
Editorial Comment

Scaffolding the Medium

"Scaffolding the Medium" is the title of the second issue of the *International Journal of Screendance*; the title and its structure were developed during a seminar of the Screendance Network at the American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina in June 2010. This issue brings a number of historical texts into the debate on screendance practices as part of an endeavor to build a *variable* scaffolding, one that begins to both create a common knowledge base and also to support a kind of cantilevered interdisciplinarity. This issue contains five curated discussions which each take as their initial premise a key text that speaks to concerns relevant to the discourse of contemporary screendance. Each section editor then invited a number of artists and scholars to comment on the writings. The writings that catalyzed each section (which are not re-published here) include texts by Martin Heidegger, Amelia Jones, Laura Mulvey, Rosalind Krauss and Pia Ednie-Brown. The selected texts are not obvious screendance must-reads, but rather writings that have proved significant within different fields such as film theory, philosophy, and the visual arts. We hope that these texts and their commentaries will serve to stimulate current debates on screendance by creating common reference points and proposing possible histories and trajectories.

Screendance artist Kyra Norman selected a chapter entitled "The Pensive Spectator" from Laura Mulvey's *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006), in order to explore changes that have occurred in response to contemporary mechanical means of *stilling* the image. In response, filmmaker Miranda Pennell reflects on two of her works to explore different performative qualities of still and moving images. Drawing on Mulvey's text, she argues that a choreographic approach explores the materiality of the body much like the materiality of the filmic apparatus was questioned by avant-garde practices. Disruptions of a conventional flow of movement as well as displacements and delays in the moving image thereby invite a more reflective response on the side of the spectator whilst questioning perception itself. Performance artist Augusto Corrieri revisits a childhood memory to reflect on how the manipulation of time in media, domestic television, and the VCR have had an impact on how we understand the world and how we view ourselves.

Theorist Harmony Bench invited three dance scholars to reflect on Amelia Jones's essay, "'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation" from 1997, arguing that while screendance does not need to concern itself with questions of authenticity, it is nevertheless haunted by the debate surrounding live performance practices. As one of the respondents, Hannah Kosstrin compares and contrasts a notator's process of committing a choreography to the page with a videographer's production of a screenic document. For Bench, the different processes of observation and distillation of both these practices constitute methodological alternatives that could inform screendance aesthetics. Meanwhile, Jason Farman explores the asynchronous sensory engagement with screen media and its capacity to foster intimacy between participants. Jason Farman as well as Melissa Blanco Borelli's reflection on the impact of the bodily spectacle of popular music videos invite the question: what kind of sensory experiences, forms of embodiment, and

relational experience might screendance be able to generate in the receiver, given the proliferation of mobile platforms and interactive devices that permeate the everyday?

Scholar Ann Cooper Albright uses Martin Heidegger's 1954 treatise, "The Question Concerning Technology" as a portal to engage her respondents in questions about technological intentionality. Lisa Naugle and John Crawford focus on Heidegger's ideas about "enframing" as it relates to their own research in interactive technologies. Tom Lopez contributes a performative text from "the bifurcated twins' of *Techné* and *Poiesis*. Kent de Spain ruminates on the place of the body and nature within Heidegger's technological ideologies. And finally, Ann Dils undertakes an etymological investigation of screendance and the attendant metaphors which flow from its linguistic origins.

Artist/theorist Douglas Rosenberg chose Rosalind Krauss's 1976 essay, "Video: The Esthetics of Narcissism" as a look-back to the critical responses toward video art in its early days. Virginia Piper draws out Krauss's psychoanalytic and semiotic references in a consideration of the aesthetics of video art in 1976 in the context of screendance in 2011. Rodrigo Alonso notes Krauss's identification of a "new kind of performance art, one at the crossroads of the body and the media," while Claudia Rosiny focuses on video and its narcissistic potential in dance. Finally, Terry Sprague looks at the Krauss essay through the lens of "consumer visual culture."

Choreographer/artist Simon Ellis asked Pia Ednie-Brown to revisit an essay she had written over a decade ago, a piece that was originally written through the lens of architecture. Brown looks at the built environment and the virtual, posing philosophical questions about the affect of both. Dianne Reid and Lucy Cash offer commentaries in response to Brown, each improvising and performing Brown's text in individually personal ways.

This issue also features an edited transcript of a presentation by Professor Ian Christie, originally delivered at the first seminar of the Screendance Network at the University of Brighton in September 2009. Drawing on lectures he delivered as part of the Slade Lecture Series at the University of Cambridge, UK in 2006, Christie surveyed a history of cinema under the title "Cinema Has Not Yet Been Invented." In this presentation Christie places the research of the Screendance Network into the context of a wider contemporary review of cinema as an art form and examines debates across the twentieth century, which considered film variously as a mechanical advance, as popular entertainment, and as a discrete artform. Today, media practices such as popular narrative cinema and experimental film continue to represent conflicting views with regards to the potential and use of the medium. Such differences have created a healthy diversity within the field adding to theoretical discourses and references, distribution, and audiences. This is pertinent to the field of screendance, as artists and researchers attempt to differentiate distinctive bodies of critical enquiry. In order to fully grasp particular approaches, shared concerns and visions within the hybrid field of screendance a review of some of the concerns of the twentieth century may be useful.

The Artist's Pages feature an essay by filmmaker Adam Roberts, who reflects on his own shift from narrative filmmaking to screendance and the particularity of this later body of work. The discussion of Mulvey's "Pensive Spectator" is echoed in Robert's exploration of the flexibility of filmic time and space and the emphasis on presence within screendance. More specifically, Roberts contemplates the impossibility of stillness within the passing of

film time and the intrusion of the mechanism that the freeze frame constitutes, both of which play with the expectations, tension, and attention of the spectator.

To mark the 50th anniversary of Maya Deren's death and coinciding with a season of films and events dedicated to Maya Deren at the British Film Institute in London, UK, the issue includes a section on Maya Deren. This section has been put together by Elinor Cleghorn, who also curated the BFI season. For this issue of the *International Journal of Screendance*, Cleghorn reviews Deren's cinematic legacy in the context of early filmmaking and reflects on her writing, lecturing, and passionate advocacy of independent filmmaking. Following research in the Maya Deren Collection of the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Centre at Boston University, Cleghorn also selected a previously unpublished draft of a 1945 lecture by Maya Deren, entitled "Introduction to the Films," which Deren appears to have delivered as part of a film screening.

In the Re-Views section, we feature Scott deLahunta on Brian Rotman's *Becoming Beside Ourselves: The Alphabet, Ghosts and Distributed Human Being* (Duke University Press, 2008) and Claudia Rosiny on Daniel Belton's *Line Dances*, which is a program of seven dance films "for web and new media." Finally, Claudia Kappenberg and Sarah Whatley offer a report on the Screendance Symposium held at the University of Brighton in February 2011.

The aim of this, the second issue of the *International Journal of Screendance*, is not simply to cast a wide net or to determine what is inside and what is outside the canon of screendance. Rather, we are interested in exploring multiple lenses from diverse points of view in order to articulate contemporary concerns and visions within screendance. The broadening of the debates reflects a wider contemporary concern with discourse in a global community. In a first issue of a new bilingual, German and English edition of the art publication *frieze*, editor Jennifer Allen reflects on the problem of provincialism which has haunted most of the Western world for the last 300 years, but argues that it has finally given way to a perpetual motion of globalization.¹ *The International Journal of Screendance* feels a strong kinship with this position. In upcoming issues we aim to further expand the circle of contributors and readers and to also make space for regional voices or initiatives.

We hope that the texts and debates from across such polyvocal disciplines and practices will offer an interesting and stimulating read.

Claudia Kappenberg and Douglas Rosenberg, editors

References

- Allen, Jennifer. "Hat die Kunstwelt noch ein Zentrum/ Does the art world still have a centre?" *frieze* d/e (Summer 2011): 11–12.
- Christie, Ian. "Cinema has not yet been invented." Slade Lecture Series, 2006. Cambridge, UK. Information at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/news/press/dpp/2006012001>.
- Deren, Maya. "Introduction to the Films." 1945. Carbon copy of original material from the Maya Deren Collection, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

Notes

1. Allen, "Hat die," 11–12.