

images play in your hand or on the wall; they are so prevalent that there is a sense of nostalgia for their once-preciousness and for their original materiality. I have witnessed students wanting to access 'hands-on' technology to offset the digital, electronic, non-material. The moving image is not only easy to produce but it is unlimited, over-abundant and so cannot be assimilated, causing a kind of shutting down. Information comes too fast, too easily, so there is a new desire to slow down, to want to have a relationship with materials that have their own force that cannot be so easily controlled.

This desire for pause, for stillness that allows us to register just one thing, this need to clear a space for meditation, for waiting and for reflection is a response to our accelerated digital age. This desire can be understood as contemporary rather than, as it is often perceived, as something loaded with nostalgia. I would argue that it is a response to the experience of living in our globally networked digital age.

JM: I agree with you. Because of the acceleration of the infosphere the production of solitude, silence and emptiness is political.

RN: I went to the States in the 1990s to teach, and there I found what I was really looking for: The New York scene, Abigail Child, MM Serra, the New York Co-op and Anthology Film Archives, which was really open. They'd show your work and you could see all this great stuff across a huge spectrum – West Coast, East Coast, found footage films. There was none of what I saw as the parochial 'closedness' of the London scene. By the time I had enough money to buy digital cameras and a computer, I could ransack Hollywood, experimental film or anything I liked and apply these experimental processes, but with my own interpretation emerging in the cutting together of anomalous material.

SP: The shift of experimental film from the cinema to the gallery is a big one. The cinema is a cultural event; often the film-maker is present at the screening. You have a Q and A, a discussion. You have to commit to the whole thing. I really appreciate it because it's a very concentrated and rich experience. It is about connecting with people; it is not the same when you show a film in a gallery.

ND: When my films are shown in gallery conditions the results deliver the idea or concept of the film but never the experience. I don't think the experimental film we're discussing works in a gallery for a variety of reasons and it's not just acoustics or audiences being able to walk out rather than sit through a film in full; it's more to do with the intensity of the demand against the gallery audience's expectations of moving image. They bring too serious a mood to what is essentially a consumer space. Now, I take account of what space I expect the work to be shown in as I create the film.

RN: My work was recently shown in a programme of shorts at the London Film Festival in the Experimenta section at 11 o'clock when people are wanting to get home; the films supposedly have a theme in common, which is just not ideal. Short experimental films need more space to be taken more seriously. Stuck together in thematic programmes just marginalizes these films.

ND: Can we think of experimental film as inscribed in practice? We carry it in us through our knowledge and experience, so, we are part of experimental film. If a context is no longer there, does it then become a genre or a style?

JM: We thought that counter-practice (including film) would change the world incarnating new subjectivities, bodies, sexualities, symptomologies and the transformation of the unconscious, and this would create the conditions for us to affirm new logics for our worlds with transformed social relations. Naively, we did not anticipate the rise of the neo-liberal yBa's project that foreclosed on what our experiments were striving for.

LFMC was a place that we fashioned as somewhere where women could go to explore, to experiment with complex difficulties, forces and contradictions. This was the time of the interregnum where the moment of the first generation of LMFC

film-makers (the structural materialists) was over and the future neo-liberal project had not yet begun. We were the interregnum generation.

ND: Were we part of creating a film movement? When I play these films made in this interregnum space as Jean says, they are appreciated but viewers and curators of contemporary moving image tend to blend images in terms of content without considering their provenance and are unaware of the history of where these images come from, that they had a medium, a material, a political history and an institutional context e.g., IVA and the Film Co-op.

To me there is an embodied experience of film-making not just a content-led production. It strikes me that we have used mystical discourse in the way we have been talking about film as a transfigurative or transformational process. I draw on this knowledge but my new work looks different to the films I made in the 1990s. In *Sorelle Povere* (2015) and a long film *Jennifer* (2015) on a women's monastic community, I am trying to work very directly and simply with a subject and put that across without any cutting up, manipulation or fragmentation. It doesn't fit into experimental film tropes or a documentary genre.

AS: Well, does it actually matter that experimental film doesn't exist anymore? Every generation re-invents what is radical and what is avant-garde. And that is something really important to take on.

ND: Although experimental films traditionally circulate within a distribution system, they must go into hiding to obtain a value in the art market to be sold as limited editions; the art world has invented a way of commodifying it. But film isn't a commodity fetish in the same way because projection always has the aura of a unique event. It is ephemeral and it can't easily be consumed because it is time-based; it is embedded in time, it is experiential and fleeting. So it resists total commodification. Experimental film brings with it its historical context of isolationism in opposition to the commodifying objectives of the art world and that is why it's not recuperable. That is the value perhaps now; it is a mode of resistance or an inscription in our diverse and changed practices.

## Notes

1. See Nina Danino (2002), 'The intense subject', *Undercut Reader*, Wallflower Press, pp. 8–12. In this text, Danino explores the theme of self-inscription in experimental film from the London Filmmakers' Co-op in the 1980s.
2. 'When The Eye Frames Red', Trin T Minh-ha in conversation with Akira Mizuta Lippit in 2012. Available online: <http://trinminh-ha.squarespace.com/when-the-eye-frames-red/>. Accessed 24 September 2015.
3. 'Shoot Shoot Shoot: The First Decade of the London Filmmakers' Co-operative and British Avant-Garde Film 1966–76' was a screening programme of works from the Co-op curated by Mark Webber and staged at Tate Modern in 2002.
4. See for instance: A. L. Rees (1999), *A History of Experimental Film and Video*; Nina Danino and Michael Mazière (eds) (2003), *The Undercut Reader*; David Curtis (2007), *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain*; and Catherine Elwes (2015), *Installation and the Moving Image*.
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