Reflections on Durational Art

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From Duration to Temporalization: Rethinking Time and Space for Durational Art

What has space to do with durational art? How does its duration speak to, interact with, and intervene in its space of articulation? How does the concern with inter-art or inter-media complicate our notion of durational art and the distinction between space and time?

The title of this special issue, “Time Zones: Durational Art and Its Contexts,” points to such an imbrication and encourages us to search for cultural and political implications of this line of inquiry. Instead of rigidifying difference against a shared standard, the “Greenwich time” from which difference is derived and measured, hence reifying a “geography of time,” the title suggests that time itself is not standard, but differs across “zones” of experience. In this sense, placing duration in cultural, spatial, and experiential contexts becomes a more complex way to engage questions of time and space and the social role of art.

The distinction between temporal (poetry, music, dance, theater) and spatial (painting, sculpture, architecture) art sits at the core of notions of medium specificity that can be traced to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in the eighteenth century. Lessing naturalizes this distinction through a strict correspondence between different signs, their respective modes of organization, and the things that they signify, insisting that the border between spatial and temporal art be observed to ensure the propriety of art that stays truthful to its own “nature” or essence.1 Lessing, however, favors poetry (temporal art) over painting and sculpture (spatial art) by highlighting
poetry’s immateriality and its appeal to the imagination, adhering to a long
history in the West that privileges time over space—a history traceable to
Plato, who conceives space as material and time as “the habitation of the
soul.”

The emergence of cinema by the end of the nineteenth century com-
plicates the distinction between temporal and spatial art. As the art historian
Erwin Panofsky points out, the medium’s technologically derived aesthetic
(camera movement, framing, and editing) is capable of the “dynamization
of space” and the “spatialization of time.” Still, the temporality of cinema,
especially time as duration, has been a favored subject. This is seen both in
a particular tradition of film theory and in film practice. In film theory,
echoing the argument of medium specificity advanced by the modernist art
critic Clement Greenberg, who defines medium in terms of its material
basis, film critics and film scholars have prized cinema’s celluloid basis and
its “indexicality” as the material harnessing of a subject’s existence in a sin-
gular moment in space that conditions cinema’s realism.

If “indexicality” provides the material condition of possibility to capture the singularity of
time, philosopher Gilles Deleuze has turned to cinema’s aesthetic organi-
zation to further consider how certain practices of cinema enable time as
qualitative experience, or duration in a Bergsonian sense. In his famous
formulation of movement-image and time-image, Deleuze divides film his-
tory into classical cinema and modern cinema with World War II as the
watershed, suggesting an evolution (or devolution) of cinema in relation
to time. Whereas in movement-image (prevalent in classical cinema) time
serves as a second-order inference through an action-oriented spatial struc-
ture of false continuity, in time-image (which surfaces with modern cinema)
time is the direct image in cinema, a mediating factor of cinematic experi-
ence. The time-image persists in the world of international “art cinema,”
from neorealism in postwar Italy to its contemporary resonances in Iranian,
Thai, Taiwanese, and Chinese cinema (to list a few), which share a predilec-
tion for long takes and long shots that capitalize on cinema’s duration. In its
most recent manifestation, duration has been celebrated in the “cinema of
slowness,” an arsenal of international art cinema in which the desire to
preserve the integrity and singularity of time remains tenacious.

Yet, the persistence of time-image, as in the case of “slow” cinema,
registers a broad-based change in audiovisual practice in recent years, of
which “slow cinema” serves as a symptom and antidote. In contemporary
discussion, perhaps the biggest shift from the temporal orientation of cinema
is its “spatial turn.” With the industrial and discursive emergence of New
Media, cinema has experienced not so much an obsolescence, as some film
scholars argue, as an “explosion” and “relocation” attributable to its embrac-
ing of digital technology in production, its multiplication in distribution
through an increasingly diverse range of display formats and platforms, and its more varied consumption via screens big and small, static and moving—internet streaming and DVD playing; individual mobile devices such as the cell phone, iPad, computer, and television monitor; giant screens in movie theaters and on the street. We are witnessing the revival of seventy-millimeter roadshows from the 1970s, the proliferation of IMAX and 3D films, and the ubiquity of live screens in the public square. Instead of getting nowhere, cinema is everywhere, on airplanes, trains, subways, and buses. These films’ intensity is enhanced by size but also by intimacy, sometimes creating individual “cells” by the closed circuit of the technical ensemble sealed with a pair of earphones.6

The challenge and opportunity posed by New Media—the notion itself evoking the ghost of medium specificity in the discursive tradition of media distinctions premised on specificities of material support and technological modes of production—has motivated two directions of the “spatial turn” in film studies. One direction turns to cinema’s connection with art, by reorienting the avant-garde tradition of “expanded cinema” from the 1970s to the more contemporary museum world of installation art; the other turns its attention to historically diverse practices in the exhibition “spaces” of cinema. Film historians have uncovered a wide range of exhibition practices beyond the standard “theatrical format” based on the static space of movie theaters, including mobile spaces such as mobile projection in urban and rural settings and drive-in theaters. This interest in alternative modes and spaces of exhibition has also brought attention to the history of nontheatrical films under the rubric of “useful cinema”—pragmatic, often nonnarrative-driven films serving specific purposes, such as industrial films, advertising films, science and educational films, military training films, and films for religious and political propaganda.7

These spatial turns that shift the question of cinema’s ontology to its topology, however, are not without contention. Film scholars have cautioned against the conflation of the avant-garde film tradition of expanded cinema in the 1970s with video and digital installations in contemporary art museums and gallery spaces. Volker Pantenburg, for instance, emphasizes expanded cinema’s commitment to duration on one hand and access on the other—hence its history of connection with communication media such as television and computers that have tapped into a global community. In the art space of museum and galleries, Pantenburg contends, both “duration” and “access” are severely curtailed following a different logic of commodification.8 By fetishizing the “object” of film and digital art, museums and galleries have limited the accessibility of these arts; by spatializing the exhibition of films in terms of mobile spectatorship, curators and critics have conflated physical mobility with political critical agency.9 Instead, Pantenburg argues,
museums have instated an economy of attention that builds on a consumption mode of distraction corresponding to the monetary economy of maximum numbers and the endeavor for financial returns. As a result, little attention has been paid to the actual films themselves. Similarly, with the turn to “nontheatrical” films in production and exhibition, some film scholars have also started to wonder if the “content” of cinema still matters, with the surging interest in the material conditions and “infrastructure” of cinema and media that leaves the actual representations in films unexamined.

Perhaps the bigger challenge corresponding to these “spatial turns,” I would argue, is not cinema’s loss of “duration” and “content” per se. Instead, we are facing the implications of the methodological shift in the “posthermeneutic” move in the humanities, which, inspired by Marshall McLuhan and a particular strand of German media theory, has consciously distanced representation, or the “content” of cinema in terms of the semantics of representation, in favor of investigating the material and external constituents of representation. The posthermeneutic move, as Bernhard Siegert argues, has also corresponded to the posthuman turn across the Atlantic among German, Anglophone, and French academics, who increasingly draw our attention to the “programmability” and the nonhuman dimension of a technologically mediated contemporary society.

With the primacy given to the externality and materiality of communication, a new conception of time emerges. In contrast to Bergson’s notion of time as “duration” harnessing the contingency and the real that elude mathematical division, technologically conscious philosophers such as Bernard Stiegler have proposed that we consider the “technics of time”—that is, time as the “effect” of technological mediation. As W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark Hansen argue, “There is no time in itself, there are only temporalizations, technico-empirical specifications of time.”

All of these discussions are technology heavy. How, then, do we reconsider film as a durational art in relation to space? More specifically, is it possible for us to link cinema, as both a technological construct and a medium of representation, to its cultural, experiential, and political context?

In contemporary independent documentary in China, filmmaker Mao Chengyu’s filming and exhibition practice opens up room for such considerations. Mao has abandoned his career as a civil engineer and taken up independent documentary and organic farming, turning his camera to rural and religious life in inner China. His film Shenyanxiang (The Ximaojia Universe), an experimental ethnography of his home village on the midstream Yangtze River, is a particularly interesting film for considering questions of duration and access, temporality and context, representation and its material and technological constituents. The film simultaneously uncovers and reconstructs a minor history of the Ximao Clan that reflects on China’s past
and the turbulent years of the twentieth century. In his film, Mao reshapes temporal experience at both the shooting and editing stages. At the shooting stage, he constructed several art installations and placed them in his home village to let the villagers interact with them and to document the changes these objects experience through time. At the editing stage, he experimented by interspersing still images (his own drawings) between moving segments of film. In this sense, the film serves both as a site of exhibition for the artwork he constructed and as a mediating medium of temporal experience.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing examples in the film is the boat he reconstructed in tribute to the peasant rebel leader Yang Si from the twelfth century. Heeding the belief that the insurrectionary army built a “thriving boat” (feihuang tengda zhou) for Yang Si that was sunk at the bottom of Dongting Lake after the army’s defeat, Mao built a sinking boat in the rice paddy fields to evoke the spirit of the boat. In a series of long shots of the boat in the paddy field alternating with a few closer shots of different profiles of the boat, sutured by the “antiquated” editing style of a “wipe,” Mao documents elapses of time both within the individual shot—the waving movement of rice plants, distant smoke from household cooking—and between the shots, where the ellipsis of time is suggested by changing seasons and light of day. After the rice crops are harvested, the boat exposes itself in the water, creating the effect of a boat on the river. As time goes by, the symbolic monument of the sinking boat ages with the crops in the field, as its monumental status becomes dwarfed by two ducks quietly swimming across the field. After the film won an award at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, Mao chose to exhibit his and others’ films in rural areas in central and southern China to engage more tangible interactions.

What is the implication of such a film and exhibition practice? Mao’s art installations alter our sense of temporality and history by producing a process-based reflection on the intermixing of myth, religion, and minor history through time-based art that is site specific. Compared to an art gallery or a museum, the usual space for media art that emphasizes art as object, Mao’s documentary provides an alternative archive and exhibition space with the advantage of recording his media art as a process in the making, one that involves dynamic interactions of the villagers who took part in shaping his art or whose indifference makes a subtle commentary on his interventions. But the film goes beyond faithful recording and display; like the archive and the museum, it plays an active role in shaping its collection and artwork, as Mao readily acknowledges by his constructive editing.

Instead of considering the representation of the film as its “content,” we witness how the film explores representation itself as “technics.” More specifically, time in its plural sense—the cyclical time of nature, the ritual time
of commemoration, the mythical time of gods, and the linear time of progression—is not just out there but is an effect of technology and aesthetics, or aesthetics as technics. If Mao’s film functions as time-based art, perhaps it is time to shift its conceptual paradigm from “duration” to temporalization. But equally important for us, perhaps it is also time to reconsider representation itself as technics of time and space.

NATALIA BRIZUELA

Time Matters

In the late 1970s the Colombian artist Oscar Muñoz, then in his mid-twenties, bought 3,500 contact sheets and negatives from Instantáneas panamericanas, the Cali photographic studio that was then going out of business. He purchased the material for a ridiculously low price, paying for it by weight and not quite sure then of what he would do with the photographic remains, invested as he was, at the time, in his dark, hyper-realistic, moody charcoal drawings depicting empty interiors. Had Muñoz not salvaged this unclaimed material, it would have been destroyed and its remains recycled.

Years later, while making his way through the cheaply bought images he had saved from the garbage, Muñoz—who by the mid 1980s had exchanged charcoal drawings for proto-photographic printing experiments on unstable surfaces like water—found close to a hundred portraits taken on the Ortiz Bridge in Cali that had been made in the tradition of fotocinero street photography.

The Ortiz Bridge portraits that Muñoz selected had been taken between the late-50s and mid-70s by fotocineros, Colombian photographers who not only took the booming photographic portrait industry out of the studio and into the streets but also placed photography closer to the cinematic medium. Hence their name: foto cine. The anonymous fotocineros generally shot a sequence of photographs of the same person as she approached the camera, privileging slightly low, slow angle frames, always trying to capture the person as she walked, in movement, with one foot in front and the other behind. The person or persons photographed would receive a little piece of paper from the street photographer indicating the film roll number under which they could inspect their portraits the following day in the photography studio the fotocinero was working for. The sequential shooting and the caught-in-motion stills pointed toward the film medium. But more than these signposts of a broken-down cinema, it was the material that the film rolls were made from that gave these street photographers the name fotocineros.
photography studios would buy leftover 35 mm film reels from production companies, cut the film strip, and manually fit it into photographic rolls that they would give to the fotocineros for their daily work. Fotocineros were then paid one Colombian peso per roll by the studio when they returned them. An average fotocinero could take between 4 and 5 rolls per day, with 72 negatives per roll. Thus, an average fotocinero working six days a week could shoot between 8,000 and 9,000 negatives per month. Put into perspective, the 3,500-item archive that Muñoz bought was much less than a month’s work for the typical fotocinero.

Muñoz edited those hundred images into a video and then, during two nights in September 2003, projected the videos—he made two of them—onto the Cali River from the Ortiz Bridge where they had been taken. The still images were turned into moving images—brought to life, we could say—collapsing and complicating the temporal distance between the then and the now inscribed in all analog photographs. Photographs made to look like they belonged to a film sequence, whose materiality was actually filmic, were then projected as moving images onto the moving surface of the Cali River, temporarily turned into a screen. A moving image was finally achieved, but one that brought movement to images that signaled stasis in more horrifying ways than the mere stillness of the photographic medium.

The Cali River drains into the Cauca River, which then runs for more than six hundred miles before becoming the major tributary to the Magdalena River, Colombia’s principal waterway, which runs for more than nine hundred miles, from south to north, ending in the Caribbean Sea. From the late 80s and throughout the 90s the Cauca River had been where the infamous Cali Cartel discarded thousands of bodies in their horrific social-cleansing crusade—to rid their domains of homosexuals, the homeless, prostitutes, and other unwanted people, enforcing a “Cali limpia, Cali linda” (clean Cali, beautiful Cali) regime through the power of their cocaine empire. The Cali River, onto whose surface Óscar Muñoz projected, in 2003, the collection of one hundred unclaimed photographs that he had saved from years of oblivion and near destruction, is intimately linked to the “River of Death,” as the Cauca River is commonly known. The Magdalena River, which received whatever bodily remains survived the long journey along the Cauca River, had also, since the early ’80s, been the destination for victims of the violence of organized crime. Rivers are thus, in all of Colombia, but particularly in places like Cali, moving mass grave sites as well as symbols of the absence of any rule of law, and of the arbitrary, yet systematic, governing presence of violence.

Muñoz’s Ortiz Bridge project—El Puente—is, by all measures, a time-based, site-specific installation. Yet these terms, these names, these categories used to classify and somehow describe contemporary art do very little
for and to the work itself. They seem and are empty terms, names, and categories, particularly given the multiple and complex Benjaminian archeology of both critique and redress that is at the heart of this and all of Muñoz’s work of the last twenty years. They are also particularly difficult terms, names, and categories to use when thinking about, and thinking with, work like Muñoz’s, because they signal the contemporary global art-world that has never quite taken him up as a flagship for any of the many “turns” that so quickly appear and disappear—the site-specific turn, the archival turn, the public art turn—even though work like El Puente so easily and perfectly fits into a number of these fleeting contemporary art trends. When used as descriptors of El Puente, these terms, names, and categories sound like they come from a different world, from another planet, spoken in a language untranslatable to the language of Muñoz’s work.

That different, incompatible, untranslatable language that does not really allow Muñoz’s work to be comfortably referred to as “time-based media art,” is time itself. Time, the material of durational art practices and of time-based art, has never been, despite all economic and political attempts, global. Time has always been historical—messy, heterogeneous, contradictory, unsynchronized. And it is a question of time, I believe, that makes some recent art from Latin America global and contemporary, able to be easily categorized under the universalist terms “time-based,” “installation,” and “public” art.

Why are some artists from Latin America taken up into the whirlwind of the global contemporary art world and not others? Is there any “thing” in the artworks themselves that elicits a fascination that makes some of them global and contemporary while others just don’t have that “thing”? Why are some contemporary artists from Latin America circumscribed within their local or Latin American contexts, never quite becoming part of the global art world while other contemporary Latin American artists are always automatically globally visible? Why do the institutions of the global art world seem to place some artists on the side of global and universal issues, and others as expressions, examples, and illustrations of local and national problems? In the post-medium, post-national grammar of contemporary art this would seem like a contradiction, a blind spot, or maybe just a perverse paradoxical characteristic of the global contemporary art world itself. Inextricably tied to the political and economic logic of neoliberalism, the restructured spatial relations in the jungle law of the deregulatory practices of the “free market,” where global interests, as we know, outweigh the considerations or borders of nations and communities. Yet as we also know, under the guise of “freedom” modern inequalities have increased dramatically, producing fractures, fragmentation, and disempowerment. These side effects of the current state of global financial capital have therefore reproduced the differentiation of certain sites as yet again markedly local,
which frequently—if not always—means remaining outside the global cultural circuit of circulation, connectivity, and visibility.

Without a doubt, contemporary art itself has pushed the art world to enlarge its geographically predetermined borders and to move beyond its Eurocentric ideas, and Latin America, in particular, has in recent years been the focus of much of this attention. Yet the art world continues to reiterate its own previous limitations whereby not all artworks seem quite equally global. Therefore, art often becomes precariously contemporary, for to be contemporary you must be global, and to be global you must somehow already be contemporary.

Muñoz’s work opens onto History—articulating a non-teleological, non-progressive, non-developmental, non-accumulative version of History and Time. It takes place in hesitation, wavering in the face of constant surprise. It is a displacement of and as a “lugar a dudas,” echoing the name of an art center in Cali that Muñoz has been directing for the last decade. This “place for doubts” is a space for thinking and reflecting on artistic practices and on the complexities of life today. It is a horizontal commons, a site for experimentation and formless practice that understands the artwork as experiential. There is no time for History in the global contemporary artworld.

ALLAN DESOUZA

**What It Is, Now**

Convention distinguishes between “still” and “time-based” media, but while this distinction serves some conveniences, it is more porous than we generally admit. What attributes would we ascribe to time-based media if we considered them, like material objects, as “still”? What if we considered material objects as time-based? What possibilities would open up within each medium if we consider all media as material form and time-based?

Since I work primarily with photo media, I will concentrate on its histories and particularities. I use photography as a time-based medium that, palimpsest-like, is sometimes durational within the same frame; sometimes it is multidirectionally sequential across many frames, like nonlinear cinema.

Conversely, I use text and video, ostensibly experienced as durational, to depict or recreate the experience of a single moment—a little like a snapshot—though my aim is toward a shimmering, oscillating, unstable moment. Since I am thinking about photography, my use of “shimmer” invokes Roland Barthes: “Difference is the very movement of dispersion, of friability, a shimmer; what matters is not the discovery, in a reading of the
world and of the self, of certain oppositions but of encroachments, over-flows, leaks, skids, shifts, slips.”

Deviating from Barthes’s understanding of difference as the instability of excess and contamination, whose encroaching movement indicates the passage of time, Henri Cartier-Bresson proposes photography as restabilized stoppage and containment. His coinage of photography’s “decisive moment,” “captured” by the shutter’s “release” (the scare quotes denote the medium’s conventional, though hardly neutral terminology) suggests that what is depicted is stilled, such that it then operates self-reflexively within the photographic frame.

The history of photography has created an archive of difference, yet photography’s “moment,” the photograph, treats and reduces everything in the world to the same quality of being a photograph. One can think of photography as producing categories of sameness, each with their own “style,” from the colonial “native type” to the glamour shot, from the family album to Instagram, from August Sander to Bernd and Hilla Becher, from the police mugshot to the celebrity photograph. The “essence” of photography is to contain difference; to prevent dispersion, friability, shimmer. To stop movement and to stop time.

The ubiquity of this conception, the stillbirth of the “timeless” moment (darkroom chemicals “fix” the image, preventing its further “development”), belies different temporal processes of the photographer scripting, crafting, orchestrating, choreographing, or waiting, predator-like, for an alignment of light, form, and action. The viewer too, can narrativize the photograph—as one might a cinematic still—by imagining what might happen before or after the moment documented. This is not literally (or literally) a narration, but a recognition of its performativity as a prescribed reiteration of, for example, gender coding, as in Cindy Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* series, 1977–80 (the reader will have already noted my own coding of photography’s masculine conventions as birth-envy).

The photograph depicts space by means of the convention of stopped time and movement (“still/ed life”), even if the stopped movement is understood only as the halted action of light. Other questions of form interrupt the conventions of the still/ed image and activate its durationality, whose extent is determined by the viewer as much as by the artist, though the durations of both, combined with the duration of the artwork, intersect with the durations of other things, beings, forces, and discourses. The viewer’s experience of duration is dependent on movement, which in turn is dependent on the traversal of space. Without this experience of movement in/ across space, our sense of duration is limited (we tend to substitute time measurement for actual duration). This is precisely what photography does: it appears to remove movement; it even appears to remove its own space as a photograph.

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Our tendency is to view the photograph not as a material object that occupies its own space, but as the illusory, yet utterly convincing depiction of a nonexistent other space, which continues to exist now only in its depiction.

Despite the terminology of stopping time and motion (and emotion) that is typically used to describe it, the photograph always exists temporally—that is, historically, its duration extending at least from the time of its shutter release or its making (Ansel Adams: “You don’t take a photograph, you make it”) to the time of its viewing. Add to that the duration of influences and references, the preconception or “pre-moment” that leads toward the making of the work, and the postpartum or “post-moment” that determines its circulation and interpretation. Add to that photography’s constantly changing technical and stylistic forms, and its re-presentation or performance of preexisting representational codes.

My own *Lost Pictures* series, for example, is dated from 1962–2005, though even those dates might be taken as a fraction of the works’ actual formation (figs. 1 and 2). My father took the “original” photographs between 1962 and 1965; I remade them from 2004 to 2005. Similarly, my *Redactions* series reworks paintings by Paul Gauguin and Henri Rousseau. The works, then, “originate” from the 1880s at least, though one should also

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**Figure 1.** Allan deSouza, *Arbor*, from the *Lost Pictures* series, 1962–2005, 40" × 60", digital print. Courtesy of the artist and Talwar Gallery, NY.
track and date the influences on the two artists, including perhaps the pre-
Columbian art collected by the infant Gauguin’s mother. I scanned mono-
graphs of the two artists published in the 1960s and have been exhibiting my
prints since 2010. These two bodies of work might fulfill a definition of what
now constitutes photography, though their “moment” spans decades and
centuries (perhaps even as far back as the fourteenth-century Incan
empire). My point, though, is that we can never fix an originating moment;
we can just make note of a pause midstream. As Karen Archey has noted,
artworks have multiple temporally located “activation points.”

A correlating convention of photography/art is of timelessness: the
notion that certain (master)works transcend the temporal (Dorothea
Lange: “Photography takes an instant out of time, altering life by holding
it still”). If anything, photography commemorates the instant in memory
and in history, thereby reinserting it into a more enduring temporality, and
without losing its other activation points.

Our understanding and experience of duration is then dependent on
having a time frame (measured time), whether it is the length of a Holly-
wood film, the length of a human life, or the time frame of climate change.
Our experience of time’s passage and duration is especially acute, even in
crisis, when one time frame intersects with and disrupts the expected dura-
tion of another. These intersecting durations are what activate any thing or

FIGURE 2. Allan deSouza, Fountain,
from the Lost Pictures series, 1962–2005,
60” × 40”, digital print. Courtesy of the
artist and Talwar Gallery, NY.
being in the present, and it is encounters between these multiple durations that produce new meanings, new intersections, new durations.

Though typically understood according to the truisms of stopped time and being out of time, photographs, like other material artworks, are in a state of constant decay. At, or in, the same time, they exist in a state of perpetual immanence as they come into visibility and into meaning. Decay and immanence, both factors investigated and recorded by (art) history, are also time-based and durational. These durations—from prefabrication to postviewing—apply to any artwork in any medium. Our everyday understanding is that every “thing” comes to an end, an ending marked by a change in form or energy sufficient to transform a thing into something else. A computer is no longer a computer when it is broken down into its component parts. A mouse is no longer a mouse when it has died and decayed into a mass of fur and bones (“It was a mouse,” we might say, though we might not have a succinct name for what it is now). Similarly, we haven’t yet named what, how, or when photography is now.

SUZANNE GUERLAC

My first question about “time-based art” is what kind of time are we talking about? I am convinced by Henri Bergson’s argument that, unless we are dealing with lived, or concrete, time, we might as well be talking about space. And this of course introduces the question of “life,” an increasingly fraught question in today’s scientific/technological/computational world, the precarious Anthropocene world we try to live in. These are the questions that direct my research.

Photography as a Time Art. I have been interested in photography as a time-based art. Of course this is not the conventional view: photography is usually opposed to film as a still medium to a temporal one. We could say that ever since the Lumière brothers engineered the capacity to reconstitute the images of chronophotography into an apparently seamless temporal unfolding through projection—ever since the cinematograph was exhibited at the Palace of Industry at the World’s Fair of 1900—photography became, retroactively, a still.

Stillness, though, did not come naturally to early—or slow—photography. The sharp image of a daguerreotype represented victory over the relatively long exposure time necessary to register an image. It required a performance of stillness. It required energetically suppressing lived time, which entails movement, even as this living time was recognized as an
essential part of the photographic process. In 1839, the art critic Jules Janin conveyed the automatism of the daguerreotype by affirming that everything is equal before the sun. It is as if the sun were a vast organ of attention that took in everything before it at one go, at the speed of light. But he immediately points out that the sunlight is not a stable, measurable, entity. It varies according to the concrete circumstances in which it is embedded: not only fixed parameters such as the hour of day, the time of year, and exact location, but also variable atmospheric conditions, such as wind, humidity, and the quality of the air. All of these nuanced factors affect the time of exposure and development. Slow photography seems to have to do with absorbing concrete time into matter. Henry Fox Talbot (who made photographs on paper from the 1840s) reminds us in *The Pencil of Nature* that light touches paper and that paper (with all its specific qualities) receives this touch. The photographic act is a material gesture that occurs in time. Moreover, once registered, the image is merely virtual until it comes into appearance—arrives—through processes of development. Where is the image during the time of the latent image? How does this time get accounted for? Photography implies an event of apparition, not the mechanism of a copy machine. All of this gets elided when photography speeds up, when it is rationalized and identified (as in Roland Barthes’s *Camera Lucida*) with dead time.

*Critique of the Cinematographic: Bergson and Proust.* I am interested in the force of Bergson’s critique of the cinematographic. I don’t think Gilles Deleuze has addressed Bergson’s critique adequately. Bergson argues that the cinematograph is not an apparatus of time art. He claims it gives us *faux time*—a fiction of spatialized time (one thing coming after another at calculated intervals) and a depiction of merely abstract movement. He turns the cinematograph into a powerful critical figure of false epistemology and false metaphysics. For Bergson it epitomizes the fundamental illusion of the whole history of Western philosophy: its obsession with space (with what is measurable) and its suppression of durational time, where the past gnaws at and alters the future. Bergson reveals the cinematographic to be not only a false time art—or an art of false time—but also a symptom of bad thinking that, in his last work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, he associates with logics of unsustainable economic practices and political injustice. Taking duration seriously implies critique from the perspective of the livingness of all living beings.

Marcel Proust incorporates the thrust of Bergson’s critique of the cinematographic into *In Search of Lost Time*. He evokes it twice in *Time Regained*, when Marcel thinks about what kind of writing might be worth undertaking and rejects conventional literary realism and factitious aesthetic vocations. In Proust, as in Bergson, the rejection of the cinematographic model implies the rejection of a false conception of the real. It is crucial to Proust’s
attempt to invent a new fictive form, one bent by anachronism and fleshed out by improvisation, in which the reader engages with time as it happens. In Proust, the critique of the cinematographic goes hand in hand with a brilliant deployment of what I call *photographies*—that is, the full range of photographic processes, acts (including taking and viewing), and metaphors—that alter the temporal dynamics of his narrative. When we pursue these lines of force in Proust’s writing, we find that Marcel/the narrator is not struggling to recollect and represent the past; in the body of the novel, our protagonist struggles to make contact with the real as time passes. Writing about Proust and photography has led me to reexamine Barthes’s reflections on photography. Attending to Barthes’s reading of Proust together with his discussions of haiku and photography (Paul Nadar’s photographic archive of Proust’s world) suggests a view of photography quite different from the one we find in his fraught attempt to theorize the essence of photography, *Camera Lucida*, and to my mind one that is much more interesting.

*Life in the Age of Mechanical (Re)Production.* This is the broader question that interests me: how are we going to think “life” not only in the age of mechanical reproduction (of what were once unique and timeless works of art) but also in the age of mechanical (re)production of life? Today scientists designate various “material substrates” for life: software (materialized through computer imaging), hardware (or robotics), and wet (or biochemical) substrates. Increasingly, life is defined in terms of self-replication, often achieved computationally. Bergson defined life as matter soaked in time. “Everywhere where something lives,” he writes, “there is, open somewhere, an inscription of time.”

Openness to time is the distinguishing feature of the living. This is how Bergson marks a critical divide between the living and the inanimate, the artificial or the dead. The divide may not hold as clearly as it did in Bergson’s day, given current research in “living technologies” (artificial life, both chemical and computational), but this is precisely why it is so important to attend to it and to the social and political effects associated with erasing it. From my (Bergsonian) perspective, questions of time arts (among them: which ones really are time arts in the durational sense?) and of life or livingness, are intertwined. By confusing spatial “arts” (even those that unfold in clock time) with durational time arts we confuse the living and the nonliving, blurring the lines between them.

For Bergson, the suppression of concrete or durational time implies a kind of suppression of life. Just as Bergson found in the cinematograph a metaphor for metaphysical illusions and the suppression of time, I find in
slow photography a figure for duration, as it pertains to livingness. I am interested in the way early photography could be said to soak matter in time. To think and speak about it requires that we consider the embeddedness of various rhythms of absorption of time (or of light) in concrete networks of dynamic material conditions. This invites us to think differently—not abstractly, not in terms of data, or repetition, or information, not in terms of quantification (or what Bergson calls spatialization), but in terms of concrete relations and interrelations, of giving and taking time.

SANSAN KWAN

What Is the Time of Contemporary Dance?

Throughout the “Time Zones” project at UC Berkeley’s Arts Research Center (ARC), we participants have explored various forms of time-based art, connecting conversations about durational performances in a museum context with discussions of contemporary dance. The descriptor “time-based” may be more necessary in the visual arts in order to designate forms of non-object-based, experiential, or durational art, as opposed to what we understand the usual conventions of visual art to be. To call dance “time-based,” however, might be considered redundant. Nevertheless, despite the presupposition that dance is always already time-based, I would like to think here about the “time of dance” in this contemporary moment, and to think about what (and when) is contemporary dance.

It might be said that because dance, by definition, occurs in time, it is always contemporary, it is always “with time.” Nonetheless, there remains anxiety over the need to identify specific aesthetic markers under the category “contemporary.”

Perhaps in order to enable a theorization of current work we want to imagine that the work is part of some unifying trend, some consistent logic, or some aesthetic, political, cultural, or intellectual imperative that drives it. We aim to identify recognizable traits as a way to name something about the era in which we live. That is, we constantly seek to align the “contemporary” with a series of aesthetic preoccupations while also reckoning with it as a temporal designation—it is the dance that is happening now.

The problem with the doubled value of the term is that it hinges that which is contemporaneous to a stylistic definition of what is contemporary.

This hinging risks excluding an artist whose work does not look like what we have determined to be contemporary. Thus, she might not be regarded as coeval with her “contemporaries.” Exploring dance as a “time-based art” across global contexts, it becomes apparent that there is a racial and ethnic
dimension to this problem, to this conflation of the temporal and the aesthetic. “Contemporary dance,” as an aesthetic genre, is dominated by Euro-American artists. And many of the most oft-cited works across dance and museum worlds are curated within a Euro-American frame. Are global artists who do not fit the prescribed style then not “contemporary”?

Let’s consider the introduction to a collection called *Dance* in a series called “Documents of Contemporary Art,” where Andrée Lepecki (also a contributor to this issue of *Representations*), argues that the ontological nature of dance itself—its “ephemerality, corporeality, precariousness, scoring, and performativity”—lends it an automatic contemporaneity. It is, by definition, always of the moment, always cutting edge. This formulation adds another layer to the “timeliness” of contemporary dance. To the temporal situatedness denoted in the idea of the contemporary (that is, the fact that contemporary dance is the dance that is happening in this time period), Lepecki adds the ontological definition of dance as a time-based art, of dance as inherently in time, thus inherently contemporary. Lepecki goes on to explain that these constitutive qualities of dance, when incorporated into a visual arts framework, provide the potential for political and aesthetic radicalism. That is, when placed alongside the visual arts or, for example, framed within the institutional structures of a museum, dance “as a practice of contemporaneity” is radical. His formulation feels viable when he elaborates it within the situation of Western concert dance as it is integrated into the conceptual visual arts, but I am not certain it works in all contexts. He argues that dance “as a practice of contemporaneity” opens up political possibilities in other arts.

What are the politics of dance as contemporaneity within the world of dance itself? As it turns out, the term “contemporary dance” is vexed and contested across various dance genres. It does not mean the same thing in all dance communities. In this short article I briefly explore the various understandings of contemporary dance within concert, commercial, and “world dance” contexts. I would venture that even if dance, by ontological definition, is a practice of contemporaneity, notions of what looks contemporar}

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can provide some insight into the ways that high-art dance, popular dance, and non-Western dance are increasingly wrapped up with each other and, at the same time, this juxtaposition can shed light on the ways the separate dance worlds reveal our cultural and political prejudices, as well as the forces of the market. In thinking more largely of dance as it joins the visual arts and the broader category of “time-based art” in a global context, it makes sense to understand the time of dance as inherently contemporary. I want to explore more specifically what contemporariness means within various categories of dance practice.

**Contemporary Concert Dance.** In the concert dance arena “contemporary dance” is sometimes used interchangeably with the terms “modern,” “postmodern,” “experimental,” “conceptual,” or, in New York City, “downtown.” Sometimes it is defined against “modern” and “postmodern”—in the sense of both period and form. Sometimes it is called “post-postmodern,” or even “contemporary modern.”

Formally speaking, contemporary dance might include release technique and/or contact improvisation (sometimes considered the techniques of postmodern dance), floor work, various modern dance techniques (those of Martha Graham, José Limón, Lester Horton, Erick Hawkins, Merce Cunningham, and so on), and/or ballet. It increasingly draws on non-Western forms (that is, African and African diasporic dance, Asian martial arts, yoga) and street dance forms. Contemporary dance often requires a dancing body that is highly versatile across a variety of skills—what Susan Foster describes as the “hired body.”

On the stage, it might incorporate spoken text, multimedia, even virtual reality. It is often cerebral and antispectacle (though not always), opposed to the dramatic or the excessively expressive (though not always), highly formal or sometimes deliberately pedestrian. It often values process over product; it experiments with nontraditional spaces (these frequently include museums) and nontraditional spectator-performer relationships. Often, it is collaboratively choreographed. It can be critically self-reflective. It seems to develop or, some would argue, merely rehearse many of the explorations of postmodern dance in the context of a new era. Like postmodern dance, contemporary concert dance makes frequent affiliations with the visual arts.

Frédéric Pouillaude declares that there is no “epochal figuration” (“Scène and Contemporaneity,” 125) for dance today; there is no unified aesthetic for contemporary dance. He goes on, however, to identify a “new French scene” (125) and to ascribe five attributes to this new scene. (He also argues, like Lepecki, that “presence” is a constitutive fact of dance.) What is central to this “mutation” (134), this new shift, is a preoccupation with
contingency and relationality (that is, dances made via fleeting collaborations; dances created only for their immediate local conditions and not repeated; dances that are self-conscious about process). These preoccupations, he asserts, are what make contemporary dance contemporary, not in a historical sense, not contemporaneous in time, but in an “extra- or para-historical sense” (134). Thus Pouillaude resists both the temporal designation of “contemporary” and the aesthetic designation, while at the same time describing an aesthetics of contemporary dance that is tied to a temporal attitude.

**Contemporary Commercial Dance.** Contemporary dance as it is practiced in the commercial/competitive dance world mostly does not share the aesthetic interests of concert dance. Epitomized by the television show *So You Think You Can Dance*, contemporary commercial dance is emotive, dramatic, and virtuosic. It is most often normatively gendered and decidedly heterosexual. It is usually performed to pop music and dramatizes the lyrics of the song (and thus is often conflated with or related to “lyrical dance”). It is a popular mode that, for the most part, has no place in the contemporary visual art world—unless it is being parodied or placed in quotation marks (see, for example, Alexandra Bachzetsis or Phil Collins).

At the level of technique there is certainly resemblance and crossover between commercial and concert contexts. Looking at a dance studio’s class descriptions and the material taught, it can be difficult to determine whether a particular contemporary class is geared toward the commercial or the concert dance genre. Interestingly, though, modern and postmodern dance are not named as sources in contemporary commercial dance, whereas, as I have said, contemporary concert dance is quite often explicitly conscious of its modern and postmodern dance heritage. This fact is fitting, since what seems to distinguish commercial from concert dance is less the movement vocabulary and more the artistic motivation. I suggest that postmodern dance, especially, is less characterized by a distinct movement vocabulary and more by artistic imperatives—imperatives that are not of interest to commercial dance makers.

The indifference to postmodern dance is not only aesthetic, however; it also confirms commercial dance’s commercialism. Elizabeth Freeman posits a notion of queer temporality, an anachronous, asynchronous crossing to and between other times, as a form of resistance to heteronormative, capitalist-driven linear time. Giorgio Agamben discusses “contemporariness” (not “contemporaneity,” which he connotes as being of the current time) as a “singular relationship with one’s own time, which adheres to it, and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it.” Agamben’s contemporariness might be practiced at any period in history; what characterizes it is
a reflective consciousness of the present and its relation to a time beyond. Art historian Richard Meyer sees this kind of contemporariness in contemporary art. I think a good deal of contemporary concert dance also engages this crossing of time, citing and circling back to the past, calling itself “contemporary modern” or “post-postmodern,” recycling/reenvisioning postmodern tropes. On the other hand, the fact that commercial dance neglects to cite modern or postmodern dance places it in the seemingly spontaneous present tense of neoliberalism—commercial contemporaneity rather than Agamben’s reflexive contemporariness.

Pop artist Beyoncé offers an example of the key qualitative and political differences between commercial and concert dance. A few years ago she was reprimanded for producing a music video that stole, phrase for phrase, cut for cut, choreography from an Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker/Thierry de Mey dance film. While the film was an experiment in repetitive breakdown and a critique of female objectification, the music video capitalized on hypersexuality. In other words, while the movements were the same, the motivations were totally contrary; thus making one work avant-garde and the other pop. Discussions in the legal world suggest that because the dynamics and the context of the two dances are different, Beyoncé’s version might not be an infringement of copyright. Despite being constituted by exactly the same choreography, the dances are distinct. Perhaps parsing the difference between commercial and concert contemporary dance is about paying attention to attitude and motivation; like following the rule of thumb for pornography: “I know it when I see it.”

Contemporary Non-Western Dance. Throughout this special issue, critics, scholars, and practitioners explore time-based arts in a global contexts. In considering the global it is important to remember the fraught nature of temporal terms like “contemporary” and “modern” and the ways they historically have been conflated with the geographical and cultural, that is, with the West. In non-Western art “contemporary” is a necessary qualifier when we do not mean to refer to traditional forms. Without it “Asian dance,” “African dance,” or “Native American dance” is immediately assumed to be traditional. Another way to think about this is that “Asian” becomes the necessary qualifier for contemporary work that comes from Asia because “contemporary dance” is otherwise assumed to be Western. So “Asia” is yoked to “traditional,” and “contemporary” is yoked to “Western.” It is difficult for choreographers to be both Asian and contemporary. Often “contemporary Asian dance” is really just Western contemporary dance with a few traditional gestures or costume choices that signal “Asianness.” Or it is slotted as contemporary Asian dance simply because the choreographer is from Asia, while the work itself replicates the movement vocabulary of
contemporary concert dance. And what of choreographers of traditional non-Western dance forms who are innovating within their traditions, without adopting the shapes of Western contemporary dance? Ananya Chatterjea, dance scholar and choreographer in the classical Indian Odissi form, grapples with the universalizing hegemony of contemporary dance technique:

I found myself confronted with one question repeatedly: How could I consider my work contemporary if I was still using footwork and hand gestures? ... Every time, the suggestion lurking around the corner was that “contemporary” choreography had a particular look, and other imaginings of what might be described as contemporary had to translate into those terms in order to be recognized as such.34

“Contemporary dance” becomes a dominant set of aesthetic values that serves to subsume even as it claims to welcome. Non-Western artists, then, must either conform or risk illegibility. Of course, the market for dance requires a delicate balance for non-Western artists, who must look sufficiently different and enough the same in order to be desirable on Euro-American stages. The fact that some non-Western forms are also being incorporated into what we call contemporary technique further complicates the landscape.

Conclusion. Placed within the wider category of time-based art in a global context, the “timeliness” of dance is a given. Within this wider arts framework, “contemporary dance” fails to be recognized as a collection of fraught categories but is usually known only as the form of contemporary dance practiced by Euro-American experimental concert dance choreographers.35 A closer look at “contemporary dance” within the world of dance itself, however, evokes both recognition and anxiety across concert, commercial, and world dance communities. If we adopt “contemporary” as exclusively a temporal designation, presumably the field is then opened up to all forms. This risks giving the term no real locus of identification, no way to mark the social, cultural, or political significance of a moment in history. If, however, we localize and delimit “contemporary” as designating a coherent set of aesthetics, then we relegate so many other forms to the status of the “not contemporary.”

I’m not arguing that we can disambiguate the temporal and aesthetic valences of the word “contemporary” as it relates to dance. Certainly we could use other terms when we want to emphasize either present era or specific style: “synchronous” or “current,” “experimental” or “lyrical.” I’m merely saying that the double meaning of the term leads us to question the intertwined relationship between artistic style and ideas of artistic development, as well as the political implications of this intertwining. The contending valences of its use across the three contexts of concert, commercial, and world
dance can reveal particular attitudes: about what counts as “high art,” how market neoliberalism functions, how gender and sexuality norms are reinforced, and how colonialism casts its shadow, to share a few examples.

**ANNEKA LENSSSEN**

**Delay, Displacement, Pixelation**

Syria. In 2011, the name did not yet signify a refugee crisis or a front in the ISIS brand of global terror. During the year of the so-called Arab Spring, Syria harbored an active, if scattered, revolutionary movement, as became discernable, occasionally, in pockets of nighttime protest and anonymous actions. Members of this resistance understood that they needed to establish legibility for the international news media, which was then avidly monitoring public squares. But with Syrian regime forces willing to shoot both protestors and journalists, it would not be possible to generate an image of a 500,000-person rally. Instead, protesters ventured into the streets in small and vulnerable formations, carrying camera phones to broadcast documentation live, while the Local Coordinating Committees of Syria (LCCS) worked to tabulate footage on social media, issuing notices of new activity countrywide. But the same networks also broadcast footage of deaths. Once their phones began to record assassinations by sniper, including those of the camerapersons themselves, the footage—showing not blood but instead the suddenly blanked screen of the face-down lens—was also posted to YouTube, bearing such titles as “Syrian Youth Films His Killer in the Last Moments of his Life.” By then, the fraught work of “coordination” entailed traversing a temporal gap, running messianic errands between past events and a present that might redeem them.

I found Shannon Jackson and Julia Bryan-Wilson’s invitation to reflect on the stakes of time-based art and cross-media practice for this special issue to be challenging, in part because it prompted me to think again about the lost time of that Syrian revolution. What would have come to pass if the LCCS had succeeded in gaining recognition for their movement? Would our collective recognition have filled death with meaning, inoculating it against the illegibility of civil war? And I marvel, too, at how our own networked art world engaged a version of these questions in 2011, briefly contemplating the stakes of Syrian protest images within a disciplinary desire for a revolution. In June of that year, the essay “The Blood of the Victim: Revolution in Syria and the Birth of the Image-Event,” by Jon Rich, circulated via the e-flux platform to some 90,000 subscribers, making the provocative proposal that the Syrian image-event (the protestor who films
his own death) be understood as an avant-garde invention.\textsuperscript{37} The essay proposed that the films made by protestors in Syria had finally closed the gap between witnessing and acting, which is to say the very intolerable gap that had already driven photojournalists such as Kevin Carter to suicide. Because Syria’s citizen-protestors showed no hero protagonists at all in their films, its argument went, they had closed their images to external interpretation, achieving a kind of radical autonomy and thereby establishing their “exclusive right to decide the future of their country.” Rich’s proposal, which pushed the difficulties of solidarity in a digital age to an almost absurd conclusion, sparked immediate debate, prompting at least two letters to the \textit{e-flux} editors that contested its circumscribed take on the work of the image.\textsuperscript{38} But the essay’s critique was as surreptitious as it was activist in its dismantling of revolutionary conventions. Indeed, it drew its central provocation—the transposition of a Syrian struggle against death into the frame of art world conventions—from the playbook of Lebanon’s famed “postwar generation” of artists and thinkers, who, in the aftermath of the Lebanese civil wars, 1975–90, had used conceptualist strategies to explore the wars’ destabilizing effects on perception and memory.\textsuperscript{39}

Can images be used to interrupt the intolerable wait for a transformative resolution, restoring time to everyday life? As an art historian who researches painting and politics in Syria of the 1940s, ’50s, and ’60s, I know that the problem of trying to redeem livable time from the national image lay at the very heart of the Syrian artistic project. For the generation of artists, writers, and party leaders who came of age during French Mandate rule over Syria, 1920–46, the knowledge that the Bilad al-Sham region had been cut and cauterized into state forms (Mandatory Syria and Lebanon, Mandatory Palestine) often served to link a mythopoetics of death to the mythopoetics of the avant-garde. The work of this generation often invoked “Syria” as a space of cyclical history: a continuum of martyrdom and rebirth, running from the sacrificial cults of Mesopotamia to the blood-soaked events of their own lives. The “new poets” of the Beirut-based poetry revue \textit{Shi’r} (1958–64), for example, often mobilized notions of the collective life-in-sacrifice they understood to be native to the Syrian landscape, linking Tammuz, Jesus Christ, the Prophet Muhammad, Husayn ibn Ali, and others into a long genealogy of messengers both true and false. As the anthropologist Talal Asad has described it, this \textit{Shi’r} project was a secularizing one; its many theological references served not to venerate but rather to multiply prophets and idols in deflationary ways, disrupting the inherited authority of religion.\textsuperscript{40} Artists, too, explored the redemptive possibilities of drawing a distinction between the momentary death event and the mythical life-blood of the land. Perhaps most notably, in the years immediately following the 1963 military coup that brought the Ba’th Party to power, the Syrian
painter Fateh al-Moudarres—a friend of the Shi’r circle and a revered figure of Arab modernism—began to treat his paintings as sacrificial objects, invoking the intricate temporal relations that implicated his canvases in the fate of others (both human and painted). He worked serially, producing innumerable paintings in pigment and sand with part-whole conjunctions of bodies and faces at their center. To Shi’r critics, these hanging figures read as iconographies of Christ, signifying the fateful continuum of torture and torturer, and repentance and condemnation. Yet al-Moudarres was just as interested in mobilizing his paintings as physical presences. In artist statements, he described staging confrontations between the unsettling surface of the painting and the viewer, thereby displacing viewers from a space of illusion and pushing them into a shared, profane register of bodies where myth could be broken down into a temporality of everyday life. The “faces cast in lead, love, and silence” that his paintings comprised, he wrote in 1963, had the power to affect even his own psyche as maker. He aimed to abdicate the role of artist-as-god so as to stand “at the canvas beside humanity” in its most accursed state.

Each subsequent year of the Ba’th Party regime only brought new conflicts over national representation in Syria, and many broke along the threshold of the image-event. I think of the film Everyday Life in a Syrian Village, a haunting feature-length documentary by filmmaker Omar Amiralay and playwright Saadallah Wannous, made between 1971 and 1974. Commissioned by the Syrian National Organization for Cinema, the project was conceived as a politicized one in the “conscientizing” mode of Third Worldist cinema, and aspired to capture the internal relations of al-Muwaylih, a desolate farming village outside Deir al-Zour that had been earmarked for a massive Euphrates dam improvement scheme. Once the filmmakers visited al-Muwaylih and talked to its residents, however, they shed their illusions about the regime’s claims to development. As Wannous later recounted in a melancholic newspaper column, their interviews with villagers revealed that life in al-Muwaylih remained outside the progressive Syrian history manufactured by the state. Village leaders could not identify the date of the last war with Israel, let alone enter into the promised future of military redemption in Palestine. For Wannous, this signaled the emptiness of the promises. As he put it, the peasant knew no images “other than the land that absorbs his life,” and that gave him “no more than enough to slightly delay his death.” In response, Amiralay and Wannous made a film to undermine all top-down pretense to revolution in the countryside. Some scenes follow an agitprop model very closely, including use of freeze frames and the Frantz Fanon quotation, “Every spectator is either a coward or a traitor.” But others open into the doubt and ambiguity of everyday subsistence. A key scene takes place in a mosque, where men have gathered
for a collective Shi’a ritual. By a series of camera pans across the group, we see men who had been drumming and chanting begin to rock and convulse, falling to the floor. The sequence builds suspense as more bodies continue to fall, only to end abruptly with a zoom into focus on a single body extending radially across the *shamsa* pattern of a Persian rug (fig. 3). As the viewer confronts the lifeless body, she only belatedly discerns a slight heaving of the chest and moving of the lips in an unknown chant. The power of this scene comes from its abdication of the film’s driving call to political action. The status of the body becomes ambiguous, at once an immanent promise of movement into collective action and a useless vessel to be discarded in the event of final redemption.

![Still from Everyday Life in a Syrian Village, directed by Omar Amiralay (Damascus, 1974).](image)

**Figure 3.** Still from *Everyday Life in a Syrian Village*, directed by Omar Amiralay (Damascus, 1974).

Of course, the appearance of mythical references and popular mysticisms is hardly exceptional in a postcolonial context; Fanon’s own writing on national culture famously insists on them as a model of vitality, a whole body of efforts made by people to “describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence.” But I have been interested in how al-Moudarres and Amiralay worked within the Syrian networks of cultural effort, using their images not to show but rather to induce consciousness, to move from image to bodies outside the shot. And conversely, I am interested in thinking with the image-event and its apparent closure to culture. This is not because it succeeded in restructuring the proof of the revolution’s popular sovereignty (we know it did not), but rather because the purportedly closed image would complicate the...
parameters for a time-based practice in new media. Here, one must consider the lecture performance *The Pixelated Revolution*, by Lebanese performance artist Rabih Mroué, which debuted in New York in January 2012, not long after the circulation of Rich’s “The Blood of the Victim.” It too explored YouTube footage from Syria and the shifting status of revolution in a space of digital witnessing. By invoking pixels in the title of the work, Mroué signaled his concern with the shifting ontology of the picture, and its distinction from the analogue value of proximity, and his staging of the performance emphasized distance from images as well. Sitting at a table onstage, Mroué used notes, slides, and forensic zooming-in to deliver a relentlessly structural analysis of the culled footage (in one moving segment, he isolated instances of “double shooting,” or the symmetrical encounter between the sights of a mobile phone and those of a tank). But precisely because *The Pixelated Revolution* proceeded as a clinical appreciation of the images, it also proffered intimacy. Mroué played a role akin to revolutionary coordination, looking into Syria from afar but moving deeply into its pixels, trafficking across the messianic divide. To me, it is this approach to images that exemplifies the new and darkly hopeful possibilities of that moment. Although such coordination was a time-based art, it claimed no interest in duration. Time had already shed its bodies, dissembling its mythical past and becoming atomized, mobile, and even—fleetingly—available to counter-claim.

ANGELA MARINO

Fiesta Time: The “In-Time” of Durational Art and Festival Performance

I approach time-based art as a scholar of performance studies and Latin/o American studies with a focus on festival and carnival. Two years ago, I had the opportunity to work with the Arts Research Center at UC Berkeley as a coplanner of the conference Spiraling Time: Intermedial Conversations in Latin American Art. That event foregrounded time-based art as a domain of epistemological difference. In other words, how we understand the world is based in cultural perceptions of time that exist simultaneously and, at times, those perceptions are layered, incongruent, and untranslatable.

As “untranslatable” as time-based art may be, referencing here the conundrum that Diana Taylor describes in “Translating Performance,” evidence of duration can be questioned. To experience time that has passed and to learn from art as a model or enactment of duration became part of the collective work of the conference and a reflexive challenge to our...
respective disciplines. In my own research, I have found that these questions challenge presumptions at the heart of debates in my field. For example, in the study of ritual, fiesta, and carnival performances, events can last several days. Fiesta’s production process often occurs over long periods of time; the events of the festival can stretch for several days or even months. The idea of time takes on particular meanings linked to the mythos or story surrounding a festival occasion. The time of year is often marked by the festival, so that performance in itself works as a mnemonic for the passing of time and as a kind of clock that tells us it “is time”: time to plant the crops, time to build something, time to harvest, or even time to die.

In large-scale popular events like parades, processions, and mass ceremonies, duration is organized by thousands of people, which means that questions of “when” press against questions of “who,” and specifically “who will decide” the arc of festive time. That decision has always been deeply moral, social, and also political. If a fiesta is to be done in a particular way, at a particular time, on a grand scale in the public realm, a tremendous amount of backstage work and consensus-building is required. Economic forces and issues of representation and power often frame the dynamic. From a production standpoint, event organizers understand the “behind the scenes” legwork involved in bringing large numbers of people to agreement and action as resoundingly political. It also relies heavily on precedence and habitual acts. As performance studies scholar Richard Schechner understands it, the defining process of performance is the restoration of behaviors, small bits of behavioral scripts that are restored in all kinds of social experience. The act of festival performance, like other performance has been done before, and in this case continues in the expectation that it will be done again.

There is another aspect of what we might consider durational production that challenges the temporal boundedness of an event. Take the colonial fiestas of Mexico, recorded from the early 1500s, in which 25-foot arches of flower garlands lined the processional path at the major intersections and entrance of the colonial city center. Keep in mind that Tenochtitlan was a metropolis of several hundred thousands of people, a city that dwarfed most European cities of the time. This was no small affair. Multiple stages were erected with elaborate multilevel platforms and apparatuses for flying circus performers, including trapdoors and other moving parts of the stage. This event required thousands of people working in coordination and often over months. Given this perspective on the production process, we find that the neat seams between the “beginning” or the “end” of any event unravel. What brackets the performance act blurs into indistinguishable boundaries between the world of performance and that of everyday life and labor.
The field of performance studies debates this presumed divide between performances that are “belief-making” rituals and those that ask us to suspend our disbelief. This debate, again, affects ideas of time and durational performance. For example, Milla Riggio, following much of the carnival theory of the twentieth century, envisions Trinidad carnival as an experience removed from the regular workaday world. Not quite “out of time” but not quite “in time” she describes, “Trini time—carnival time” as “in itself a concept of time, with its own value, not the absence of time or the suspension of time, but another way of measuring time—the time scheme if you will, of carnival’s world elsewhere.”

I mostly agree with Riggio. Yet analyzing the elaborate production behind the scenes, the everydayness of the relations within the festival spaces (walking, chatting, eating, etcetera), and the duration of its activities, I find that fiesta time is a contiguous time, in many respects a fully contiguous “in time” that blends the extraordinary with that of the ordinary. Such a model embraces and integrates the moment of staging art as parallel to displaying art. These may be more readily recognizable in festival and carnival as moments that exceed the conventions of the stage, venturing into the marketplaces, streets, and commons.

As I’m writing this essay, I am returning from the Saint Paul Winter Carnival, in which the festive gales of winter are the cause célébre of this otherwise quiet Midwest community. Nestled against the northern Mississippi River in brown-stoned Saint Paul, Minnesota, King Borreas and his Royal Guard, along with the Queen of the Snows and the four directional Winds (East, West, North, and South), battle to hold their icy winter palace against the imminent fires of the Vulcan Krewe. This mythos of the winter carnival dates back to 1886 and was invented as a spirited response to a New York publication that described Saint Paul as uninhabitable due to its severe cold weather. The Chamber of Commerce and prominent citizens then declared a ten-day festival to fill the town with “warmth and gay celebration” in its most typically frigid month of January. A tourist attraction both locally and nationally, the carnival sells its experience in an idiom that is populist and sometimes self-consciously hokey.

Indeed, after 130 years of celebration, with many of its diehard followers in Lederhosen, flamboyant garter dresses, and boas, and with more sequins than snowflakes outside, the winter carnival marks a sense of time in the community. Beatriz Herrera, a UC Berkeley MA candidate and I interviewed the 2015 Vulcanus Rex, the trickster-like challenger to the Borreas fiefdom. While these role-played characters may seem entirely fantastical, this one told us of the ongoing play that reaches into daily life year round. In April of last year, several months after the festival officially ended, he told us of a public outcry over the failures of Vulcanus Rex to deliver his promise after
an unusually late spring. While no doubt the chiding was a way of making a fun public distraction, it revealed a form of time-telling rite that exceeds the conventions of beginning, middle, and end; its durational effects leak into the live performance of the social life of a community.

The variable of time then moves between what are considered the conventional expectations of the “show” to a much more unconventional frame over a sometimes unpredictable duration. The festival audience, too, is difficult to locate at this unpredictable event. Audience members become participants. Participants are also spectators. Both are moving parts bound only by their shared time and space. It would appear that we are entirely dependent on shared time and space in that dynamic relationship, and yet the degree to which presence or shared experience can be located is not always the same. No matter one’s state of readiness in the theater, when the curtain is drawn we say the show has begun. In festivals, the stages are often numerous, or moving, or nonexistent. The expanse of a processional parade can be the stage for both those participants featured on floats as well as those among the display lining the streets. Many performances begin early in the morning and end late at night; some endure over the course of several days and even weeks.

Adjusting the festival calendar to tourism is a fairly new practice, even in the world of modern leisure, perhaps indicating who really rules in the contemporary festival world. Although the arrival of dignitaries was sure to spur some of the most spectacular feasts and festivals since they were recorded, the idea that one would change the date of what were often religious holidays to those befitting an economically or politically convenient occasion was a privilege reserved for only the higher levels of authority. It also sets in place an entirely different program of spectacular entertainment, one paced to meet certain economic or political ends.

The carnival appeals to the mythos of seasonal time, yet its production is marked by the frame of governance. The court of Borreas and the Vulcan Krewe build their sponsorship base in more than a thousand public appearances throughout the year. They are also, as one participant said, “deeply entrenched” in the civic life of Saint Paul. The ambassadorship among the King Borreas courts makes an institution of its own. The case of the Saint Paul Winter Carnival again challenges us to reconsider the idea of carnival time in a world elsewhere, as political and economic objectives were part of its conception.

While the ice sculptures are already melting, suggesting the festival’s durational limits, this “work of art” endures through shared understandings of what transpires in time and, more important, through the relational, ongoing economies and rapport in the production of everyday life.
Present-Time:
The Art of Resistance in the Age of Cinematographic Ubiquity

Cinema since its beginnings has been inextricably linked to the time of the present. Its promise has been that a new form and technology can be invented for every historical moment, a form capable of rendering an image of the transforming present. Cinema’s radical aspiration is that, through its ability to record the present moment, it can reflect back to us the most relevant questions we are asking; the cinematic medium thus can bring us closer to the present, to create a deeper awareness and sensitivity to the indeterminacies of the movement of time.

Cinema’s temporality is therefore present-time. Our present is in the endless recordings of events that come to us instantly, through the ever-evolving moving image and sound technologies that access us constantly, in every waking moment of our lives. Present-time is constituted in this surfeit of mediation, at high speed, in which every moment is transformed into an event demanding our paid attention. We are drawn to one event and instantly to the next, often making it hard to know what is significant about the present as an experience. Clearly this isn’t a new revelation in relation to modern life. Cultural critics have been commenting on the loss of an ability to experience the present since at least the late-nineteenth century. But today there is an even more complex kind of transformation happening with the emergence of new digital imaging technologies and high-speed communications—in particular, the uses of miniature high-definition tapeless cameras, solid-state surveillance cams, and the now ubiquitous smart phone. How are we able to discern the importance and value of an archive of recordings that document every single moment of the day?

Watching documents of events as they unfold in real time has created an overwhelming sense of the present tense in our daily lives: the immediacy of the bird’s eye view of often unspeakable global violence—from drone attacks and beheadings in the Middle East to crazed shooters randomly massacring unsuspecting people with automatic weapons from Paris to Santa Barbara. The present in America is being defined by images of the intense police violence being waged against black communities in the nearly weekly shooting and beating deaths of unarmed black men, as well as the real-time documentation of acts of individual and community resistance in confrontations with the police or military.
Beyond the ubiquitous documentation by legions of professional journalists and anonymous mounted surveillance cameras, there is the emergence of a wide range of recordings by nonjournalists who have begun to use their smart phones or mini-digital cameras as an interface, as a form of self-protection or resistance in situations in which they are confronted by state authority—such as the police, Homeland Security, or border control (fig. 4). These happenstance filmmakers are creating a new cinema of present time, often by turning on the camera and placing it between themselves and figures of state power—thus destabilizing the power dynamic in situations they are witnessing or engaged in. Frequently the camera is simply turned on and left to run until the hard drive or chip is full. These recordings are then privately uploaded to the web or released to advocacy or news organizations; depending on how spectacular the recordings are, they circulate virally. These self-documenting videos have become a significant form of video activism.

What’s more, in the case of bystander filmers who witness police confrontations, the filmer is often pulled into the event in the act of recording, either by being confronted directly by the police officers who order them to stop, or by becoming a protagonist in the event as witness or interlocutor. In the case of some police shootings, the documenters have become as controversial as the event they have recorded. The name and fate of the filmer becomes part of the story. Almost all the men who recorded the recent high-profile police killings of unarmed men have themselves become victims of police and state harassment: Feidin Santana, who filmed the police shooting

**Figure 4.** Still from “Robert Trudell Rides into Pine Valley, California—US Border Patrol Checkpoint, Refuses Search,” YouTube video by Robert Trudell, 1:19, 31 May 2013, posted by Robert Trudell, 7 September 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIbBvBZYI80.
of Walter Scott in South Carolina; Ramsey Orta, who was jailed after filming Eric Garner’s death; and Kevin Moore, who filmed the arrest of Freddie Gray in Baltimore. All of these men became part of the event, both influencing what was happening in the moment of filming and then again shaping how the event was understood and responded to after the fact.

Such recordings focus our attention on the precariousness of moment-to-moment shifts in power dynamics between people: what exactly is said and how; how things move toward violence or escape it. These videos allow for the provisionality of the present to emerge within representation; they allow for an engagement with events that are unfolding in the present moment, where their direction is not yet determined and where their dynamics are not yet understood.

The act of filming becomes an integral part of the event as it is emerging—and can shape and reshape it in real time. Often people begin filming as a form of self-protection in contexts where the authority’s lack of accountability is obvious, even before anything explicitly damaging has happened. Many African American drivers have taken to mounting cameras on their dashboards to document and protect themselves from harassment and illegal treatment if, or more often when, they are stopped by the police. In these cases, recording begins before the unfolding interactions even become “events.” The recordings thus reveal how something unfolds in time; the event is not just what happened in front of the camera, it is also the act of recording itself and all that it places in motion.

These documents address the actuality of an event that is unfolding in the present moment, its direction and outcome not yet determined, its dynamics not yet intelligible or able to be narrated. Its presentness is precisely the emergence of the event; it can defy immediate understanding and coherence. Here, the goal of knowledge is not closure, but what is going to happen next.

The fascination of the present moment in these long-duration recordings comes from knowing that anything can happen—or nothing at all. Ironically, the unbroken linearity of these recordings exposes the present as a point of rupture and discontinuity that has the potential to destabilize the verisimilitude of linear time. Present-time simultaneously poses the threat of meaninglessness and of pure and uncontrollable contingency, both of which destabilize the narrative coherence and rationality of social control. As Mary Ann Doane has suggested in her work on time and contingency, “The present as a point of discontinuity marks the promise of something other, something outside of systemicity . . . [or] an anti-systemicity.” In the case of these videos, the state’s system of authority is disrupted by the presence of the camera and the chance that it will catch the police in illegal behavior. At the same time, it empowers the filmer to step out of that system’s discourse of presumed authority.

Reflections on Durational Art
In these uninterrupted recordings, the camera reveals the power of the state and the structure of an embodied, impersonal, brutal state authority (fig. 5). It makes visible, instant by instant, microshifts and changes in the situation and interactions, as each person reacts to the changing power dynamic between officers and filmer and the question of whether resisting authority will erupt into violence—or not. These durational recordings show a mechanics of resistance. And they show powerfully how resistance takes time—how energies, affects, and forms of negotiation are produced, built upon, or dissipated. In both cases, the present becomes the point of undecidability: nothing is inevitable, so narrative has no form; each instant is the disruption of another.

Like an irritant placed between the police and the person stopped, the camera opens a space for confrontation that would be unlikely to happen without its presence. The camera as a third term can reveal how systems have already broken down within the social order, as we see police illegally intimidating or acting outside the law with impunity. Not only are the acts of violence themselves being documented, but the possibility of their being recorded itself now becomes one of the contingencies these documents reveal. This is not to claim that the ubiquity of cameras will end the violent abuse of the citizenry, especially the abuse of African Americans by a militarized and self-regulating police force, but it is to say that these recording practices are changing the terms of the discourse, making clear that such police abuse is murderously real and occurring on a daily basis.

**Figure 5.** Still from “When You Stand Up, They Stand Down,” YouTube video by Shawn Thomas, 4:18, posted by Shawn Thomas, 4 February 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCcmFkr_Mr4.
At the same time, there is no guarantee that the videos themselves will be read as irrefutable evidence that the event took place as it is seen in the recordings.

The resistance seen in these videos is not only about defying police authority; in more general terms, these are performances of the possibility of resistance within the society of control, with its overwhelming technological intelligence and militarized apparatus directed at its own citizenry. The camera allows the filmer to use the act of filming as a way of transforming relations of power—showing police acting with impunity as they are illegally intimidating and brutalizing. In so doing, these unanticipated recordings create new forms of drama and character identification, and are effectively transforming public discourse and the political landscape.

Where these confrontations lead from moment to moment is often highly unpredictable; the presence of the camera changes the scale of power relations between the citizen and the police, causing the gaze to become bidirectional rather than singular. The videos reveal the precariousness of the image of state authority, laying bare the histrionic and often violent nature of its power by destabilizing the police’s performance of authority. The ability to publicly post the videos online, then, is implicit in the performances and has also given rise to media art and activist organizations associated with Black Lives Matter, CopBlock, WeCopwatch, NYC Resistance, and other community groups that are informing and instructing people on how to use their cameras and about their legal rights. The laws are being learned, challenged, and clarified in very public ways as a result.

Thinking about these recordings raises the larger question of the relationship amongst technology, resistance, and time. The overflow of technology in encounters between individuals and the state is staggering. In these recordings, one can see power circulating across and through various technologies, from gun to camera to phone to database. Just as subjects are targeted by visual technologies, they turn those same technologies back on the state, even as they risk freedom and bodily integrity in doing so. While these videos reveal cases of individual resistance, their micronature, interestingly, reveals larger structures of race, class, and gender at work, as different kinds of people come into contact with state power with varying consequences. In the process, these videos shift the terms of struggle, revealing both the potency and the precarious nature of state power. Present-time is marked by the potential of violence as the video camera documents its own destabilization of the interrelationships between domination and resistance. Still, it remains a question whether this technology will successfully mobilize the larger forms of resistance that can actually eliminate the precariousness of lives that are not valued.
“Time is Money, Efficiency is Life”

So declares one of the oldest propaganda slogans in the Chinese city of Shenzhen. Put up on a simple painted billboard in the 1980s in one of the first industrial zones created after the death of Mao, the slogan documents the exciting and radical nature of the reinvention of the political economy of China in the early years of Reform. Back in the 1980s, it was a slogan that proudly promised the opportunity to transform time, value, and social relations as China emerged out of central planning and into a market-economy mode of life. It summarized the spirit by which a whole new city and its integration with the global capitalist system was constructed—when construction teams proudly declared they could build tall buildings at the speed of “three stories a day.”

Throughout the 1980s, the quasi-state-run corporation that controlled the industrial zone, Shekou, where the billboard went up, would implement many employee-initiated reforms that shared decision-making power with workers. Some of these reforms were experiments in governance and voting that would come together in a top-to-bottom political movement known as the Shekou Storm. That movement, documented in local newspapers with the support of political leaders, anticipated many of the demands that university students would take to Tiananmen Square in 1989. Through and through, the early experiments in Shenzhen’s Shekou demonstrated the extent to which economic reforms in post-Mao China were integrated not only with political reforms but also with exciting, equitable, and productive forms of social life.

Today, the sign has been spruced up in bronze laser-cut letters, an English translation has been added, and colorful flowers have been planted around it. But now the slogan sounds more like an exhortation to survival. It is a slogan that American workers would understand as a command to increase individual productivity rather than as an invitation to imagine and to reconstruct. Shenzhen, and later the whole region in which it is situated, has become integrated into the global economy as the “workshop of the world,” but the ethics and rates of production of Shenzhen-based firms such as Foxconn are closely tied to those of Apple in Cupertino.

In the 2000s, Shenzhen added “art” to the list of products made there for global export. For the thousands of people in Shenzhen producing oil-on-canvas works for the global wholesale and consumer markets, painting was added to the activities for which a worker could set a price according to the time required to make the product, with the knowledge that the efficiency of production would determine his or her daily life. In the practice of
these painters, “time-based” art is quite literally about the rates of production necessary to earn a subsistence living. From Dafen, we can start to refocus the notion of time away from the viewer’s experience and back towards the producer’s life. In Dafen, there are rhythms: two weeks per order, two to twenty six paintings per day, so many square meters of production per year, so many dollars per square inch achieved at auction.

In 2006, when I began research on Dafen Oil Painting Village, where eight thousand painters were said to be producing five million paintings per year, my contacts in the village were through internationally exhibiting artists such as Christian Jankowski and Liu Ding. Jankowski and Liu introduced the art world to Dafen Village through projects that focused on the modes of production at the village itself, and their finished works were installations, performances, and conceptual art projects that incorporated series of paintings by Dafen’s painters. From an art-historical perspective, artists such as Jankowski and Liu were working within at least two well-established contemporary art traditions: the readymade and the delegated performance. From a Marxist perspective, they had outsourced the time-consuming labor of oil painting to Chinese workers and turned the subcontracting of labor itself into a marketing device. The then-emerging category of “time-based” art captured the performative and project-based aspects of their work, yet for some reason it failed to capture the classic (or material) operations here: artistic labor, measured by the labor-time of painting, was being procured by those who had access to the market of international art and the ability to extract surplus value out of structural inequities in the global artistic hierarchy. For Dafen painters, conceptual artists like Jankowski and Liu represented middlemen who paid for their labor-time but sold their products around the world at prices many multiples beyond what they were paid. These market and cultural tensions were what I turned my attention to in my writing on Dafen.

And yet, throughout my fieldwork, I continually encountered contemporary artists who also hired painters in Dafen or elsewhere in China to paint their paintings, but who did not work within the same Duchampian traditions as did Jankowski or Liu. When I visited Maccarone Gallery in 2009 to research the Jankowski works, the curator revealed that Maccarone represented another New York-based artist who also had his paintings painted in China, though it was not part of “the work” per se. Later on, I learned that artists like Kehinde Wiley did the same, but curators and registrars were at first not sure whether or not it was a “secret.” One artist in Los Angeles was open about the process but had been advised by his gallerist not to discuss it, and even to source portions of his work from professional painters in the United States just to avoid the “Made in China” stigma. In other words, these were artists for whom outsourcing to Chinese painters was an integral
part of their production, not a declarative conceptual move. Very few responded to my requests to interview them or to contact the Chinese painters who worked for them. Eventually the invisibility upon which they insisted seemed to me identical to the secrecy and anonymity that other middlemen in the trade (wholesalers, re-exporters) would likewise insist upon.

Historians of art work with the visible; that which is hidden, forgotten, or said to be incidental and unintegral to the work of art is left in only a theoretical and not a descriptive space. As Martha Buskirk observed about the place of the contract in minimalist versus conceptual art, artists can employ identical practices that nevertheless can have completely different significances in their construction of intention. The process of making practices invisible in the realm of intention often occurs at the moment when new media are named, or when new periodizations are set. In the formation of the “time-based” in contemporary art, we ought not forget that it takes place, for better or worse, against the backdrop of the massive globalization of artistic labor.

Notes

WEIHONG BAO

4. Although “indexicality” originated from Charles Sanders Peirce’s triadic taxonomy of signs—index, icon, symbol—the term has often been associated with André Bazin’s ontology of the photographic image to establish a privileged notion of realism in relation to photography and cinema’s capacity to capture the real, through a limited understanding of indexicality as trace and physical contact. As Mary Ann Doane astutely points out, Peirce’s understanding of index itself harbors two contradictory definitions, one as trace, the other as deixis, a gesture of pointing devoid of meaning. Charles Sanders Peirce, Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, vol. 2, Elements of Logic, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, MA, 1932). André Bazin, What Is Cinema?, vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, 1967). See Mary Ann Doane, “The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity,” Differences 18, no. 1 (2006): 128–52.
5. See, for instance, Song Hwee Lim, Tsai Mingliang and a Cinema of Slowness (Honolulu, 2014).
6. For a fascinating account of cinema’s continuing metamorphosis, expansion, and relocation, see Francesco Casetti, *The Lumière Galaxy: Seven Key Words for Cinema to Come* (New York, 2015).


9. Pantenburg has given the example of a “unique copy,” which restricts the use of a (digital) work in two spaces at the same time. Pantenburg, “1970 and Beyond,” 86.


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**ALLAN DESOUZA**


15. Space is delineated in order to designate it as a boundaried place, even if that “place” is now only the rectangular framing of the photograph itself.


17. Art restoration, which risks the loss of the ruin’s aura, is a refusal of decay.

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**SUZANNE GUERLAC**


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**SANSAN KWAN**

20. I note two examples of dance critics bemoaning the indecipherability of contemporary dance: In a 2005 article in the *New Yorker*, dance critic Joan Acocella writes, “Right now, New York’s ‘downtown’ dance shows no engulfing trends, as it did in the nineteen-sixties and seventies (conceptualism and politics), or in the eighties and nineties (irony and politics).” See Joan Acocella, “Mystery Theatre: Downtown Surrealists,” *New Yorker*, 8 August 2005, 94. In a 2001 dance review Claudia La Rocco writes, “For large stretches of ‘To the Ones I Love’ it is difficult to get any sense of a mind at work. The movement palette is boilerplate contemporary-international—ballet, modern, capoeira, yoga, hip-hop—with all of the various complexities and particularities smoothed out to create one vague patina”; see Claudia La Rocco, “With Bach as Innocent Bystander, Message for the Senses, Not the Mind,” *New York Times*, 30 September 2011.

22. This is analogous to the much discussed relationship between modernity, modernism, and modern dance. Danielle Robinson studies an earlier conception of “modern dance,” which referred to popular social dance forms of the early twentieth century in the United States, and she ties those forms directly to industrialization and modernity’s fraught relationship to black-white racial formation. See Danielle Robinson, *Modern Moves: Dancing Race during the Ragtime and Jazz Eras* (Oxford, 2015). Meanwhile, Sally Banes references the more common understanding of modern dance as the concert dance form of the mid-twentieth century in order to argue that postmodern dance actually reveals more of the hallmarks of artistic modernism than modern dance does. See Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Boston, 1980).


25. Shannon Jackson reminds us that determinations of what is radical and what is conventional depend on the framings we bring to each artistic genre. What is radical about theater to a visual art audience may be completely within the expected conventions for a theater audience and vice versa. See Shannon Jackson, “The Way we Perform Now,” *Dance Research Journal* 46, no. 3 (December 2014): 53–61.

26. One of the first substantive theorizations of “world dance” can be found in Susan Leigh Foster, ed., *Worlding Dance* (New York, 2009).


31. One online dance periodical describes it this way: “Chances are there are leaps and some eye-popping acrobatic tricks. The dancers are usually trained in ballet and jazz technique and able to lift their legs super high. The woman is generally wearing a short, empire waist dress and the man often forgets his shirt”; Nancy Wozny, “The Contemporary Conundrum,” *DanceSpirit*, 2010. http://www.dancespirit.com/uncategorized/the_contemporary_conundrum/.


35. Never mind that even the very idea of dance as “choreography” is based on a Western-centric model. Many non-Western, non-white dance forms do not operate with the notions of choreography as it is understood in the West. See, for example, Anthea Kraut, *Choreographing the Folk: The Dance Stagings of Zora Neale Hurston* (Minneapolis, 2008).

**ANNEKA LENSSSEN**

36. One most notable effort to read Arab Spring protests within an avant-garde frame is *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991–2011*, ed. Nato Thompson (Cambridge, MA, 2012), which included Egypt’s Tahrir Square among its list of engaged projects. The volume was published by Creative Time, a New York “public arts organization that works with artists to contribute to the dialogues, debates and dreams of our times”; http://creativetime.org/about/#mission.


39. On the postwar rubric, see Sarah Rogers, “Out of History: Postwar Art in Beirut,” *Art Journal* 66, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 8–20. I have confirmed that “Jon Rich” is a pseudonym, and that the author of “The Blood of the Victim” has connections to this circle. Out of concern for the author’s safety, however, I cannot reveal the author’s identity here.


42. Artist statement attributed to “Gallery One exhibition, February, 1963,” in brochure for a 1969 exhibition at the Sultan Gallery, Kuwait.

43. Ibid.
44. Saadallah Wannous, “Afkār” (Thoughts), al-Thawra (October 14, 1976). In recounting these experiences, Wannous was mounting a critique of the Syrian regime’s carefully managed optimism following the 1973 October War, which was buttressed by new economic support from petroleum regimes.

45. Although released in 1974, the documentary was immediately banned from Syrian theaters and never seen by the population it was intended to address.

46. This quotation, an exhortation to act rather than remain a spectator, appears as the final frame of their film. Argentine filmmakers Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, the theorists of the Third Cinema movement, had used the same Frantz Fanon quote to bracket their great film The Hour of the Furnaces (1968), apparently hanging it in banner form at screenings.


48. COIL Festival 2012, Performance Space 122, New York, January 9, 2012; I attended it then.

ANGELA MARINO


JEFFREY SKOLLER

52. Mary Ann Doane, The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive (Cambridge, MA, 2002), 106.