

## Art History in the Cinema Age

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The history of the art that has been produced over the last century appears more and more as a *history of art in the age of the cinema*. To be sure, it remains a history that is still in a written, printed and published form, but it is equally a history in which the moving image and the aspect of the audio-visual are more and more present. So, what has the cinema done to change art history? How can art history be undertaken with film? How should one engage with the task of studying the transformations of art history brought about by and through cinema which are still in progress? These are some of the questions that this article wishes to pose. After briefly recalling the powerful change of perspective and the emergence of new problematic brought about by cinema with respect to the discipline of art history, we will observe that, alongside the “art film”, a work of pure creativity, and the “film about art”, which falls into the documentary category, there was attested from the post-World War II period on what might be called the “art history film”, which was a genuine practice of the history of art *with and through the camera*. But, if there is therefore, in the history of art history itself, a chapter to be written on the “art history film” as a vector of knowledge, it is no doubt particularly necessary to open up reflection on what was, in the twentieth century and still is today, history *informed by and through the cinema*, in short, an art history in the cinema age, just at the moment when this age is making way for another, the age of electronic networks, which it broadly anticipated.<sup>1</sup>

### What changes has cinema made to art history?

In considering this question, we will leave aside the emergence of a new field of studies, namely film studies and cinema history, to concern ourselves more generally with the renewal of the gaze that the invention of the cinematograph allowed. A January 1920 survey by the journal *Le Film* was already underlining this: the close-up, slow motion, accelerated montage, the cutting together of different images, were just some of the various technical achievements which exercised a considerable influence on the way the world in general and the arts in particular could be viewed. In the article, the sculptor Bourdelle strongly recommended that a documentary on the masterpieces of the nation’s artistic patrimony should be presented for educational purposes at the end of each film session. For his part, in a July 1934 article entitled “The Cinematograph and the Arts”, Henri Focillon (1998) declared himself to be inwardly moved by the enlarged faces, the giant hands, the

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strange way shadows were projected and how light was “capable ... of treating space like a completely new milieu”.

From the moment of its first appearance, cinema historicised the other arts. In his pioneer work entitled *Beaux-Arts et Cinéma* (Fine Arts and Cinema) published in 1956, Henri Lemaître considered cinema as a medium which revealed the potentialities for movement and observational disposition present in the other arts that had preceded it: Lemaître believed that the camera played a type of midwife-role when applied to the work of art. There is thus not just a “before” and an “after” cinema, but there is painting viewed *by* the cinema, and painting *in the age of* cinema. Pierre Francastel was equally convinced that the cinema provided us with keys for understanding the “plasticity of thought” which proceeds by montage and sequencing, and that an art history as enlightened by the cinema was indeed possible (Dufrêne 2010). Similarly, Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti (1952) thought that the common source of the arts offered the possibility of deriving a history of art by means of cinema (Collectif 1994).

Élie Faure and Malraux were struck by the heuristic power of the film image. Faure noted that primitive arts such as khmer arts and cinema were discovered at around the same time. Just as the automobile, which the art historian Faure extols in his book *Mon périple* (My Journey), the cinema transports through time and space, allowing particular associations and comparisons to be drawn. It makes accessible what is separated by far-off time and space: such is the elasticity of the celluloid (Bullot 1998; Gauthier 2002). In 1976, in his text *L'Intemporel* (The Intemporal), third part of his monumental study *la Métamorphose des dieux* (The Metamorphosis of the Gods), André Malraux developed his theory of the “Museum of the Audio-visual” which goes well beyond that of the “museum of the cinematograph” (Henri Lemaître).<sup>2</sup> If between 1935 (the beginning of colour photography) and 1965 almost all significant art works were reproduced in books, henceforth, said Malraux, “all the capital images of humanity will be available for each person at the touch of a button”. For him, the Imaginary Museum of television would be that of sculpture (“The screen is always kind to sculpture”), of “unstoried arts” (fetish objects), of “religious works” (“The audio-visual dimension conveys religious works in great number”) and of the arts relating to the discovery of the Far East. Indeed, the audio-visual sphere stood in succession to the Museum of the Imaginary because, while “the art book can bring into dialogue only pairs of images”, film and video sequences are adapted to the unframed arts: “The true Imaginary Museum of sculpture – temples, cathedrals, Asian caves – and of architecture has become the domain of television, which can transmit the interior essence of monuments, whereas photography can but suggest it” (Malraux 1973).

By its peculiar capacity to mobilise the whole band of the Muses, cinema opens up a pluridisciplinary field of studies where the arts enter into correspondence with one another. The very notion of “living art” undergoes a change in rhythm so much does the presentising of absence per medium of the film actualise both the personality and voice of the artist and the locus of creation, the studio. In such a way, during the 1960s, the filmmaker Jean-Marie Drot captured some of the greatest artists of the last century at work in their Montparnasse studios.<sup>3</sup>

The faculty of recording and definitively fixing images through work on the montage bench has allowed arts like performance or land art not only to retain works in themselves but also the various processes of their realisation, which drawing or photography failed suitably to do. In these cases, the creative dimension of the film takes precedence over the purely documentary aspect. In ethnographic films such of those of Robert Flaherty, Chris Marker and Alain Resnais's *Les Statues meurent aussi* (Statues also Die) (1953) or *Les Maîtres fous* (The Mad Masters) of Jean Rouch, the camera is participatory. The real question is knowing whether these should be filmed with a subjective camera, whether commentary is or is not necessary, and whether editing should be undertaken or not.

Cinema has had an aptitude for building teams and eliciting common effort. Élie Faure emphasized that, in the “great rhythm of history” which in his view sees periods of collective creativity alternate with others of withdrawal into subjective expression, filmmaking is the modern counterpart of the era of cathedral construction, when the sense of collective effort was so pronounced. It is worth noting that from its foundation after the Second World War FIFA (the International Federation for Art Film) brought together artists like Fernand Léger, art historians such as Pierre Francastel and Lionello Venturi, philosophers and others. It was precisely within this co-operative environment that the art history film was born. It was the fruit of collaboration between art historians and filmmakers, such as Roberto Longhi and Umberto Barbaro, who together produced *Carpaccio*, dedicated to the work of that artist, in 1948.

## What is an art history film?

In the art history film, it is art history which is making the cinema *of itself*. In the sense in which Godard as cineaste creates a cinema history from his history *of the cinema*. That said, the boundaries have never been clearly drawn. So, the art film, created by an artist, obviously has a documentary aspect to it, reinforced by the fact that from the start artists like Fernand Léger in *Ballet mécanique* (1924) or Marcel Duchamp in *Anemic Cinema* (1926) have filmed their own works. In addition, a film about art composed by someone like Luciano Emmer, to mention a recently deceased master of the art-form, can well be endowed with a veritable fiction scenario. Finally an art history film must have its own set-disposition study.

An art history film is “a film of research and demonstration” (Thirifays 1950), the product of art history but also the result of a peculiarly cinematographic way of approaching art history. Accepting this multiple dimension means that the position of the *auteur* is necessarily relativised: such a film requires a director with a profound feeling for history, an artist and a dedicated team to bring it about.

To the same extent that the freedom to create and the licence to bring pleasure by whatever means may be conceded to the art film and the film about art, so one may expect from the art history film that it poses the question of the historic time in which the works it examines were created with regard to the time in which we now study them, and this question is all the more pertinent in that the very technical device afforded by the cinema itself clearly will modify the way in which these works are now received. The investigation is thus the model for the art history film. In Buster Keaton’s *Sherlock Jr* (1924), the projectionist, falling asleep, starts dreaming and takes on a double identity, an active double of himself literally passing through the screen and becoming the hero of the movie. Endowed with a sixth sense by the Seventh Art, and assisted by his permanent to-ing and fro-ing between the real and imaginary worlds, he unmasks the crooks and ends up marrying the cinema owner’s daughter. This film could be the metaphor for the art history film. The *auteur* takes on the dual role of investigator and fiction author, setting within the particular time-span of the film, that of the montage, the work of historical investigation.

How long has the art history film existed, and how has it evolved? Since before the Second World War, art had made its entry into the cinema in the form of the “art film” (of the already mentioned Fernand Léger to Carl Dreyer, director of *Thorvaldsen* in 1949). It was more especially in the form of the “film about art” that the art history film emerged and developed during the 1950s and 60s. The initial searching about for a way to define it – Ragghianti fell back on the term “crito-film” – was evidence of its fundamentally hybrid character, as both documentary and art film, a character which retrospectively would tend to be considered a strength. If in most cases the text of the commentary was composed by an art historian (e.g. Kenneth Clark for *Rembrandt* 1975,

Roberto Longhi for *Carpaccio* 1948) whereas the director determined the shots, it happened that certain historians took the camera themselves, such as Curt Oertel (1890–1960), whose *Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg* (The Stone Marvels of Naumburg) (1932) was admired by the film-theorist Siegfried Kracauer himself and whose *Michaelangelo* (1938) is a master-work. In his *Raum in kreisenden Licht* (1936), the German art historian Carl Lamb (1905–1968) filmed the church at Wies at every hour of the day. But the most famous of the art historian filmmakers is Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti (1910–1987), professor at the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa.

The Belgian film director Henri Storck wrote: “The eye of the camera is much more powerful than our own. It draws the eye of the viewer over the whole of the painting, settling on certain details ...” In reference to his *Rubens* (1948), he explains: “Through the application of the techniques of film we have tried to recapture the perpetual movement of his painting.” The technical and pedagogical set-up employed by Storck included diagrams, double projections and animation.

A study of the films of art history, understood in the sense of an “inquiry” (to revert to the fundamental concept of the term used by Herodotus) would without any doubt bring out that their very diversity and evolution are a function of the diverse historical methods applied along with the evolution of the objects under study. In other words, the film about art can be said to belong to one historical school or another. In the *Carpaccio* of 1948 as conceived by Roberto Longhi, the art historian makes attribution of certain works. The shot-framing and camera movement is subordinated to his voice. The film constitutes both the vector for the historian’s commentary and for the linkage and comparison of the works. At the start of the film, Longhi compares the manner of the futurist painter Carlo Carrà with that of Carpaccio. The bringing together of the works and the attention to detail are the tools of connoisseurship. Luciano Emmer, one of the pioneers of the art documentary film from the 1930s onward, chose for his part to approach the painting from the point of view of his empathy towards it, preferring to adopt in his *Leggenda de Sant’Orsola* (1948) a purely visual and narrative approach over any didactic commentary. He said that he would take hold of the shots of the pictorial work and consider them as distinct objects in themselves. In doing so he came close to the theory of “pure visibility” which derives from the philosophy of Conrad Fiedler. This is also the case for Ragghianti, who produced twenty *critofilms* (critique films) between 1948 and 1964.

Ragghianti’s opus is revelatory of the fact that the art history film is not only the product or the translation of an historical inquiry *through or to* film, but it is an original practice of art history *by means of* film. Ragghianti set as his objective “a reading and critical analysis of artistic language achieved through the visual language of cinema”. Another Carlo, the Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg, has famously drawn parallels between the methods of Freud, Giovanni Morelli and indeed Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes – which brings us back to Buster Keaton! In Ginzburg’s view, what these three had in common, and at about the same time, was not being content with just what everyone sees. Freud concentrated exclusively on that which escapes in the form of slips of the tongue, or bits of dream narratives, Morelli on the revelatory details of an artistic “hand” (e.g. the way noses or ears are drawn) and Conan Doyle on disparate clues concealed within reality.<sup>4</sup> They all apply a methodology which passes reality through the filter of a device which is an instrument of knowledge.

Ragghianti and those who, like him, engaged in an art history *through* cinema, did not content themselves with what was visible to everybody, but wanted to make stand out that which only the camera sees or can bring into view along with cinema’s particular manner of recreating historical time. He filmed *Urne etrusche di Volterra* (Volterra’s Etruscan urns) (1957) by the light of a burning torch, so recreating the visual conditions of the past itself. But in *Piazza del Duomo* (Cathedral Square) (1955), he made use of a helicopter to enable the architectural site to be viewed as a whole.

The extreme mobility of the camera in that instance was in complete contrast to the effect of fixed shot filming.

Thus the art historian working through cinema can link together, as in a sort of dream confabulation, both present and past time, both real and imaginary, as did Keaton's projectionist. His reward, if his film is a success, is the hand of the cinema owner's daughter, that is, his audience!

Finally, the camera creates "fictive arts": technical reproduction becomes in itself an artistic proceeding. What is pejorative for Walter Benjamin is positive for Malraux. The latter also compared the screen to the canvas: on the screen "the associative process of the viewer watching these images is immediately interrupted by their metamorphosis". Malraux recalls a conversation he had with Picasso who had just seen a film called *La Vénus de Lespugue* which he had not found very good. Picasso suggested to Malraux what might be a better film: "making superimpositions with a prehistoric female figure from the *Musée Grévin*, a flint, my bat skeleton, a Romanesque angel (I know one that looks like two branches) and a real branch as well, why not, with leaves on it." Picasso predicted: "There are going to be the true films about art, with their own specific language. As in painting" (Malraux 1973).

The traditional approach to the film about art can be decried and criticised by the art historian when he wishes to bring out its difference in the way technical devices are used. The day-for-night technique of art history films was tried in *Il cenacolo di Andrea del Castagno* (1954), in which Raghianti starts off by lining up all the clichés of films about art before suddenly stopping the documentary in its tracks. The film then races on at high speed over the protests of the spectators. Then an off-screen voice is heard, declaring: "It is obvious that this is not how this work should be viewed and explained."

Thus, the art history film cannot be understood without being resituated within the dual dependence framework that is particular to it, namely on the one hand, the art history that is being practised as a discipline at the time of the film's production, and on the other the evolution of cinema as a whole. Raghianti's *Michelangiolo* (1964) should be set within the perspective of Roberto Rossellini's *Journey to Italy* (1953) and John Cassavetes's *Shadows* (1959). The presence of sculpture in Rossellini's film is not pure chance: from the "natural" moulding of the deceased couple during the eruption of Vesuvius – that the archaeologist brings back to life – to the ancient statues in the Capodimonte Museum which "speak" to Ingrid Bergman, and to the processional Virgin which brings about the final *deus ex machina*, it incarnates, through its multiple meanings and their recurrence, the semiotic layering of sculpture over the centuries and the possibilities for the reactivation of these layers of meaning: cult figurines, fetish objects, idols, carvings, all metamorphosed into a work of art. The now legendary improvisation sequence in the sculpture garden of the Museum of Modern Art in New York shot by John Cassavetes shows the hero reduced to silence before the work of the Greek sculptor Polygnotos Vagis, *Revelation* (1951), a stone head possessing a powerfully fascinating presence. One of the protagonists in the film declares: "it is not a matter of understanding, if you can feel it, then feel it" (Herbulot 1995: 75). Thus, an art history *in the cinema* is first and foremost an art history *in the cinema age*.

## Towards a history of art history in the age of the cinema

Simply understanding cinema's specific contributions, understanding a manner of writing art history by the camera, is insufficient, indeed far from being so, to account for the profound transformations of contemporary art history by cinema and necessarily informed by it. But to attempt the history of this development and to follow up the indicators for its future requires that a number of points be addressed.



In the first place, it will be necessary to assess the impact of the audio-visual sphere (incorporating cinema) on the contexts wherein art history operates: research, museology, teaching.

Today films are closely studied for the purpose of understanding the creative act (Hans Namuth's film on Jackson Pollock, for example, or Clouzot's on Picasso), artistic experimentation (the recent release of a documentary on Clouzot's unfinished film *L'Enfer*, created from interviews and a montage of the rushes, revealed the manner of working of op-art artists at the request of the filmmaker), and to establish the history of the arts of performance. The audio-visual medium shines light upon the process of pictorial creation (style, palette, writing, correlations) which for a long time had an existence only for the painters themselves, and this through the multiplicity of detail provided and especially because it obliges the spectator to "embrace the creative process" (Malraux). Artists are recorded both in regard to their intentions and their practices so as to draw instruction as much on their creativity as for the future care and treatment of their works by conservators and restorers. The Louvre series *Transmettre* includes interviews filmed with art historians (Haskell, Baltrusaitis, Chastel, Sterling, Zeri, Krautheimer, Belting) and perspectives on art, often on the occasion of a particular exhibition (Rosenberg, Damisch, Changeux).

In what way does cinema complement and perhaps also transcend the age of the museum? We recall Malraux's reply to the pessimism of Benjamin: "the place expressed by the audio-visual leaves us in as much perplexity as its time ... it is not the museum ... it is not the small screen that the image constantly seems to be escaping from". In Malraux's view "the basalt head of Nefertiti belongs both to the Egyptian 14th century as to our present day and to the artificial time of film: the time of the Audio-visual Museum". Whereas Benjamin regretted that, through reproductions, "the cathedral is dislodged from its original site to take up residence in the apartment of an art-lover", Malraux (1973) retorted almost word for word: "the Audio-visual Museum does not elect its domicile in the apartment of the viewer": to the contrary, it "reveals the *link* between the sacred statue and the crypt, between the façade of the Parthenon with the sky and the Panathenaea, between the equestrian statue and its square, between the giant Christ of Sicilian mosaics and the cathedral, and more profoundly, the belonging of all sacred art to the sanctuary". We might cite as one piece of evidence the stimulating dispositions of the Quai Branly Museum which resituates works within the context of their ritual use.

As early as 1950, Pierre Francastel (1950) was declaring: "no film about art can exist which, at least to some extent, does not have a pedagogical value". He was already emphasizing that these art films could not be a simple "support for a conventional verbal lecture". In summary, introducing the audio-visual dimension into instruction, at whatever level this might be, presupposed that account be taken of the specificity of what the art historian called "plastic vision". Simply appending a commentary to a sequence of images can in no way be sufficient. Cinematically it is possible to build an image of the hand of Rembrandt modifying his engraving from one state to another. One can bring together and align in a mere instant the works of art that Malraux called "surviving presences", using an expression that one could imagine was borrowed from Aby Warburg (but Malraux had not read, nor had any knowledge of, Warburg's *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* which linked with his own idea of the museum of reproduction and sequence), thanks to the "accelerative" power of the imaginary produced by a film sequence: "the convulsion of cinema", wrote Malraux, can draw "from the *Annunciation* in the cathedral of Reims the angels in flight of Bernini". Any university lecture, any educational session should derive its rhythm and sequence from the plastic vision. Many Powerpoint lectures are already shaped in this way. The demonstration is therein made visible as well as readable. And nothing prevents the teacher from making use as much of the art history film proper as of the numerous films which bring works of art to the screen or questions

associated with those of the discipline: what attitude to take towards works, the effects of beliefs, how to visit a museum etc.

In fact – and this is the second great field of investigation – we must agree that the time has come to draw up the most complete inventory and undertake the most detailed analysis possible of the way cinema has, over the course of its history, taken in works of art (we mentioned earlier that the birth of the art history film had furthermore been marked by the manner adopted by filmmakers when looking at art). Malraux had already pointed out what might be called cinema’s Pygmalion effect in relation to sculpture. From Maya Deren’s *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1945) to Joe Wright’s *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) – here two examples with nothing in common have been deliberately chosen to demonstrate the breadth of production in this domain – films that include statues in their scenes have multiplied. Along with some of the already-mentioned films: *Les Statues meurent aussi* (1953), *Voyage to Italy* (1953–54), *Shadows* (1958–59), one might add other films of Resnais: *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) and *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) – the year in which Resnais told Nicolas Zand of *France Observateur* that he wanted to make “films which observe each other like sculptures” – or further, Truffaut’s *Jules and Jim* (1961), Chris Marker’s *La Jetée* (1962) and Godard’s *Le Mépris* (Contempt) (1963). Sculptures played a role in all of these.

The term “role” itself, with its etymological association with “roll”, and hence a reel of celluloid film brings attention to an inclusion in film repertoire of art works which have been enacted and arranged in sequences, and which could subsequently be re-enacted and reinterpreted differently. The same site, the same scene could provide films with different “actors”: thus Curt Oertel’s *Die steineren Wunder von Naumburg* (1932) endows the cathedral with a *role*, while Walt Disney gives the wicked queen Grimhilde in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* the appearance of the statue of “Fair Uta”, the Margravine of Meissen, which is the glory of that cathedral (Girvau 2006). For that very reason, Disney’s film was not authorised to be shown in Germany until 1950 (Poggi 2007). There was a recent surprise in seeing in the shapes of the noses of the Na’vi of David Cameron’s *Avatar* (2009) a potential, though improbable, allusion to the personages sculpted by Hubert Le Sueur. And definitely, in Abbas Kiarostami’s *Shirin* (2009), the faces of the hundred or so Iranian actresses that he filmed with the simple instruction to think of an event, a person or a moment in their lives that created a particularly strong emotional response may in some sense be linked back to the “emotional faces” of Charles Le Brun, whilst at the same time eliciting a visual analysis of the attention engaging the involvement of the audience, the famous “place of the beholder”, a fundamental subject for art history from Diderot to Michael Fried.

Museums have well realised the value of opening up their collections to different ways of perceiving them. That which filmmakers had formerly “stolen” from the art treasury, often in the form of reactivation through a “tableau vivant” from Pasolini’s *La Ricotta* (1963) or Godard’s *Passion* (1982) to the works of Bill Viola, henceforth museums are offering them to them on a plate (!) like the head of John the Baptist, if one can judge from the productions commissioned by museums, such as the “films du Louvre” or the film *Visages* (Faces) of Ming-Lang Tsai (2009) for which the Louvre was proposed as a “laboratory for realisation” (Henri Loyette). In reverse, what sense should be given to the notion of an exhibition and that of a museum when related to the cinema?

Finally, the third great field of study should be, within the art history discipline itself, to understand how our vision of historic time has been affected by the cinema.

Some have been able to put forward the notion of an *archaeological power* of cinema that facilitates an approximation of the way works were originally perceived by those contemporary to their creation. This is something Ragghianti or Emmer tried, filming by night or by the light of candles or flaming torches. For Malraux as well, “the televised cathedral rediscovers the echo of the original cathedral over the heads of the collectors of statues”. It is the point of difference which sets him

off against the filmmakers Chris Marker and Alain Resnais in their 1953 film *Les Statues meurent aussi*, for whom, in a Western museum, the way in which fetish objects and non-Western art in general were seen by their original creators no longer exists. But for Malraux, if such a manner of seeing is effectively impossible to re-establish, the works still continue to speak to us. It is not simply the “viewing for pleasure” as denounced by Resnais: admiration in its strongest sense can replace veneration (Zarader 2008).

More fundamentally, the audio-visual dimension is particularly suited to facilitating understanding and enrichment of the essential notions of survival (Warburg’s “Nachleben”), of rediscovery (Francis Haskell), of objects’ career pathways (Arjun Appadurai), of metamorphosis (Malraux) or of stratigraphy (Argan) as well as some others which nourish our spatio-temporal conception of art and creativity. Understanding successivity without falling into the trap of conditioning, perceiving viscosities (Castelnuovo, Ginzburg) and anachronism (Didi-Huberman), as art history has been inviting to be done since the 1960s, is not unrelated to the passing from the “movement-image” to the “time-image” as analysed by Gilles Deleuze in the light of the *Qu’est-ce que le cinéma* of André Bazin – who in turn had earlier pointed up the crucial role of Rossellini’s *Voyage to Italy* (1953–54). Bazin praised the *passage* of one state of consciousness to another, from one fragment of reality to the next thanks to the film’s spatio-temporal montage, thereby putting his finger on the link between the cinema and metamorphosis: the enigma of a succession that does not follow upon itself.

In the final analysis, such an inquiry into art history *in* and *through* the cinema can only be conducted on an international scale. In 1962, UNESCO and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) had launched such an inquiry into the use of cultural and scientific films in museums, the report of which was published in *Museum* in 1963. The British Museum proposed that “the international organisation should take charge of the publication of an international catalogue of films which should be kept up to date”. But though FIFA (the International Federation for Art Film) has continued its work and though, since 1981, a festival of films about art has been organised at Montreal ever year with the award of a prize, it must be acknowledged that to date there is still a lack of an international catalogue of films having an art history approach, and there is but little research collaboratively undertaken on the links between art history and film. One can well imagine how fruitful it would be from this point of view should an investigation be mounted under the dual supervision of the CIHA and the International Council for Film, Television and Audio-Visual Communication (ICFT) of UNESCO. It would then be possible to contradict Malraux’s assertion that, with the Museum of the Audio-Visual, the “problems of art are no longer those of art history”.

In today’s art biennales, video has become, whether one likes it or not, a universal tool, a sort of “green card” of contemporary art. It is a platform for expression that is understood by all, particularly with the use of subtitles, and which allows, to a much greater extent than traditional platforms, the recognition on the world stage of the art of artists from emerging countries, always on condition that they have access to the means of this technique. Could the art history film also become – and if so, under what conditions? – a language shared by the international community of art historians and which furthermore could facilitate the conjoint emergence of both researchers and new subjects worthy of being assigned a place in history in countries where art history as a discipline is present to only a very limited degree or even entirely absent? Could it not in its future forms contribute, in a manner as open and labile as are, on a different level, the present-day developments of the information media under the influence of social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, to assisting art history to evolve beyond the *domain of readings fashioned by the institutional and publishing* establishment over the last three centuries in Western countries? The stakes are high



when it comes to the rereading of the world's art heritage and the broadening of the objects of study for "classical" art history, but this should not go to undermine the realisations of a scientific and critical methodology indispensable for avoiding the denaturing of history into memory, of the love of art into nationalist ideologies and of art heritage into exclusive identity.

Translated from the French by Colin Anderson

## Notes

1. This article further develops a paper presented in November 2009 at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in the context of a seminar organised by Professor Pieter Krieger under the aegis of the CIHA. Its title was "Film on Art".
2. Malraux, director of the film *l'Espoir*, author of *le Musée imaginaire de la sculpture mondiale* (The Imaginary Museum of World Sculpture), created *Les Métamorphoses du Regard* (The Metamorphoses of Gaze) in 1973 together with the film-director Clovis Prévost on commission from the Fondation Maeght in France and the ORTF (the French Office of Radio and Television). The reader is referred to my paper given at the CIHA colloquium in Akita in June 2007 entitled: "Malraux, art and television as a follow-up to the 'Musée Imaginaire'".
3. In the series for ORTF entitled "Les Heures chaudes de Montparnasse" (Drot 1999).
4. In cinema terms one might say that Freud studies the rushes, Morelli the close-ups, while Conan Doyle functions through montage.

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