TIMELENGTH EXHIBITION CATALOG

TIMELENGTH CATALOGUE DE L'EXPOSITION

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WILLEM DE ROOIJ
PASCAL GRANDMAISON
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PREFACE

Michèle Thériault

The exhibition *Timelength* marks a new beginning for the Gallery. Its programming will now focus more intensely on contemporary issues. The mandate of the Gallery has been modified so as to integrate Canadian and Québécois art within an international context. The decision to broaden our field of interest is a signal that it is no longer possible for a university gallery to program outside the international sphere. The public at large, the student population and the artistic community will be the first to benefit from this realignment. However, our commitment to contemporary debate does not signify that we will no longer present exhibitions of a historical nature, but that they will now have to be developed within the perspective of a contemporary problematic.

The presence of the moving and projected image has become a common feature of numerous exhibitions of contemporary art. *Timelength* looks at the moving image from the viewpoint of duration and in relation to different modes of production and presentation. The image in this exhibition, however, is marked by slowness, quasi-fixedness and the play of its opposite, and the circumspect use of sound and silence. The works in video and film by Jeroen de Rijke and Willem de Rooij, Pascal Grandmaison, Gwen MacGregor and Jocelyn Robert are brought into a dialogue with the films of Michael Snow and Andy Warhol, two artists who have transformed the notion of duration in the cinematic image since the sixties. Their works function as referential marks that position the framework of discussion in a recent past. The exhibition also examines how the apprehension of the moving image within a darkened space illuminated by the image alone transforms our relationship to art.

This publication was conceived as a way of extending through writing the discussion on the temporal experience afforded by the films and videos in the exhibition. It brings together two essays by the curator and one by Stefan Jovanovič that examines filmic time in installation. Artists have also contributed commentaries. The catalogue was conceived by Uniform and

it is discriminating in the links it forges between the works, the concerns the exhibition addresses, and graphic design.

Timelength poses a challenge to the Gallery's exhibition space. Although designed a little more than ten years ago, it was never conceived so as to accommodate the moving image and sound in the way they have been integrated to artistic practice today. The space had to be reorganized to present large-scale video and film projections. In this respect the curatorial challenge is multifaceted: one has to think through the layout of the works and the relationship between them in relation to a visitor's experience that now takes place entirely in the dark. One can't simply close off spaces, isolate the work, and shut out the light. Darkness, sound and silence must become active components rather than effects in the exhibition's spatial layout and in the visitor's experience. In this way a dialogue can develop between the works and with the viewer, who must be encouraged to inhabit a half-darkened space where the incongruity of the intimate and the public is played out.

MATERIALITIES OF DURATION

Michèle Thériault

Movement, pause, waiting, mobility, stasis, silence, sound, darkness, light. Works whose effects, in their continued interplay, create duration that takes shape somewhere between temporality and atemporality.

EVENTS OF DURATION

From the moment it becomes the focus of an act of cognition, duration is assimilated to one or more personal experiences. It becomes a state that can be experienced through the cinematographic, literary or pictorial fields, to name but a few. I am thinking here of the temporal commitment that Rober Racine's *Pages-Miroir* and the work of Arakawa and Opalka represent; of Michael Snow's film *Wavelength*, Antonioni's trilogy or Aleksandr Sokurov's *Russian Ark*. In literature there is, of course, the *langueur* of Proust's search, the constitution of duration as entity and its confinement within a logic of circularity in Beckett's œuvre, and the extended time (simultaneously achronological and painstakingly chronological) that runs through the fantastic and troubling tales of Haruki Murakami. These durations, emerging from the construction of parallel and imaginary realities, are incisive openings to duration in the form of durational events, a form that casts duration, so to speak, outside temporality. Like the works brought together in *Timelength,* they place us before a pronounced instance of duration.

The videos of Grandmaison, MacGregor and Robert, and the films of Snow, de Rijke/de Rooij and Warhol (shown here on DVD), were brought together because they materialize duration through a range of registers that enable them to carry on a dialogue with one another, and to draw visitors into a singular experience of duration. Existing only within a darkness penetrated by the light that carries the image, this duration is materialized in the image's prolongation, its slowed movement and its regulated stillness, as well as through the discreet use of sound or silence, which produces a *protracted* time within the viewer, a sense of time that can persist by way of inattention and boredom. A duration, in short, that is the event in itself.

EXCESS

Duration is inextricably tied up with the living being who, although bound to it, remains paradoxically unaware of it. Only when duration intrudes violently upon one's being, when it presents itself as an excess, only then does it become visible and its manifestations can take the form of profound boredom, suffering or joy. Duration's features may be irregular and uneven or indistinct and rooted in repetition. The registers through which the works in *Timelength* operate are marked by excess: the deliberate slowness of the image, hesitant and faltering in *Spin* (2002); or its fixedness rendered by the subjects in the *Screen Tests* (1963-1965) or by the insistent holds on each location shot in *One Second in Montreal* (1969). The subtle and delicate implacability of the transformation of the image and its ambient sound in *Bantar Gebang* (2000) and the abrupt interruptions of narrative flow in the voice in *Catarina (2002)* are, for their part, excess-effects that lead to an extension of sight and hearing – effects that are felt more intensely through the insertion of a subtle interplay between slow motion and acceleration in MacGregor's *Up to the 8th floor* (2004), Robert's *Catarina*, and Snow's *Side Seat Slides Paintings Sound Film* (1970). Each of these works places the viewer before a durational image (or a series of durational images through, for instance, Snow's different holds on each photograph in *One Second in Montreal*) that inscribes its presence outside the boundaries of linear time. Each one does not therefore *represent* duration; it is duration.

MARKING TIME

Our relationship with these works is grounded in the condition of waiting. And because we are dealing with images in motion and technologies of motion, this paradoxical condition which is bound up with slowness, apparent stillness and an interplay with its opposites is sensed in a much more acute fashion. Marking time is experienced through an excess that makes duration manifest. As soon as the eye or ear comes into contact with one of these works, one enters into a condition in which a pronounced sense of waiting becomes an integral part of the optical and acoustic structure. Curious, painstaking, scrutinizing, riveting, encompassing, weighty and even boring – waiting is conjugated in all these ways. It binds vision to the act of scrutinizing and has the effect of making being present to itself. In some cases, particularly in *One Second in Montreal*, *Up to the 8th floor*, *Bantar Gebang* and *Screen Tests*, the process of marking time intrudes upon experience to such an extent that the mind drifts, abandons the work, to then come back to it temporarily, only to leave it again, thereby

plunging the viewer into a syncopated duration invaded momentarily by unrelated, everyday thoughts.

WAITING PAUSE MOVEMENT STASIS

Waiting is constituted through the opposition movement/pause and movement/stasis which is played out along the axis of this exhibition. This fruitful opposition, in its shifts between polar extremes, articulates different facets of the exhibition and creates temporal reverberations that also constitute a common material duration. A certain rhythm marks the visitors' movements in the space. Viewers walk, stop, sit, wait and walk again, are detained, waylaid and pushed away from a work, move again and feel this movement reduced to a state of stasis, before freeing themselves from it and moving elsewhere. Accentuated through the works, this rhythm becomes, as it were, the connective tissue linking one durational event to another and the basis for one's experience of it. Consider the interplay of movement and stasis in *Up to the 8th floor* and *Catarina*: the viewer will simultaneously find him or herself grappling with the body's mobility and the work as the image's speed shifts back and forth. Consider how one's gaze and body is locked into the unrelenting hold of the image when the projection of *Bantar Gebang* begins only to be slowly released as the gestures of daily human existence start to animate the projection's expanse. This rhythm creates not only a regime of viewing in time but of listening, a regime not only of the mind but also of the living body.

DARKNESS INCONGRUITY

All of the activities that take place around the experience of duration unfold through the strange interaction of our bodies in a space that has been plunged into darkness, illuminated only by projections and traversed by ambient sounds that are, at times, difficult to identify (*Bantar Gebang*, *See You Later/Au revoir* [1990]), or by spoken words interrupted or indeed distorted by various processes (*Catarina*, *Side Seat Paintings Slides Sound Film*). This is not quite the cinematic experience described by Roland Barthes, for the freedom to move about as one wishes is much greater, even with the films of Snow and de Rijke/de Rooij which are presented in typical cinema fashion complete with screening times and a projectionist.[1] The experience is more one of exhibition-cinema, of the "black box" type.[2] Walking around, sitting on a bench or on the floor, leaning against the wall, staring at the image, drawing closer to it, scanning the walls of the space and going from room to room in a constant, artificially created semi-darkness, creates a relationship of incongruity with the

space and among visitors and a significant rupture between the exhibition and the outside, day-to-day world. The singular circumstances surrounding the perception of space and images in *Timelength* results in a more intimate and, in some ways, captive relationship with a work, and, through it, one can experience a duration that disturbs temporality.

FILM VIDEO PROJECTION MONITOR

Timelength is designed to have visitors experience duration through an excess that is inextricably tied to a process of production, since this profoundly material incursion into time to be apprehended in its density is the product of processes and modes of presentation that are quite distinct from one another: video and film; projectors and monitors; continuous loops and screening times. It was important, therefore, to present both films and videos in their original forms at the gallery. Only Andy Warhol's *Screen Tests*, filmed in 16mm and transferred to DVD, are shown on a monitor. Today we tend to make less and less of a distinction between film and video: some artists film in 35mm format and then transfer the film to digital video format, while a number of experimental filmmakers, like Stan Brakhage, have agreed to let their works be transferred to video. If attention to the differences between these media is warranted then it is because film and video have distinct processes of production and produce images and durations specific to each. *Timelength* is designed to highlight each medium's particular divergences, discrepancies and effects as a function of particular works.

FILM

Timelength presents three 16mm films by Michael Snow (*One Second in Montreal*, *Side Seat Slides Paintings Sound Film* and *See You Later/Au revoir*) and one 35mm film, *Bantar Gebang*, by the Dutch artists Jeroen de Rijke and Willem de Rooij. One can examine, in these cases, how media and presentation constitute duration differently. Since 1994, de Rijke and de Rooij have collaborated on the production of films designed to be shown specifically in galleries or museums. It is worth noting that these artists do not describe themselves as filmmakers, unlike Michael Snow, who is known as an experimental filmmaker, as well as a painter, sculptor and musician. Snow, moreover, usually presents his works in a cinema-like environment.

Bantar Gebang is a 10-minute film shot in 35mm; those of Michael Snow, shot in 16mm, have running times of 26, 20 and 18 minutes respectively. These films are shown at set times in a space set aside specifically for

them in the gallery. Visitors are therefore required to be present at the prescribed times if they wish to view the films. They have to take their places and wait for the projectionist to start the film. After some time, let's say 10 or 26 minutes, the image fades to black, the projector is switched off, and visitors get up and leave the room. This process runs counter to the more indeterminate character of the experience associated with video loops. In this case, visitors are free to view the work when they so desire, but they cannot easily determine the point at which they must enter the loop for it might be of no consequence to the work itself. Hence their feeling of being unable to grasp the work in its entirety. With predetermined screening times, such as those set for the films of Snow and de Rijke/de Rooij, the works' starting and finishing points are clearly delineated; the experience of duration begins in those moments of anticipation, before an empty, silent screen registers the first images, and ends with the disappearance of the last image and the switching off of the projector. Moreover, viewing from a seated position, coupled with the physical presence and sound (although muted) of the projector – in short, the whole ritual of projection, its theatricality, so to speak – are an integral part of the experience of these projected film-works. In them, duration operates in three interrelated modes: anticipation in the semi-darkness of the screening room before the projector is switched on; duration through the exact amount of time it takes to show the film; and duration *within* the work itself. Since the films of Snow and de Rijke/de Rooij are durational works – with Snow extending and exposing duration, and de Rijke and de Rooij rendering it implacable in its progressive invasiveness – the duration produced by the apparatus and mode of presentation is constituted within its own *mise en abîme* that projects it even farther outside ordinary time.

TRANSFERS

Andy Warhol's *Screen Tests*, which are presented on a monitor in *Timelength* are originally 4-minute 16mm films, that have been transferred to DVD by The Andy Warhol Museum. These are the only non-projected works in the exhibition, hence the only ones whose relationship with the viewer is, strictly speaking, televisual. Displacement is, therefore, a feature of these films in terms of both the immediate presentation environment and viewing mode. The blurring and cross-contamination of processes and media witnessed in the presentation of these *Screen Tests* make for a more nuanced experience of duration in these 'pieces of film' that can be described as intense moments of duration. We know that Warhol often showed his films in his studio, the Factory, while other activities simultaneously

took place. Visitors viewed these films in whatever manner they pleased, and were not required to keep quiet. Duration in each *Screen Test* is constituted, on the one hand, by a person staring at (or being stared at by) the lens, and, on the other, by the viewer's gaze, in turn immobilized, as it were, in the act of observing a head imprisoned by the lens and the framing of the image. In Warhol's studio, however, the surrounding activities would have intruded on the viewer's experience, and one might very well conclude that duration *within* the work was completely evacuated. In a gallery and through a monitor, the experience has a completely different character. The more intimate scale of the monitor creates a sort of bond between our gaze and that of the subject staring at the lens (Ann Buchanan, Billy Name) or performing before it (Walter Dainwood, Donyale Luna). Through the waiting that becomes more concentrated before each *Test*, a duration is created that exists outside of the normal course of things.

Moreover, within the context of *Timelength* and some 40 years after they were made, the *Tests* have become imbued with a lyrical and occasionally melancholic dimension that certainly did not characterize them at the time of their production. All this gives the work a more hieratic quality – but not without a tinge of irony. The transfers the *Tests* have been subjected to echo the very nature of Warhol's work, which engaged complacently with the idea of the copy and deliberately confused notions of authenticity. In this prosaic, televisual relationship with the work and in our distancing from the original mode of production, duration is not entirely synonymous with what emerges from this exercise in banal endurance – staring at the camera lens for several minutes – but also subsists *in* the time of endurance and survival, which has brought these short 'pieces of film' simultaneously here and elsewhere.

VIDEO

In video projections duration exhibits its own set of attributes. Since the ones in this exhibition run in continuous loops, the image is at all times present and accessible (its larger-than-human scale acts as a plane of attraction, a field of vision in which viewers can sometimes lose themselves) and duration becomes part of a continuum in space. We are drawn into its orbit and remain suspended there until we wish to leave. Waiting in the works of Grandmaison, MacGregor and Robert occurs only *within* them and since these works embody a quality of marking time, duration takes on an additional sense of materiality. While the 16 or 35mm projection apparatus produces duration through its presence within the field of the

work and functions as a historical vector, this is not the case with the video projector, which has a more strictly utilitarian role. Moreover, its relatively recent use in exhibitions and its pervasiveness in museums and galleries deprives it of symbolic value. As soon as they enter the gallery space, viewers 'enter' the image and, in some cases, the soundtrack, and since both run continuously, they pre-exist the visitor's arrival and will continue playing after they have left. In the works of Grandmaison, MacGregor and Robert the presence of duration becomes spatial, even merging with the space at times, and its experience undergoes a kind of stretching out. When duration does change registers, it does so in the carefully calibrated time frame created by the projection of films for set periods of time. Between these two modes of producing and presenting images and sounds, there emerges a duration whose materiality possesses fluctuating contours.

IMAGE SILENCE SOUND BODY

Timelength places us before images that are sometimes multiple and sequential (*Spin*, *Screen Tests, One Second in Montreal*), that are inscribed within a narrative sequence (*One Second in Montreal*, *Side Seat*, *See You Later/Au revoir, Catarina*) or that constitute a single view that undergoes, nevertheless, numerous subtle transformations within its sequence (*Bantar Gebang*, *Up to the 8th floor*). The image has, of course the power to fascinate and exhibitions that have focused on the projected image have exploited this characteristic. This exhibition, in contrast, does not focus solely on the 'image' or, more precisely, on the unique power of the durational image; rather, it focuses on the image as part of a complex that produces duration, and that includes sound, silence and the body, but also as we have seen earlier, as an image that is linked to specific technologies of presentation. Thus the silence accompanying the works of MacGregor, Grandmaison, Snow's *One Second in Montreal* and Warhol's *Screen Tests*, which is as much an absence of sound as a presence that fills the space, is a component of the materialization of duration within the image and of our experience of this as excess and as a mode of waiting. Sound as accentuated ambient noise in *Bantar Gebang*, as the interrupted flow of the narrative voice in *Catarina*, as a distorted voice in Snow's *Side Seat* and as the tapping of the typewriter keys in *See You Later/Au revoir* continually probes the durational image and scores the process of marking time.

In each case the sound or silence produced activates a listening process, thereby requiring us to use a sense other than sight to determine the

parameters of the work. In *Timelength*, the event of duration is experienced in a relationship that weaves together vision, hearing and the body in motion and at rest. *Timelength* is above all a spatialization of works that seeks to highlight the complexity and the subtle divergences and discrepancies in their structures and their modes of presentation that combine to produce the experience of a time that is extended and strangely exceeds temporality.

NOTES

1. Roland Barthes, "Leaving the Movie Theater," in *The Rustle of Language*, Richard Howard trans. (New York: Hill & Wang, 1987), pp. 345-349.

2. There is an ongoing debate on this question, as well as a body of literature devoted to it. See my "Thoughts on Exhibition Cinema" in this catalogue.

FILMIC TIME IN INSTALLATION

Stefan Jovanovič

> The cinema was born – and this is no small matter – as a machine to produce images, views that were continuous, unbroken, lengthy. From the outset filmic time was given as a time to which one submits and simultaneously as an acknowledged, identified time: unable to escape the time of projection, we nevertheless accept this time, recognize it as our own, and experience it as such. This is the meaning of Jean-Louis Schefer's famous description of the cinema as "the only experience in which time is given to me as a perception."
>
> Jacques Aumont, "The Variable Eye, or the Mobilization of the Gaze" [1]

Visual artists have increasingly taken on the role of filmmaker, and, within this movement, it is more than simply the cinema's materials, techniques and repertoire that have been displaced into the museum and the gallery; most significantly, it is the cinema's modes of reception. We experience countless moving images within the spaces of contemporary art, many of which reproduce and critique (or at least problematize) the aesthetic and experiential qualities of cinema. The projected film or video installation is the most familiar manifestation of this phenomenon. I would like to introduce a reading of some of the kinds of cinema we encounter within exhibition spaces from the point of view of *duration*, which is a necessary condition of cinematic representation. Film implies duration – conceptually as well as materially – and we must thus negotiate a relationship to *filmic time* each time we experience the moving-image projection in a visual arts environment. In outlining some of the ideas formulated in several recent studies addressing the origins of cinema and aspects of visual culture within late modernity, I shall suggest that contemporary film and video installations summon up identifiable modes of filmic duration in their formal and figurative strategies, in what may thereby amount to a concurring critical practice. Specifically, I would claim that these artworks' construction of meaning within filmic time enact, in a kind of interdiscursive exchange with film history and theory, a *double movement* – a rethinking or rewriting of cinema's past

in light of a 'post-cinematic condition' theorized in the present moment. Or, in other words, I'd like to think about the ways in which contemporary art, by recourse to duration and the luminous screen, seems to have undertaken an obsessive *revisiting* of cinema. In this context, 'to revisit' might be understood to connote both forestalling and superseding the cinema's oft-anticipated demise, which surely has been one of the most influential tropes within this genre of art practice.[2] Duration therefore also implies a forestalling of the end to cinema, and, in light of the ongoing postulations of the cinema's death – recurrent and often misleading and hyperbolic – these critical practices would seem to have undertaken a kind of rewriting of its historical beginnings.[3]

A key concern in contemporary discussions of modern visual culture and the shaping of experience in late modernity has been the role of the cinema and its changing aesthetic and phenomenological modalities within the 'subjectivization' of the spectator. Accordingly, the theorization of the social and psychic conditions of film reception in many recent studies will have either revised or dispensed with such vague and mediocre notions as 'the cinematic effect' and a fixed 'apparatus' of the enclosed and darkened theatre, "where the spectator – captive and immobilized in his armchair – is also captured by the film, fastened to the screen in a play of seduction and identification," as Jacques Aumont has written.[4] In dealing with broader socio-historical aspects of technique, models of vision, and the origins of modern visual culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Aumont and a number of other scholars[5] have argued that the relationship between the viewer and the spectacle of cinema – a dynamic historical configuration specific to late modernity – generates not *one* effect, but many. And the inexorable changes to film's contexts of reception throughout its history would suggest that one could not rely on any enduring material configuration to provide the ground for some transhistorical 'apparatus' model of cinematic reception. "What is called 'the cinema' has in fact entailed throughout its history many different modes in the material presentation of the film to a spectator," Aumont notes, citing such examples as early cinema's 'nickelodeon' (a mostly standing-room audience), the drive-in and non-Western contexts of film spectatorship.[6] The rethinking of materialist socio-historical and phenomenological accounts of the cinema by referencing their concepts to this wider set of critical concerns and theoretical models has thus sought to resituate the origin of cinema – and to understand its heterogeneous and ever-changing conditions of reception – within a fundamental historical and cultural rupture in models of vision, attention

and temporality in Western modernity.[7] For Aumont, the preconditions for cinematic reception were to be found amid a longer and more profound epistemic shift in models of vision. The model of the 'disembodied' gaze in which the camera obscura stood as the metaphor for vision during the classical age, Aumont has argued, gives way to a 'variable eye,' a new embodied or 'corporeal' and mobilized gaze typical of the spectator's relationship to cinema. This variable eye and modern visual culture echo other developments in the nineteenth century, including new modes in painting and the advent of rail travel and photography. This variable eye represents, for Aumont, "the configuration of modernity par excellence."[8]

What is essential to the cinema therefore, (if we accept the theoretical terms of Aumont's model), lies neither with the film medium, nor with the various institutions of cinema. Rather, it is located within this relationship of self-divestiture negotiated between viewer and spectacle within filmic duration. As Jean-Louis Schefer declares in the introductory quote above, the cinema offers its spectator *time as a perception*. If the cinema comprises any enduring feature, it may be only film's concrete and irreversible duration in real time that we submit to, of necessity, as spectators. This relationship is negotiated within the varying conditions of viewing a luminous image that occupies a two-dimensional surface, but is not reducible to any single context or set-up. Nor does the experience of temporal continuity require any essential correspondence of this mediated image to any lived spatial or temporal reality, although the cinema's epistemological claims are a function of the moving image's ability to mediate real space-times with an unsurpassed degree of verisimilitude. To submit to the time of the cinema is to relinquish the possibility of control over the moving image, in contrast to the experiences of temporal interactivity afforded by "video games and other simulations," or what Aumont defines as "today's 'new images.'"[9] In such images, as Aumont understands them, "time is 'interactively' masterable and almost entirely manipulable."[10] We might thereby claim that insofar as a moving image installation unfolds in concrete duration and defies any kind of temporal manipulation or mastery on the viewer's part, such an artwork reiterates the most irreducibly cinematic strategy – the presentation of filmic duration. In the context of the visual art space, such a viewer-spectacle configuration, I would posit, probably remains much closer to the viewer-object paradigm of modern art's reception[11] than the user-object relationship expressed through such cultural forms and techniques as video games, new media and the Internet. It may be observed that a good many of the multimedia works one encounters in today's visual arts environments

lay claim to the kind of 'post-cinematic' discourse Aumont might associate with the advent of a postmodern 'demobilization' of vision, as typified by the user's relationship to virtual reality and cyberspace. And, in considering the proliferation of these new images as marking the coextensive twilight of the modern viewer-spectacle paradigm represented by the variable eye, the author thereby concludes that the cinema too, must inevitably reach its end: "the camera has now become a cold eye, completely void of all reference to the human that transported the cinema to its apogee. The variable eye, too, has entered the era of postmodernity."[12]

Aumont's study offers a persuasive model for understanding the central place of theories of modernity and modern visual culture within considerations of filmic time. I would like to pursue this line of inquiry by introducing into this model some of the ideas put forth by Mary Ann Doane's recent book, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*.[13] Doane's detailed study of the origin of cinematic time and of the cinema's capacity to represent duration situates this development within the changed models of temporality in late modernity, specifically the increasing standardization and management of time effected by modern techniques and capitalist production. Discussing the thorny issue of film's indexical relation to time in early cinema, the author introduces the concept of 'the event' as the 'unassimilable' contingency implicit in the recording of time by the camera. For Doane, the 'event' implies a twofold notion within this context: that of temporal continuity and structure, but also of transience, chance and unpredictability. Doane writes:

> Insofar as the cinema presented itself as the indexical record of time, it allied itself with the event and the unfolding of events as aleatory, stochastic, contingent. It was capable of trapping events in all their unpredictability and pure factualness. However, the fact of its own finitude – the limits imposed by both the frame and the length of the reel – resulted in the necessity of conceiving the event simultaneously in terms of structure as a unit of time, as not simply a happening but a significant happening that nevertheless remained tinged by the contingent, by the unassimilable. This curious merger of contingency and structure lends specificity to the early formations of cinematic temporality.[14]

I want to consider Doane's remarks in relation to the body of films produced by Andy Warhol, probably the key figure in avant-garde film's connection to the contemporary use of the moving image in the visual arts. Warhol's film

corpus prefigures in many respects the double movement that, I have suggested, marks the relationship between early cinematic notions of temporality and the re-engagement with these models by contemporary film and videomakers. In contrast to the early avant-gardes' use of montage for its modern 'shock-effect,' Warhol's principal innovation in his early films was to *eliminate* editing, splicing together only the end of one film reel to the beginning of the next. Such a practice underscores what I would declare to be a critical aspect of Warhol's work in film: a continual double reflection on early cinematic time and the unstable beginnings of film culture vis-à-vis the upheavals within the domain of the moving image taking place in the 1960s. Writing in 1964, Jonas Mekas declared that "Andy Warhol is taking cinema back to its origins, to the days of Lumière, for a rejuvenation and a cleansing."[15] And indeed, the trajectory of Warhol's film work, as Hoberman has noted, appears to emulate the historical development of the cinema itself. It evolves from silent black-and-white, single-reel films such as *Kiss* (1963), to the gradual incorporation of sound, scenarios, and even the short-lived use of two and three screen set-ups (echoing the groundbreaking work of the silent film pioneer Abel Gance) in films such as *Chelsea Girls* (1966). Warhol's films would appear to follow this model through to the use of colour, editing, widescreen, and finally, the production of feature films (1974's *Frankenstein* even being presented in 3D).[16] The extremely long, silent, fixed-frame films of Warhol's early period provide perhaps the best example of how the artist invokes the paradoxes of early cinematic time – the notion of temporal continuity achieved through a succession of fixed images – as a means to critique the various rhetorics of cinematic 'realism' in postwar European modernism, documentary and ethnographic film. In examining the influence of Warhol's approach toward filmic time on the work of Chantal Ackerman, Ivone Margulies writes: "Warhol undermines observational and direct cinema by hyperbolizing to the point of caricature the very basis of their existence: the notion of non-interference."[17] Margulies further asserts that, " Warhol's extended renditions of cliché images create a different register through which to read neorealism's narrativized phenomenology of the quotidian."[18] Warhol challenges the cinema's epistemological and narrative foundations by undermining the cinematic notions of event and of contingency, presenting instead a fixed-frame image of pure sameness, thereby amplifying the formal and figurative effects of cinematic duration.

Mainstream cinema shows a strong disinclination to what we call 'dead time,' any length of time in a film that does not contribute to advancing the film's narrative. In Warhol's longer films, such as *Sleep* and *Empire,* the

artist presents us with nothing but dead time, a subtle filmic entropy brought nearly to the point of stasis by its fixity of framing and un-dynamic composition (not to mention being projected at 16 frames per second instead of 24). For, as Doane might argue, dead time undermines the illusionistic distraction from lived time that is the basic lure of cinema to the modern spectator. Dead time tends to create awareness on the part of the spectator of lived time outside the diegesis and the frame of the film, thereby, in effect, negating (or at least mitigating) the seduction of cinema. The dead time of these films thus creates a dual register of temporal experience. For even as the viewer inspects the surface of Warhol's moving image for evidence of the film's 'event-ness' in such contingencies as scratches and jumps, the graininess of the film and so on, he or she becomes aware of the lived time outside of the frame of the film, within which nothing seems to happen. Such films, as Margulies has argued, simultaneously emphasize both the film's materiality and a very literal form of referentiality.[19]

Warhol's double reflection on early cinematic time also references the unstable norms and conventions of early cinema in bringing the reception of his films closer to the idea of a museum or gallery viewing protocol. Unlike other avant-garde films of the 1960s, including the 'structural' film movement within which these films are often inscribed, the artist himself never watched them in their entirety and preferred his viewers likewise to come and go as they pleased. Thus, in terms of the external duration of the time of viewing, such a format of presentation sets Warhol's work in sharp contrast to the structural filmmaker's reliance on the more rigid and immobile viewing protocol of the darkened cinema. Specifically, the mode of reception within which one might experience Warhol's *Sleep* would set it in contrast phenomenologically, as well as conceptually, with a film such as Michael Snow's *La Région Centrale* (1971), which implicitly demands that the viewer take in its entire three hours' duration, given that the latter work is largely premised on the increasingly dizzying, hallucinatory and visceral effect on its *captive* audience.

Snow's films, though addressed to an immobile spectator in the cinema, are equally exemplary of the kinds of radicalized film practice being done throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, although the artist takes a somewhat different approach in formulating the terms of his critique vis-à-vis cinematic illusionism and the modalities of filmic duration. Snow's 1990 offering, the 18-minute *See You Later/Au revoir* stages the most banal non-event (a man leaving an office) and slows it down almost to the point of immobility

through the use of high speed photography to film this action at a rate of thousands of frames per second. The effect of this extreme distension of a roughly 30-second action introduces an extraordinarily sculptural and almost suspenseful quality into a banal action. In re-presenting the temporal continuity of so fleeting and arbitrary a narrative moment – one which conventionally would be subsumed under the seamless formal system of continuity-cutting in a mainstream film – in such concrete and palpable terms of filmic duration, Snow gives new meaning to the kind of surgical penetration that Walter Benjamin ascribed to the work of the cinema's cameraman with respect to the subject being recorded.[20] *See You Later/Au revoir* pushes to extremes this metaphorical penetration, enacting an almost phantasmic spectacle out of a brief and otherwise unremarkable action.

Contemporary artists have devised a diversity of strategies that would appear to carry forward the critical aims of avant-garde cinema, reproducing and challenging the different historical conditions of cinema's viewer-spectacle relationship. Underpinning this orientation, as I have already discussed, has been a range of scholarly discourse correlating the changing norms and conventions of contemporary film and media reception with the unstable permutations of early modern visual culture, within which the cinema was but one – albeit particularly compelling – technological and cultural form.[21] As Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz have written: "Cinema constituted only one element in an array of new modes of technology, representation, spectacle, distraction, consumerism, ephemerality, mobility, and entertainment – and at many points neither the most compelling nor the most promising one."[22] The advent of new historicism, as a method of looking into early cinema in modern culture, thereby reflects a more general interest in different modes of consciousness and formulations of subjectivity, within which the cinema and forms of cinematic duration are inscribed. Such a hypothesis might be underscored in part by the prevalence within contemporary film and video of figures, formal structures, and techniques of staging duration, that invoke early or primitive cinema, 1960s and 1970s avant-garde film, and European modernist narrative as the most frequent point of reference. Hence, Warhol's critical place in linking together avant-garde film practices of the 1960s with the gallery-based cinema of contemporary art. Unlike many of his contemporaries who moved from painting into sculpture in the early 1960s, Warhol shifted his attention to film. Warhol's concern with the literality created by his use of extreme duration and dead time offers a viewing experience of the cinema that, in Margulies's view, is hyperrealist in its literality.

qualities of duration compel us to reconsider the conceptual basis of cinematic forms of visual rhetoric, or even the very epistemology of the cinematic image, then the influx of filmic practices into the museum perhaps points to the exhaustedness of other venues for critical exchange between viewer and cinematic image. That public space and television, as possible sites of diffusion, are too monopolized by advertising to accommodate any kind of critical reflection, would seem to imply that the museum may remain the only space within which these phenomenological and aesthetic modalities of the moving image may be critiqued. This perhaps may be the horizon where the *cinéma d'exposition* may recuperate a kind of critical potential.

NOTES

1. Jacques Aumont, "The Variable Eye, or the Mobilization of the Gaze," trans. Charles O'Brien and Sally Shafto, in Dudley Andrew, ed. *The image in dispute: art and cinema in the age of photography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997) p. 245. This essay comprises the second chapter of Aumont's book *L'Oeil interminable : cinéma et peinture* (Paris: Séguier, 1989). [*L'Oeil interminable*, p. 58.]

2. See for instance Emmanuel Hermange, « Pour nous le cinéma est mort : Notes sur quelques stratégies cinéphiles de l'art. » *Parachute* no. 103 (07-08-09/2001) pp. 12-25.

3. We might compare the cinema's double-movement to that of photography. It has for some time now been suggested that advances in digital imaging and the proliferation of pictures thereby generated are foreshadowing a 'post-photographic' future: that no image will be able to make a claim to 'visual truth' by virtue of its indexical relation to a pre-existing 'reality'. Conversely, the re-writing of photography's emergence has challenged the notion of 'indexicality' as intrinsic to formations of a photographic epistemology during its early history. See especially, William J. Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1992) and Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning With Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1997).

4. Aumont, *op.cit.* p. 241 [« Nous n'imaginons plus guère d'autre modèle théorique du spectateur que celui où, captif, immobilisé dans son fauteil, il est aussi « captivé » par le film, rivé à l'écran par le jeu de la séduction et de l'identification. » *L'Oeil interminable,* p. 52.]

5. See especially the collection *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser (London: BFI, 1990).

6. Aumont, *op.cit.* p. 241. [« Ce qu'on appelle « le » cinéma a connu, en fait, et à toutes les époques, bien de modes différents de présentation matérielle du film au spectateur. » *L'Oeil interminable,* p. 52.]

7. See Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1999).

8. Aumont, *op.cit.* p. 247. [« la configuration moderne par excellence. » *L'Oeil interminable,* p. 60.]

9. Aumont, *op.cit.* p. 256, n. 28. [« les jeux vidéo et autres simulations. » *L'Oeil interminable*, p. 72.]

10. *Ibid.* [« nul moyen pour le spectateur d'accélérer ni de ralentir le film, à la différence, radicale, des « nouvelles images », dont le temps est « interactivement » maîtrisable, presque déformable. » Jacques Aumont, *L'Oeil interminable*, p. 58.]

11. For a discussion of the relationship between modern art and experimental film of the 1960s and 70s from the point of view of time and theatricality, see Ivone Margulies, *Nothing Happens: Chantal Ackerman's Hyperrealist Everyday* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996), Ch. 2: "Toward a Corporeal Cinema," pp. 42-64.

12. Aumont, *op.cit.* p. 249. [« la caméra devient un œil froid, parfaitement vidé de la référence à l'humain que charriait, à son apogée encore, le cinéma. Tout simplement, l'œil variable est entré, lui aussi, dans le postmoderne. » *L'Oeil interminable*, p. 63.]

13. Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2002)

14. *Ibid.*, p. 140-141.

15. Quoted in Jim Hoberman, "After Avant-Garde Film," in Brian Wallis, ed. *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art; Boston : D.R. Godine, 1984) p. 63.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Ivone Margulies, *Nothing Happens,* p. 37.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, Schocken, 1969), p. 233.

21. See Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds. *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

22. Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, "Introduction," *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, p. 1.

I'm moving forward while thinking backward, or is it moving backward while thinking forward? Either way my work has a push-me/pull-you relationship with time. I make installations and video that embrace the ordinary event, the overlooked evidence of time and place. Sometimes the work is site-specific and uses ephemeral materials in conjunction with the architectural history of the site. Other works are gallery-based and use time-based elements like video and sound. In all cases there is a gathering of elements that is about a commitment to process, and the development of meaning through that process. The resulting works allow for a slow discovery and transformation of the ordinary moment, seeping into the audience's eyes and ears. My work offers a kind of present day traveling.

Gwen MacGregor

On imagine facilement le temps qui passe comme une rivière qui coule. C'est une image employée par de nombreux poètes. Mais le premier marin venu vous dira que l'eau ne coule jamais de manière constante, sans histoire. Il y a toujours de petits tourbillons, des remous, des courants ... il peut même arriver que l'eau remonte la rivière en un point donné. Dans certaines de mes installations, c'est un peu le genre de lieu que je cherche à créer : j'essaie de creuser de petites alcôves dans le temps qui passe.

Jocelyn Robert

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ ALL OF THIS

Film is the first representational medium to guarantee specific durations to the user.

Film cameras and projectors are members of the clock family.

Metronome markings in music scores (an attempt at an agreement as to the duration of individual notes in a specific piece) are a predecessor. But performance is subject to human whim.

In film projection a shutter isolates each frame. There are 24 frames per second, a frame (a single photograph) = $1/24^{th}$ of a second.

The visible (to some) pulse of a projected film is caused by the shutter, by the back and forth between one forty-eighth of a second of dark followed by one forty-eighth of a second of projected image.

This really is a "pulse", a "heart-beat" which, mechanically regular, tick-tocks *in* the image, the passing of time.

An interesting difference between projected film and projected digital video is the latter's unmodulated glare. It is more difficult for a digital image to communicate duration. In the compression algorithm of a digital image only what changes in the shot is renewed. Pixel based images are more "graphic" than sensorial. Even film grain resembles our eyes' rods and cones. But digital video has its own interesting qualities.

As an artist I work for and with the qualities and contexts of mediums. In 1970, I made *Sink* a continuous-play carousel slide gallery work. My *De La* is one of the first real-time video installations. *Two Sides to Every Story* is a gallery film installation of 1974, currently in the Whitney Museum's touring exhibition *Into the Light.*

I have made several digital video works: the 90 minute cinema-theatre **Corpus Callosum* (2000) and the continuous-play DVD gallery installation, *That/Cela/Dat* (2000), *Sheeploop* (2001) and *Solar Breath (Northern Caryatids)* (2002).

THOUGHTS ON "EXHIBITION CINEMA"

Michèle Thériault

The predominant discourse in the proliferation of exhibitions featuring the moving image is, certainly, the one that links this type of image and its mode of presentation to cinematographic culture. "Exhibition cinema," as it is dubbed, stands apart from cinema proper – the other cinema – by its eschewing of theatre-based screenings, the increased mobility afforded the viewers who are no longer required to remain seated, the continuous presence of the moving image (video projections are, for the most part, looped sequences), the frequent use of multiple screens to create an immersive environment, and, last but not least, the exploration of narrative and figurative modes and of shooting methods specific to cinema.

Cinematographic culture, which goes back to Edison's and the Lumière brothers first flickerings in the late 19th century, was profoundly shaken in the 20th century by the arrival of television and large-scale advertising (including music video spin-offs). So much so, that it has become difficult to separate these three areas one from the other. Moreover, technological advances in video and digitalization and a host of ever more sophisticated softwares have eroded the specificity of the cinematographic act and redefined the nature of the filmed image, while fostering the development of amateur cinema and a certain democratization of cinema itself. Clearly, then, a great number of factors combine to create a "cinema effect" in exhibitions of contemporary art.

These characteristics are necessarily mobile themselves because the infiltration of cinema into the culture and history of the image within art institutions has blurred the boundary between cinema and the visual arts and set new parameters for visitor experience. The discourse developed around artistic practices of the moving image and their site of exhibition is unfixed and multifaceted. The diversity and crossovers of image-producing and projecting devices used by artists has created works and an experience whose hybridity points, as Raymond Bellour has suggested, to an aesthetics of confusion.[1] One relationship, however, is inevitably reconsidered in all exhibitions involving

video or film projections, and that is the visitor's relationship to time. Philip Monk is correct when he says that it is not a question of new media but of a changed relation to time, no matter what the medium.[2]

It is more constructive, therefore, to consider this mode of art from the viewpoint of a precise context and conditions, rather than trying to circumscribe it within general terms – particularly since it is by nature resistant to such attempts, having not yet ceased to transform itself, visitor experience and the nature of the space in which it it is presented. *Timelength* discusses specific issues within precise parameters. It brings together works that delve into specific aspects of this "other cinema" from the vantage point of duration, which is articulated within a sort of oppositional tension: slowness-quasi-fixedness-immobility/acceleration-movement-mobility; silence/sound; video/film; monitor/projector; temporality/atemporality; darkness/light.

This exhibition would also like to reflect upon "exhibition cinema" by having visitors experience distinct modes of image production and presentation, namely, 16mm and 35mm film, projected in their original formats; film works transferred to DVD; and video projection. It was important to relate the question of duration and its rendering by young artists like Pascal Grandmaison, Gwen MacGregor and Jocelyn Robert by juxtaposing their work to the films of Michael Snow and Andy Warhol and their singular exploration of duration within the moving image. Starting in the 1960s, each of these two artists, in a distinctive way, significantly broadened the nature of film experience. Snow's films explore duration as an inherent property of the film process, while Warhol's are inscribed within the iconic and popular culture of cinema.

In no way am I advocating the separation of media in order to preserve some putative purity specific to each. Rather, I want to highlight the image's complexity in the simple variations that it undergoes through the means used to capture and present it. As visitors come face to face with images possessing varied textures and resolutions, a problematic begins to take shape within the fluctuations of the image itself and of one's experience of it. To view a 16mm film by Michael Snow is to experience a graininess of image scored now and then by the trembling shape of a dust particle, an image that is slightly unstable for having been spliced and hence always bound to the apparatus that projects it. The same holds for the 35mm image of artists like de Rijke and de Rooij, which possesses exceptional definition and clarity. Durations produced by film and video are inherently

different. "In a film", Snow says,"the shutter isolates each frame. The visible (to some) pulse of a projected film is caused by the shutter, by the back and forth between one forty-eighth of a second of dark followed by one forty-eighth of a second of projected image." This back and forth, Snow adds, is like a pulse marking time. Because of its lack of modulation and its algorithmic compression, the projected digital image has a harder time conveying duration.[3] Moreover because they arise out of a chemical process and consequently do not possess video's potential for immediacy, film images are somewhat immune to this profound effect of enhanced reality, to that excess of the real, suggestive of simulation, that emanates from the video image. The film image bears the time of its "coming into being" within itself, unlike today's video image, which, in its unceasing and inexorable electronic presence, seems entirely devoid of a past. But it is in this continuous present, which is, so to speak, outside time, that "videographic" duration is constituted. Yet a film today can be entirely digitally simulated and the differences in the way duration exists in film and video are no longer the sole property of each medium as one bleeds into the other.

If the discourse on "exhibition cinema" and even exhibitions themselves seems to privilege a relationship with the culture of popular cinema and large-scale, ultra-designed urban advertising, *Timelength*, without wanting to suppress its latent presence in certain works – namely Grandmaison's *Spin* – would like experimental cinema, its culture and strategies, its overturning of popular film codes and *mise en abîme* of its own processes to circulate in and around the works presented.

Andy Warhol and, particularly, Michael Snow were part of an experimental film culture that assimilated their work from a critical perspective. This community, which Snow describes as secret in its relationship with the art world, remains marginalized – few gallery goers know it well – but it was there, over the course of the 20th century, that film, the moving image and its temporality would undergo profound transformations and a constant re-evaluation. The productions that emerged from this culture – one thinks of Snow's *Wavelength* and *La région centrale* and Warhol's *Empire* – are radical experiments of duration within the image. Even if visitors to exhibitions are generally conversant with popular cinema and in many instances remain ignorant of experimental film culture, it was important that the radicality it represents permeates the exhibition. Oddly, works constituted of projected images possess a "spectacular" character akin to that of popular cinema, especially the films produced by Hollywood, but their

critical questioning of this culture resides with investigations characteristic of experimental and alternative cinema.

Timelength engages visitors in a frontal encounter with the work. The decision to leave out multi-screen projections was deliberate so that the relationship to the still fixed image and the pictorial as such, could be looked at more closely. By "exhibiting" the moving image, *Timelength* inscribes itself in an exhibition history marked by the fixed image and, indeed, by painting. Moreover, the slowness and fixedness inherent to works included here (which extends time and transforms them, in the process, into durational works), plays off the contemplative relationship characteristic of "pictures" and their fixed image. It is not a matter of assimilating "exhibition cinema" to the pictorial continuum – for the former undoubtedly upsets the latter; rather what needs to be examined is "the meaning and manifestations of this reversal of the mobile into the motionless."[4] In fact, it is hoped that *Timelength* will help to call the very identity of every image into question, along with its precariousness, whether it is fixed and on a substantial material support like that of a painting, or whether it is mobile and immaterial, as in a projection.[5]

While the visitor's relationship to the works in *Timelength* is frontal, this does not mean that their experience requires immobility from the viewer. Even though the films of Snow and de Rijke / de Rooij require the visitor to seat him or herself before a predetermined screening, the semi-visible space of presentation, once the projector has been shut down, becomes a place of scrutinizing mobility. In the looped wall projections of Grandmaison, MacGregor and Robert, visitors are no longer bound to conventional cinema viewing and can move as they please. In the discourse on exhibition-based cinema, the question of radicality is linked to the visitor's mobility in his or her relationship to the moving image. However, to equate mobility, liberty and radicality on the one hand, and immobility, passivity and conventionality on the other, as is often the case, is to simplify the issue of the reception of works of art, and to overlook a whole range of other factors that work to shape it. [6] It is, therefore, much more productive to envision the advent of the moving and projected image (along with the emergence of non-optical sensory practices) in museums and other exhibition venues as a means of rethinking the tensions continually at play between viewer and art work, whatever the latter may be. In this way one can have so-called "conventional" modes of reception participate in a contemporaneous discourse.

In conclusion, I would like to bring to the fore the practice of reading (particularly of fictional narratives) to open a breach in the discourse on the cinematic spectacular as a way of thinking differently about what one sees (and hears). Reading is a practice conspicuously marked by duration and one that confines a being to specific durations. It is in the way that it (particularly the reading of fictional narrative) absorbs body and mind, the temporal discrepancies that it produces in the ensuing rupture with the world, the intimate and concentrated nature of its hold on our imagination and on our perception and our senses (that compels us constantly to readjust to reality), that its experience becomes inscribed in the calibrated sphere of the illuminated image that visitors to exhibitions watch in the dark.

NOTES

1. Raymond Bellour, "Battle of the Images," *Art Press*, no. 262 (Nov. 2000): 52. An example of this aesthetic of confusion is found in Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's *The Paradise Institute*. The work is presented inside a box that replicates a movie theatre with projection booth and rows of seating.
2. Philip Monk, "Paint it Black: Curating the Temporal Image," *Prefix*, no. 9 (May 2004): 17-18.
3. Michael Snow, "Please Take the Time to Read All of This," 2004. Reproduced in this catalogue, p. 99.
4. Jean-Christophe Royoux, "Cinema as Exhibition, Duration as Space," *Art Press*, no. 262 (Nov. 2000): 40.
5. Boris Groys, "On the Aesthetics of Video Installations," *Stan Douglas: Le Détroit*, exhibition catalogue (Basel: Kunsthalle Basel, 2001).
6. Mark Nash, "Art and Cinema: Some Critical Reflections, *Documenta 11*; *Platform V: Exhibition Catalogue* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), p. 129-133.