93
4. Claude MONET Nymphéas, Reflets verts (left part panel, detail), Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, 1920-26
5. Alfred STIEGLITZ A Snapshot, Paris, 1911
6. Rocks near Château Noir, photograph (source unknown)
7. Paul CÉZANNE's interpretation of the same subject, 1900
8. La Montagne Sainte-Victoire, photograph (source unknown)
9. Paul CÉZANNE La Montagne Sainte-Victoire, 1885-87
10. Paul CÉZANNE La Montagne Sainte-Victoire, 1904-06
11. Paul CÉZANNE Cinq baigneuses, 1877-78
12. Pablo PICASSO Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, 1907
13. Futurist Photodynamic of U. Boccioni attributed to Giannetto BISI, 1911(?)
14. Roger FENTON The Queen's Target, 1860





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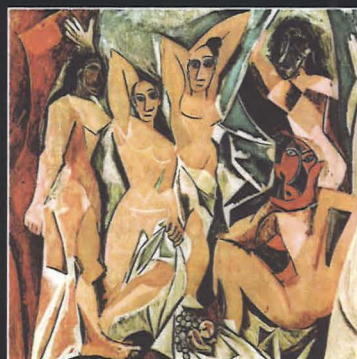
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## Plate 2. Dynamism 1

1. Edvard MUNCH Children on the Road, 1906
2. Georges SEURAT Le Chahut, 1889-90
3. Umberto BOCCIONI Simultaneous Visions, 1911
4. Frantisek KUPKA The Dream, 1906-09
5. Umberto BOCCIONI Riot at the Gallery, 1910
6. George GROSZ Metropolis, 1916-17
7. Giacomo BALLA Girl Running on a Balcony, 1912 (study)
8. Giacomo BALLA Girl Running on a Balcony, 1912
9. Carlo CARRÀ Interventionist Demonstration, 1914
10. Otto DIX War, 1914
11. Frantisek KUPKA Riders, 1900 c.
12. Giacomo BALLA Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash, 1912



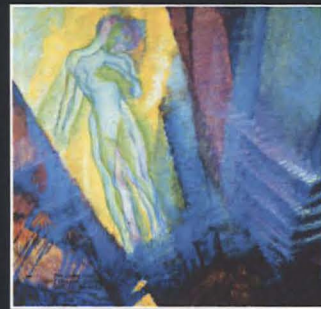
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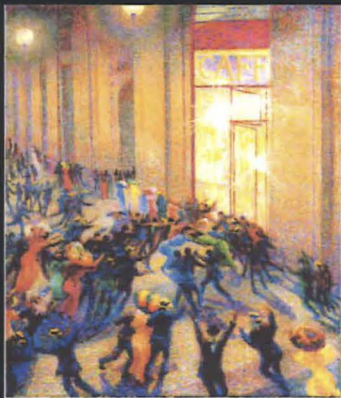
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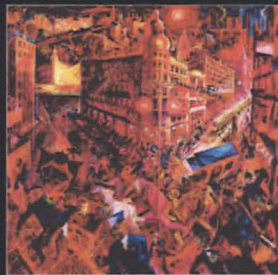
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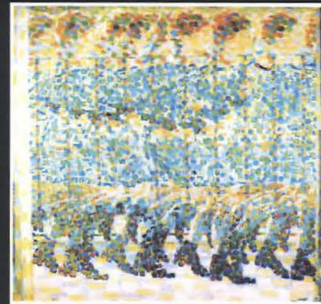
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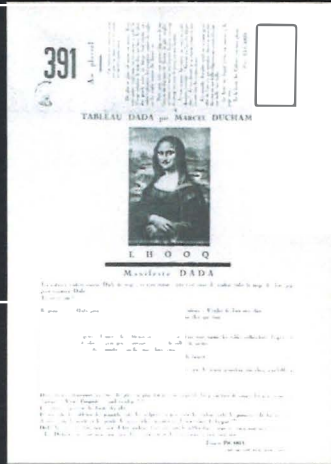
## Plate 3. Dynamism 2

1. Filippo Tommaso MARINETTI Futurist Poster, 1914
2. Filippo Tommaso MARINETTI Captive Balloon, 1914
3. Umberto BOCCIONI Charge of the Lancers, 1915
4. Anton Giulio BRAGAGLIA Figure Descending Stairs, photodynamic, 1911
5. Giacomo BALLA Dynamic Expansion + Speed, 1913
6. Anton Giulio BRAGAGLIA photodynamic, 1913
7. Anton Giulio and Arturo BRAGAGLIA Typist, photodynamic, 1911
8. Anton Giulio BRAGAGLIA Double Print, 1911
9. Pierre ALBERT-BIROT Offering, (1919?)
10. Marcel DUCHAMP Nu descendant un escalier n°2, 1912
11. Alvin Langdon COBURN Vortograph, 1917
12. Anton Giulio BRAGAGLIA Hand in Movement, photodynamic, 1911
13. Alvin Langdon COBURN Vortograph of Ezra Pound, 1917 c.

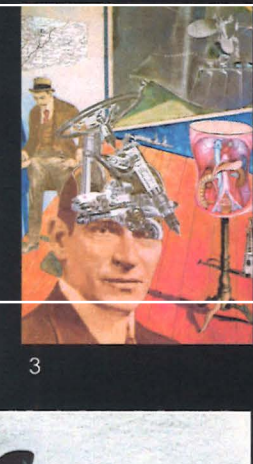
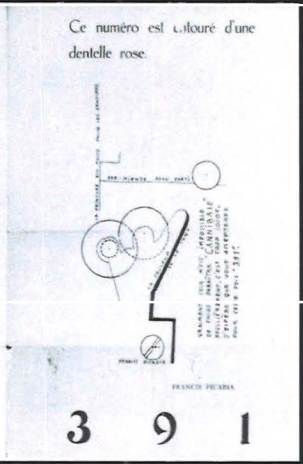
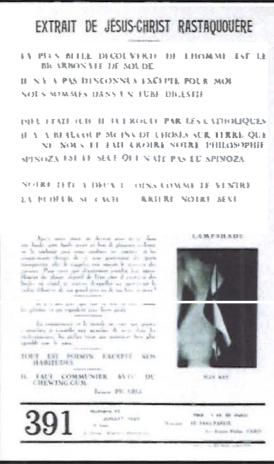


## Plate 4. Dada

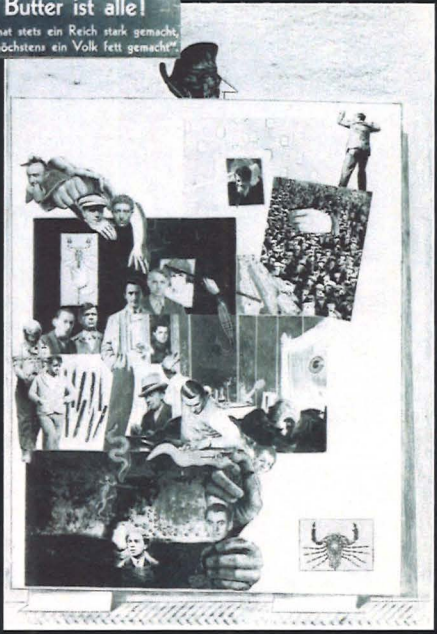
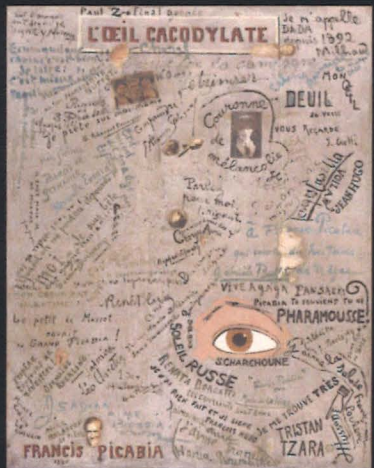
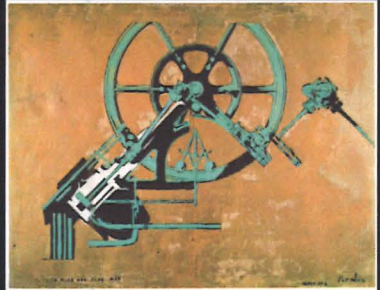
- 1a. 391: Marcel DUCHAMP L.H.O.O.Q - Manifeste Dada , 1919
- 1b. 391: MAN RAY Lampshade - F. PICABIA Double page, 1920
2. John HEARTFIELD Hurrah, The Butter is Finished, 1935
3. R. HAUSMANN Tatlin at Home, 1920
- 4a. Francis PICABIA L'œil cacodylate (The Cacodylic Eye), 1921
- 4b. Francis PICABIA L'œil cacodylate (The Cacodylic Eye), 1921 (detail) Man Ray photograph
- 4c. Francis PICABIA L'œil cacodylate (The Cacodylic Eye), 1921 (detail) Man Ray signature
5. George GROSZ Remember Uncle August the Unhappy Inventor, 1919
6. Francis PICABIA That's the Girl Born Without a Mother, 1916-17'
7. Raoul HAUSMANN Dada Cino, 1920-21
8. Hanna HÖCH Photodynamic (from Bauhaus book) b.1925
9. Hanna HÖCH Da-dandy, 1919
10. Max ERNST Loplop introduces members of the Surrealist group, 1931



1a - b



4a - c



## Plate 5. Bauhaus

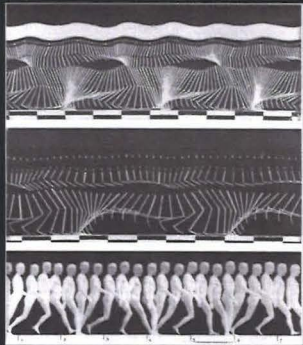
1. Lionel FEININGER Woodcut for the Bauhaus Manifesto, 1919
2. MAN RAY Camera-less photograph (Moholy-Nagy's Book, 1925)
3. J.B. POLACK X-ray photo of a shell (Moholy-Nagy's Book, 1925)
4. George Willis RITCHEY Spiral Nebula in the Hounds (astronomy, 1917) (Moholy-Nagy's Book, 1925)
5. Laszlo MOHOLY-NAGY Untitled, 1922
6. Laszlo MOHOLY-NAGY Camera-less photograph (Moholy-Nagy's Book, 1925)
7. MAN RAY Camera-less photograph (Moholy-Nagy's Book, 1925)
8. K. SCHWERDTFEGER Reflected light-displays photo: Hüttich & Oemler (Moholy-Nagy's Book, 1925)
9. Laszlo MOHOLY-NAGY Balconies (Bauhaus' building / Moholy-Nagy's Book, 1925)
10. John HEARTFIELD Swallows Gold and Utters Base Metal, 1932
11. Nazis' propaganda against the Bauhaus, collage by Iwao Yamawaki, 1932



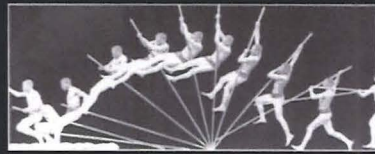


## Plate 6. Futurist Film, Expressionist Film, Kino Eye and Kinetic Art

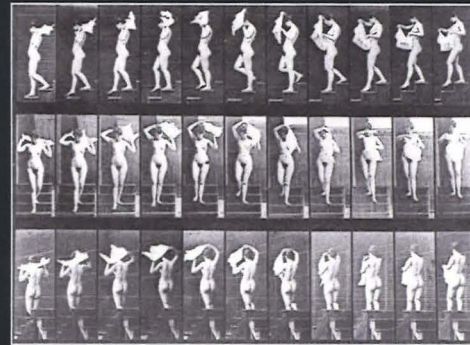
1. Etienne-Jules MAREY Chronophotographic studies of human locomotion:
- 1a. Man in black costume with white lines and dots, 1886
- 1b. Successive views of a man running, 1886
- 1c. Man walking in a white costume with one black leg, 1886
2. Etienne-Jules MAREY Chronophotographs:
  - 2a. Long Jump with a Pole, 1890
  - 2b. Man Pushing a Cart, 1891
3. Eadweard MUYBRIDGE Animal Locomotion, plate 133, 1887
4. Léopold SURVAGE Coloured Rhythm, 1913
5. Léopold SURVAGE Coloured Rhythm, (black and white) 1913
6. Marcel DUCHAMP Rotoreliefs, 1935
7. Student work at the BAUHAUS (Josef Albers' class), 1928
8. Anton Giulio BRAGAGLIA Thais, 1916
9. *Dance of Geometric Splendor* from *Vita futurista*, 1916
10. Yakov PROTAZANOV Aelita, 1924
11. Robert WIENE The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, 1919
12. Dziga VERTOV The Man With the Movie Camera, 1928
13. Victor VASARELY plate from Kinetic Album n°III, 1959



1a - c



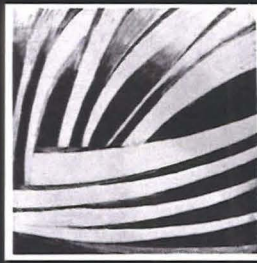
2a - b



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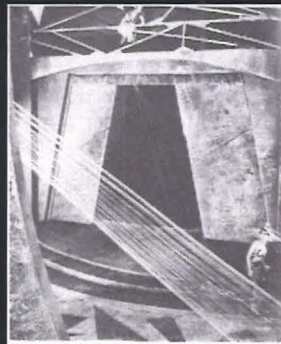
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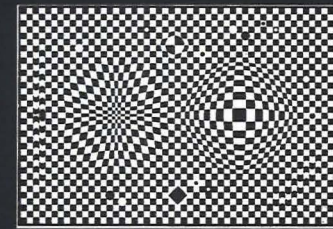
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## Plate 7. Dadaist Cinematography

1. Fernand LÉGER Le Ballet mécanique, 1924 eyes
2. Fernand LÉGER Le Ballet mécanique, 1924 legs, eyes, mirrors
3. Fernand LÉGER Le Ballet mécanique, 1924 stair's loop
4. Henri CHOMETTE Jeux des reflets et de la vitesse, 1923-25
- 5a. René CLAIR Entr'acte, 1924
- 5b. René CLAIR Entr'acte, 1924 (Duchamp and Man Ray playing chess)
- 5c. René CLAIR Entr'acte, 1924
6. Hans RICHTER Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich, 1929
- 7a - f. Hans RICHTER Vormittagsspuk, 1927-28



1



3



5a - c



7a - f



2



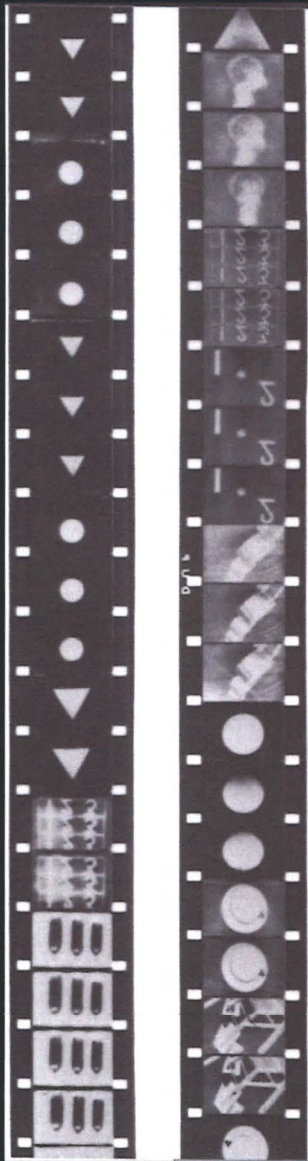
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## Plate 8. Dada and Abstract Film

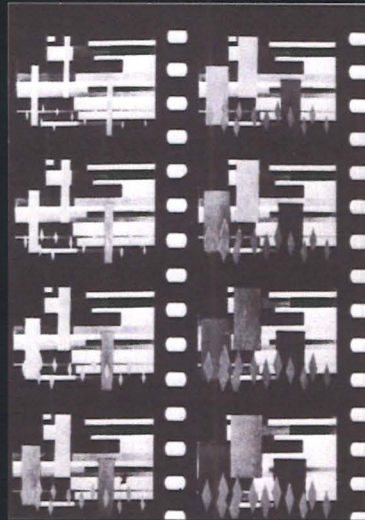
1. Fernand LÉGER Le Ballet mécanique, 1924
2. Hans RICHTER Vormittagsspuk, 1927-28
3. Oskar FISCHINGER Radionynamics, 1941
4. Hans RICHTER Rhythmus 23, 1923-25
5. Hans RICHTER Rhythmus 21, 1921-25
6. Hans RICHTER Rhythmus 23, 1923-25
7. Hans RICHTER Rhythmus 23, 1923-25
8. Hans RICHTER Filmstudie, 1926
9. Hans RICHTER Filmstudie, 1926
10. Hans RICHTER Filmstudie, 1926
11. Oskar SCHLEMMER Costume designs for the Mechanical Ballet, 1923
12. Kazimir MALEVICH Black and red square, 1915
13. Kazimir MALEVICH Painterly Realism of a Football Player, 1925



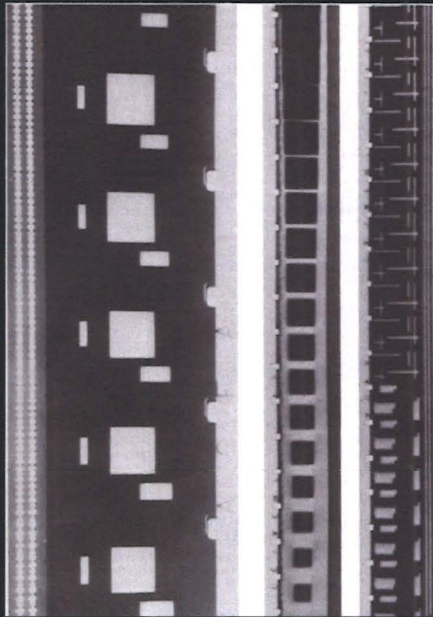
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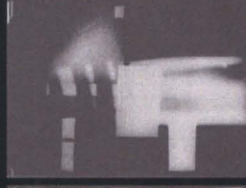
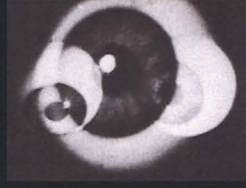
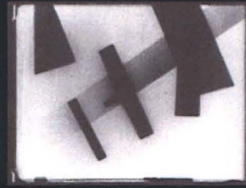
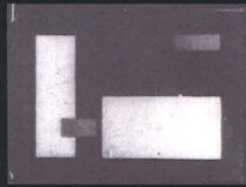
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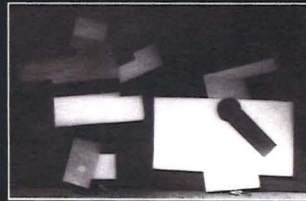
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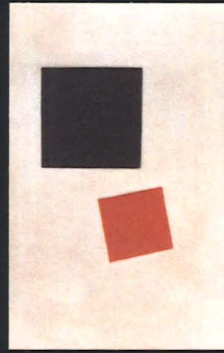
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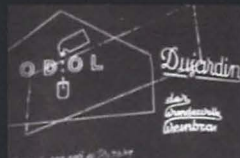
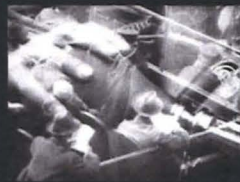
## Plate 9. Absolute Film and Abstract Film

1. Julius PINSCHEWER /Guido SEEBER Kipho-film, 1925
- 2a - c. Walter RUTTMANN Berlin sinfonie, 1927
- 3a - b. Francis BRUGUIÈRE Light Rhythm, 1930
- 4a - f. Walter RUTTMANN Lichtspiel Opus I, 1921
5. Walter RUTTMANN Opus II, 1921
6. Walter RUTTMANN Opus III, 1922-25
7. Walter RUTTMANN Opus IV, 1923-27
8. Walter RUTTMANN Opus II-IV, 1919-25
9. Walter GRAEFF script for *Komposition*, 1922
10. Viking EGGELING Diagonalsinfonie, 1923-25





1



2a - c



3a - b



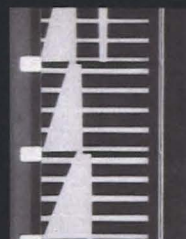
4a - f



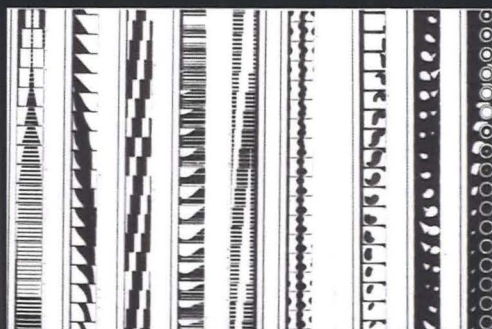
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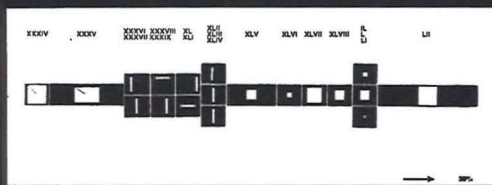
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plate 9

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## Plate 10. Surrealism

1. Le Surréalisme et la Révolution, May 1933
  2. La Révolution Surréaliste, n°2 January 1925 Man Ray's photograph
  3. The eyes of Nadja (for Breton's novel *Nadja*, 1928) Man Ray's photograph
  4. The eyes of Gala for Dali's *Visible Woman*, Max Ernst's photograph, 1930
  5. Man Ray and the Surrealists in 1930
  6. Max ERNST (eyes open/ closed)
  7. Max ERNST *Histoire naturelle*, 1926
  8. Salvador DALI *The Phenomenon of Ecstasy*, 1933
  9. Clovis TROUILLE *Mes Funérailles (My Obsequies)*, 1940
  10. Hieronymus BOSCH (About 1450 - 1516) *The Garden of Worldly Delights - Right wing: Hell (detail)*
  11. MAN RAY *Portrait imaginaire de D. A. F. de Sade*, 1938
  12. Germaine Berton surrounded by the Surrealists, *La Révolution Surréaliste*, n°1 December 1924
- background Luis BUÑUEL *Un Chien andalou*, 1928

# LE SURREALISME AU SERVICE DE LA RÉVOLUTION

Directeur : **André BRETON**  
 10, Rue Faidherbe, PARIS 17<sup>e</sup> Téléphone : Triotri 3618

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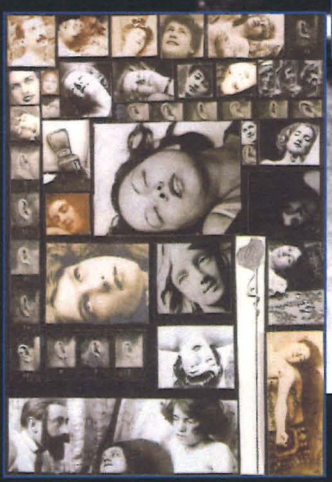
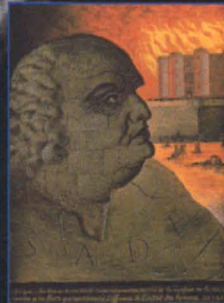
LA RÉVOLUTION SURREALISTE ...



SALVADOR DALI

# LA FEMME VISIBLE

PARIS EDITIONS SURREALISTES 1930



## Plate 11. Surrealist Cinematography

- 1a - b. Germaine DULAC *La Coquille et le clergyman*, 1927
2. Jacques BRUNIUS *Violons d'Ingres*, 1939
3. Jean COCTEAU *Le Sang d'un poète*, 1930
4. Luis BUÑUEL *L'Âge d'or*, 1930
- 5a - c. Theme of the hand in *La Coquille et le clergyman*, *Fireworks* and *Un Chien andalou*
6. Kenneth ANGER *Fireworks*, 1947
7. Maya DEREN *Meshes of the Afternoon*, 1943
- 8a - f. Luis BUÑUEL *Un Chien andalou*, 1928
9. Hans RICHTER *Dreams That Money Can Buy Ruth, Roses, and Revolver*  
(episode directed by Man Ray), 1945-47
10. Hans RICHTER *Dreams That Money Can Buy Ruth, Roses, and Revolvers*  
(episode directed by Man Ray), 1945-47
11. Hans RICHTER *Dreams That Money Can Buy The Girl With The Prefabricated Heart*  
(episode directed by Fernand Léger), 1945-47
12. *Dreams That Money Can Buy*, from handbook, 1948
13. Paul DELVAUX *Rendez-vous à Bray*, 1971
14. Harry KÜMEL *Maipertuis*, 1972
15. David E. DURSTON *I Drink Your Blood*, 1971
16. Raoul SERVAIS *Taxandria*, 1995



1a



5a-c



1b



6



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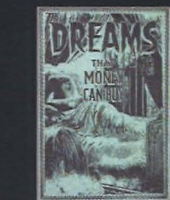
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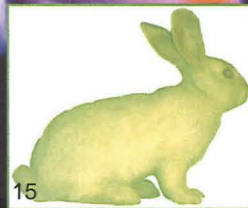
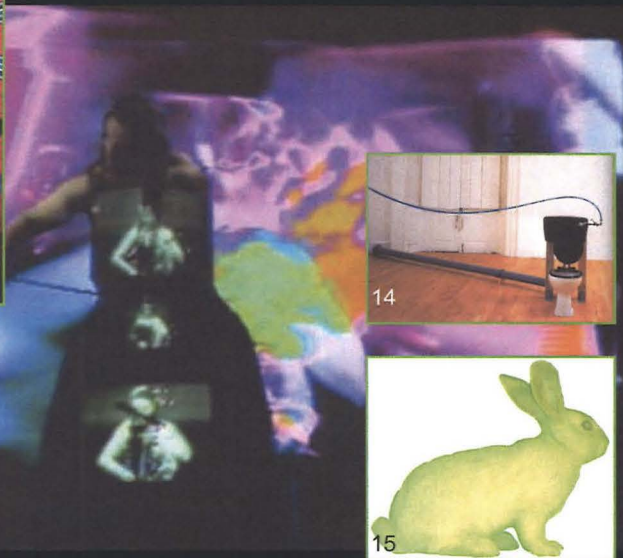
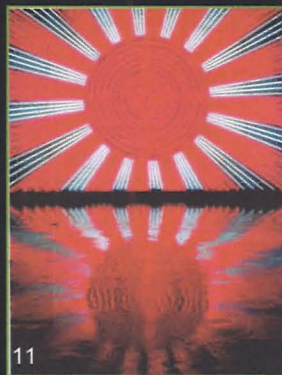
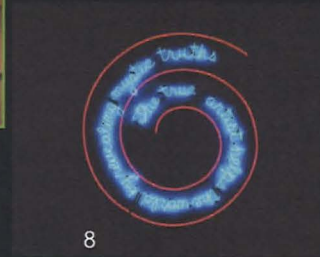
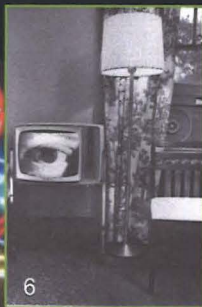
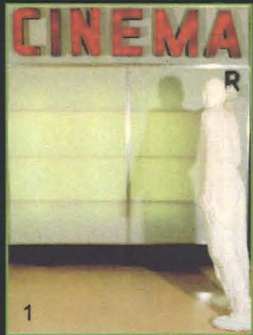
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## Plate 12. Post-dada

1. George SEGAL Cinema, 1963
  2. CHRISTO (JAVACHEFF) Running Fence, 1972
  3. Robert SMITHSON Spiral Jetty, 1970
  4. Louise BOURGEOIS The Nest, 1994
  5. Martial RAYSSE Peinture lumière, c. 1965
  6. Lee FRIEDLANDER Washington D.C., 1962
  7. Rebecca HORN The Turtle Sighing Tree, 1994
  8. Bruce NAUMAN The True Artist..., 1967
  9. Henrik Plenge JAKOBSEN The Teacher, 1997
  10. Sadie LEE Bona Lisa, 1992
  11. Yukinori YANAGI Hinomaru Illumination, 1992
  12. Andres SERRANO The Morgue, 1992
  13. ORLAN Seventh Operation (surgical performance), 1993
  14. Sarah LUCAS Assuming Position, 1997
  15. Eduardo Kac Alba, 2000
- background L Bruce NAUMAN Five Marching Men, 1985 (detail)  
background R Nam June PAIK Global Groove (in 2004)



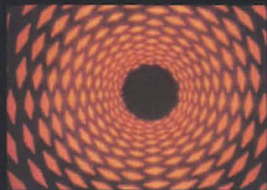
## Plate 13. Paint Film and Early Computer Imagery

1. Ferdinand ZECCA The Golden Beetle, 1907
2. Ferdinand ZECCA The Golden Beetle, 1907
3. Oskar FISCHINGER Komposition in Blau, 1935
4. Oskar FISCHINGER Komposition in Blau, 1935
5. Oskar FISCHINGER Kreise (circles), 1933
6. Jordan BELSON Allures, 1961
7. Jordan BELSON Allures, 1961
8. Jordan BELSON Phenomena , 1965
9. James WHITNEY Yantra, 1950-57
10. James WHITNEY Lapis, 1966
11. Len LYE Free Radicals, 1958
12. Norman McLAREN Blinkity Blank, 1955
13. Norman McLAREN Mail Early, 1959
14. John WHITNEY Permutations, 1968
15. John and James WHITNEY Five Film Exercises, 1943-44
16. Hy HIRSH Eneri, 1953
17. Hy HIRSH Chasse des Touches, 1959
18. Len LYE Colour Box, 1935
19. Eino RUUTSALO Kaksi kanaa, 1963
20. Eino RUUTSALO Food, 1967
21. Len LYE Color Cry, 1952
22. John and James WHITNEY Variations. 1939-40
23. James WHITNEY Yantra, 1950-57
24. Len LYE Colour Box, 1935
25. Len LYE Free Radicals, 1958





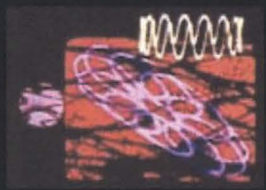
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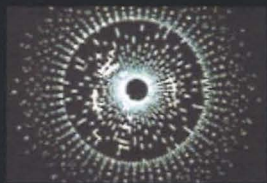
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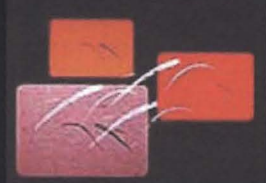
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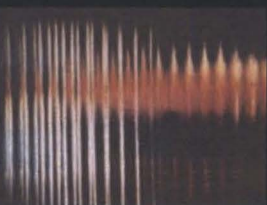
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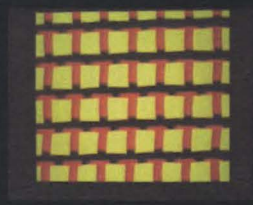
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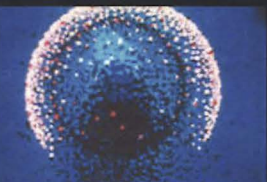
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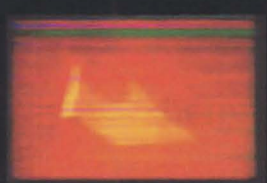
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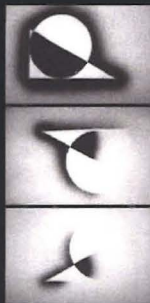
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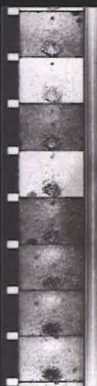
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plate 13

## Plate 14. American Experimental Film 1929 - 1972

1. Ralph STEINER H<sub>2</sub>O, 1929
2. Lawrence JORDAN The Seasons' Change, 1960
3. Maya DEREN The Very Eye of Night 1958
4. Harry SMITH Early Abstractions #1-5, 7, 10, 1939/56
- 5a - c. Stan BRAKHAGE Mothlight, 1963
6. Stan BRAKHAGE Sirius Remembered, 1959
7. Stan BRAKHAGE The Dead, 1960
8. Stan BRAKHAGE Song I, 1964
9. Stan BRAKHAGE Eye Myth, 1967
10. Stan BRAKHAGE Eye Myth, 1967
11. Stan BRAKHAGE Anticipation of the Night, 1958
12. Stan BRAKHAGE The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes, 1971
13. Stan BRAKHAGE Sexual Meditation n° 1/Motel, 1970
14. Stan BRAKHAGE Cat's Cradle, 1959
15. Bruce BAILLIE Quixote, 1964-67
16. Bruce BAILLIE Castro Street, 1966
17. Bruce BAILLIE Castro Street, 1966
18. Jonas MEKAS Yoko Ono and John Lennon (diary), 1971
19. Jonas MEKAS Reminiscences of a journey to Lithuania (Elzbieta Mekas), 1971-72
20. Jonas MEKAS As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty, 1963
21. Jonas MEKAS Notes for Jerome (Self-portrait with a girl, Cassis), 1966
22. Jonas MEKAS Walden (Diaries, Notes and Sketches), 1969
23. Stan VANDERBEEK Newsreels of Dream 1, 1964



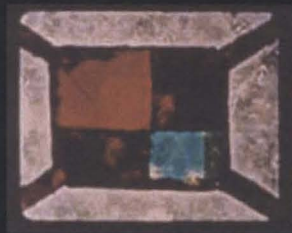
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5a - c



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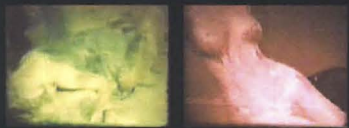
plate 14

## Plate 15. Formal and Structural Film

1. Scott BARLETT Off/On, 1969
2. Otto MÜHL and Kurt KREN Cosinus Alpha (materialaktion nr.14), 1964
3. Otto MÜHL and Kurt KREN Mama und Papa (materialaktion 6/64), 1964
4. Burton GERSHFIELD Now that the Buffalo's Gone, 1967
5. Pat O'NEILL 7362, 1965-67
- 6a - b. Peter KUBELKA Adebar, 1957
- 7a - b. Malcolm LE GRICE Berlin Horse, 1971
- 8a - d. Paul SHARITS T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G, 1968
9. Kurt KREN Mauern-Positiv-Negativ und Weg, 1961
- 10a - d. Paul SHARITS Piece Mandala, End war, 1966-67
11. Paul SHARITS N:O:T:H:I:N:G, 1968



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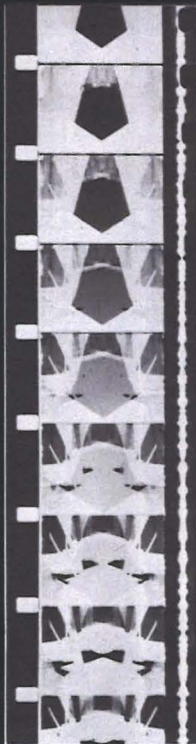
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8b - d



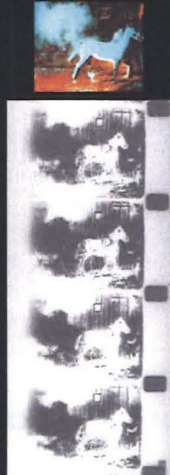
8a



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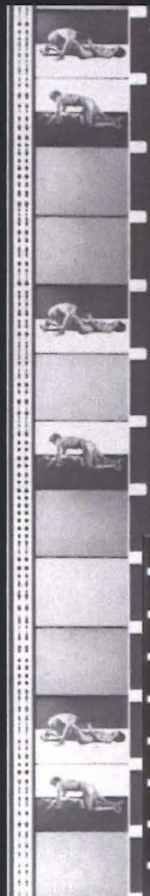
6a - b



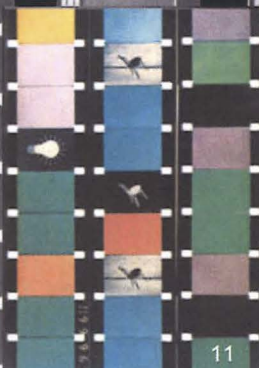
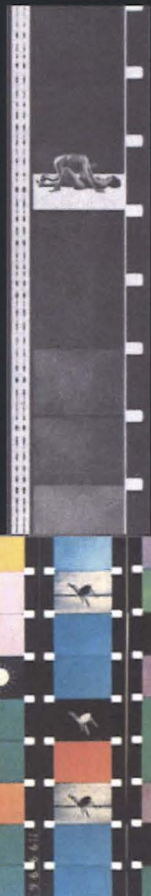
7a - b



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10a - d

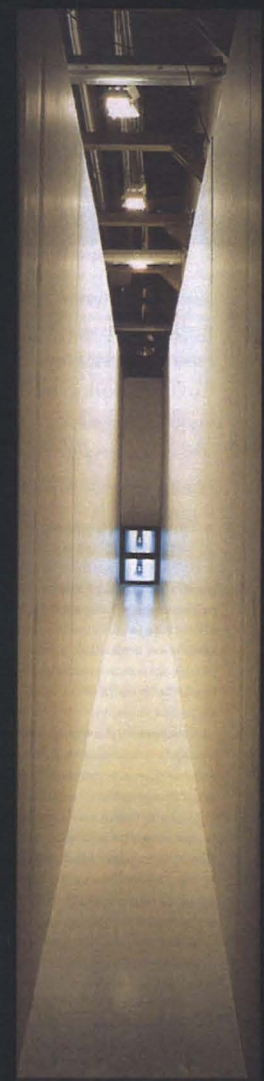
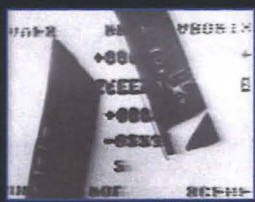
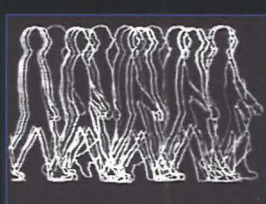
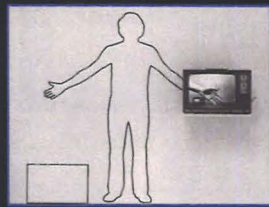


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plate 15

## Plate 16. Video Pioneers [experimental to feature] '70 - '80

1. David CORT Interactivive Videospace Environment images (videophones and videomirrors), 1976
2. James BYRNE Scale Drawing, 1975
3. David CORT Interactivive Videospace Environment images (videophones and videomirrors), 1976
4. Lynda BENGLIS Female Sensibility, 1974 (originally color video)
5. Antonio MUNTADAS Emission, Reception, 1976
6. John REILLY and Stephan MOORE The Irish Tapes, 1972 ( video-documentary)
7. Ed EMSHWILLER Crossings and Meetings, 1975
8. Bill VIOLA The Space Between the Teeth, 1976
9. Keith SONNIER Video Wall Projection, 1970
10. William WEGMAN with Man Ray, 1972
11. Nam June PAIK TV Buddha, 1974
12. Skip SWEENEY and Joanne KELLY Vidance, 1973
13. Keith SONNIER Animation II, 1974 (Computer generated image)
14. Steve PARTRIDGE Monitor 1, 1975
15. Nam June PAIK TV Garden, 1974
16. Bill and Louise ETRA Astral Projections, 1974
17. Stephen BECK and Jordan BELSON from the videofilm *Cycles*, 1974
18. Bill VIOLA Reverse Television, 1982
19. Vito ACCONCI Pryings, 1971
20. Antonio MUNTADAS Emission, Reception, 1976
21. Bruce NAUMAN Live Taped Video Corridor, 1969-70



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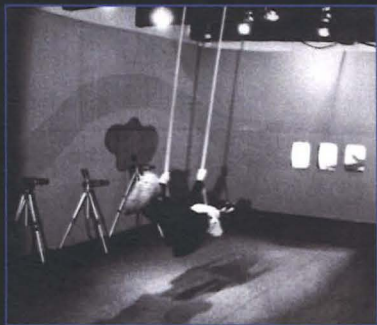
plate 16

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## Plate 17. Multi-channels Video Installations

1. Susan MILANO The Video Swing, 1974
2. Shigeko KUBOTA Nude Descending a Staircase, 1975-76
3. Bill VIOLA Nantes Triptych, 1992
4. Gary HILL Inasmuch As It is Always Already Taking Place, 1990
5. Bruce NAUMAN OK, OK, OK, 1990
6. Davidson GIGLIOTTI untitled, 1976
7. Nam June PAIK T.V. Clock, 1963-81, NY 1982
8. Bill VIOLA Poem A, 2005
9. Peter WEIBEL Tritität (videopoem), 1974
10. Bruce NAUMAN MMMM, 1991





1



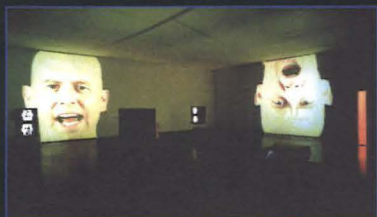
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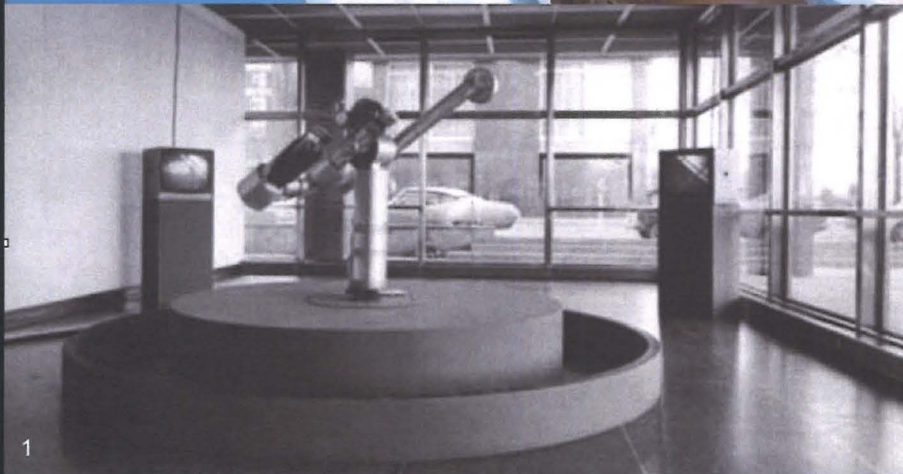
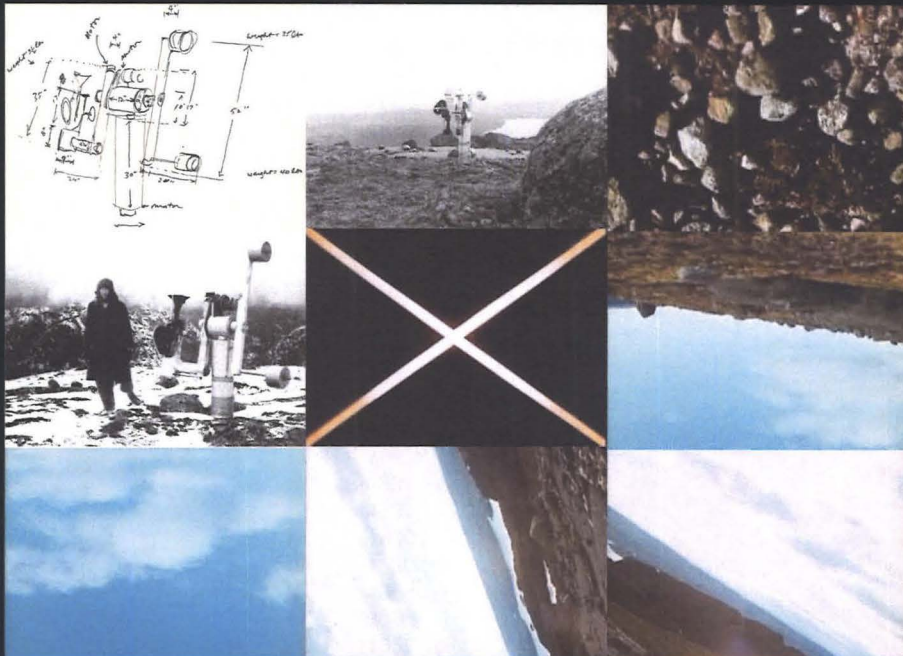
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## Plate 18. Temporal/Spatial Video Art

1. Michael SNOW De La, 1969-72 (La Région Centrale, 1971)
2. Michael SNOW Sheeploop, 2000
3. René COELHO Zelfportret (video loop), ' Het vijfde seizoen, 2003
4. Kurt KREN 37/78 Tree Again, 1978



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plate 18

## Plate 19. Man Ray (Self)-Portrait

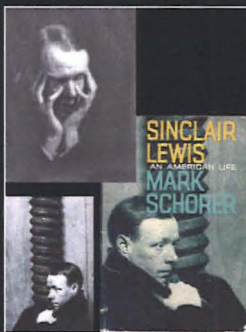
1. 1914
2. 1916
3. 1920
4. 1920
5. 1920
6. 1921
7. 1921
8. 1924
9. 1925
10. 1925
11. 1927
12. 1929
13. 1930
14. 1930
15. 1931
16. 1931
17. 1931
18. 1931
19. 1932
20. 1933
21. 1933
22. 1934
23. 1935
24. 1935
25. 1936
26. 1943
27. 1944
28. 1946
29. 1947
30. 1950
31. 1965
32. 1970 (with Juliet Man Ray)



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## Plate 20. Man Ray Portrait

1. Mina Loy, 1920
2. Lee Miller, 1929 (1930)
3. Rose Selavy (M. Duchamp), 1921
4. Max Ernst, c.1934
5. Mrs Rowell, 1930
6. Lee Miller, 1930
7. Berenice Abbott, 1920
8. Kiki de Monparnasse, 1926
9. Jacqueline Goddard, 1932
10. Sinclair Lewis, c.1925-26
11. Marquise Casati, 1922
12. Tanya Ramm, 1930
13. Antonin Artaud, 1926
14. Andrée Sikorska, 1925
15. Lee Miller, 1930
16. Marcel Duchamp, 1930
17. Meret Oppenheim, 1933
18. Juliet, 1953



## Plate 21. Man Ray Nude

1. Reclining Nude, 1912
2. Reclining Nude, 1920
3. Kiki en odalisque, 1925
4. Natacha, 1930
5. Ady, 1937
6. Kiki, 1922
7. Lee Miller, 1930
8. Femme nue, 1930
9. Chevelure, 1937 (?1929)
10. Natacha, 1930
11. Untitled (Sur impression), 1930
12. Nu, 1937
13. Untitled, 1936
14. Untitled Solarization, 1930
15. Masculin, 1933
16. Untitled Solarization, 1935
17. Margaret (Bazaar), 1941
18. Neck, 1930 (also attributed to Lee Miller)
- 19a - b. Anatomie, 1929
20. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *The Source*. 1856. Oil on canvas. Louvre
21. Nadar: *Musette (Christine Roux)*, c. 1855 - 60
22. Kiki, 1925
23. Coat stand, 1920
24. Dadaphoto (NY-Dada, april 1921)
25. Model, 1925
26. Nu au voile, c.1925-28
27. Blanc et noir (Nu aux bandelettes), c.1929
28. La prière, 1930
29. Érotique voilée (Meret Oppenheim), 1933
30. Ady et Nusch, 1937
31. Classicism, 1930

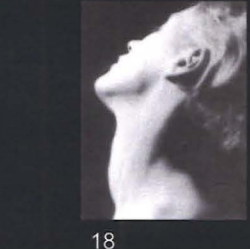




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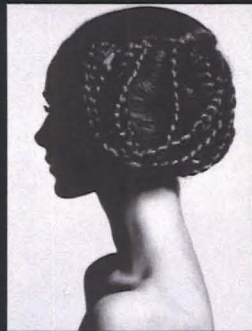
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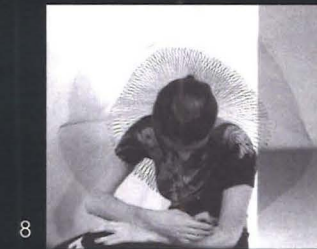
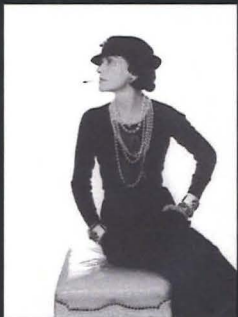
## Plate 22. Man Ray Fashion and Glamour

1. Peggy Guggenheim, Poiret 1924
2. Photo de mode, n. d. ('30)
3. Photo de mode, n. d. ('30)
4. Photo de mode, n. d. ('30)
5. Chanel collection, Bazaar 1937 (background: Giacometti's *Albatross*)
6. Lee Miller, 1929 (1930)
7. Coco Chanel, 1935
8. Untitled, 1935
9. Nancy Cunard, 1926
10. Suzy Solidor, 1932
11. Red Badge of Courage, 1937
- 12a - d. La Mode au Congo, 1937
13. Dolores del Rio, 1940

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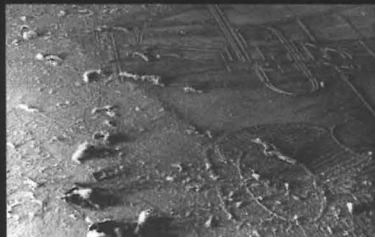
plate 22

## Plate 23. Man Ray Composition 1

1. Space Writing, 1937 (1939)
2. Elévage de poussière (Elevage de poussière, Dust Raising), 1920
3. Untitled (Long Hair, Chevelure), 1929 (1930)
4. Moving Sculpture, 1922 (1919) (published also as "La France" in 1926)
5. Echiquier surréaliste, 1934
6. Le Violon d'Ingres, 1924
- 7a - b. Noire et blanche, positif et négatif, 1926
8. Woman Smoking a Cigarette (Femme à la cigarette), 1920
9. Untitled (Lèvres), 1930
10. Untitled (Lidia), 1932 (1927)
11. Untitled (Hand on Lips), c.1929 (1931)
12. Untitled (Pub pour bas), c.1930
13. Terrain vague, 1929
14. Untitled (Chardons), 1931
15. Les Arums (Lys, Calalilys), 1930
16. Mains, 1932
17. Untitled (from 105 works 1920-1934)
18. Untitled, 1931 (from 105 works 1920-1934)
19. Untitled (Almanach surréaliste du demi-siècle), 1950
- 20a - b. Les Galets, 1933



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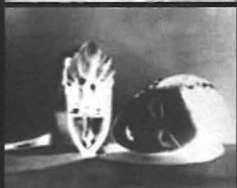
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plate 23

## Plate 24. Man Ray Composition 2

- 1a - b. Untitled, solarization, 1931
- 2. Yves Tanguy, 1936
- 3a. Untitled (Le Dos blanc), 1927
- 3b. contact négatif by Jacques Faujour, 1998
- 4. Nu voilé au fouet, n. d.
- 5. Drink me only with..., 1932
- 6. Lidia et les mannequins, 1932
- 7a. Série de la prière, 1930
- 7b. Série de la prière, 1930
- 7c. Modèle d'Antoine, 1933
- 7d. Madeleine Turban, 1925
- 8a - c. 3 versions from the same negative, Salvador Dali, 1929 - 1931
- 9a - b. Le comte Étienne de Beaumont, 1925
- 10. Madeleine Turban, 1925
- 11. Meret Oppenheim, 1933

1a - b



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3b



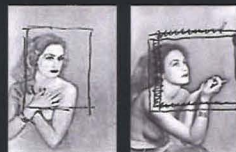
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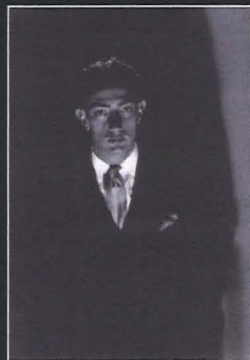


7a - d

3a



11



8a - c



9a - b



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## Plate 25. Man Ray Opera Rayographica

1. Rayograph (Film enroulé) 1922 (1930)
2. Ballet-Silhouette, 1916
3. La Volière, 1919
4. Rayograph c. 1940 (Plume, 1947)
5. ABC, c.1970
6. Rayograph (Deux mains), 1959
7. Rayograph (Profil et oeuf, Kiki), 1922
8. Rayograph (Le Baiser), 1922
9. Rayograph (Revolver avec cubes alphabétiques), 1924 (1925)
10. Two Hands, 1966
11. Reversed rayograph? c. 1940 (1947)
12. Cadenas, 1970
13. Rayograph (Cigarettes), 1924
14. T. Square, 1943
- 15a. Orchestra (Revolving Doors III), 1916-17 (paper collage)
- 15b. Concrete Mixer (IX) ibid.
- 15c. Orchestra (Revolving Doors III), 1926 (lithographie) 1941 (gouache)
- 15d. Concrete Mixer (IX) ibid.
16. Revolving Doors
17. Nudes (Les Trois grâces), 1920
18. Le Centaure, 1969
19. Hermaphrodite, 1919
20. Admiration of the Orchestrelle for the Cinematograph, 1919
21. Untitled (Perpetual Motion), 1908
22. L'Émerveille merveilleux, 1973
23. Torse (From *Electricité*), 1931
24. Autoportrait au nu mort, ?





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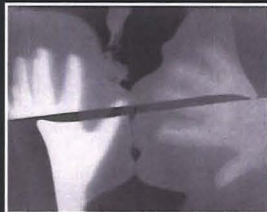
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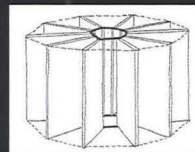
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15 a - d



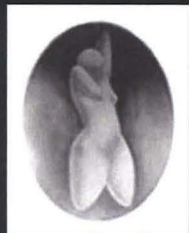
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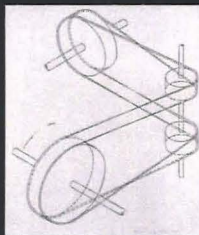
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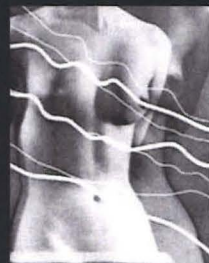
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## Plate 26. Man Ray Painting

1. Untitled(Standing Nude in Profile), 1912 Ink. (Ferrer school)
2. Portrait of Dorothy, 1911-12 Watercolor
3. Ridgefield Landscape, 1913 Oil
4. Wooded Landscape, 1913 Watercolor
5. The Village, 1913 Oil
6. Dual Portrait, 1913 Oil
7. Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz, 1913 Oil
8. Five Figures, 1914 Oil
9. Woman Asleep, 1913 Oil
10. Untitled (Cat), 1913 Ink
11. After Breakfast, 1914 Oil
12. Self-Portrait, 1916 Oil and Objects
13. The Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with Her Shadows, 1916 Oil
14. Kiki de Montparnasse, 1923 Oil
15. Régate, 1924 Oil
16. Les gens en colère d'un après-midi, 1928 Oil
17. A l'heure de l'Observatoire - les amoureux, 1932 - 34 Oil
18. Le beau temps, 1939 Oil
19. Apple, Knife and Legs, 1941 Oil
20. Rue Férou, 1952 Oil
21. Natural Painting, 1959 Acrylic



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12 - 13



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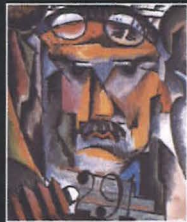
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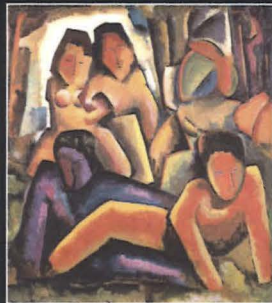
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9 - 11



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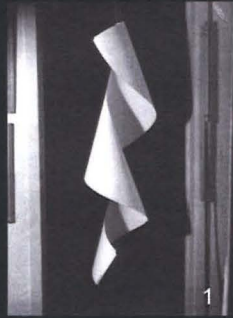


21

plate 26

## Plate 27. Man Ray Object Still Life

1. Lampshade, 1920 (later version)
2. Le Secret d'Isidore Ducasse, 1920
3. Vénus restaurée, 1936 - 71
4. Obstruction, 1920
5. L'Homme, 1918
6. Boardwalk, 1916
7. Autoportrait, 1971
8. Bronze Ailé, 1971
9. Ce qui nous manque à tous, 1927 - 35
10. Objet mathématique, 1934 - 36
11. New York, 1920
12. Emak Bakia, 1926
13. Installation with Self Portrait, Peacock Feather and Metronome, c.1950
14. Mr. and Mrs. Woodman, 1947
15. Cadeau, 1921
16. Presse papier, 1920
17. Compass, 1920
18. Jeu d'échecs, 1942
19. Still Life, 1933
20. Ruth, Roses and Revolvers, 1945
21. Pain peint, 1958 (later version)
22. Mr. Knife and Miss Fork, 1944 (1945)
23. Self-Portrait, 1932



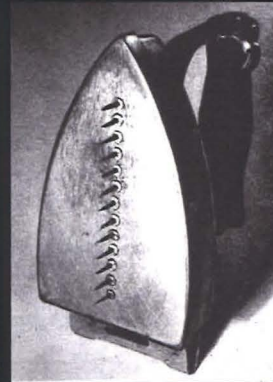
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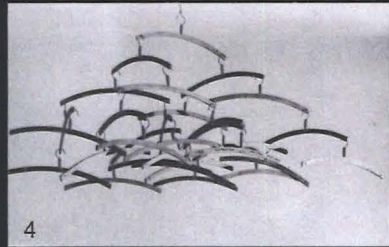
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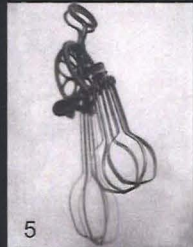
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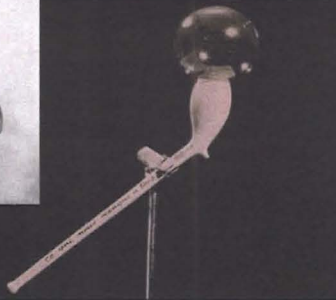
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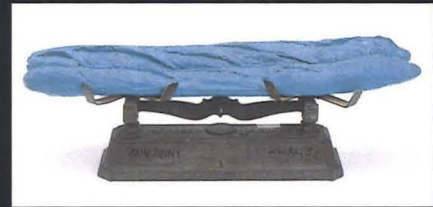
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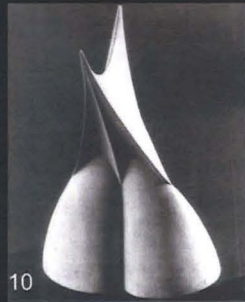
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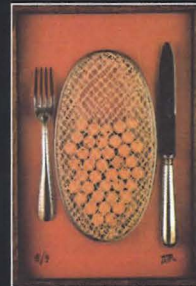
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## Plate 28. Le Retour à la raison / Emak Bakia opening

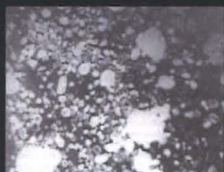
- 1a. Spring [strip] (only in *Le Retour à la raison*)
- 1b. Pins [strip] "I threw pins and thumbtacks at random"
2. Pins [still] "huge white pins crisscrossing"
3. Salt and pepper [still] "On some strips I sprinkled salt and pepper"
4. Cinerayograph of unknow object (pepper grains?) [still] (only in *Le Retour à la raison*)
5. "Egg-crate carton" [still] (only in *Le Retour à la raison*)
- 6a. Danger/Dancer (L'Impossible), 1920
- 6b. Danger/Dancer [still] (only in *Le Retour à la raison*)
7. "The light-striped torso" positive [still] (only in *Le Retour à la raison*)
8. "The light-striped torso" negative [still] (only in *Le Retour à la raison*)
9. Nude contact prints [strip]
10. Inscriptions on film [still]
11. Limit frame of pins/thumbtack: 5 versions
12. Strip with the limit frame pins/thumbtack (11)



1a

1b

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3



6a



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6b



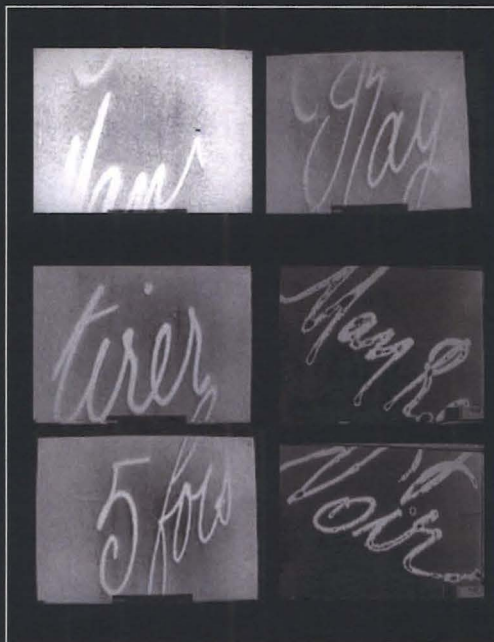
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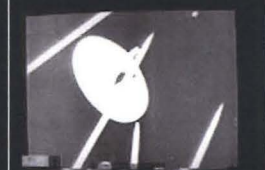
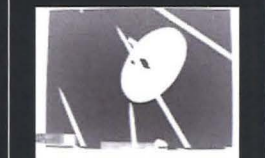
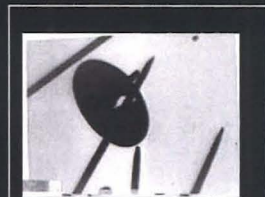
8



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## Plate 29. Emak Bakia

1. Emak Bakia object, 1927
- 2a. Dance (Dance Interpretation), 1915 Oil on canvas 36 x 28 in.
- 2b. The painting in Emak Bakia: rotation 90° CW
- 3a. Fisherman's Idol, 1926 Cork (objets trouvés, sculpture)
- 3b. Fisherman's Idol (Bronze version), 1973
- 4a. Emak Bakia's theme of the eye : eye-objective superimposition
- 4b. Emak Bakia's theme of the eye: eye-automobile superimposition
- 4c. Emak Bakia's theme of the eye: Kiki's dcuble awakening
5. Jacques Rigaut by Man Ray in 1922
6. Homme d'affaires, 1926 Print on paper (for *Emak Bakia*)
- 7a - e. At "Magic City"
8. Versailles: Le Bassin de Neptune
9. Marcel Doret (1896-1955) in 1927 and his airplane D.27





1



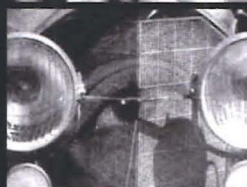
2a



2b



3a - b



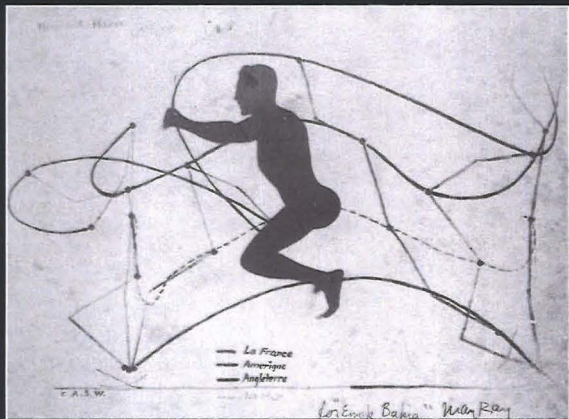
4a - c



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22 - Parc de Versailles. — Le bassin de Neptune et les fontaines Elzev. — Fontaine of Neptune.



6



8a - e



7



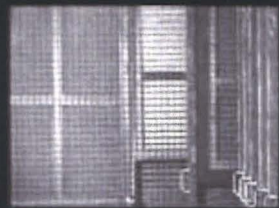
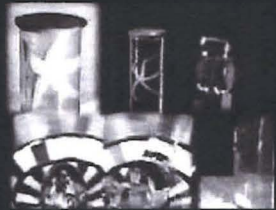
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## Plate 30. After Emak Bakia

- 1a - e. L' Étoile de mer, 1928  
2a - i. Les Mystères du château du dé, 1929 and the villa Saint-Bernard at Hyères today  
3a - g. Two Women - Deux femmes (erotic film between 1928 and 1937)  
3h. Lee Miller and the erotic Princesse X of Brancusi c. 1930  
3i. Jenny (dancer), 1938



1a - e

2a - i

3a - i

## Plate 31. Four Films Toward a Surrealist Cinema

1. MAN RAY *Emak Bakia*, 1926
2. Germaine DULAC *La Coquille et le c'ergyman*, 1927-28
3. MAN RAY *L'Etoile de mer*, 1928
4. Luis BUÑUEL *Un Chien andalou*, 1928-29



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2



3



4

plate 31

## Plate 32. Dadaism and Surrealism in Contemporary Video Art

1. GORILLA TAPES The Commander in Chief, 1985
2. GORILLA TAPES Startrash, 1986
3. Eleanor CLAIR (RePUBLICof cube) Cube cinema Multiple video interventions, 2003
4. ZAFIRAH (RePUBLICof something) performance, 2006
5. Guillaume APOLLINAIRE Calligrammes, 1912-13
6. Charles SANDISON People, 2003
7. Adon LACROIX (Donna LECOEUR) from *A Book of Divers Writings*, 1915
8. Charles SANDISON Living Rooms, 2001
9. Charles SANDISON Good and Evil, 2002
10. Charles SANDISON Between Heaven and Earth, 2002



Multiple video interventions in a show in a e.  
 Eleanor Clair  
 rePUBLICof cube, Cube Cinema, Bristol, 7th Feb 2003

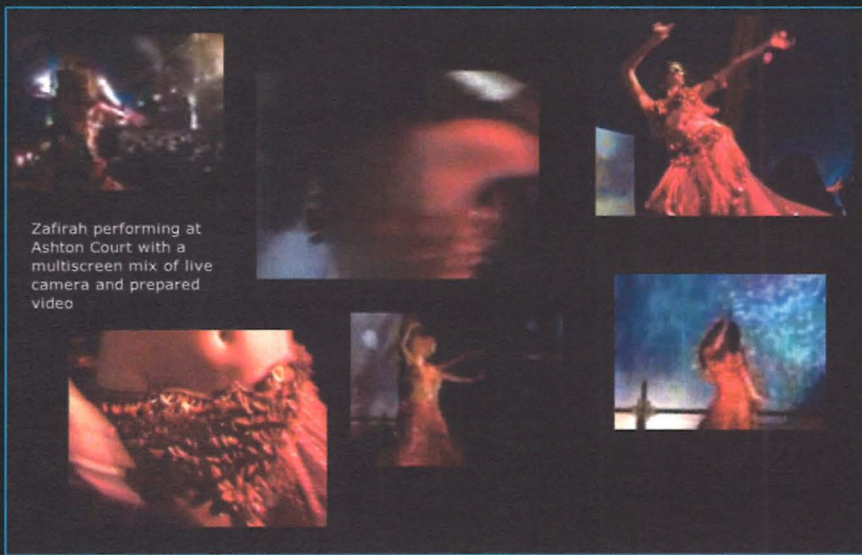
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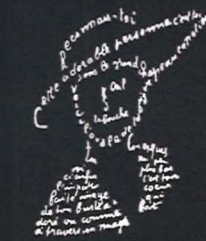
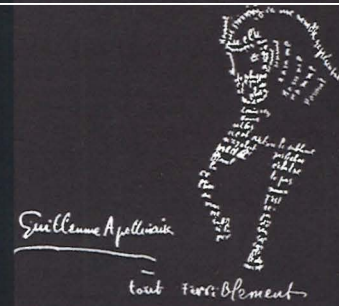
2

A video-taped and live performance in four parts that appeared throughout the Cube show. The star is late for her appearance and only makes it when there is no-one left to play her backing tape.

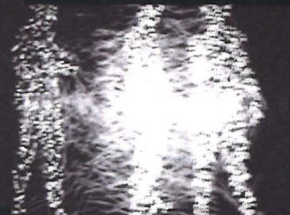
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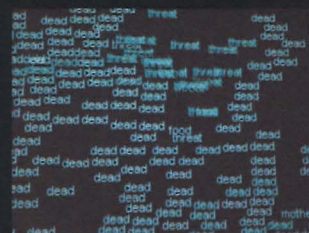
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 LA LA LAR-R-RITA  
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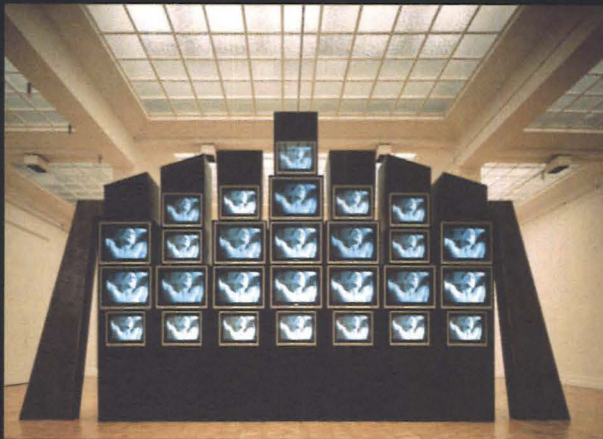
plate 32

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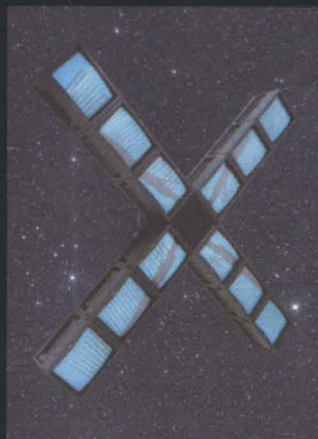
## Plate 33. European Second Video Generation

1. Marie-Jo LAFONTAINE Les Larmes d'acier, 1987
2. Bert SCHUTTER Mill x Molen, 1982
3. Bert SCHUTTER Les Baigneuses, 1996
4. Peter BOGERS Retorica, 1992
5. Bill SPINHOVEN I/Eye, 1993
6. Eija-Liisa AHTILA Talo/The House, 2002
7. Isaac JULIEN Baltimore (16mm film transferred onto DVD), 2003
8. Michel JAFFRENNOU Videoperatta, 1989





1



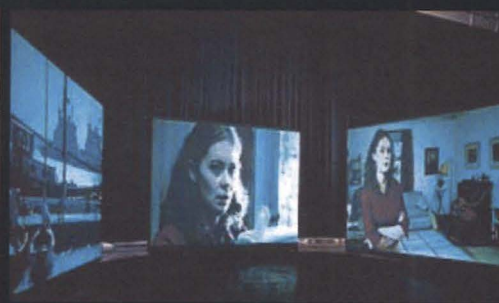
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plate 33

## Plate 34. Comtemporary Video Art and Digital Video Art

1. Bill VIOLA Going Forth By Day, 2002
2. Bill VIOLA Emergence, 2002
3. Bill VIOLA The Raft, 2004
4. Peter GREENAWAY The Tulse Luper Suitcases, 2004
5. Peter GREENAWAY Les morts de la Seine, 1989
6. William LATHAM Evolution of Forms 1990
7. PINK TWINS Splitter 2, 2006
8. Yoichiro KAWAGUCHI Cytolon, 2002
9. Michel BRET and Marie-Hélène TRAMUS Funambule, 2002
10. Malcolm LE GRICE Even Cyclops Plays the Ferryman, 1998



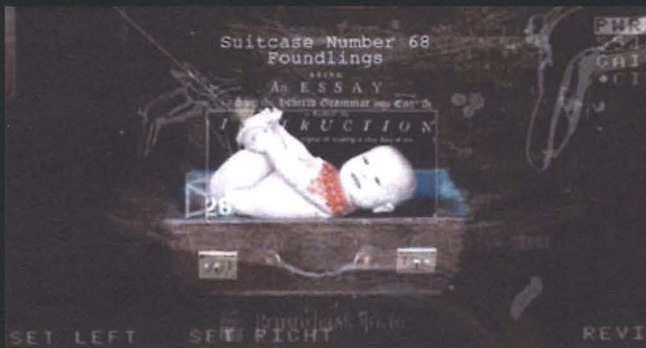
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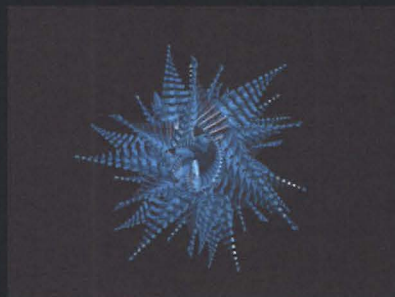
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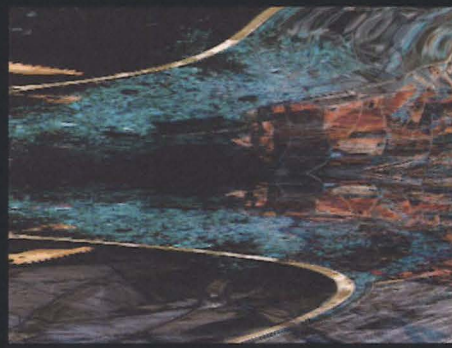
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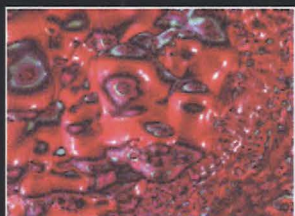
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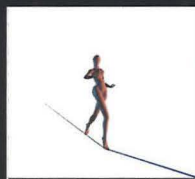
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plate 34