Abstract

This research investigates ways in which contemporary artists engage with cinematic traditions, via new technologies of viewing that bring cinematic paranarratives into focus, in order to generate new forms of narrative.

Through practice-led research, the dissertation articulates a trend in contemporary art in which artists use the pictorial tradition of art in order to generate new narratives from familiar cinematic tropes. This is linked to the emergence of new technologies for the reception of cinema that allow nonlinear spectatorship. The dissertation argues that artworks created in this context provide a site where the history of cinema and art are intertwined, and central to this is the introduction of stillness as a key aspect of cinema reception. Stillness brings the hidden photographic base of cinema into the diegesis of artworks that evoke cinematic tropes. Rather than presenting stillness as a disruption to narrative, which has been a dominant approach in film theory, this dissertation asserts that by juxtaposing multiple narratives in a single installation within the gallery context, artworks use stillness to produce numerous possible narratives from cinematic tropes.

The creative component consists of a series of performance and video installations produced between 2005 and 2010. These works create scenes that evoke incidental moments that appear to have been isolated from a broader cinematic narrative. They are evocative of cinema in general, but do not make reference to specific films. These moments are extended through time and expanded spatially, utilising the pictorial tradition of stillness. In the absence of defined linear narratives these artworks simultaneously fragment and synthesize disparate narratives.

Through a combination of my own artworks and those of other contemporary artists, I will discuss the way artworks that apply stillness to cinematic tropes are able to explicitly evoke paranarratives that are inherent in cinema, but operate implicitly. Central to this argument is an examination of the materiality of the technologies that inform and facilitate artistic production. In this case, technologies of cinema and its distribution, including screens, projectors and DVD. Stillness and material presence are
methodological approaches central to the pictorial tradition of art, but are here applied to cinema in order to generate new narratives out of well-worn cinematic tropes. By re-examining familiar cinematic tropes the thesis has re-directed an inquiry toward that which surrounds cinema and the transformations that occur when audiences leave the cinema. Through a recontextualisation of spectatorship in the gallery, this research has demonstrated how stillness, as part of the viewing process, has presented us with unprecedented methods with which to explore cinema as a series of “incomplete texts”.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

i. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated in the Preface,

ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

iii. the thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices OR the thesis is [number of words] as approved by the Research Higher Degrees Committee.

______________________
Simone Hine
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Associate Professor Barbara Bolt for her constant support and advice that was essential to bring the thesis to fruition. In particular her guidance regarding Practice-Led research has proved invaluable to this dissertation as well as to other projects. I would also like to thank Kyle Weise for his constant support through the PhD process. This includes assistance with the installation of creative works, advice on all aspects of the process as well as his general support.
Table of Contents

1
Introduction: The Architecture of Hollywood Narratives

13
Chapter One: Cinema and Art: Art History’s Uncertain Hold

43
Chapter Two: Stillness as Moving Image

65
Chapter Three: From Everyday to Antiquated: Technology as Sculptural Object in Contemporary Art

95
Chapter Four: Paused Film in Contemporary Art

139
Chapter Five: Crime, Bodies and Media Temporalities: interior and Process

163
Conclusion: Stillness and Motion / Reality and Fiction

175
Glossary of Terms

177
List of References

184
Bibliography

197
Appendix
List of Figures

Figure 0.1: Simone Hine (2009) *Corridor*, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.

Figure 0.2: Simone Hine (2009) *Corridor*, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.

Figure 0.3: Simone Hine (2009) *Corridor*, Two-channel Video installation, Installation View (Blindside: Melbourne).

Figure 0.4: Simone Hine (2009) *Corridor*, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.

Figure 0.5: Simone Hine (2009) *Corridor*, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.

Figure 0.6: Simone Hine (2009) *Corridor*, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.

Figure 1.1: J.M.W Turner (1842) *Snow Storm and Steam-Boat off a Harbor’s Mouth*, Oil Paint on canvas, 914 x 1219mm, Photograph: Tate Britain.

Figure 1.2: Andy Warhol (1964) *Brillo Soap Pads Box*, Screen-print and Ink on Wood, 432 x 432 x 356mm, Photograph: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.


Figure 2.2 Image of Zidane from 2006 World Cup Match between France and Italy, (http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/football/26944308)


Figure 2.5: Sam Taylor-Wood (2004) *David*, Single Channel Video, Video Still, 67mins.


Figure 2.8: Simone Hine (2009) *049*, Three-Channel Video, Installation View (Kings ARI: Melbourne).
Figure 2.9: Simone Hine (2009) 049, Three-Channel Video, Installation View (Kings ARI: Melbourne).

Figure 2.10: Simone Hine (2009) 049, Three-Channel Video, Installation View (Kings ARI: Melbourne).

Figure 2.11: Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno (2006) Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, 90mins.


Figure 3.1: Gary Hill (1990) Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place, Video Installation.

Figure 3.2: Detail of television from: Gary Hill (1991) Between Cinema and a Hard Place, Video Installation.

Figure 3.3: Simone Hine (2001) displace, Video and Performance Installation, Installation View (Palace Gallery: QUT: Brisbane).

Figure 3.4: Simone Hine (2001) displace, Video and Performance Installation, Installation View (Palace Gallery: QUT: Brisbane).

Figure 3.5: Rodney Graham (2003) Rheinmetall/Victoria 8, Moving Image Installation, Installation View

Figure 3.6: Dziga Vertov (1929) Man With a Movie Camera, 68mins.

Figure 3.7: Jacques Tati (1967) Playtime, 115mins.

Figure 3.8: Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez (1999) Blair Witch Project, 81min.

Figure 3.9: Matt Reeves (2008) Cloverfield, 85mins.

Figure 3.10: Simone Hine (2005) Watching, Two-Channel Video, Video Stills.
Figure 3.11: Simone Hine (2005) *Watching*, Two-Channel Video, Installation View (Forty-Five Downstairs: Melbourne).

**Figure 4.1:** Gregory Crewdson (1998-2002) *Untitled (‘Twilight’ series)*, Digital C-Prints, 1219 x 1524mm.

**Figure 4.2:** Steven Spielberg (1977) *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, 137mins.

**Figure 4.3:** Gregory Crewdson (2003-2005) *Untitled (‘Beneath the Roses’ series)*, Digital C-Type print, 1448 x 2235mm

**Figure 4.4:** Gregory Crewdson (1998-2002) *Untitled (‘Twilight’ series)*, Digital C-Prints, 2236-1148mm.

**Figure 4.5:** Gregory Crewdson (1998-2002) *Untitled (‘Twilight’ series)*, Digital C-Prints, 1219 x 1524mm.

**Figure 4.6:** Alexander Gardner (1865) *Portrait of Lewis Payne*, Gelatin Silver Print from Wet-Plate Negative.

**Figure 4.7:** Jeff Wall (1996) *Volunteer*, Silver Gelatin Print, 2215 x 3130mm.

**Figure 4.8:** Mike Nelson (2000) *The Coral Reef*, Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 4.9:** Mike Nelson (2011) *I, impostor*, Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 4.10:** Simone Hine (2010) *No Use Crying*, Video Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 4.11:** Simone Hine (2010) *No Use Crying*, Video Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 4.12:** Simone Hine (2010) *No Use Crying*, Video Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 4.13:** Simone Hine (2010) *No Use Crying*, Video Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 5.1:** Simone Hine (2006) *interior*, Two-Part Performance and Video Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 5.2:** Simone Hine (2006) *interior*, Two-Part Performance and Video Installation, Installation Detail.
**Figure 5.3:** Simone Hine (2006) *interior*, Two-Part Performance and Video Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 5.4:** Simone Hine (2006) *interior*, Two-Part Performance and Video Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 5.5:** Christopher Nolan (2000) *Memento*, 113mins.

**Figure 5.6:** Simone Hine (2010) *Process*, Video and Performance Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 5.7:** Simone Hine (2010) *Process*, Video and Performance Installation, Installation Detail.

**Figure 5.8:** Simone Hine (2010) *Process*, Video and Performance Installation, Performance Detail.

**Figure 6.1:** Pierre Huyghe (2000) *Third Memory*, Two-Channel Video Installation, Video Stills.
**Introduction: The Architecture of Hollywood Narratives**

In the central business district of Melbourne, Australia stands an Art Deco office block. The original lettering boldly announces the building’s name: “Nicholas Building”. This office block was built in the 1920s and remains largely in its original state. Visitors enter the building through a leadlight arcade, which houses several retail stores. Offices, studios and art galleries are accessed through the original cage lift. When taking the lift there is a choice of either “attendant” or “automatic”, this is perhaps the most striking indication of the extent to which the building has not changed to suit technology and style.

As one ventures further into the building, its antiquated state becomes more apparent. The original cream and brown tiled corridors, darkly stained hardwood doors, high windows that line the hallways and hand painted signs indicating the levels and exists, are traces of a period that has long since passed. The building is in every way a relic of the past that has been preserved because it was forgotten, rather than a deliberate act of conservation.

The rarity of these Art Deco buildings in contemporary cities is immediately apparent when walking through the Nicholas building. The first time I entered the building, I immediately thought of the past, in two ways: I thought that this building contains traces of its entire history which spanned a large section of modernity; standing as a testament to Art Deco as an aesthetic that embraced modernity in the period prior to World War Two. I thought of the people that walked the hallways and I wondered, what kind of businesses had their offices behind which door and for how long, how many feet must have walked up the stairs or taken the lift, what such a stunning building must have looked like when it was new and at what point did this building begin to look like a relic of a time past?

---

1 See Anne Friedberg’s *Window Shopping* for an extensive discussion of the mobile gaze in relation to arcade shopping and early cinema.

2 Recently the lifts were updated and no longer have attendants operating them. This change to the building has locked my work *Corridor*, which will form the subject of the following discussion, into a particular point in time where the building had a much more antiquated appearance. Nothing else in the building has been updated since the work was shown in 2009.
As I thought of who may have walked the corridors of the Nicholas building, Philip Marlowe came to mind; that fictional character who has traversed hardboiled crime novels, Hollywood films and serial television. As I walked through the corridors, the disembodied eye that characterises much of cinematic viewing was evoked, I seemed to walk slower and more deliberately, as if to recreate the pace of a Noir film. As I walked through the building I half expected to see that “fast-talking dame” Hildy Johnson, from *His Girl Friday* (1940), march around the corner, disrupting the slow and sure pace of the noir protagonist. In this way, I continued to conjure relevant characters from film history and imagine them walking these corridors. As I looked at the building I was able to reconstruct an imaginary history, drawing upon the men and women that acted out roles in Hollywood films that were designed to approximate life in the first half of the twentieth century.

![Figure 0.1: Simone Hine (2009) Corridor, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.](image)

The concern for the material past of the building was necessarily coupled with a strong sense of the past as constructed through cultural representations. Classic Hollywood films have evolved to become historical documents through time. Existing as a record of how Hollywood understood and presented modern life, unfiltered by nostalgic reconstructions, which are an inevitable part of the reading process. While these films do not necessarily present an accurate portrayal of life, they exist today relatively unaltered and are consumed in much the same way as they were at the time of their production, allowing a glimpse into the past.
The tendency to understand the past through cinematic representations can be linked to late twentieth and early twenty-first century film practices. The introduction of Video Home Systems (VHS) and cable television allowed people to view commercial films in their own home for the first time. This established practices of re-watching films which created an understanding of the past that was intertwined with cinematic history (Friedberg 1994: 7). Building upon the intrinsic nature of cinema, technologies designed for home viewing allowed audiences to delve into the experiences of previous decades (Friedberg 1994: 169). The introduction of Digital Video Discs (DVD) to consumer markets built upon this construction of home spectatorship. However, DVD was specifically marketed toward connoisseurs, which largely increased the distribution of re-mastered films from studio’s back-catalogues, giving audiences unprecedented access to film history. While Blu-ray has refocused distribution onto new-releases, digital downloads and Manufacture-On-Demand DVDs (MOD) have continued to provide access to studio back-catalogues, further expanding the range by eliminating the economic imperatives of large print runs (Schauer 2012: 38-39). Video-on-Demand (VOD) has further expanded possibilities for varied film reception, incorporating both new releases and back-catalogues. For this reason, digital downloads and VOD appears to be the technology that is replacing DVD as the dominant source of cinema spectatorship (Iordanova 2012).

Figure 0.2: Simone Hine (2009) Corridor, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.

3 While Laser Discs were available prior to VHS, VHS was the first large scale consumer product to allow the reception of cinema within the home.
It is from this tradition of film spectatorship that the fictional characters of Classic Hollywood populated my imagination as I walked through the Nicholas Building. However, as much as I might have wanted to imagine the characters of these films occupying the same space I occupied, what I actually had in front of me was the worn terrazzo steps that bared the marks of people whose stories I will never know. I will never know what it was like to work as woman in the Nicholas Building in the 1940s. The closest I will come is to experience representations of life at this time through the backlog of film history, access to which is a product of contemporary technologies of film distribution.

My initial response to the Nicholas Building provided the starting point for my work *Corridor* (2009). The combination of the physical presence of the building (aged yet relatively pristine) and the notion of the past generated and archived through the history of cinema (particularly Classic Hollywood) combined to create a sense of the past that exists somewhere between reality and fiction.

*Figure 0.3: Simone Hine (2009) *Corridor*, Two-channel Video installation, Installation View.*

---

4 The word “experience” is used here to refer the experiential nature of narrative cinema as opposed to the accounts offered by historical texts.
As one entered Blindside gallery in the Nicholas Building, where *Corridor* was exhibited, the space of the building was reflected back to the viewer. Two synchronised videos were displayed on two freestanding screens, via rear-projection. The screens had an appearance somewhere between a blackboard and a sign, they were made in an Art Deco style and coated with a dark stain typical of Art Deco buildings in general and the Nicholas Building in particular. They matched the original fixtures in the gallery, which was situated in the Nicholas building, echoing the doorways and window frames that line the corridors. The video showed a woman (myself) in 1940s attire walking through the corridors and up and down the stairs of the Nicholas Building. The videos were filmed on a digital camcorder and altered in postproduction, to create a sense of a Classic Hollywood film, using contemporary consumer-grade technology. The use of the Nicholas Building, the screens, video and data projections, firmly cemented the work in a contemporary context, yet the mise-en-scène, acting, directing and subject of the video evoked the past. It was my intention with this work to present a synthesis of both periods within a video work. The public spaces of the Nicholas Building, which audiences must have walked through to get to the gallery, were re-presented back to the viewer through the guise of a Classic Hollywood aesthetic, bridging the gap between experience and representation.

![Figure 0.4: Simone Hine (2009) Corridor, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.](image)

The intertwining of past and present, representation and actual, is viewed within the details of *Corridor* as a necessary part of reconstructing a previous era. If we are to
take the detail of the costume, which functioned as a significant indicator of the past within the work, we see a necessary replication of the content within the formal construction of the work. The process of making inevitably echoed the same disjuncture between the actual and the representational that I observed when walking through the building for the first time. This was a disjuncture that would later be replicated in Corridor through the disjuncture between the building and the installed videos.

The two characters, the Nicholas building and the woman, bookend the era of Classic Hollywood. The building was constructed at the beginning of the Hollywood studio system and the woman that walks the corridors and stairs of these videos is a figure reminiscent of women in films at the end of this era of film making. The woman is depicted continually walking the corridors, lost in the constant mundane repetition of modern life, perpetually moving forward while at the same time retreading a familiar path. The repetition of her action and the loop of the video further replicate the repetition of films watched and re-watched, a practice made possible by contemporary technologies.

![Figure 0.5: Simone Hine (2009) Corridor, Two-channel Video installation, Video Still.](image)

The woman is presented within the work as an idea; she walks through the building as an apparition of the past both in terms of history and cinema. In this way Corridor draws upon ideas about the world that were produced and distributed by the

---

5 Any Warhol’s Empire (1964) is the example par excellence of a film that is structured in such a way that the building functions as a character.
Hollywood studios, and presents them in the context of the Nicholas Building, which was a space occupied by actual people. With the distance of time, however, both the representation and the actual become sites of imagined experiences of the past.

The intertwining of representation and actual is necessarily embedded within the fabric of Corridor’s construction, none more so than in the costume worn by the woman. The process of making the costume started when I immersed myself in Hollywood films from the 1940s. I inspected the attire of secondary characters, such as secretaries, with an eye toward making the costume. I acquired a blouse and skirt pattern from the 1940s on the internet that approximated these Hollywood characters. The costume was in this way a re-presentation of a representation of life in the 1940s, yet the patterns themselves were actual patterns that would have been used by women had they not been preserved untouched awaiting my use some seventy years later. The costume was modeled on Hollywood actresses, and made from original patterns on a home sewing machine, just as women would have in the 1940s. Just as my ideas of the Nicholas Building were informed by Hollywood films, so was the style of the costume, and both were physically manifested as part of the world prior to my cinematic interpretation.

The intertwining of reality and fiction in both the form and content of Corridor presents Hollywood tropes as necessarily intertwined with the material world. The art gallery is a particularly adept site to extrapolate on the effects of the intertwining of reality and fiction, because the history of art has shown a reliance on the physical manifestation of ideas. Even the mimetic tradition of art emphasised the materiality of mediums used to create illusions, instead of creating illusions by concealing the materiality, as is the case in narrative cinema. This tradition of representation in art provides the formal context for an extrapolation of this layering of cinematic tropes upon the physical world.

---

6 When I received these patterns in the mail, I had a similar response to my first encounter with the Nicholas Building. Certain questions were evoked: Why has this pattern been preserved? Was it left on the shelf of a store or in a factory, no longer useful once the fashion had changed? Did someone purchase it with the hope of making it and never got around to it? And why had no one discarded it? Where has it been for seventy years?
Taking my cue from a series of works that I created between 2005 and 2010, of which *Corridor* is one, the following pages will negotiate the space between art and cinema. I will draw upon both art and film theory in order to discuss this trend in visual arts. The content is derived from cinema history and the methodology is embedded within the historical practices of visual arts. The first three chapters will follow specific threads of the history of art that have led to the current conditions of contemporary art. These chapters will articulate a very particular version of art history in order to establish the theoretical positions that underpin my practice: that art and cinema have become intertwined; that contemporary artists use stillness as a tradition of art in order to examine other disciplines in more depth; and that the choice of technologies used to display time-based media art has theoretical as well as practical implications. The first three chapters will underpin the arguments presented in the last two chapters. These final two chapters will focus on the relationship between stillness and motion within contemporary art. The fourth chapter will focus on the cinematic precedence for the merging of art and cinema. The concluding fifth chapter expands upon ideas set out in chapter four through textual analysis of individual works. The first three chapters map the terrain within which my work operates and the last two chapters use my work in order to articulate the methodology I employ when creating work, and expand the theoretical development of the thesis via concrete examples.
The first chapter articulates a particular set of ideas that questioned the relevance of art and art history in the 1980s as a starting point to understanding the intertwining of contemporary art with other cultural forms, specifically cinema. In the wake of this loss of faith in art history, many contemporary artworks no longer criticise in order to move beyond art from previous periods, but use them to generate new perspectives. This chapter will articulate the intertwining of contemporary art and other forms of popular culture as derived from a loss of faith in the certainty of art history as well as a loss of faith in art’s privileged position as cultural commentator. From this viewpoint the argument is made that cinema and art have become explicitly intertwined in recent years. While this has occurred alongside changes in technology, it is a result of a lineage of connections between the two disciplines that existed outside of Modern Art history and which is only now prevalent in the field of contemporary art.

Chapter Two will expand upon the ideas outlined in the first chapter. Taking Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait as its subject, this chapter looks at the way this film/artwork utilises both traditions of cinema and art in order to create new narratives that are generated in the space between the two disciplines. The boundaries between art and cinema have become intertwined, yet the specific traditions of each are still utilised in order to generate meaning that is produced at the point where both traditions collide. Textual analysis of Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait gives specificity to the broader concept established in Chapter One. In particular this chapter expands upon the idea that artists utilise the pictorial tradition of art as a methodology in order to generate new meaning from cinematic tropes. Central to this chapter is the way moving images can be understood within the pictorial tradition of art as moving/still portraits, an idea clearly articulated by Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait and developed through analysis of a three-channel video that I produced in 2009 titled 049.

Building upon the idea that art and cinema have become intertwined, as established in chapters one and two, the third chapter will focus on the technological connection between visual arts and other media. Concentrating specifically on art and cinema, this chapter will discuss the way technologies of cinematic reception have been incorporated into the field of visual arts. The material and technological concerns of art
become intertwined with consumer products, such as televisions and home viewing systems, which form the material basis of many contemporary artworks. Of particular interest is the way that these technologies define the work that is produced. In addition, this chapter will discuss how the meaning of the work is affected as technologies become obsolete. Each of these ideas will be explored in relation to a video and performance installation *displace*, that was performed in 2002 on the cusp of changes in television technology, and a two-channel video, *watching*, produced in 2005.

Chapter Four will draw upon a text by Laura Mulvey, titled *Death 24x a Second*, in order to articulate a number of ways that contemporary technologies of film distribution have altered film reception. It will be argued that film spectatorship is now temporally diverse, both in terms of when and where films are viewed, as well as the temporal sequence of cinema. Diversified modes of cinematic spectatorship potentially encourage detailed readings of films, as viewers are able to slow, pause, skip between chapters and repeat scenes. Of particular interest to Mulvey’s discussion and this chapter is the paused image, the digital still, which only became accessible to wide audiences with DVD technology, but continues to gather importance as cinema slowly moves into web-based distribution. This chapter will argue that there are parallels between the fragmentation of cinema through new technologies of cinematic reception and the way cinema is presented in many contemporary artworks. This idea will be explored through a discussion of contemporary artist Gregory Crewdson, who produces photographs that are reminiscent of cinema yet only exist as single images. Crewdson explores cinematic narratives through the pictorial tradition of art. This will provide the context for further discussion of my work *No Use Crying* (2010), which presents a temporarily halted scene that references cinema in its style and content, while utilising the stillness of the pictorial tradition of art to reduce the scene to a single moment expanded through time. However, unlike Crewdson’s film stills, this work expands the scene beyond the two dimensional space of cinema and photography. The work incorporates both sculpture and performance as part of the pictorial tradition of art. By incorporating performance as part of the work, stillness can be understood as an aesthetic derived from the pictorial tradition of art, rather than a necessary limit of the medium.
Out of this contemporary art context, I have produced several works that draw stillness, as a para-narrative\(^7\) of cinema, into the diegesis of the work. Taking two works that I have produced as case studies, the chapter will expand upon ideas developed in the previous chapters. Interior (2006) and Process (2010), two performance and video installations, are key examples in the final chapter. This chapter will articulate the cinematic interest in representing the process of photographic development and the ‘coming into being’ of the photographic image (print and Polaroid). These scenes function in two ways. Firstly, the photographic image is seen in motion as it fades into being, imbuing the photograph with a sense of time that is usually denied the still image. Showing the process of a photographic image coming into being, this work presents photography as an evolving process, rather than the “arrested moment” that has defined much writing on photography. The second function relies on Garrett Stewart’s argument that the presence of a still photograph in the diegetic space of a film references the photograph as the hidden stillness of the cinematic image. Filmic images that show a photograph coming into being reference the coming into being of movement through the process of time and motion on photography. Process represents the evolving process of the photographic image, but couples it with the presence of a performer who holds a stationary pose for the entire duration of the performance. This chapter will discuss the way that the still body of the performer, in Process, confuses the assumption that the body has more immediacy than the mediated image of the performer on video. In these works all information about the subject is gleaned from videos despite the live body being present in the gallery space. The stationary body becomes the site of absence, rather than presence. The assumption of movement in performance is denied, likewise, the assumption of stillness in the photographic image is denied in favour of the photograph as part of an evolving process.

The following pages will argue that a loss of faith in art as separate from other aspects of life and culture, coupled with a loss of faith in art history as a means to progress art forward, has lead to contemporary art becoming intertwined with other disciplines.

\(^7\) Para-narrative is a term used by Garrett Stewart to describe those narratives that films suggest implicitly, but are never presented explicitly. See Stewart, G. (1999). Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photo Synthesis. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. This is an idea that will explained in more depth in Chapter Four.
Focusing on cinema and contemporary art, I will articulate the way stillness has been used by contemporary artists to create new narratives. Visual art is particularly suited to this line of inquiry because stillness is a defining aspect of the pictorial tradition. As cinema has become fragmented through the many technologies of reception that have changed viewing practices in recent years, making stillness an expected part of the cinematic experience, the pictorial tradition of art becomes increasingly relevant. Art and cinema have become closely aligned in both form and content, with important theoretical and philosophical ramifications for art history and the material practices of art.
Chapter One: Cinema and Art: Art History’s Uncertain Hold

This chapter will articulate a particular set of ideas that questioned the relevance of art and art history in the 1980s, and uses this as a starting point to understand the intertwining of contemporary art with other cultural forms, specifically cinema. A number of questions arise: At what point did the boundaries between art and other disciplines become blurred? What historical conditions led to the breakdown of these boundaries? And what are the implications of this change for contemporary understandings of art and its purpose? Each of these questions defines an area of inquiry that is unable to be answered definitively. The area of inquiry shifts and changes at every point, as different versions of history converge and diverge.

The 1980s saw a crisis in art theory and history. Many texts proclaimed the end of art, art theory, and art history⁸. There was a sense that the very presence of these debates in art theory confirmed that a change had occurred, regardless of whether the arguments were adequate to explain the situation. At the very least it could be said that there was a sense of uncertainty and disillusionment with art at that time. This was both a freeing and daunting prospect, as artists were no longer confined by the restriction of Modern theory and history, but this meant the terrain of art became fractured and disparate. This was a decade before I began working as an artist. Yet the debates of this decade have laid some of the ground-work for many of the assumptions that my work relies on to produce meaning.

Theories regarding the state of art in the 1980s were as varied as they were numerous. With the distance of three decades, the following chapter will map a particular version of art history that articulated a state of disillusionment with the singular version of art history offered by Modernist art critics. I will argue that in the wake of these debates, the contemporary context of art has become disparate, due to its inability to be understood in terms of an overarching historical narrative, coupled with an interrelated loss of faith in the boundaries between art and other disciplines.

Paradoxically, contemporary art finds cohesion through its tendency to look backwards and to utilise art historical practices for its own distinct purposes. Now that the production of art is no longer conceptually bound by historical grand narratives, artists are using historical methodologies and formal practices to redefine ways of seeing within other disciplines.

Of particular interest to this discussion is the way the pictorial tradition of art uses stillness to re-imagine cinematic tropes. The application of the pictorial tradition of art to disciplines outside of itself is indicative of contemporary art’s tendency toward disparateness, caused by the disillusionment with art history as a method to order and progress art. The theories addressed in this chapter attempt to grapple with grand narratives about the very nature of art. This chapter will repurpose these debates, not as an explanation for the conditions of contemporary art, but in order to understand the relationship between contemporary art and cinema, on which the methodology of my practice is founded.

Due to the disparate nature of contemporary art, it seems necessary to articulate this condition of art through a specific, perhaps idiosyncratic, version of the debates of the period. It is my argument that in order to understand the lineage of works from the contemporary period, which I define here as being works made after these debates, roughly the 1990s onward, it is no longer possible to define them as having a single cohesive lineage. Instead, we must redefine the lineage over and over again in order to articulate the particular set of debates from which each strand of contemporary art is derived. Such an approach seems to evoke the idea that contemporary art must reinvent the wheel over and over again. However, such an approach is only problematic if we are to think of art in progressive terms. If art can be seen in less linear terms, then the desire to return and redefine art history can become part of the production of art.

I will argue in this chapter that contemporary artists become increasingly engaged in art historical debates as education becomes increasingly tied to universities and postgraduate degrees. In turn, this gives artists the impetus and resources to define their own fields of inquiry in the absence of a grand narrative. Such an approach makes
it necessary to create idiosyncratic versions of art history that define particular trends in contemporary art, rather than having this prescribed by art history at the time of production, as was the approach of the Modern art critic.\footnote{Clement Greenberg is the example \textit{par excellence} of an art critic defining the limits of Modern Art at the time of its production.} Such an approach would place artists alongside art theorists, as both attempt to carve meaning from the disparate sea of artworks that constitutes the contemporary period.

The chapter is divided into three sections; the first part of the chapter will start with Arthur C. Danto’s text \textit{The End of Art}, which was first published in 1984. This text outlines Modern Art history as a response to the technological development of cinema. This will be contrasted with Peter Bürger’s text \textit{Theory of the Avant-Garde}, first published in 1974. Bürger’s text focuses on the role of the avant-garde in Modern Art. Both texts articulate conflicting versions of Modern Art history. However, both theorists share the underlying assumption of the importance of a singular version of art history that both defines art and progresses art forward.

The second part of the chapter discusses the way Danto’s text relates to a text by Hans Belting titled \textit{The End of Art History?} First published in 1984, Belting’s text articulates a loss of faith in art history to move art forward. He suggests that art history no longer sets the agenda of art and as such is unable to map a cohesive set of practices. Instead of telling the narrative of art, art history simply maps the diverse practices of many artists. In a more recent text, \textit{After the End of Art} (1997), Danto aligns his argument with Belting’s, but there is a fundamental difference between their arguments. Danto believes that a loss of faith in art history renders art no longer relevant. Danto relies on a belief that art requires a singular version of art history that progresses art towards an ultimate end. In contrast, Belting articulates art history as extraneous to the production of art and therefore the loss of faith in art history signifies an opening up of art to a plurality of meanings that were not possible before, while at the same time marking the end of art history. In Belting’s theory each artwork is understood on its own terms, rather than being held accountable to an art history that is defined externally from the work itself. Belting provides a general account of the changes that were taking
place at the time. This approach has maintained its relevance, in that art history has abandoned the pursuit of grand narratives that give order to contemporary practices, in favour of effectively identifying thematic trends as they emerge. Following this line of enquiry, the pages of this text will identify a set of conditions that apply, not to art in general, but, to a set of practices that have emerged in recent years. Emerging thematics are drawn from textual analysis of specific artworks, rather than through an ontology of art history’s linear progression. This approach to art history presents the terrain of contemporary art as fractured, but more inclusive.

The third section of this chapter will add specificity to the more general argument articulated in the first two sections. In the absence of a singular explanation of art by art history, certain aspects of visual culture can now be re-examined. This is particularly interesting in terms of the relationship between cinema and art, because there has been a sudden rekindling of artistic interest in cinematic technologies, just at the moment of their increasing obsolescence, as digital technologies become the dominant mode of media production and distribution. There has always been a connection between the two disciplines, but it is only now that art is explicitly merging the two. Such an exploration of a discipline external to art can be understood in the wake of the debates concerned with both the autonomy and singularity of art. Many artists at the time of these debates made works that directly addressed these questions, in particular the merging of high and low art. However, as a new generation of artists emerge, a new approach has developed that accepts that art is one among many methods of understanding the world. Therefore, artists utilise external disciplines as interchangeable elements of the form and content of contemporary art. Consequently, the type of work produced is very different from the work produced at the time of these debates.

Certain art practices, which will form the basis of discussion in the following pages, utilise underlying assumptions about the relationship between art and cinema that will be articulated in this chapter. These assumptions mark a clear break with the way Modern Art incorporated cinema and other forms of popular culture, in favour of the much more diverse, symbiotic relationship between art and cinema that is prevalent in
the works discussed here. Given the fracturing of a cohesive narrative of art history, it has become necessary to articulate the particular relationship between art and cinema, as exhibited by specific artworks, because there is no longer a singular art historical approach to art’s engagement with popular culture. Instead, art history must engage with the diversity of approaches that has always comprised art, but is only now being accommodated by the writing that surrounds artistic production. It is therefore important to clearly articulate these assumptions before proceeding to the more detailed discussions in the chapters that follow.

**Danto and The End of Art**

Danto’s text, *The End of Art*, attempted to understand the disillusionment with art that occurred in the 1980s in terms of an end of art history. By extension, this leads to the end of art, which Danto considered to be primarily reliant on art history in order to produce meaning.¹⁰ Thirteen years after the original essay, Danto published another book titled *After the End of Art* (1997) in which he aligned his original essay with another essay by Hans Belting titled *The End Of Art History?* that was published in German in the year prior to Danto’s original text.¹¹ Danto understands the end of art as the end of a progressive art history which was bought about as a result of a definition of the essence of art. This provides the fundamental difference between the two arguments. For Belting, the end of art refers to the end of an essentialist philosophy of art (Kelly 1998: 37). The following will articulate the difference between Danto’s and Belting’s argument in order to build the theoretical groundwork for the relationship between art and cinema that forms the basis of the argument presented in the following chapter.

For Danto, pre-modern art history is constituted as the record of mimetic art’s continual linear progression toward optical fidelity. The goal of pre-modern art was to

---

¹⁰ The essay was published as the lead essay in a book titled *The Death of Art*. The other essays in the edited text are all direct responses to Danto’s argument. It is within this context of debate that Danto’s argument has been situated since its original publication. The article has been refined and republished several times since its initial publication. Danto’s argument is rigidly defined, therefore this context of debate is needed in order to acknowledge the disparate contexts which it attempts to articulate.

¹¹ Danto’s second book sparked a series of responses, some of which were published in a dedicated issue of the journal *History and Theory* (1998) and an edited book *The End of Art and Beyond: Essays After Danto* (1999). Such a grand statement as “the end of art” should only be understood as the starting point of a debate, rather than a finite articulation of the state of art.
move beyond inferences to direct equivalences. The measure of a painting’s success was based on the ability of the work to erase the gap between perceiving a representation and perceiving the actual object. According to this understanding of art history, progression is constituted as a series of technical discoveries. Danto focuses specifically on two aspects of pre-modern art: inferred movement and perspective. These were two developments in painting that added to the perceptual accuracy of the medium (Danto 1984).

The history of art was, for Danto, a series of small progressions within the constant medium of painting, until the invention of cinema which transformed artistic inquiry. Instead of simply implying movement, cinema actually showed it. Danto suggests that cinema erases the gap between representing movement and actual movement. In other words, Danto suggests that mimetic painting was simply superseded by cinematography, which offered a closer equivalence to perceptual reality than was possible in painting. Cinema incorporated both movement and sound as elements that moved the mimetic arts beyond painting (Danto 1984).

The development from painting to cinema is not the clear progression toward greater mimesis that Danto’s argument suggests. The clearest example of early cinema’s regression in realism is the inability to reproduce colour. Colour is a significant aspect of the mimetic arts that painting possessed for centuries prior to the invention of cinema. Danto’s argument does not account for the significance of such regressions in the history of mimetic art. Andre Bazin’s argument in his seminal text “What is Photography?” presents a reason for the illusion that photography, and by extension cinema, constitutes a progression in the mimetic arts. Bazin argues that the mechanical element of photography, which forms the basis of moving images, gives the impression of greater mimesis, rather than actually producing it. Bazin suggests that the mechanical process of taking a photograph is more important than the fidelity of the image to reality (Bazin 1967: 12). In other words, Bazin suggests that it is a belief in the mechanical reproduction of the subject devoid of human intervention that leads to a belief in the realism of cinema over painting, rather than anything inherent within the image produced. Therefore the absence of colour from the photographic image is countered by
the knowledge that the image was rendered mechanically. Knowledge of the mechanical nature of the photographic image, in combination with the cultural implications of the process of its construction, creates the effect of cinematic realism despite the actual mimetic ability of early cinema being depreciated through lack of colour.

Danto articulates the connection between cinema and art in terms of a linear progression from painting to cinema. Danto’s discussion of cinema’s turn to narrative suggests that the sense of wonderment experienced by audiences confronted with the realism of cinema as a technology was the primary focus of cinema in its early years. This is noted in the work of the Lumière Brothers, where the subject matter emphasized movement. However, as audiences became familiar with the technology, the effect of wonderment dissipated. Unlike painting, which has a virtuosic element to its production, cinema was the result of a mechanical technology and therefore needed to add the element of narrative in order to sustain the interest of its audiences. Danto suggests that cinema would not have sustained interest if it remained simply an optical toy. It is this lack of interest in mechanical optical equivalences that plays a part in bringing the history of mimetic art to an end (Danto 1984). Danto argues that artists began to abandon the goal of progression towards realism in painting at approximately the same time that cinema began to establish itself as a narrative based medium (Danto 1984: 21).

Danto provides a version of art history that is precise and neat, but in its clarity fails to account for the simultaneity of narrative and visual attraction, which continues to define contemporary cinema. Tom Gunning, in his seminal article “The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant Garde”, articulates a shift in the focus of cinema that occurred around 1906. The ‘cinema of attractions’, which was dominant prior to 1906, sought to excite the viewer through a focus on spectacle as it was created through the specifically visual means of moving images. Gunning suggests that this approach to early cinema, which focused on the possibilities inherent within the medium, gave way to narrative cinema, which drew upon the traditions of theatre and literature to generate audience engagement. Like Danto, Gunning articulates a significant change in cinema at this time, however, unlike Danto, Gunning makes clear
that the ‘cinema of attractions’ was not opposed to narrative and as such was not completely usurped by it either. Instead the ‘cinema of attractions’ became a component of narrative cinema, that worked to seduce via visual spectacle. This component of cinema remains strong in contemporary action films, where the focus on visual spectacle often overrides the narrative pull (Gunning 1990).

While Gunning demonstrates the way the spectacle of early cinema has continued as part of narrative cinema, Laura Mulvey has endeavoured to articulate the way time has affected moving images, bringing new resonances that suggest a continued relationship between art and cinema through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mulvey presents a version of cinematic history that coincides with Danto’s first two stages, however she articulates a third phase where, through the movement of history, the images that once spoke of the ordinary lives of its subjects and audiences alike, now look strange. These films have a new fascination, as images of the past begin to look “fossilised” as our connection to these images fades. These films become uncanny as they are at once moving yet fossilised. For Mulvey these images point to the lineage between movement and stillness, that has begun to gather importance in art in recent years (Mulvey 2006: 36). Mulvey’s argument retrospectively implies that the relationship between cinema and art continued beyond the introduction of narrative. This disjuncture occurs as a result of the different intention of each author. Danto writes about cinema as a means by which to explain the end of the history of mimetic art and therefore does not follow cinema’s development alongside visual arts. Alternatively, Mulvey is interested in articulating a relationship between still and moving images, which are defining characteristics of both photography and cinema. It is my argument here and throughout the following chapters, that the connection between art and cinema was never broken and that this connection has emerged as a recent trend in many contemporary art practices due to developments in contemporary technologies of cinematic distribution.

Danto focuses his argument on the development of cinema toward greater mimesis as the point at which art and cinema became disparate mediums, because once movement had been achieved in cinema the still mediums, such as photography, from
which cinema is derived, and painting, could not compete in the progression toward greater mimesis. As Christian Metz has articulated, cinema does not represent movement, as still images do, but replicates it. Danto’s articulation of this division relies on a belief that the replication of movement is the most significant aspect of mimetic art. However, as we see from Mulvey’s argument, stillness is an ever present element of cinema, not only because movement is created through the succession of still images, but because we retrospectively read stillness into moving images, because any photographic-based medium suspends its subject through time as an image. Cinema is never simply the production of movement and as such the stillness of the pictorial tradition is pervasive.

In her text *Moving Pictures*, Anne Hollander presents a detailed account of the historical progression from painting to cinema. Hollander maps what she calls the “proto-cinematic” paintings of Northern Europe in the fifteenth century to present-day cinema, conceiving of this tradition of painting as the pre-history of cinema. Hollander argues that the division between painting and cinema occurred when art historians began to retrospectively view pre-modern art through the lens of Modern art history. This led to art historians disregarding the similar way in which narrative was constructed in Northern European painting and cinema (Hollander 1989: 27). The centrality of medium specificity to Modern art history meant that the formal differences between cinema and art over-shadowed the similarities in terms of narrative content.

Hollander views the construction of narrative as central to the lineage between art and cinema, whereas Danto understands mimesis to be the defining relationship between art and cinema. The difference between the two arguments hinges on the version of art history that each writer adopts. Danto adopts a model for understanding the relationship between art and cinema that aligns itself with Modern art history. His version sees Modern art as the continual progression towards abstraction, achieved through medium specificity, hence cinema and art were viewed as separate disciplines, which occurred when Modern art abandoned the mimetic tradition. Hollander challenges this way of understanding the relationship between art and cinema through detailed textual analysis of a wide breadth of painting. Her argument redefines the
relationship between art and cinema by drawing connections between the way narrative is constructed in cinema and painting. Hollander creates a new version of history by shifting the focus of subsequent readings of art and cinema, from formal abstraction, to narrative.

![Figure 1.1: J.M.W Turner (1842) Snow Storm and Steam-Boat off a Harbor’s Mouth, Oil paint on canvas, 914 x 1219mm.](image)

While Danto’s argument has the weight of Modern art history behind it, the chronology of the argument is more complicated than Danto suggests. Danto articulates the loss of faith in the mimetic tradition as being technologically determined by the invention of cinema as a primarily narrative form. However, the occurrence of J.M.W Turner’s work in the late 1830s and 1840s questions the historical accuracy of Danto’s claim. In these works Turner is pre-occupied with capturing movement within the still support of paint on canvas. Turner sacrifices the realism of the image, in favour of abstraction, in order to evoke movement rather than focusing on realistically rendering scenes in spatial terms. To that effect, Turner abandoned the goal of realism well before cinema established itself as a narrative medium.
Jonathan Crary, in his text *Techniques of the Observer*, argued that Turner’s paintings from this period are indicative of disillusionment with the camera obscura as a method for ordering the visual. In this context, Crary identifies, through Turner’s painting, a move from models of space and form exemplified by Newtonian Physics to concerns with thermodynamics that occurred well before the invention of cinema (Crary 1992: 138). In Crary’s account we see a much more complicated oscillation between cause and effect when investigating the historical effects of technological advancements. For Danto, the move from mimesis to abstraction in art is solely determined by technological advances and the cultural precedence for technological advancements do not factor into this version of history.

Both Hollander and Crary present new versions of art history that provide alternative readings of art from the Modern and pre-modern periods, which bypass Modern art history in favour of a more far-reaching account of events. Both arguments hinge on close readings of material that lays outside of dominant concepts of art history. Likewise, Mulvey articulates a new way of understanding cinema that sees stillness as an integral part of the way meaning is constructed. If we are to look at each of these alternative historical narratives about art and cinema as individual layers, drawn into focus through analysis, then the relationship between cinema and art is complicated, because the two fields cannot be understood in medium specific terms. Instead, each form must be understood in terms of their relationship to other disciplines such as philosophy and science.

Contrary to this approach, Danto presents a sequence of decisive events and in doing so identifies a moment in art history where art lost faith in the mimetic tradition. Danto argues that, as a result of the dissolution with mimetic art, two strands of contemporary art emerged in the Modern era: Abstract Expressionism and what he refers to as “theorized art”. In Danto’s original 1984 text, *The End of Art*, he focuses his discussion on this change in regards to Post-Impressionist painting and consequently draws the conclusion that, in the absence of a goal of art’s progression towards realism, art became about the abstract expression of the artist’s emotive response to the subject. According to Danto, art history was formed along new lines in which art is about artistic
expression. Danto follows the art historical premise that progresses towards greater and greater levels of expression from Fauvism through to Abstract Expressionism. Danto takes the Romantic notion of art that emerged in the nineteenth century, and traces its function in the twentieth century (Kelly 1998: 32). It is Danto’s argument that when art reached Abstract Expressionism, it was no longer about mimetic representation and, therefore, art history as a discipline was fundamentally changed. He argues that it is not possible to articulate the progression of art that is concerned with artistic expression in the way that mimetic art can be understood in progressive terms (Danto 1984: 24). The mimetic nature of art could be traced toward higher fidelity as could its disappearance, as art became more and more abstract. However, once mimesis disappeared as a central concern of art, the history of art was no longer able to articulate the progression of art through time. Instead, art history became a record of a series of independently articulated artistic endeavors. Danto posits the idea that the end of art is the result of the end of art history as progressive (Danto 1984).

Danto presents a theory of Modern Art that follows traditional conceptions of revolutionary change in Modern Art. In contrast, Crary presents a theory of Modern Art that is contrary to what he refers to as the two dominant theories of revolutionary change in Modern Art. The first theory sees changes in the production of art starting with Manet, and following through to the impressionists, as a radical departure from the history of realism in painting. The second theory, occurring almost simultaneously, is the invention of photography and consequently cinema, which is understood as a continuation of the agenda of realism, within a new technological format. In traditional accounts, technological change is understood as the imposition of a set of principles on culture from the outside. On the other hand, Crary sees both the changes in art historical representation and the invention of photography as symptomatic of cultural and scientific changes that occurred much earlier in the century (Crary 1992: 7-8).

Like Danto, Crary aligns visual culture with the dominant technological apparatus of the time. However, instead of understanding these technologies as defining

---

12 A likeness can be made between Danto’s technological determinism and his notion that art history determines art from its position outside of art.

13 The discussion of Turner earlier in the chapter is indicative of these cultural and scientific changes.
the culture from outside, he sees them as emerging from within the culture. At the beginning of *Techniques of the Observer*, Crary positions his discussion within the context of a contemporary revolution in the way modes of representation have been changed by computer graphics. He aligns changes created by digital technology with the changes in perceptual ordering that occurred in the Renaissance, suggesting that current changes may be more radical (Crary 1992: 1). Writing two decades ago, Crary identifies a change that has become increasingly predominant since *Techniques of the Observer* was first published, with photographic and cinematic images becoming altered by the ubiquity of computer generated imagery which is the result of a move from analogue to digital photographic-based media. The transition from analogue to digital, which is an underlying aspect of each chapter of this text, has fundamentally altered the fabric of both mediums.

Crary’s argument highlights the way changes in technology do not occur in isolation, nor do they bring about precise cultural change. Instead technological change is understood as emerging from a symbiotic relationship between the culture from which it was generated and the material technology that makes its existence possible. In Crary’s account, the influence of technological change is disseminated in a way that cannot be pinpointed to any single revolutionary moment, and, in contrast to Danto, is understood in terms of a slow progression that includes both the material effects of the technology and cultural change. In Danto’s account, the technological apparatus of cinema created a rift in the mimetic tradition of art, whereas Crary presents the material apparatus of cinema as necessarily integrated into the cultural and historical change that bought about cinema’s invention.

In the first half of Danto’s *The End of Art* he posits the Expression theory of art as a partial reason for the demise of art history. This has been focused upon in this chapter thus far. In the second half of the essay, Danto puts forward another theory of art that emerges alongside Expression theory. He conflates each movement of Modern Art that does not fit within the move from mimetic art to Abstract Expressionism into the category of “theorized art”. Danto suggests that in the absence of a clear goal to drive the progression of art forward, Modern Art returned to the question of art’s
essence that has been a part of art since Plato. By asking the question, “What is Art?” art became self-reflexive and this self-reflexivity enabled art to follow an agenda that could be transcribed once again into art history (Danto 1984: 30).

As the history of art could no longer be understood in terms of mimesis, and Expression theory proved inadequately understood in historical terms, art required theory in order to make sense of itself. Danto argues that each Modern Art movement that attempted to define the philosophical essence of art revealed itself to be unable to achieve this goal. Thus the history of Modern Art became a series of disparate and failed attempts to understand the nature of art. Danto states that, “the historical importance of art lies in the fact that it makes the philosophy of art possible” (Danto 1984: 31). Such an idea places art and its production as secondary to the history that is generated from art.

Danto proposes that the problem with making art theory essential to art production is that the importance of the art object decreases as the theory increases, until the object is no longer part of art (Danto 1984: 31). So, for Danto, art became simply a meditation on art. The dematerialisation of art is the ultimate end of art, as nothing is left but its theorisation. He does not suggest that art will cease to be made, but rather that art as it has been defined will cease to be relevant (Danto 1984).

It is Danto’s argument that Modernism, as defined by Clement Greenberg, which dominated art history in the mid-twentieth century, bought stability back to art by identifying the basic elements of painting: a process that can be translated into a progressive history of art (Danto 1997: 68). However, for Danto, the entire project of High Modernism collapsed with the emergence of Pop Art. Danto cites Andy Warhol’s *Brillo Box* as the work *par excellence* of this movement and its effect on High Modernism and art in general. *Brillo Box* had an appearance so close to the actual object that it demonstrated the impossibility of Greenberg’s goal. In Danto’s words: “it became clear that the real philosophical question was how to prevent [art] from simply collapsing into reality” (Danto 1997: 71). More specifically, addressing the concerns of painting, Danto asks, how is one to tell the difference between a monochrome painting
and any flat painted surface? If a monochrome painting is unable to be differentiated from the mere wall on which it hangs, art must rely on something more than simply its visual qualities to make it art (Danto 1997: 71). For Danto, the very existence of *Brillo Box* rendered Greenberg’s model of art without substance. This rupture is similar to the rupture that Danto suggests occurred when cinema replicated movement. Both points of rupture in art and art history occurred when the boundary between art and life began to seamlessly merge; when art became indistinguishable from life and the autonomy of art was untenable.

![Figure 1.2: Andy Warhol (1964) *Brillo Soap Pads Box*, Screen-print and Ink on Wood, 432 x 32 x 356mm.](image)

Danto articulates the very purpose of *Brillo Box* when he suggests that it marks the point at which art became one with the reality it once represented. However, where Danto sees this as a transformative gesture that marks the end of art, I would argue that Warhol simply acknowledged the way art has always functioned. Warhol’s work brings into focus the symbiotic relationship of art with other disciplines that Crary, Hollander and Mulvey articulate in relation to art and cinema.
Danto presents two versions of art history: Abstract Expressionism and what he terms, “theorized Art”. Both aspects of Modern Art conceive of art history in linear terms, with the goal of art being the progression of art history. Technological change is, for Danto, the source of rupture in art history. However, this notion has been rendered untenable by the existence of other well-founded versions of art history. These arguments do not simply render Danto’s argument untenable by virtue of its reasoning but, more significantly, they demonstrate that historical change does not occur as a discrete linear progression. Instead, multiple versions of history coalesce and layer upon each other to create a version of history that is complicated by an inability to locate the locus of change within a single event. Cause and effect shifts like a kaleidoscope, depending on the perspective adopted. It is therefore my goal in this chapter to map a number of different versions of art history, including that presented by Danto, as they converge and diverge. In the absence of a single version of art history, art production becomes the locus for a series of tenable version of art history.

**Bürger and the Avant-Gardes**

Peter Bürger’s *Theory of the Avant-Garde* first published in 1974, a decade earlier than Danto’s *The End of Art*, posits a version of Modern Art history that consists of two main periods that span the many different movements of Modern Art: the avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde. Instead of following two simultaneous versions of Modern Art, as Danto does, Bürger focuses on the idea of the avant-garde. The avant-garde incorporates both strands of Modern Art history discussed by Danto, yet Bürger concentrates on the aspect of the avant-garde that Danto calls “theorized art”. Bürger’s argument works to expand the underdeveloped aspects of Danto’s argument while redefining its scope and presenting a different version of Modern Art history. Bürger’s argument conflicts at many points with Danto’s, however they both arrive at a similar point: art has lost its ability to progress the history of art forward.

---

Bürger conceives of the avant-garde as a series of failures. He states that the historical avant-garde occurred between 1910 and 1925. For Bürger, the role of the historic avant-garde was to break down the gap between art and life through a critique of Modern Art’s presumed autonomy from other mediums (Buchloh 1986: 41). Bürger suggests that one way in which art was seen to be autonomous was in the individual act of creation. After the separation of the producer from the means of production, the artist remained as the sole producer of handcrafted objects. This perpetuated the notion of art as autonomous in bourgeois society (Bürger 1984: 36). This sentiment has been echoed by Victor Burgin who suggests that after industrialisation the trace of the artist’s hand became a source of nostalgia for a time now past (Burgin 1986: 153).

The historic avant-garde responded to this condition of art by negating the role of individual creation. Bürger refers specifically to Duchamp’s readymades as examples of the artist’s negation of art as created by an individual, because he selected mass produced objects and displayed them in galleries as art objects. The signature forms part of a philosophical tradition that guarantees the author’s presence in the work (Burgin 1986: 153). Duchamp also took the artist’s signature as the key to the authenticity of the art object and applied that to mass-produced objects. In doing so, he questions the validity of the artist as sole creator of art objects (Bürger 1984: 52). Duchamp proved that it was possible to create a work from mass produced objects. However, Duchamp does not break down the notion of art’s autonomy from mass produced objects, instead he draws attention to this as a fallacy, and in turn he draws attention to the process of creating meaning through an artwork.

For Bürger, Duchamp’s readymades had a time limit. Once Duchamp had cemented this idea in Modern Art then it was no longer provocative. Once the question of the artist as individual is resolved, as Bürger suggests has occurred in the case of Duchamp, then the work no longer functions in the same way. Thus Duchamp is understood as an historical avant-garde figure. To repeat the gesture after it has been subsumed into the history of art is not to be provocative in the manner of Duchamp, but is instead in line with the art market. The same gesture repeated is not an avant-garde

---

15 This is something that Danto claims was not fully achieved until Warhol’s Brillo Boxes.
artwork, but a work of institutionalised art. It is Bürger’s notion that this work, which he labels as neo-avant-garde, institutionalises the work. Thus, the very artworks that hoped to break down the boundaries between art and life are now used to restore it. According to Bürger, the neo-avant-garde reverses the role of the historic avant-garde by repeating the same gesture (Bürger 1984: 52-53).

This is not specific to Duchamp or Dada; it runs across all aspects of art. The post-war period of the 1950s and 1960s saw a recycling of the historic avant-garde practices. Techniques such as readymades, monochrome painting, collage, and the grid, that had been central to the practices of the historic avant-garde, were re-appropriated as key elements of the neo-avant-garde (Foster 1994: 5). Bürger viewed the neo-avant-garde as mere copies and imitations of the original and genuine practices of the historical avant-garde. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh has pointed out that Bürger’s claims about the original avant-garde is based upon a fictitious belief that only the original is genuine and anything else is a disingenuous copy Bürger’s argument sees the neo-avant-garde as a devalued contributor to the history of the avant-garde because, through repetition, it devalues the role of the avant-garde by making it the institutionalised art it set out to oppose (Buchloh 1986: 42).

Both Danto and Bürger align the value of an artwork with its ability to be, not only understood in terms of art history, but its ability to maintain the linear progression of Modern Art. Danto and Bürger articulate two contrasting versions of Modern Art, yet they are bound by the same notion of art as a singular and unidirectional production of art historical consequences. This leads to a notion of history that is “punctual’ and ‘final’. In turn this historicism results in contemporary art being understood as reiterative and redundant.  

Danto suggests that there were many types of art being produced during the Modern period and thus many possible versions of art history. However, Danto ultimately asserts that only one art history was formed, until pop art opened art to the possibility that anything was possible (Danto 1997: 121). Danto acknowledges plurality

16 Hal Foster makes this point about Bürger’s argument, but the same is evident in Danto’s work. See Foster, H. (1994). “What's Neo about the Neo-Avant-Garde.” October 70(Autumn): 5-32.
in art as a necessary state, yet he does not allow for the same plurality within art history. For Danto and Bürger moments of rupture occur at a single point where an artwork creates an aesthetic shift that is self-contained, yet able to signify substantial change (Foster 1994: 13). There is no interest taken in the dissemination of historical rupture. Historical rupture is instead defined as the point of its origin (Miller 1984: 149-150). Bürger and Danto understand contemporary art as post-historical. Bürger understands contemporary art as the purposeless repetition of the historic avant-garde throughout postwar Modernism, and Danto understands it as the point where the boundary between art and life became blurred. Despite the different approaches, both theorists posit a version of art history that suggests we are condemned to a “pluralistic irrelevance” because artistic meaning is unable to be generated without art history (Foster 1994). Both arguments are specific, but indicative of the broader concerns of this period of art history and theory.

David Geers’s article “Neo-Modernism” identifies the emergence of, what he refers to as, neo-formalism in contemporary art (2012). Geers’s argument presents a scathing account of this trend in contemporary art that echoes Bürger’s argument that the endless and unthinking repetition of historic avant-garde gestures has, and continues to, proliferate in contemporary art. In so doing, Geers identifies a trend in contemporary art that gives weight to Danto’s idea that art will continue to be made, but will cease to be relevant. Geers makes the point that this current recycling of Modern Art techniques and aesthetics does not have the oppositional purpose of Modernity and instead utilises Modern techniques as an aesthetic gesture that evokes well-worn ideas about “artistic innocence” (Geers 2012: 11). The crux of Geers’s argument is that this movement is defined by the use of Modern techniques for their aesthetic value alone, devoid of historical context or critical basis.

The difference between Geers’s argument and those presented by Bürger and Danto is that Geers does not suggest that this repetition and lack of relevance extends to include all contemporary art. Instead, he identifies one strand among many, albeit a dominant

17 Foster discusses Bürger and Miller discusses Danto. Both theorists apply the same logic of analysis to these very different versions of art history.
one at the moment in the field of contemporary art. Furthermore, he positions the relevance of Modern gestures within an historical moment in time. Geers suggests that Modern gestures could be usefully re-invoked in certain contexts, however, their uncritical application in certain contemporary art practices leaves them devoid of a critical edge. Geers refers to the appropriation of Modernist techniques in the 1980s as an example of a critical rethinking of Modernity through evoking the style associated with the period (Geers 2012: 10). In so doing Geers inadvertently points towards the idea that artists can invoke past traditions in order to generate new perspectives that are not in themselves a continuation of Modern art history.

**The Gap Between Art and Life**

Hal Foster responds directly to Bürger’s idea of the neo-avant-garde, but takes a very different view from Bürger. Just as Geers points toward a critical appropriation of Modernist techniques in the 1980s, Foster articulates the way the second neo-avant-garde added a critical edge to the appropriation of the historic avant-garde. Foster suggests that the neo-avant-garde was the result of artists’ increased critical study of the pre-war avant-garde. Focused artistic research was generated for the first time in institutions that offered MFA programs (Foster 1994: 10). In this context, artists were, for the first time, closely studying the history of art, which transferred into the production of art as an extension of pre-war historic avant-garde practices. Foster conceives of the neo-avant-garde in two stages. The first stage is the 1950s neo-avant-garde which recycled the pre-war avant-garde styles. The second neo-avant-garde in the 1960s added a critical element to the process, which built upon the first neo-avant-garde (Foster 1994: 10). Artists were, in this view, actively engaging with the idea of art as a progressive historical medium.

Bürger’s argument accepts the avant-garde rhetoric without questioning the legitimacy of their claim. Particular focus is placed on the notion of the avant-garde as merging art and life. For Foster, this very concept is only sustainable if there is a belief in the goal of the autonomy of art from life. According to Foster, the problem becomes
evident when one attempts to define the terms ‘art’ and ‘life’. Art must be seen as autonomous in order to move beyond itself into life. Furthermore, life has a paradoxical meaning in Bürger’s argument. Firstly, it is inaccessible because of art’s autonomy, but at the same time it is seen to be immediate in the sense that, once artistic conventions are broken, the gap will be automatically filled with life. The impossibility of the goal is, according to Bürger, what leads to the inevitable failure of the succession of avant-garde movements (Foster 1994: 16-17). Bürger assigns a set of predetermined rules about art, based on the wholesale adoption of avant-garde rhetoric, and uses that to judge other art and in particular the neo-avant-garde. Bürger does this instead of looking at the work on its own terms and deciphering the meaning from what is present in the work (Buchloh 1986: 43).

Foster’s argument is quite pointed in the sense that it attempts to use the work of the neo-avant-garde to more accurately articulate the role of both the avant-garde and neo-avant-garde. Foster states that the role of the avant-garde was not to transcend itself as art, nor was it to follow the Romantic notion of merging art and life. Instead the avant-garde set works in the ‘gap’ between the two. It is within this gap that the boundaries between art and life, and the conventions of both, are tested (Foster 1994: 18). Foster takes this idea a step further, by stating that what the avant-garde declared is not necessarily what they achieved. Using the examples of Rodchenko’s Pure Colours: Red, Yellow, Blue (1921), Foster states that Rodchenko proclaimed that painting would end with the revelation of his monochrome triptych, but what he demonstrated was the conventionality of painting. Foster makes a similar claim for Duchamp’s Fountain (1917) when he states that it reveals the conventional limits of art at a particular place.

---

18 This is not an isolated problem within Modern Art history and theory and is instead a defining feature of this era. Another example can be seen via Boris Groys’s work on the ethics of the Russian Constructivist movement. Groys articulates how Modern art’s reliance on overarching historical narratives has resulted in the recognition of ethically questionable works because they are historically pertinent to formalism in art history. However, as Groys notes, this narrative has resulted in a disregard for other works that, in formal terms, were historically regressive and which turned toward past artistic practices as a means by which to distance themselves from the morally and ethically questionable context of Russia at the time. See Groys, B. (1993). "On the Ethics of the Avant-Garde." Art in America(May): 110-113.
and time. The works do not transcend the boundaries of art, instead they test the limits (Foster 1994: 19).  

The role of the first neo-avant-garde was to utilise the historical avant-garde within their work. By using the avant-garde techniques, the first neo-avant-garde worked to institutionalise the avant-garde, rather than to transform the institution, which had been the previous understanding of the avant-garde. The first neo-avant-garde made the avant-garde appear historical in order to elaborate beyond it. By repeating techniques of the historical avant-garde, the neo-avant-garde cemented the importance of the avant-garde within art history (Foster 1994: 22). The second neo-avant-garde set about exploring the limits of both the historical avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde. With this understanding of the neo-avant-garde practice we see a changed perspective from that purported by Bürger. Instead of seeing the traditional avant-garde as a succession of failed attempts to transform art and the neo-avant-garde as mere senseless repetition of these failures, it is possible to see the avant-garde and the first neo-avant-garde as necessary steps toward the second neo-avant-garde’s testing of the institution and so on (Foster 1994: 24-25). This perspective of the role of the avant-garde artist, and their ability to test the limits of art, emerges from and produces a history that becomes progressively less and less skeptical of the past. Here, the past is seen as something that can be utilised, rather than transcended.  

If we are to see the history of the avant-garde as split between an historical avant-garde and neo-avant-garde, in the way Foster articulates, then Warhol’s *Brillo Box* does not collapse the history of art, but can be seen as a continuation of the avant-garde as the continuation of the institutionalised adversarial practices of the historical avant-garde. The *Brillo Box* is understood as a second neo-avant-garde practice that continues what the avant-garde started, because it works within the gap between art and life instead of attempting to move beyond this. What is significant about this is that the practices of the historical avant-garde are seen here as a set of rules, despite starting out as adversarial, which through time have formed the tradition of Modern Art. Likewise the first and second neo-avant-garde have cemented their place within art history, and  

---

19 The effect of time and place on time-based artworks is explored in greater depth in Chapter Three.
The neo-formalism that Geers has discussed is something different again, as these works presently appear devoid of the critical edge of the second neo-avant-garde. It may be possible to see this emptying out of the avant-garde practices by Neo-Formalism as a stage in the cyclic evolution of institutional avant-garde practices.

The End of Art History or the End of Art?

Hans Belting, like Danto, articulates the disillusionment caused by the move from Modern to contemporary art. For Belting, the end of art history is constituted as the disillusionment of art history in the wake of Modernism. Belting presents the argument that art history no longer produced a convincing version of art. This is a shift whereby contemporary artists utilise the history of art within their work, yet art history is not used to progress art forward in the way it had in Modernism (Belting 1987: 3). Belting provides a compelling account, seeing the end of a progressive art history as the opening up of history to be used by contemporary artists, not as something to move beyond in order to push art forward, but as a history of ways of viewing the world. This is the tradition of Modern Art that Foster articulates.

Belting posits that the separation of art from art history started with Modernism. When art rejected the traditional goals of mimetic art, art history continued to maintain its role without questioning its own methods of constructing a reality. Because of this, art history tended to provide accounts of Modern art that unquestioningly recorded the agenda of the avant-garde. This was particularly important in Modernism, because this was the first time that artists produced work that was self-aware of art as historically progressive. Modern Art history was divided between those who lamented the emergence of Modern Art, and wished for a return to traditional practices, and those who sought to justify art through its contrast and progression from traditional art practices. In both cases, the divide between pre-modern and modern art was central.

20 Belting’s argument is much broader then Danto’s. Rather than mapping out specific lines of art history that have constituted an exhaustion of art, as Danto does, Belting articulates a broader question of how the end of Modernism, in its many formulations, has resulted in a disillusionment with art history.
Once again Modern art is understood in terms of its progression away from pre-modern art (Belting 1987: 34-35).

Belting’s argument converges with Bürger’s argument in that both theorists articulate a situation whereby the progressive avant-garde became the tradition of Modern art. However, Belting’s argument diverges from Bürger’s argument because Belting does not consider the historical avant-garde agenda to be the purpose of Modern art; an idea that has already been articulated with reference to Foster’s critique of Bürger. Belting is concerned less with articulating the history of Modern art and more concerned with the effects of that history on subsequent art production. Belting proposes that when Modern art became an historical tradition, it ceased to be contemporary. When Modern art became historical it was no longer possible to maintain the separation between Pre-Modern and Modern art, because both function as two artistic traditions for contemporary audiences. This has particular significance in Belting’s argument, because it marks the transition of Modern art history, from the arbiter of contemporary practices, to the custodian of historical art practices.

Pre-modern art and Modern art maintain their distinct identities, but converge because they are both relegated to the historical past, thus contemporary audiences’ connection to them is similar (Belting 1987: 34-36). If Modern art is understood as a tradition of opposition to tradition, then the pre-modern tradition of art is fundamentally changed when Modern art became historical. Without conflating the two, we are able to understand them both as historical (Belting 1987: 40). As such the techniques of Modern and Pre-Modern Art become utilised as part of the traditions of art.  

Belting articulates the effect of Modern art’s transition from a contemporary to historical mode of practice in a two-part argument. Firstly, he identifies a point of historical change, being that art no longer follows a cohesive linear progression that can be understood in art historical terms. This is the connection that Danto makes with the text. However, the second aspect of Belting’s argument points towards the implications of historical change for art in general, which deviates from Danto’s argument. Belting

---

21 This will become more relevant in Chapter Four when the pictorial tradition of art becomes central to the argument.
states that artists no longer look to art history for guidance, but instead plunder it for ideas. While there is a similarity to Bürger’s argument, in terms of the version of history that supports the argument, the sentiment is much closer aligned with that of Foster’s critique. Both Belting and Foster see the recycling of historic avant-garde practices in potentially positive terms. They both see the progression of art through the re-interpretation of historical techniques within a different context. Belting however, specifically articulates the importance of the need for art history to find ways of explaining this trend in art if it is to continue to have relevance to contemporary art.

In the preface of *The End of the History of Art?* Belting succinctly outlines the premise of his book by stating that “the old antagonism between art and life has been defused, precisely because art has lost its secure frontiers against other media, visual and linguistic, and is instead understood as one of various systems of explaining and representing the world” (Belting 1987: xi). This poses a significant problem for Danto, as he understands the failure of art to maintain its separation from life, exemplified by Warhol’s *Brillo Box*, as the point when art ceased to be relevant. Belting identifies the same moment, however, he makes the conclusion that this only concerns art history and does not present a problem for the production of art itself. And, for Bürger, the collapse of art into life was the very goal of the historic avant-garde. It is the branching out beyond art as a self-reflexive discipline that gives the strand of art that will form the basis of the following chapter, its relevance. Furthermore, the relevance of contemporary art comes from the way in which artists apply the traditions of art to disciplines outside of art, in order to generate meanings that would not be possible from within the disciplines themselves. The moment of change has been identified by Danto and Belting alike, but the conclusions differ according to their varying conceptions of art history and its purpose.

The broad strokes with which Belting paints the picture of Modern Art positions it as a fluid entity (Belting 1987: 57). In so doing, Belting articulates the implications of historical change in equally fluid terms, leaving it open to the many possibilities that can fit within the parameters of the broad argument. The condition in art history, articulated by Belting and Danto alike, suggests that several strands of art will emerge
simultaneously without the selective ordering of history. For Danto, art history is positioned as a fundamental aspect of contemporary art and as such he comes to the conclusion that art will continue to be made but cease to be relevant. Whereas Belting concludes that because art history fails to adequately explain contemporary art, then art history is no longer relevant. For Belting, this is the end point to a division between art and art history that occurred at the beginning of Modernism and has broadened ever since. The different conclusions reached in the two texts can be seen in the titles of both essays, where Danto refers to the end of art, Belting refers to the end of art history.

There is a prophetic element to both texts, as there is with any text that makes such dramatic assertions about paradigmatic shifts within a discipline. With the distance of three decades it is easy to see the extent to which the changes identified in Danto’s and Belting’s texts have manifested themselves within contemporary art. As has been previously mentioned, Danto’s argument finds relevance in the current emergence of Neo-Formalism. However, this is only one among many other trends that co-exist within art and theory alike, which points to what I have argued is the error in Danto’s assertion: that art will lose relevance without the singular progression of art history. This would be true if art was separate from other disciplines. However, as I have argued in this chapter, art is necessarily linked to other disciplines. This has become prevalent in contemporary art as an effect of the conditions outlined by Danto and Belting. Thus, the relevance of contemporary art comes, not from the progression of art history, but from art’s symbiotic engagement with the world that surrounds it. For the purposes of this discussion I am looking specifically at cinema as a ubiquitous part of contemporary society. I then use art history to generate a methodology, namely the use of stillness, in order to generate new narratives within the indisputably relevant discipline of Hollywood cinema.

Belting treads similar ground to Danto, however he asserts that art history has become inadequate as a lone measure for explaining art, despite the paradoxical tendency of artists to incorporate art history within the content of their artworks. Artists have expanded their gaze to incorporate other disciplines and, as such, art history has become intertwined with the histories of other disciplines, rendering art history as one
of a number of ways of explaining contemporary art. As we have seen in Hollander’s use of the history of cinema, this approach can extend to Pre-Modern art history. This is coupled in this chapter, with a reliance on film theory, specifically Mulvey’s *Death 24x a Second*, in order to argue for the shared history of art and cinema. In the pages that follow it has been necessary to combine film history and theory with art history and theory, in order to make sense of artworks that are intricately intertwined within cinematic practices.

Belting’s text seems particularly adept at foreseeing the way art and cinema have become intertwined in recent years, because it identifies, not only the difficulty in maintaining the boundaries between art and other disciplines within art historical terms, but also a simultaneous increase in the importance of art history within methodological approaches to art production. The relevance of contemporary art that intertwines the histories of art and cinema, lies not in its ability to progress art history forward, but in its ability to add new perspectives to other disciplines, such as cinema, which have maintained their relevance through their ubiquitous presence in wider culture. These works utilise the traditions of art, particularly painting, as a methodology that is applied to cinema in order to generate new narratives. In this way the relevance of art is no longer art history’s self-referential progression, but instead comes from finding new ways of applying the traditions of art to the world beyond art. What started out as an apparent random plundering of art history, as identified by Belting, has, through time, become a methodological approach that is embedded within the progression of art from painting, through photography to cinema. It is a methodology of applying stillness to a world in motion.

**In the Wake of the End of Art (History)**

I began working as an artist a decade after Danto’s and Belting’s texts were first published and as such I do not share the sense of pathos that resides over these texts. I did not witness the transition from the certainty of art historical accounts of Modern Art to the uncertainty of contemporary art and therefore it has not been possible for me to
lament the passing of this certainty. Instead, I have grappled with the idea of not only producing art, but forming a practice, at a time when the singular historical guidance, which Danto associates with Modern and Pre-Modern Art, is clearly absent. Once again, this is not a source of lament, because those expectations were never embedded within my notion of art and its purpose.

Due to my historical position, Warhol’s *Brillo Box* has always been part of the canon of art history and is clearly defined by the institutionalised postmodern mantra of merging High and Low art, or as Foster has articulated, a testing of the boundaries between the two. The *Brillo Box* was never the watershed in my understanding of art that it was for Danto. Instead, it has always been present as a key moment in the history of art. Having begun study as an artist in the wake of this pivotal moment in art history, I create works that do not merge High and Low art as part of the content, but utilise this development in art history as part of the methodology of the work. In other words, I take what *Brillo Box*, and Warhol’s work in general, articulates as content and use that as an institutional given, incorporating it into the fabric of the work as methodology. Where Warhol took his medium and subjects from disciplines outside of art and used them to speak about the conditions art, I utilise the traditions of art in order to examine disciplines outside of art. Paradoxically, my use of cinema as the subject of my art practice is embedded within this nexus of art historical discourse.

I have, in the manner suggested by Foster, trained as a visual artist and as such the history of art that precedes me informs my practice. While Foster notes this tendency in post-war artists, it is possible to see this era as the start of a method of artistic training that has increasing relevance to art production in general and to my own art practice specifically. The incorporation of art history into the content of art in the post-war period was understood to be part of the Modern turn toward self-referential art and as such was a continuation of key Modernist goals concerning the forward progression of art history. However, as Belting has suggested, by the 1980s artists no longer produced work that progressed art history forward, but instead used art history as a set of ideas that could be incorporated into artworks in ways that do not necessarily adhere to their original context or purpose.
Given my historical distance from Modern and Pre-Modern traditions alike, I draw from both histories as different parts of the same historical tradition. This again aligns my methodology with that identified by Belting. In doing so, I utilise aspects of the combined tradition of Modern and Pre-Modern art to form the methodology of my art practice. However, instead of utilising art history to self referentially investigate art, I use art history as a method through which to understand visual culture in general. Focusing on stillness as a consistent formal element in both Modern and Pre-Modern art, I utilise art history as a tradition of seeing and representing the world, rather than a tradition that defines the trajectory of the form and content of the work. The methodological approach of my art practice is applied, not simply to the production of art in the way the second neo-avant-garde utilised the historic avant-garde, but is applied to disciplines that have traditionally been viewed as outside the visual arts.

My practice as a visual artist, and the practices that will be discussed in the following pages, have disparate subject matters that are linked by the way art and cinema are mutually incorporated within the work. The works discussed throughout the following chapters take cinema, amongst other mediums of popular culture, not as a curiosity to examine from the position of an outsider, but as an integral part of the way the work generates meaning. Whereas self-reflexivity in Modern Art formed the content of the work, my practice applies the methodology of stillness, as a condition of visual arts from the Pre-Modern to Modern periods, to cinema. In this way Art History is used to construct a methodology of stillness, which is applied to cinema and forms the content of the work. Likewise, film theory is used in this text alongside art theory as two equally significant frameworks for understanding contemporary art.

A progression can be seen from Foster’s idea of testing the gap between art and life, to an integration of art with other artistic disciplines, which, through their association as popular culture, have aligned themselves with the notion of everyday life in a way that art has not previously. The extent to which contemporary art is intertwined with cinema can be seen in many of the works discussed throughout the following chapters, and for many of these works the only aspect of their construction that links them to the aesthetic history of visual arts is their methodological use of stillness.
Chapter Two: Stillness as Moving Image

This chapter will expand upon the ideas set out in the previous chapter concerning the way the pictorial tradition of art is intertwined with cinema. Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait (2006), a moving image work by Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno, will be the locus through which a broader argument concerning contemporary art will be made. The first part of the chapter will argue, through this work, that contemporary artists utilise stillness in order to focus the gaze of the audience onto small details that may otherwise go unnoticed. Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait presents a complicated version of stillness that sits on the border between stillness and motion, yet the work’s clear evocation of portraiture as a significant aspect of art history captures the otherwise elusive border between stillness and motion / art and cinema. The second part of the chapter will identify the way images of Zinédine Zidane (the subject of Gordon and Parreno’s work) are dispersed across different media. The different uses of technology are unified through the single idea of a media portrait.

Building from the ideas elaborated on in the discussion of Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, the chapter will discuss a work that I created, 049 (2009), in order to draw out some of the common uses of stillness that I have gleaned from art history and applied to moving images. 049 takes a different approach to Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, however, it contains the dualistic approach to the subject which comes from combining the disparate traditions of the two disciplines: art and cinema.

Football, Television, Art and Cinema

Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno’s Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait depicts an entire football match from start to finish in real-time. The match is played between the teams Real Madrid and Villareal as part of the La Liga tournament in Spain. The match was filmed using seventeen film cameras placed around the stadium. Instead of focusing on the play of the ball; the focus is on the movements of one player: Real Madrid’s Zinédine Zidane. The film consists primarily of film footage which isolates
Zidane as the focus of each shot, with full length shots and cropped images of his feet, face and hands. Film and television footage is edited together to create a seamless representation of Zidane’s participation within the match. Found footage fills the halftime interval with information and images that contextualize the match by describing and showing, in montage, a series of diverse world events that occurred on that day. This disparate footage is unified by an original soundtrack by musicians Mogwai that creates consistency and emotive drive across the footage.

Filming under this premise is at odds with standard broadcast recordings of a football match. Instead of the linear drive and distinct series of events that compose standard edits of the path of the ball, this film consists of short snippets of action when Zidane has possession of the ball, and much longer sequences when he does not. In the sequences without the ball, Zidane’s attention is always fixed on the play of the ball, which audiences of the film are unable to see given the close range of the frame of each shot. The ball generates a frantic sense of movement within the frame as Zidane negotiates it with quick footwork. Because the film removes the ball from the linear narrative of the football match it appears as an abstract form that facilitates the movement of the subject. The ball is the focus of Zidane’s attention, but it is secondary to the film’s narrative.
Figure 2.2 Image of Zidane from 2006 World Cup Match between France and Italy.

*Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* appears to preempt the events of the 2006 World Cup, where, moments before the end of the game, which would see France leave the tournament, Zidane was sent off the field for head-butting an Italian player.²² It was a confusing moment for audiences watching the live feed that was broadcast worldwide. The play was stopped while Zidane was red carded yet, because the incident occurred outside of the play of the ball, there was some time before the now infamous footage was broadcast, revealing the incident to audiences.²³ Presumably, this delay was the result of the time taken to locate the footage because it was outside of play and therefore initially overlooked. In this moment, audiences were made aware of the limits of their visual perspective of the match, because the focus of attention is always on the ball and anything that occurs outside of that remains unseen unless deemed significant. It is these moments outside of the play of the ball that *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* brings to the fore and in doing so gives audiences an altered perspective that adds new information to football that it is not possible to represent within the televisual context in

²² *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* finishes with a Zidane being “red carded” or sent off the field. In the film it is a decisive moment because the film finishes when Zidane leaves the field and not when the game finishes.

²³ The length of time it took to find the footage, discussed here, was based upon my own experience of watching the live broadcast of the event on Australian television. Once located, the footage was seen over and over again across all media coverage from football websites to the evening news. However, in replays the delay was edited out. This incident demonstrates a glitch in the ordinary broadcast of a football match.
which football is usually viewed. In this way, the work uses the history of portraiture within the visual arts in order to make explicit that which is only implicit in television coverage.

*Figure 2.3:* Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno (2006) *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait,* 90mins.

*Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* is exemplary of the intertwining of contemporary art and popular culture, combining art, cinema, television and sport. *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait,* is clearly a feature film, yet it has been made by two artists. The focus on a single player, rather than the narrative of the wider game, clearly cements the work within the visual arts, because it presents a non-linear narrative that focuses on a specific idea: the portrait of Zidane. On the other hand, the film is unmistakably cinematic in its formal qualities, including the technology used in its production and display, and the consequent aesthetic as well as the single channel format that is designed to be watched from start to finish. Furthermore, the film was distributed by Universal, yet has been shown in both galleries and cinemas and has been released on DVD. Both the formal and thematic aspects of the work clearly place the work in a space between cinema and visual arts.

The significance of this event, that occurred outside of play of the ball but was drawn into focus because of its relevance to the overall outcome of the game, has been commemorated by the Algerian artist Adel Abdessemed in 2012, as a five metre high bronze statue of a paused moment of the event installed outside the Centre Pompidou.
Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait is exemplary of a trend in visual arts where the work aligns itself with various forms of popular culture in a way that moves beyond simple quotation. The work does not recontextualise a cinematic film by showing it in a gallery, as in the tradition of Marcel Duchamp’s readymades. Nor is it a case of merging high and low art in the fashion of Andy Warhol’s Campbell Soup Cans and Brillo Boxes. Rather, the film takes a professional football match and applies modes of investigation drawn from the history of art, in order to generate a perspective that has the potential to reveal something about the match that is always present, but not immediately evident. In this way, the work is uniquely contemporary as it draws upon the entire history of art, not to move beyond it, but to utilise the modes of investigation that have defined art from Pre-Modernity to Post-Modernity as a methodological approach.

**A Slow Moving Portrait**

As the name Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait suggests, the film presents a new form of portraiture. At the basis of the connection between this film and portrait painting is the ability to sustain a detailed gaze upon the subject. In this film, Zidane is seen in motion, but the gaze of the camera is fixed upon the subject. This is enhanced when Zidane is without possession of the ball, as the camera lingers on his relatively stationary form. Without the energetic spontaneity of the live football match, and the driving narrative that this usually entails, the subject becomes something to be studied. The periods of relative inactivity work in combination with the prolonged attention on a single player to allow the subject to be observed in greater detail.

Michael Fried, in Absorption and Theatricality, has argued that traditional portraiture consists of a sitter who is aware of themselves being watched (1980). In this context, a portrait captures a pose, which is often theatrical and thus contrary to the notion of portraiture as a method through which something about the sitter is imparted to the viewer. This has often been countered in visual arts by depicting the sitter as absorbed in another action or thought. Fried has argued that Zidane: A 21st Century
Portrait depicts the subject as fully aware that he is being watched, while simultaneously absorbed by the match. Zidane is clearly aware of the seventeen film cameras, numerous television broadcast cameras and the eighty-thousand spectators at the event. Despite knowing that he is being watched, Zidane is fully absorbed in the match which is the primary reason for the spectators and cameras. Zidane’s voiceover at the beginning of the film explicitly addresses the presence of the crowd. Here, Zidane talks about his oscillation between being both absorbed and oblivious to the sound and presence of the crowd. For Fried, this film lays bare, within a single work, the relationship between both ways of viewing the subject. Fried goes on to say that both modes of viewing a subject operate simultaneously in many other contemporary works of art in a way that pushes the work beyond traditional portraiture, citing photographer Jeff Wall as another example of an artist who combines both elements of portraiture in a single work (Fried 2006). Fried positions his argument about portraiture within Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait in an art historical context. Drawing on the history of portraiture, Fried identifies key features that Gordon and Parreno employ to create a moving portrait that can be understood as the continuation of the pictorial tradition of portraiture in art, rather than as a biopic, which has its own traditions established within film history. Fried further identifies the ability of this film to combine elements that were previously considered to be mutually exclusive.

The concerns of traditional and contemporary portraiture appear central to Gordon and Parreno’s conception of the work. It was widely reported that both artists took the entire film crew to see the works of Goya and Velazquez, prior to filming the match, in order to direct them towards what constitutes portraiture (Fried 2006; Gordon and Parreno 2006; Bennett 2007). The nature of live events meant that it was not possible to storyboard the film prior to the match, however, the film crew required instruction. As such, the two artists took the crew to study traditional portraits as a way of instructing them in the absence of a defined subject and order of events. Traditional painting provided the historical backdrop for this contemporary film portrait (Gordon and Parreno 2006).
In addition to traditional portraiture, Gordon and Parreno cited Andy Warhol’s real-time portraits as setting an historical precedent for the film (Fried 2006). Warhol’s real-time films consisted of extended single frame shots of various subjects. David E. James considers the underlying purpose of many of Warhol’s early real-time films as contrary to normal portraiture where the subject reveals elements of a “unified self”. Instead, James argues, these films document the subject’s anxieties about being watched and recorded (1989). This leads to films where the sitter is highly aware of their need to present themselves to the camera, in other words, to pose. This is the aspect of theatrical portraiture outlined by Fried, but in Warhol’s films this is not something to move beyond, instead it is something to study. Because the subjects are highly aware of the camera, the films negate the voyeurism normally associated with extended looking (James 1989: 68-69). Warhol’s real-time films focus on the process of the inscription of the individual into the cinematic apparatus. Other Warhol real-time films depict subjects who are unaware of the camera. To cite an extreme example, *Sleep* (1963) depicts the poet John Giorno asleep. This film provides a counterpoint to many of Warhol’s other real-time films, because the subject was unaware of the camera (James 1989: 67). Unaware of the camera, the sitter is unable to pose, therefore, what is seen is a less inhibited portrait of the subject. Warhol’s real-time films created the precedence for
film portraiture as a genre, transferring the two pre-modern notions of portraiture, as defined by Fried, into the medium of cinema.

Figure 2.5 Sam Taylor-Wood (2004) David, 4:3 Video Still, 67mins.

Although Fried disregards the connection between Warhol’s real-time films and his own argument about *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*, in the light of James’ analysis, a clear parallel can be drawn between Warhol’s real-time films and the argument set forth by Fried. *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* and Warhol’s real-time films both demonstrate the two modes of portraiture that depict the subject as both aware and unaware of the presence of the camera. However, Gordon and Parreno combine in a single film what Warhol achieved in a body of work that showed two contrary types of film portraiture. The work makes a connection to historical portraiture and Warhol’s real-time portraits, simultaneously, and to a unified effect. Parallels can be drawn between *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* and Sam Taylor-Wood’s *David* (2004). In Woods’ sixty-seven minute video, David Beckham, a Real-Madrid player at the time, is pictured sleeping. This is a direct reference to the Warhol film *Sleep*. Rather than
showing Beckham as a football player, the film puts a fixed camera onto the player as he sleeps. The combination of the fixed camera and the stationary subject means that video has the distinct feeling of a well-framed photograph. This, in combination with the sharp cleanliness that is reminiscent of a print or television advertisement, transforms the video into a space somewhere between photographic advertisements of Beckham and Warhol’s real-time videos.

Endorsements are the secondary career of any football player, but Beckham has expanded this beyond what is usual. His media presence brings with it expectations, and it is jarring when he appears toward the end of *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*, as merely an incidental player in the film. Given the power of his media presence, it is very rare to see him marginalised in this way. The film shifts the focus away from Beckham in much the same way as the play of the ball has been marginalised in the film. Both are usually central elements in their respective appearances in football related media, but emphasis is shifted away from them in this film, because the focus is the portrait of Zidane.

![Figure 2.6: Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno (2006) Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, 90mins.](image)
Figure 2.7: Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno (2006) Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, 90mins.

The parallel to Warhol’s real-time film is, of course, much more explicit in David than in Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait. As has already been mentioned, the stillness of the subject enhances the connection to the pictorial tradition of art by allowing the subject to be viewed with a detail that approximates the still image of a painting or photograph. The stillness of David more explicitly approximates the stillness of a photograph. The play between stillness and motion, which has been central to Taylor-Wood’s practice for some time, is here coupled in David with a direct reference to the art historical precedents for the work, as the name David refers back to that other David of art history, creating a link through Warhol to Renaissance art. This work, like Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, draws upon the history and traditions of art that span pre-modern and post-modern art, in the manner outlined by Belting, in order to view the subject in closer than usual detail. These works create media portraits that crystalise the relationship of contemporary art that was defined in the previous chapter. The specific use of stillness here is a defining element of the manifestation of this relationship in the interaction of art and cinema.
A Stationary Moving Image

In the manner of both Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait and David, a video installation that I produced, titled 049, utilised the pictorial tradition of stillness in order to focus attention toward, and expand upon, details that may otherwise go unnoticed, while at the same time creating a tension between still and moving images by juxtaposing the two methods of display.

049 was a four minute, three-channel, synchronised video that was projected in a seamless and continual loop onto a three-walled custom-built architectural enclosure. For the majority of the video, a series of seemingly still images, of an underground car park at night, were played sequentially on the middle projector. The footage had a slight grain that usually occurs when digital video is shot in low light. This was subtle, but enough that the discerning viewer might view this as an indication of the fact that the still images were actually moving images that only appeared still because of the fixed camera and stationary subjects of the shots. This gesture was made obvious when the still scenes were disrupted by a woman walking through the otherwise lifeless car park.
The car park was dimly lit, however, after a few moments, as the woman walked to her car, all the lights in the car park flickered to life, illuminating the woman. At this moment, the sound of the fluorescent lights turning on broke the otherwise silent video installation. Her movements are arrested for a moment before she frantically begins looking around the car park trying to see the invisible, and possibly imagined, presence responsible for the lights turning on. At this moment, the two screens on either side of the main screen, which had remained in darkness until now, flashed with images of the car park, revealing the sections of the car park that the woman presumably saw as she turned her head from side to side. At this moment, the viewer’s gaze was split between a removed view of the woman from outside of the frame, and the point-of-view of the car park, from the woman’s perspective, which surrounded the main screen and her alike. The woman then runs to her car. The sound of her keys as she struggles to find them mixes with her frantic breathlessness. Once she finds the keys, the woman opens the door of her car and, at that moment, the video cuts to a still video of an empty car space, marked with the number 049. At the same moment, the soundtrack returns to silence as the seamless stream of still scenes of the car park continue, until she enters the frame once again after the video has seamlessly looped.

_Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait_ utilises the pictorial tradition of stillness in a way that remains an implicit methodological approach within the work. The footage was continuously moving, however the conceptual premise of the film is constant and thus static. _049_, on the other hand, places stillness and motion as two opposing forces within the work. A similar approach is apparent in _David_ when Beckham is seen still for a very long period of time and then suddenly shifts as he sleeps. At these moments, movement becomes a disruptive force in an otherwise still scene. Likewise, the still scenes in _049_ make up the bulk of the video and, as such, are presented as the singular method of display, particularly if the viewer enters the space during the sequence of still scenes of the car park, which is likely given the short amount of time that the woman is within the frame. In this way, stillness is constructed as the normative mode of display and movement becomes a disruption to that stillness, despite the work being made on video. The overall effect of this reversal of expectations is the dual inclusion of movement and stillness within the single video frame. Furthermore, the viewer is made
aware of the dynamic in a way that is explicit, yet does not disrupt narrative because the woman’s presence in the shot is a narrative disruption that facilitates the suspense and enhances the emotive effect. She appears as though she shouldn’t be there and this is replicated in her response to the lights, and the sense in which order is restored once she leaves the frame.

Figure 2.9: Simone Hine (2009) 049, Three-Channel Video, Installation View (Kings ARI: Melbourne).

The division between stillness and motion is echoed by a division in subject matter. As has already been established, the three screens split the gaze of the viewer between subject positions, where the viewer perceives the woman from a position outside the frame, while simultaneously viewing the empty car park from the woman’s perspective within the frame. The woman is seen moving and directing the gaze, whereas the scenes of the car park that evoke her vision remain stationary, thus creating a disjuncture between the viewer’s image of her and the scenes that she is presumably seeing.

Another dual effect is created between the image on screen and the viewer. The double gaze that is created by the three screens creates a physical connection beyond the
screen, as the viewer must move their head from side to side, just as the woman does in the video, in order to see what she is looking at. This dual effect is not simply an on-screen occurrence, but extends to include the relationship between the moving image of the woman and the physical viewer in the space. Similarly, the viewer watches the woman being illuminated, while at the same time being physically illuminated by the sudden change in light intensity created by the illumination of the projectors that surrounded the viewer. The light that spills and reflects from the screens functions to physically engulf the viewer within the same light that the fictional character is engulfed by in the video. In this way, 049 uses multiple screens to present multiple fragments of a scene simultaneously. These fragments are synthesized within the single work creating layers of duality within the work.

Figure 2.10: Simone Hine (2009) 049, Three-Channel Video, Installation View (Kings ARI: Melbourne).
Moving Portrait as Detailed Portrait

The duality of represented space identified in 049 can be seen in Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait through the fragmentation of Zidane’s body by the multiple cameras used to film him during the match. Zidane was placed under more scrutiny than he would be in usual circumstances. The sheer number of cameras recording the actions of one player produced a level of detail that allows the audience to, literally, see the sweat beading on Zidane’s face or the subtle tapping of his finger in annoyance. Access to the minutest detail of Zidane’s game does not approximate the real experience of witnessing a football match first hand, but moves beyond it, giving an intimately detailed sense of the match and the player (Griffin 2006: 336).

This detailed approach to the subject is reliant on isolating and removing extraneous elements. Filming Zidane at close range has the dual effect of creating a detailed immediacy, as well as fragmenting the body. Gordon and Parreno are careful to construct an image of Zidane through specific framing. The camera lingers on certain parts of Zidane’s body, fragmenting his form into distinct sections. The body is

---

25 The two high-definition cameras used in the film were on loan from the U.S. military. They were designed to track moving objects. These cameras provide an unusually detailed image of the subject, given the distance from which football players are filmed.
primarily divided into two sections, the feet and head, with the occasional focus on the hands. The feet, which are the focus of the football player’s skill, are a physically active element of the football player’s technique. When Zidane has possession of the ball, the feet are framed and shown in prolonged detail. However, when he is without the ball, his feet become the sign of a lingering tension, or perhaps nervous expectation, as he taps the toe of his boot repeatedly on the ground. Within this film, this simple gesture appears integral to Zidane’s process as a football player, but would rarely be seen outside of this film. However, with sustained and focused gaze, this simple gesture becomes a rhythmic repetition throughout the film. The most miniscule gestures, which would otherwise escape audience registration, are made the central focus of this work.


Focus on the upper torso and head creates the image of Zidane as strategic thinker and is often focused on in the film when Zidane does not have possession of the ball. Audiences watch Zidane watching the ball off-screen, as his eyes never stray from the ball and contact is maintained at all times. The most dramatic framing of Zidane’s face occurs at a point in the film when Zidane approaches the referee. His face is shown at close range, isolating his eyes as a key indicator of his annoyance. The camera does not pull back until he walks away. The framing of these shots ensures that Zidane remains the focus of the film, but also focuses on the player’s actions in order to build
tension. Likewise, the soundtrack builds momentum as the camera moves closer in, fixating on Zidane’s eyes and furrowed brow. Gordon and Parreno have constructed a portrait whereby the player is divided between thought and action, which is reconciled in the long shots of the full figure. This is very much the construction of the two artists, but is of course made possible by Zidane’s actions.

The fragmentation of Zidane’s image is not limited to the framing of his form. As was mentioned at the very start of this discussion, the film is comprised of both television and film footage, dividing the portrait along stringent lines. The film footage focuses exclusively on Zidane, whereas the television coverage presents a broader field of play, focusing on the ball. The television coverage is used sparingly and is utilised in the film only as a means by which to show important sections of play. The different technical quality of the image signifies it as contextualizing footage, distinguishing it from the more detailed portrait footage. The television footage appears blurred, as though it is a shot of a television screen displaying the image. The familiar television footage, complete with commentary, is juxtaposed with the film footage. In the context of the film, television footage appears strange despite being the most common mode of football spectatorship. This replicates the way the usual focus on the ball, as the key narrative motivation within a football match, is made strange within this work.

In Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, the pictorial space is further fragmented by intermittent shots of the equipment used to create the image. Of particular note are the occasional shots behind the camera. The first time this occurs, the viewer sees a very grainy image of Zidane on the field. The camera pulls back to reveal that the image that we have been watching is the viewfinder of one of the cameras used to film the match. Zidane is framed within a frame, fragmenting the image across different technologies of representation. The mode of filming at these points becomes central to the portrait. The different image qualities produced by each camera function as brushstrokes on a canvas. They make present the mode of representation that constructs the player as star. Zidane is seen fragmented across technologies of representation, in much the same way that the close-ups fragment his body through detailed framing.
Tim Griffin suggests that the entire film can be understood in the graphic inscription of Zidane’s name in the opening and concluding credits of the film. This graphic shows every letter of Zidane’s name superimposed over each other, such that his name is present in its entirety and yet completely obscured (2006: 336). The background, against which the graphic is seen, appears to be a close-up of a digital screen. It is not possible to decipher what type of screen has been filmed: it could be any one of the advertising screens that surround the football field, a television broadcast screen, or a camera’s viewfinder. The background image is shown in such extreme detail that it functions as an abstract image that signifies nothing more than the technologies of representation. This detailed image of the screen can be seen to replicate the detail with which Zidane is represented during the course of the film. The close-up of the digital screen can be understood as a metaphor for technologies of representation, which give the appearance of immediacy, while revealing nothing more substantial than access to a visual image of the subject. This focus on the technology of representation, makes explicit the importance of the medium in constructing the characters and narrative portrayed.


Although *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* captures a real life situation and person, it bears a similarity to the way the fictional character is constructed in *049*. Both
works construct the character as an image, however the extra-diegetic knowledge of Zidane as a football player, coupled with the way the camera lingers revealing intermittent details of his form, creates two narratives, showing him as both person and image. Both works employ a different methodology to produce distinct effects that are indicative of the subject that they portray. *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* draws upon extra-diegetic knowledge of Zidane as a player and person, while *049* evoked a specific cinematic trope that relies on the audiences’ extra-diegetic knowledge of cinema to construct a character that facilitates narrative tension. Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait is concerned with the point at which the individual meets media spectacle, whereas *049* is concerned with spectacle itself. In both works, stillness is used to create the detail that transforms the image into an effective narrative, be that the portrait of a well-known sporting figure, or a fictional character who appears to be from every film and no film in particular.

![Figure 2.14: Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno (2006) Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, 90mins.](image)

*Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* reconciles absorption and theatricality within a single work; however, it also presents the oscillation between the player as image and person, acknowledging the technologies of representation that turn the subject into a

---

26 This will be extrapolated on in Chapter Four.
readable image. *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* gives audiences a closer look at football from the perspective of the player. As audiences watch, in real-time, the effect of having lived the match alongside Zidane is strong. However, Zidane is known as an enigmatic star and he remains this way throughout the film. Instead of trying to reveal something about Zidane’s character, the work focuses on the more tangible qualities of the player; concentration, annoyance, disappointment, elation, and fatigue, are the main aspects of Zidane that are revealed. In this way, the film does not privilege the techniques of portraiture by suggesting that they are able to reveal something of the essence of the character. Instead, the pictorial tradition of art is employed to create a different perspective, not a more authentic one. In this way, the work is not a definitive representation of Zidane, it is simply an alternative perspective of an already extensively represented person. Likewise, *049* does not create an authentic form for representing this cinematic trope, or women in general. Instead it creates an open narrative that can be understood in contrasting ways. The incorporation of stillness, as a methodology gleaned from art history, removes the trope from the linear flow of its ordinary context and allows the viewer time to embellish the work beyond what is contained within the frame.

Both *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* and *049* utilise the mediums through which they are constructed as an integral part of their re-presentation of familiar ways of viewing the subject. This is not a technique specific to these works, but is indicative of many art practices that use moving images.

**A Pre-Modern / Post-Modern 21st Century Portrait**

Gordon and Parreno have articulated the way in which they have purposefully drawn from Pre-Modern and Post-Modern Art history alike, in order to construct a methodology of portraiture that casts new light on contemporary cinema and sports broadcasts. This can be seen in contrast to Foster’s argument discussed in the previous chapter, where we see a cyclic process of recycling institutionalised technics throughout Modernism, which resulted in a gradual linear progression as one period builds upon the
next: Historic Avant-Garde, to the Neo Avant-Garde, to the Second Neo Avant-Garde. Instead a likeness can be drawn between Gordon and Parreno’s approach and that outlined by Belting. *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* draws upon two traditions of portraiture, the Pre-Modern notion of portraiture, exemplified by Goya and Velazquez, in order to render the subject in such a way that the viewer might glean something of the self through visual means. This is combined with Warhol’s re-worked notion of portraiture, that is less concerned with representing the self and more concerned with showing the subject as image. The combination of both approaches within the single work, creates a “21st Century Portrait” that is a synthesis of the two disparate, now institutionalised, modes of portraiture. Both traditions are evoked in order to adequately portray both aspects of the subject. The person, via the pre-modern tradition of portraiture, and the image, via the post-modern tradition of portraiture established by Warhol.

The very idea of a portrait for the Twenty-First Century, suggests that a new type of portraiture is required to understand contemporary subjects. Underpinning the Twenty-First Century portrait is the use of multiple remediated images of the subject. In this way, *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* identifies the importance of technologies of display in constructing subjects. A focus on the way the formal aspects of technologies of representation impact on possible meanings created by an artwork, sets the ground work for a discussion of uses of technology across my entire practice. Several works that will be discussed in the following pages use multiple technologies of display, juxtaposed against one another, to create a disjuncture that draws attention toward the medium of display, making it an important part of the conceptual as well as formal construction of the work.

So far I have discussed the way artists no longer conceptualise their practice within linear terms, drawing from all aspect of art history to generate new narratives and perspectives on cinema. The following chapter will shift focus away from the non-linear

---

27 “Remediation” is a particularly significant concept in relation to the idea of a twenty-first century portrait set forth by Gordon and Parreno, because *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* emphasis the way multiple forms of mediated images can work together to have the paradoxical effect of creating a sense of immediacy through the proliferation of mediated images. See Bolter, J. D. and R. Grusin (1999). *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
approach to art history, that drives many contemporary artist practice, to look at the way material differences between the mediums of art and cinema have had an effect on the conceptual construction of many time-based contemporary artworks, as artists begin to utilise consumer technologies designed for the distribution and presentation of cinema. The following chapter will focus specifically on the use of consumer-grade technologies, which incorporate a linear trajectory into artworks that use them, because of the necessity of consumer markets to create technological obsolescence in order to sustain demand. This creates a disjuncture between the linear trajectory of consumer cinema technology, and the desire to create visual artworks that do not follow a linear trajectory.
Chapter Three: From Everyday to Antiquated: Technology as Sculptural Object in Contemporary Art

I first encountered Gary Hill’s video installation *Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place* (1990) in the mid-1990s via images and descriptions in books. It was not until 2007 that I saw the work installed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. *Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place* presented fragments of the artist’s body displayed on several cathode ray tube (CRT) television screens. The screens were set behind glass in a recessed cavity in the gallery wall. The televisions had been stripped back to their bare essentials leaving only the glass-tube screen and the essential electronics. This form of display was synonymous with the artist at the time of its production. Hill took normal everyday televisions made for mass domestic use and drew attention to the materiality of the technology, which is usually invisible when the televisions are encased in their expected black plastic shell. In other words, Hill alienated a familiar technology by exposing the mechanics that are usually concealed. Coupling the body and technology, this work shows ordinary technology as a mediating force in our experience of the world.

![Figure 3.1: Gary Hill (1990) Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place, Video Installation.](image)

When I saw this work in 2007 I no longer saw these screens as everyday objects, as I once had. Instead, the work took on a certain pathos as the remains of a fast-
declining technology were laid before the viewer. These screens looked more like discarded relics than everyday objects. This underlying implication emerged as CRT technologies inched closer towards obsolescence, in favour of Liquid Crystal Display (LCD), Plasma, Light-Emitting Diode (LED) and, more recently, Organic Light-Emitting Diode (OLED) televisions. Rapid changes in television technology, which began in the mid-1990s, have created a dynamic in this work that would not have been expected at the time of its creation. This is particularly relevant to Hill’s works because, prior to the 1990s, the only thing that dated a consumer television was its casing, which he removed.

Increasing numbers of contemporary artists use consumer grade technologies, such as televisions, data projectors and camcorders, in the production and display of artworks. This chapter will look specifically at technologies that are used to display commercial films in the home environment, investigating some of the ways in which these technologies have been incorporated into artworks as a means of merging the form and content of art and cinema. This connection between form and content has meant that, as these consumer technologies change, so does the content of the works that utilise them. The first part of the chapter will investigate the way televisions have been used in time-based media installations and the second part of the chapter will discuss the use of camcorders in cinema and video art.

**Sculptural and Performative Uses of Everyday Technology**

Televisions are part of consumer electrical markets that exist outside and irrespective of the art market and art institutions. Unlike traditional forms of art, such as painting and sculpture, where the work is a self-contained object that utilises materials traditionally produced for the production of artworks, time-based media installations...
that use consumer electrical products for their permanent display are reliant on the products of a constantly changing market. Domestic electronic markets are sustained by the cycles of technical and cultural obsolescence that affects the physical operation of technology as well as creating consumer demand for updated technology. A side effect of the use of consumer technology in contemporary art is that time-based art is increasingly affected by the ebb and flow of consumer markets that are based on constant change. The art market and art institutions however, rely on the stability of the artwork as a lasting object. These two oppositional tendencies, in two very different markets, have resulted in a conundrum for art conservationists who work to preserve the assets of the museums and institutions in which they work. This chapter will argue that the tension between consumer objects and art objects is something that artists both knowingly and unknowingly incorporate into their works. The chapter will focus on the specificity of this tension in order to explore the theoretical implications of artworks that use consumer technology and the way this relates to an understanding of the relationship between cinema and contemporary art.

The chapter will employ two terms, *performative* and *sculptural*, that are commonly used in art conservation to determine whether the technology used in video installations may be upgraded. These terms will be recontextualised in order to understand the effect that practical changes in technology have had on a conceptual understanding of artworks. While there has always been a focus on the relationship between mediums and the production of meaning within art, little has been written in art history or theory about the way time-based media installations that utilise *everyday technologies* are affected by changes in those technologies. This is particularly significant because technologies for film distribution operate outside of the demands of art or art history and are instead orchestrated by the commercial structures of film distribution companies, which are completely at odds with a *sculptural* use of the technology. In contrast, art conservation continually grapples with this question, because their role is concerned with the practical considerations of procuring and restoring obsolete technologies to ensure the longevity of artworks. This discipline has
increasing importance to art in general as artists continue to use consumer technologies in artworks at a time when these technologies are changing at a particularly rapid pace.

It will be argued that the gallery context presents a unique set of conventions that place importance on the technological means of display, which can be contrasted with cinema, a market for which televisions and data projectors are specifically made, and which actively works to conceal the technological apparatus of its production and display. The conceptual tension between cinema and art is understood here through the practical considerations of the materiality of artworks. When cinema became intertwined with art, as has been argued in Chapter One, this occurred not only at a conceptual level, but at a practical level as well. The extent to which the traditions of cinema and art affect the practical, and in turn conceptual, life of time-based media installations is the focus of this chapter.

Time-based media installations that rely on everyday technology, as Hill’s work does, often highlight the significant changes that occur in media technology. Many time-based media installations are affected by technological advances outside of the work itself (Laurenson 2001: 260). This effect can be practical in terms of how works are displayed and can affect whether a work can continue to be displayed indefinitely. The effect of technological advances external to the work can also be conceptual in regards to audience responses to the technology. An object that was once familiar to audiences can appear antiquated and unusual as time passes.

As time-based art has become widely collected by museums and institutions, it has become important to make decisions as to whether equipment is upgraded to comply with evolving technological standards, or maintained according to the specification of the original work (Real 2001: 216). This is largely a question of whether equipment is considered performative or sculptural. Art conservation uses these binary terms in order to determine the way technologies are used in particular artworks. The word performative is used in art conservation to refer to any artwork that is a performance, rather than an object, due to its transitory relationship with the technology used to display it. If technology is used in a performative context where it
fulfils a functional role only, it may be in keeping with the essential spirit of the work to change the method of display at the expense of historical accuracy (Real 2001: 217). This is often the case with artworks that involve video projections in which the projector is not immediately visible to a viewer in the gallery and the upgraded technology is of an equal or higher quality. This type of time-based video art functions in a similar way to cinema, thus it is easily transferable across different technologies, allowing upgrades as the original technology of display inevitably becomes obsolete. If the technology is understood to be a significant part of the installation, then it would be considered sculptural. If sculptural, the technology is usually preserved for historical accuracy in order to maintain the integrity of the original artwork. It is not simply a question of whether the technology is visible and therefore sculptural. Rather, it is a question of whether the materiality of the technology is considered integral to the meaning of the work.

Figure 3.2: Detail of television from: Gary Hill (1991) Between Cinema and a Hard Place, Video Installation.

---

29 This chapter borrows ideas and ways of understanding artworks from art conservation and applies these to art in a way that is more theoretical and interested in the cultural implications of these decisions. Confusion can occur when applying the art conservationist term in an art theory context where the word performative has a more complicated genealogy. To avoid confusion, the word performative will appear in italics when it is referring to the art conservationist term, as distinct from its use by cultural theorists such as J.L. Austin and Judith Butler.
Art conservationist Pip Laurenson identified two categories of display equipment in another of Hill’s works: *Between Cinema and a Hard Place* (1991). The first category is equipment that is *sculptural*, which Laurenson identifies as the CRT televisions, and second is the *performative* elements that are functional and not visible, such as the laser discs used to transmit the image signal to the CRT televisions. Because the CRT televisions in *Between Cinema and a Hard Place* are considered *sculptural*, Hill and the Tate (which owns the work) considered the televisions to be essential to the work (2001: 262). Thus, the televisions are not replaced by new technological forms of display, instead, damaged CRT televisions are replaced by new tubes of the same dimensions (2001: 263). It has become necessary for the Tate to store unused CRT televisions to ensure that the work can be upgraded in the future. When Hill altered the appearance of the televisions, he made them function as a *sculptural* element of the work. This in turn locked the work into a technologically specific point in time, thus transforming the technology into an essential and defining part of the work.

At the time *Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place* was produced, CRT televisions were the only televisions available; therefore they functioned as part of everyday experience. The term *everyday technologies* will be used in this chapter to refer to consumer technologies where one’s knowledge of these technological objects is derived from a lived experience that is part of daily life. For many people looking at time-based artworks, knowledge of televisions does not come from art history, nor from knowledge of how the technology functions in a gallery context; instead, it is derived from a lived experience of the technology within the home. This appropriation of *everyday technologies* as artworks has meant that the meaning of the work is reliant on the fast pace of consumer markets in defining what can be considered *everyday*.

If a technology is used *sculpturally* in order to produce the effect of an *everyday technology* in the gallery and through time the technology ceases to be considered an *everyday technology*, because it has become obsolete, then maintaining the historical accuracy of the work does not necessarily maintain the meaning of the work. If the

---

30 This artwork uses stripped back CRT televisions in the same way as *Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place*. 
example of Hill’s work is taken, the artist altered the televisions in a way that made the technology essential to the overall effect of the work; therefore the work cannot be updated without destroying an essential component of the work. It is for this reason that both *Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place* and *Between Cinema and a Hard Place* have been maintained according to their original specifications. Both works use CRT televisions, which audio-visual companies have ceased to produce, and which can no longer be considered the *everyday technology* they once were. The meaning of the work has shifted and now appears to be engaging with antiquated technology rather than an *everyday technology*. To think of the CRT televisions used in Hill’s work as everyday objects, in their current context, is an anachronism.

The use of televisions as an *everyday technology* in time-based media installations produces a secondary meaning in the work when the technologies used in the work are no longer used in everyday contexts. This secondary meaning functions as a “para-narrative” of the work. I have adapted this idea of the “para-narrative” from Garrett Stewart’s *Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photosynthesis* (1999). The foundational premise of this text is that secondary narratives about the materiality of the medium, which in the case of cinema is the still photographic basis of moving images, are able to function alongside diegetic narratives. Applied to Hill’s artworks, we see that the para-narratives of *everyday technologies* function to change the diegetic content of the work as the technologies become obsolete.

*Everyday Technologies as shifting Readymades*

In *Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photosynthesis*, Stewart articulates the way a particular para-narrative in cinema is the result of the hidden mechanical apparatus being a constant part of cinema. Stewart argues that cinema conceals its photographic base under the naturalistic illusion of narrative storytelling, and contends that, underneath the illusion of reality, the photographic base remains as a para-narrative that runs counter to the narrative. The photographic base of cinema functions in a way that is twofold: the photograph is essential to cinema’s ability to create the realistic
images that form an impression of reality\textsuperscript{31}, however, the photograph’s constant presence also evokes the stasis of the still image at cinema’s base – an idea that disrupts the seamless realism of cinema. This secondary status of the photograph is what Stewart refers to as the “para-narrative counter plot” of narrative cinema (1999: 28).

Stewart focuses on the stasis of the photograph as a para-narrative of cinema, which will be discussed in the following chapter. However, for the moment, the ontological grounding of his argument is useful in thinking about the way that everyday technologies function in time-based media installations.\textsuperscript{32} Just as Stewart argues that cinema incorporates a para-narrative of the photograph as static image, this chapter will argue that time-based media installations that use everyday technologies evoke a para-narrative about the lived experience of that technology. This para-narrative does not necessarily run counter to the artwork, unless the conditions of that technology change and the technology no longer signifies what it did at the time of the work’s construction.

There is of course a well theorised precedence for the use of everyday objects in art that can be traced back to Marcel Duchamp’s readymades. However, if an everyday object is used as a functional element of the work, rather than constituting the work itself, it functions as a para-narrative evoking a secondary meaning based upon a connection to the object’s ordinary function. The readymade set precedence for the use of everyday technologies in contemporary time-based media installations, yet these technologies function to different effect.

Thierry de Duve links the readymade to the self-reflexive tendency of Modern art. The readymade functions in two ways: firstly, it is the process that reduces art to a statement “This is art”; secondly, it is the end product of this process (1994: 68). The readymade is not a sculpture, instead it is a self-reflexive concept that can be applied across objects. The meaning of Duchamp’s readymades is not reliant on the meaning of the object itself, rather, the work exists as an ontological proposition concerned solely with the reducible nature of art. Whether a readymade is an ice shovel, bottle rack or


\textsuperscript{32} Stewart’s argument also relies on a consideration of the material life and form of the technology that animates moving images, which is often seen as peripheral to the content of films.
urinal, the work continues to function as an investigation into the essence of art, regardless of its form.

In order for an everyday object to function as art, Duchamp had to isolate the object, remove it from its context and place it within the gallery context, and in so doing render the object without purpose beyond its display (Molesworth 1998). The urinal is no longer a functioning urinal, it is an artwork. The ice shovel no longer touches ice, it sits in a gallery. It is the divorcing of these objects from their previous utilitarian context and making them devoid of function, which, in turn, allows the object to be art. It is the ability to perform this process via the mechanisms and institutions of art that the readymade seeks to demonstrate.

The use of *everyday technologies* in the time-based media installations, which will be discussed in this chapter, is different to the use of the readymade, because they are neither dysfunctional nor act in an entirely self-referential manner. The technologies continue to function in the same way within the gallery as they do outside the gallery, because they are the material support, rather than the work itself. The televisions used in many of my performance and video installations are taken from my personal home environment, put in the gallery and then returned to the domestic situation from which they came, all the time serving the same purpose in both contexts: the display of moving images transmitted from VHS, DVD, Blu-ray, media players and now Brightsigns. Works such as *Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place* and *Between Cinema and a Hard Place*, where the televisions have been reduced to their essential components, emphasise their utilitarian purpose, as they only consist of the very bare essentials required for the display of moving images.

The use of televisions in the creation of any time-based artwork creates a connection between art and film and television, because televisions are appropriated from their ordinary context by artists. Hill’s works merge form and content through the use of consumer products of the film and television industry, making the technology part of the content of the work by altering its appearance and placing it in a gallery context. Duchamp used pre-made consumer objects to show the nature of art as a
contextual construct. Working in the early twentieth century, Duchamp’s readymades can be seen as a critique of the broader cultural move towards manufactured objects, as opposed to hand-crafted objects, which continue to dominate the art market. Likewise, many contemporary time-based artists use pre-made consumer technologies to construct the work, and in so doing, confuse the gap between art and other cultural forms.

These media technologies are a necessary part of the work, but they are not fixed components of the work. It is the shifting status of these everyday technologies that makes it necessary to constantly re-evaluate the work in order to maintain its meaning as technologies shift and change. The terms sculptural and performative, which have been adapted here from art conservation, recognise and account for the functional use of the televisions and does not simply see them as part of the readymade tradition.

In 2001 I produced a work, titled displace, which was one in a series of works that I produced using CRT televisions and VHS tapes, before upgrading to LCD televisions and DVD in 2003. As audiences walked into the gallery there were three
viewing boxes that were constructed from MDF, wood and Perspex. The viewing boxes were based on the type of box used in galleries when displaying precious objects. Each box was in a horizontal format, just large enough for me to lay outstretched. Each box contained a single fluorescent light casually placed with the cables clearly visible, exposing the mechanics of the viewing box. There was only one entrance to this part of the gallery so the contents of each box were revealed sequentially as the viewer walked through the space. In the first box was a CRT television that displayed a life size image of my face and shoulders lying in the box. The television was placed at one end aligning the image with the position of my body if I were to lie in the box. The second box had a CRT television placed in the middle of it where my hips would be if I was lying in the box. On the television was playing a life size video of my hand as it lay beside my hips. In the third box, instead of having a video of my feet, as might have been expected to complete the triptych/trilogy, I was physically present, lying in the box as still as the videos.

Figure 3.4: Simone Hine (2001) *displace*, Video and Performance Installation, Installation View.
This installation preempted the move from the now antiquated CRT televisions to newer LCD technology by exhibiting the technology behind glass as though rarified objects. The televisions were literally taken from the everyday context of a living room and put in the gallery in a glass box. Just as a readymade draws attention to the gallery as a system of signification, displace drew attention to the museum box as a sign in the system of signification. The televisions, however, continued to function as they always had: playing the VHS videos as they would in both domestic and gallery contexts. Instead of the televisions functioning as readymades, the viewing boxes drew attention to these televisions as technologies that are fast becoming antiquated objects requiring preservation; an idea that only increases in potency with time.

Unlike displace, Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place removed the televisions from their standard casing and enclosed them behind glass, a gesture that transformed the televisions from everyday objects into artwork – a product of the gallery system not consumer society. Set behind glass, the presentation exacerbates the sense in which CRT televisions appeared as rarefied museum objects, yet by the virtue of Hill’s alterations, these televisions were already rarefied because they had been altered by the artist and therefore took on the status of sculpture. In their altered state, they rendered the televisions without a purpose beyond the artwork itself. In displace, however, unaltered standard consumer televisions were presented behind glass as though rarefied museum objects.

**Technology and the Body as Markers of Time**

displace and Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place have been discussed in relation to the use of technologies that lock the work into a specific moment in time and how that might be understood as time passes. The effect of time on technologies used to display photographic-based moving images is particularly complicated, because photography has long been associated with the suspension of time. Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place captured the naked body at a particular moment. While the body appears suspended in time, not dated by clothes or
other indicators of time periods, the sculptural use of CRT televisions positioned the images displayed on their screens within the time period that the televisions were current. Therefore, the sculptural use of televisions works to counter the photographic suspension of time.

*displace* further complicates this tension between photographic based images, which suspend the subject in time, and the material support that necessarily exists through time. By incorporating this formal disjunction into the content of the work, this tension, which is usually a para-narrative of photographic based mediums, became part of the content of the work. Furthermore, by juxtaposing video and performance within the same work, the work utilises different timeframes inherent in each medium to create an expanded investigation of the different timeframes as they were present across various photographic and non-photographic mediums.

The first two viewing boxes showed parts of the body mediated through televisions. I attempted to make the videos appear as close as possible to my physical body on the night of the performance. The videos were shot in the gallery space the day before the performance in order to ensure maximum continuity between the video and performer on the evening of the performance component. The VHS tape used in this performance was four hours in duration. This meant the tape did not rewind during the three hour performance and, therefore, the images were not interrupted. Each aspect ensured that the videos and performer were congruous in appearance for the duration of the performance.

The combined use of television images and the live performer created a confusion over whether the video was pre-recorded or a live feed. Upon seeing that the final viewing box contained the live performer, the ordinary expectation that the televisions displayed a pre-recorded moment, shifted to the perception that this might be a continual video-feed of the present moment. Simultaneously, it was made clear that the video was pre-recorded because of the impossibility of the camera angle when the third box was viewed. The subtly of the distinction between live or pre-recorded, as well as the work’s sequential reveal, created a recognition and misrecognition about the
Simone Hine: Stillness and Motion/Art and Cinema

timeframe being occupied. This confusion was resolved by the absence of a camera within the gallery, which confirmed that the body was presented as a pre-recorded video on the televisions. However, the misrecognition stays with the viewer when looking at the pre-recorded video, creating a para-narrative about the oscillation between live and pre-recorded video.33

The oscillation between live and pre-recorded photographic-based images in displace correlates with the oscillation between past and present that Roland Barthes articulates as key to the way time is presented in photographic based images. Barthes posits that any photographic-based image is embroiled within two sets of time: the time of the photograph, which is suspended, and the time of the subject, which ages outside of the photograph (Barthes 1980: 96). These two sets of time exist in any photograph, however displace brings the two sets of time into line with each other, because they are watched through the same frame of identical gallery viewing boxes and presented as a unified work.

In cinema, the disjuncture between the represented time and the time of viewing forms a para-narrative of films when actors, held suspended in time on film, grow older outside of the film (Perlmutter 2005: 125). The effect of time on actors outside the film became particularly evident with the introduction of DVD, as many of the “extra features” that come standard with this format contain contemporary interviews with actors. This para-textual34 material encourages older films to be viewed alongside contemporary interviews with actors, which reminds the viewer of the disjuncture between the time when the film was shot and the time of its consumption. This viewing practice found its form with DVD, but has since developed into a ubiquitous practice

33 Laura Mulvey, in Death 24x a Second, suggests that the impression of stillness that is created when a film is paused remains with the viewer when the film is restarted. While I argue against this idea in chapter four (because I do not believe that the sense of stillness is strong enough to arrest narrative in Hollywood narrative cinema), in the absence of narrative, as in the case of displace, this relationship between stillness and motion forms the content of the work.

34 Para-text is a term used by Gerard Genette to describe the extra material that surrounds literature. His idea has been reapprropriated here to help understand the extra material that surrounds cinema. For more information see Genette, G. (1997). Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretations. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. For a more extensive discussion of para-textual material that relates directly to contemporary cinema see Gray, J. (2010). Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts. New York, New York University Press.
with portable media players, notably the mobile telephone. Smart phones act as media hubs providing constant access to para-textual material. The presence of these devices brings with it a different relationship to viewing a film, even in the cinema theatre (Casetti 2011). The smart phone is often in the pocket of the audience member, on silent mode, ready to be consulted at any time. The desire to find out more about a film through a quick internet search, or to share thoughts and information on social networks, does not abate when one walks into the cinema theatre and the lights fade. Smart phones make that possible (Casetti 2011).

The disjuncture between the time of the video and the time of viewing is not simply a para-narrative of displace, as it is with cinema, instead it forms the very content of the work. displace employed photographic based images that present a consistent image through time. The viewer watched a recording of the body and, just as the CRT televisions are physically the same through time, so are the images of the body that are displayed on their screens. This can be contrasted with my body which, even during the performance, was continuing to move involuntarily and age. While the movement and changes to my body were so incremental as to confuse the distinction between still and moving, the knowledge that I was living, and therefore in motion, functioned as a para-narrative of the work. In this way, displace showed the two sets of time inherent in photography, the suspended moment and the progressive moment that is usually para-textual, within the diegesis of the work. It was my intention that the unusualness of having the live performer set behind Perspex, as a key element of the work, would provide the catalyst to make this para-narrative a defining element of the work.35

In the absence of clear narratives, artworks often require the viewer to embellish what is present in the work. In this regard, the pictorial tradition of art provides a perfect medium in which to investigate para-narratives, because, in the absence of a clearly defined narrative, these para-narratives are all that the viewer has to make sense of the work. displace presented a single moment that is devoid of any narrative explanation,

35 This expectation was confirmed when, most notably, one audience member dropped their wine glass in fright at the sight of my apparently still body behind glass.
therefore the relationship between the televisions, the viewing boxes and the live performer were the key indicators of meaning. In the absence of narrative direction for the scene, the layers of mediation became a central component of the work. The unusual juxtaposition of mediums makes what is usually a para-narrative of moving images a central component of the work.

**Obsolete Technologies within the Frame**

The effect of obsolete technology, which functions as a para-narrative of Hill’s work and my own work as it has evolved through time, is presented in Rodney Graham’s *Rheinmetall/Victoria 8* (2003) as the primary meaning of the work. Upon entering the gallery containing this work, observers are confronted with a towering 35mm film projector made for commercial use in 1961. Projected on the wall adjacent was a film of a similar height to the projector, depicting a 1930s typewriter. In the explanatory notes accompanying this work at the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Graham described this work as “two obsolete technologies facing off”. This statement succinctly sums up the immediate effect of the installation. This work is self-referential; speaking of the technology used in its display. However, the projector is not a readymade, because it continues to function as it always has, thus creating a connection to its meaning beyond the gallery context.

The projector used by Graham was an incredibly cumbersome piece of machinery that would rarely be seen outside of projection rooms and such an old model would be very rarely seen today, even in industry contexts. This projector is many generations removed from the slim-line digital data projectors that have become the standard equipment in contemporary artworks and galleries. The contrast between the projector used in this installation and the technologies audiences expect to see in

---

36 I have used data projectors in my own art practice over the past decade. In this time there has been many changes that have affected the type of work that I am able to produce: higher lumen bulbs allow data projections to be shown with more ambient light; the dramatic reductions in size have made the projectors easier to install and they are more portable; significant drops in price have made data projectors much more accessible to artists.
galleries plays a surprising role in the effect of this work, because the physical presence of the machine evokes a sense of wonder where it would not ordinarily.

Figure 3.5: Rodney Graham (2003) *Rheinmetall/Victoria 8*, Moving Image Installation, Installation View

The projected image and the projector are of equal significance in this work. The projector functions as a symbol of the mechanical technology that comprises cinema. The work does not simply reference the mechanical basis of cinema as a para-narrative, as in the case of Hill’s work and my own, but makes it an explicit part of the work’s meaning. The performative role of the projector gives way to its status as sculpture.

In *Rheinmetall/Victoria 8* the rhythmic sound of the film whirling through the projector resonated loudly in the comparatively small gallery space. Unlike film theatres, the gallery has not been designed to conceal and absorb the sound of this cumbersome machine. The sound of the machine is foregrounded in this work, as the film projector was audible before it was visible. It could be heard, not only in the gallery in which it was displayed, but in the surrounding galleries. The sound of the
projector functioned in two ways. Firstly, it enhanced the contrast between this large, awkward, mechanically driven machine and the small, inaudible, digital technology audiences have come to expect. Secondly, the installed projector created the nostalgic sound of the old picture houses that are themselves rapidly closing down. The unmistakable sound of the projector is always audible as background noise in pre-digital cinematic contexts. Sound, as the element that cannot be fully concealed by the architecture, is the audience’s only reminder of the mechanical technology that is integral to the history of film.

The film of the typewriter was shot from many different angles, each angle held long enough to evoke the stillness of a photograph. This stillness was broken, part of the way through the film, by a veil of fine dust falling onto the typewriter; burying it under the metaphorical dust of the many years of its own obsolescence. In 2003, when this work was first displayed, the typewriter was certainly an obsolete technology surpassed by the flexible convenience of the most basic computer-based word-processing technology. In contrast, film is a technology that continues to teeter on the verge of obsolescence. Inevitably, with the many advances in digital technology, film edges ever closer to the fate of the typewriter. The images of the typewriter therefore provides a necessary counter-point to make the assertion that film, in the broad sense, is almost obsolete. Both specific machines are obsolete, but film as a medium is still in the process of becoming obsolete. This is reflected in the installation by having the projector still present and in operation, whereas the typewriter exists in the installation as a disembodied image of a technology that was once central to our culture.

Like Hill’s work, Rheinmetall/Victoria 8 evoked a certain pathos as the 35mm projector presents the film with immaculate clarity and depth. This film is proof of the projector’s ability to produce high quality moving images, the way it always had. But, due to cultural and technological changes that have occurred over time, this perfectly functioning projector is relegated to the status of an antiquated object of a time now passed. This sense of pathos is further enhanced by the knowledge that Graham’s

37 A likeness can be drawn between this work and my work 049, which was discussed in Chapter Two, in terms of the relationship between stillness and motion in the moving image.
practice is largely film based. As with the CRT televisions used in Hill’s installations, both the film and the projector have remained the same through time, what has changed is our relation to the objects.

The transition of cinema distribution and reception from analogue to digital technology has occurred slowly, starting in the early 1970s with video disc and progressing slowly until the introduction of DVD, followed by VOD. Over this period, analogue and digital technologies have been used alongside each other, with the dominance shifting as digital technology has developed beyond analogue, creating a relatively seamless transition. It is only when presented with older technologies, which were once standard forms of film and video display, that the change becomes dramatically obvious. The works discussed present technologies of representation that are familiar to audiences of a certain age, but through the unfolding of time they have slipped from the context of everyday use and, when viewed in a gallery, appear strange. The familiarity connotes continuity with the present and the strangeness indicates an unanticipated incongruity where further continuity was expected (Danto 1999: 4). It is this twofold experience of these technologies of the past that evokes the sense of pathos with these objects. It is historical change that marks what was once familiar with this sense of strangeness, the further back in history we go the less cultural fluency we have and the less we can take for granted (Danto 1999: 4). In other words, the strangeness that these technologies evoke in their current context is the result of our expectation of familiarity and the consequent confusion with our disconnection from something that was once commonplace. This discontinuity between older technology and audience expectation of new technology indicates a fundamental change that has occurred in audience reception of everyday technologies in galleries.

As this equipment becomes obsolete, there is a renewed interest in its potential use in art contexts. Once the technology is removed from its original context, as in the case of each of the artworks discussed, then it evokes a sense of nostalgia which gives it a unique quality that suggests a precious museum object or an art object (Iles and Huldisch 2005: 80). As film becomes obsolete we begin to see it as it operates, rather than look through it.
Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place and displace follow a similar trajectory in the way everyday consumer technologies are used sculpturally, creating a para-narrative based on the effect of changing technology in the production of meaning through time. Rheinmetall/Victoria 8, on the other hand, directly addresses the effect of changing technologies on film based practice as well as making a more general statement about the passing of film as cinema. The para-narrative concerned with technological change that forms part of Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place and displace developed after the works were first displayed, whereas Rheinmetall/Victoria 8 directly addresses the phenomenon of obsolete technology by incorporating it into the work. In addition, each of these works rely on the context of the gallery, as a space that is designed to show objects. This can be seen in opposition to film theatres, where the architecture is designed to conceal the equipment and to immobilise the viewer in a darkened space.

Figure 3.6: Dziga Vertov (1929) Man With a Movie Camera, 68mins.
In contrast to the gallery, film theatres and home theatres conceal the technology of production and display, therefore the only way in which a film played at twenty-four frames a second in a darkened theatre can reference its production is within the single frame of the film itself. Vertov’s *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) is an *example par excellence* of cinema’s ability to reference the technology of its own construction within the diegesis of the film. There are several times throughout the film where a man is pictured with a movie camera filming events on the streets and in the buildings that comprise the film. There is a fleeting moment when the camera focuses on the city reflected in the glass panel of a door as it opens. The fixed camera creates the appearance of a panning shot across the city. When the glass becomes parallel to the camera lens, the camera and the man behind it are revealed. This shot depicts the camera filming itself, and in so doing reveals the moment of its own registration. The ‘fourth wall’ of cinema is shown here to contain the camera lens at the moment of filming with the city still moving behind. This can be contrasted to a similar scene in Jacque Tati’s *Play Time* (1967), where the older Parisian architecture is reflected in the glass door of a modern building, but as the door swings open the camera is not revealed and the illusion of a fictional “fourth wall” is maintained.

*Figure 3.7: Jacques Tati (1967) Playtime, 115mins.*
These two scenes, when considered together, present a clear distinction between the way the moment of inscription is presented in the documentary film *Man with a Movie Camera* and concealed to maintain the fictional narrative that comprises *Play Time*. The importance of the distinction between documentary and fictional narratives in photography and cinema will form a significant part of the following chapter, however, my interest here is to indicate the way *Play Time* disrupts the way fictional narrative cinema traditionally conceals the apparatus of its construction in order to present a seamless fictional reality within the frame of the film, by subtly countering this tendency through reference to this scene in Vertov’s seminal film of early cinema. The fictional reality of *Play Time* remains intact as the fourth wall of cinema is maintained, however the visual reference to *Man with a Movie Camera* functions alongside the film as a para-narrative. In contrast *Man with a Movie Camera* explicitly depicts the camera as the source of moving images within the diegesis of the film, showing the apparatus at the moment of inscription. In both films, the camera, as the apparatus of the film’s inscription, is evoked within the diegesis of the film, making the technologies of cinematic production a focus of the scenes. This history of referencing the technologies used to construct cinema, within the diegesis of the film, set the precedence for other ways of integrating particular technologies and their recognisable artefacts, into the diegesis of contemporary Hollywood films. This is particularly significant at a time when cinema reception is increasingly dispersed across different mediums.

**Consumer Grade Technologies within the Moving Image Frame**

It has become a distinctive cinematic trope to replicate older technologies as well as consumer-grade recording equipment within the diegesis of a film. *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) became synonymous with the technique of using low-grade consumer equipment to indicate that the film was shot by actual people recording ‘real’ events, rather than fictional characters in a film. This *sculptural* use of the camcorder in *Blair Witch Project* meant that the three actors were given a rudimentary two day course in how to operate the 16mm film camera and Hi-8 camcorder. The actors entered the
woods on a journey that the director and cinematographers would reveal to them as they went, via notes left in the woods. The resulting film is an edited version of the amateur footage taken by two of the three actors. The Hi-8 footage was transferred to 35mm film, and the 16mm film was pushed two stops when processed in order to enhance the grain in the footage, before transferring it to 35mm. The resulting film had an immediacy that came from the use of everyday photographic technology familiar to audiences as something they could access and use if they were in the same situation as the characters (Pizzello, Thompson et al. 1999).

Following the tradition set by *The Blair Witch Project*, the disaster film *Cloverfield* (2008) took the camcorder aesthetic and embellished it with higher production values. The film was originally intended to be filmed solely on a lightweight camcorder in the style of *The Blair Witch Project*, however, the director of photography Michael Bonvillain, decided to use high definition cameras for the visual effects plates, which were intercut with images from a handheld camera in order to give the

---

**Figure 3.8:** Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez (1999) *Blair Witch Project*, 81min.
appearance of a light-weight camcorder (Fordham 2008: 56). With one hundred and sixty-three visual effects shots of an alien monster attacking New York City, a large portion of the film was shot on state-of-the-art equipment (Fordham 2008: 66). The light-weight camcorder style effects were implemented over the top of this high definition footage. Although the film was consistent in its use of camcorder-style footage, by showing the fantastical creature and its effect on the New York skyline, it was obvious to the viewer that the footage had been altered with post-production effects, if only as a retrospective para-narrative. The camcorder-style footage was one of a plethora special effects used to create the film’s spontaneous low-grade aesthetic.

Both The Blair Witch Project and Cloverfield had internet based advertising campaigns, which provided a wealth of paratexts that informed the reception of both films prior to their respective cinema releases. The Blair Witch Project website and the Cloverfield Youtube, MySpace, and Blog-Spot uploads provided a way of releasing images and videos relating to the films that was in keeping with both films’ camcorder aesthetic. These advertising campaigns used internet sites designed for uploading home video, in a way that blurred the boundary between home video and cinema. It was

---

only with these websites as host mediums that the low-grade technology functioned seamlessly, because the camcorder footage met the expectations of the quality of the host medium. This was then contrasted to cinema theatres, and elaborately packaged DVDs, that eventually formed the host mediums of the films themselves.

James Moran uses the term “Video-in-the-text” (VIT) to refer to the incorporation of simulated video aesthetics into the cinematic diegesis in a way that is reliant on the audience’s lived experience of video technology (Moran 2002: 167). VIT is reliant on the ontological opposition between video and cinema to make obvious the insertion of video into the host medium of cinema. Cinematic codes are generally transparent when viewing a film. However, VIT has the ability to draw attention to the codes of cinema by contrasting the video aesthetic with the expected cinematic aesthetic (Moran 2002: 170). This is particularly relevant to a film like American Beauty (1999) where VIT is inserted into an otherwise standard cinematic film. However, with films like The Blair Witch Project and Cloverfield, the use of VIT creates an initial disjuncture caused by the use of an unexpected low-grade technology, but as the film progresses and the narrative begins to take force, VIT begins to evoke a sense of immediacy with the viewer as the fantastical events are played out through a technology that audiences are accustomed to using. Thus, audience knowledge of video technology creates a link between the subject and viewer that is based upon lived experience. The use of a camcorder aesthetic in these films counters the expectation that the events of the film are staged and therefore fictional.

When shown in an art gallery, films or video works that use low-grade or older technologies sculpturally at the level of production, share this tendency to draw attention to the technology used to display the work, even when the display technology is used performatively. For example, I used a compact VHS (VHS-C) camera sculpturally to shoot a two-channel video, watching (2005). The work was formatted on DVD and displayed on two new LCD monitors. The video was designed to create the impression that the woman depicted in the video was being watched through a window by the viewer outside. The work evoked a sense of amateur home video, through an exaggerated use of the low-grade video aesthetic. The two videos were displayed side
by side, and both had a grainy black and white look and a shaky hand-held aesthetic. The left video awkwardly tracks the woman’s movement. The flickering light of a television off-screen dances on the woman’s face as she sits transfixed. The woman becomes agitated, after looking around, she gets up, walks across the room, looks out the open window and then closes it before resuming her place in front of the television again. The second video, displayed on the right, was tightly fixed on an extreme close-up of the same woman’s eyes as she watches the television. The woman is stationary throughout the entire length of the right video, however, toward the end of the loop her eyelids begin to look heavy as she appears to be trying not to fall asleep.

![Figure 3.10: Simone Hine (2005) Watching, Two-Channel Video, Video Stills.](image)

Shooting the videos on a low-grade VHS-C camera affected the image quality in several ways. Most notably, the image was extremely grainy due to the inability of the camera to deal with conditions of low-light. Colour was removed from the video, in postproduction, in order to create an appearance similar to the type of image seen through the viewfinder of a video camera of the same vintage as the one used to shoot the video. The second video was also cropped and magnified in postproduction; this meant that it was a lower resolution when presented on the television. The video used the camera *sculpturally* to provide a particularly low-grade image, which was then enhanced in postproduction in order to amplify the antiquated low-grade video aesthetic.

The two videos that comprised *watching* were produced on analogue technology that functions in direct contrast to the expectation of the quality of standard digital

---

39 Viewfinders in VHS-C cameras generally consisted of a very small black and white LCD monitor mounted inside the viewfinder. This can be contrasted to the colour screens found on even the cheapest contemporary camcorders.
video. Furthermore, the video was displayed on two new LCD monitors, which provided a contextual expectation that the video would be of a similar quality. The low-grade aesthetic of the video drew attention to the high-quality televisions used to display the work, and in turn signified the use of a low grade camcorder as a deliberate aesthetic choice. As with VIT, the expectation of the host medium (in this case the new LCD monitors) is contrasted to the low-grade video, because it does not meet contextual expectations. The use of an antiquated camcorder signifies itself as sculptural, rather than simply antiquated, because it was shown for the first time on two LCD televisions that were state-of-the-art at the time.

Figure 3.11: Simone Hine (2005) Watching. Two-Channel Video, Installation View

The different aspect ratio between the camcorder and the LCD provided another deliberate disjuncture between the host medium and the video. The 4:3 camcorder
image was smaller than the screen and therefore the image was presented with the standard black panels on either side of the image. Such presentation of videos only came about with the introduction of widescreen LCD monitors, which was relatively recent when the work was first exhibited and itself has become antiquated and unexpected.

The LCD screens function *performatively* in this work, because they can be upgraded without significantly affecting the meaning of the work. However, the LCDs used to display the work also functioned *sculpturally*, in the sense that the work relies on the use of state-of-the-art equipment in order to create a context in which the antiquated camcorder footage functions as a deliberate *sculptural* use of technology. For this reason it is necessary that the *performati*ve technology be updated so that it continues to produce meaning by contrast with the video. The display technology needs to be contemporary in order to construct this disjuncture with the camcorder footage. Otherwise, they both become fossilised, and the disjuncture of technologies, a central component of the work, is lost. Any upgrade to new technology affects the work and in this case it will potentially amplify, or at least maintain, the disjuncture between the videos and the technology of display.

VIT in cinema is able to occur within the diegesis of the film because there is a standard quality that viewers expect; therefore any deviation is automatically understood as a deliberate aesthetic and conceptual choice. In the gallery, however, the technologies used are much more varied and therefore standards are not easily assumed. In addition, the installation of equipment within the space is often visible and therefore becomes part of the work as a necessary object. It is for this reason that VIT in time-based artworks often requires *performati*ve and *sculptural* use of technologies of display in order to create a disjuncture in the absence of standard technologies. Time-based artworks that use *everyday technologies* are bound to the consumer products of their initial display, linking them not only to the initial technology, but to the same moment in time. With VIT we see a further complication of the evolution of technologies from *everyday* to antiquated.
In the very first sentences of this chapter I stated that it was seventeen years after Gary Hill first exhibited *Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place* that I first cast eyes upon the actual work in a gallery. I had known about the work for some time through paratexts, including images, written text and video documentation. However, by the time I actually saw *Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place* unmediated in its totality, the work had shifted away from engaging with everyday objects to a work that displayed relics. What this highlights is that the life span of time-based media installations extends beyond the life span of the consumer products of which they are comprised. This poses many questions for art conservationists, about where the work exists and how it functions. But more significantly, it brings into focus the way time-based media arts, much like films, are never fixed entities. Instead, they are altered, updated, re-read and re-contextualised every time they are viewed. This is indeed the case with any work of art, but because artworks that use everyday technologies are defined by the fast moving pace of consumer markets, the effects are registered in years, rather than centuries.

The time-based media installations that have been discussed in this chapter demonstrate a move beyond the incorporation of everyday objects in art that is based on the model of the readymade. The incorporation of everyday technologies into the production and display of artworks means that they are conceptually and formally linked to the work, and can be seen as an example of how art is intertwined with cinema in a way that moves beyond simple quotation and critique. Art is seen here to be both conceptually and practically reliant on cinema. Art and cinema have become interconnected at the very fabric of material production, which in turn creates a conceptual connection. This is not to suggest that the traditions of these mediums have become eroded. Rather, these traditions create a tension within works that is never resolved, but always present.

The sculptural use of CRT televisions is the most dramatic example, within my practice, of the effect of changing everyday technologies. However, the progressive introduction of digital video and DVD, followed by the introduction of media players and Brightsigns, has provided a profound effect on the work at the level of production.
These technologies have had a significant effect on the way my work is produced. All technologies used in the production of time-based media arts both expand and define the limits of what it is possible to achieve. The effects of technologies used to store and replay video are hidden under the interface of these performative technologies. Although not immediately visible within the work, technologies used to store video have an equally profound effect on the way visual culture is understood and experienced. The following chapter will discuss the effect of technologies of distribution on the medium of cinema and articulate the legacy of this paradigm-shifting medium on more recent mediums for the display of cinema. Particular attention will be placed on the way these changes in cinema have worked to draw art and cinema closer together, both conceptually and formally.
Chapter Four: Paused Film in Contemporary Art

The following chapter will outline two arguments: one presented in Laura Mulvey’s *Death 24x a Second*, and the other in Roland Barthes’s *Camera Lucida*. Mulvey’s text works to reinvigorate Barthes’s argument based upon developments in technologies of film distribution that have changed the reception of cinema. Written at a time when significant changes were occurring in film distribution, Mulvey’s text focuses on the conditions of both analogue and digital distribution. The chapter will outline both texts, but instead of following the texts, it will map the space between them. In doing so, the chapter will draw connections between the ability to pause, skip and repeat sections of a film using contemporary technologies of film distribution, and the recent trend in visual arts where artists produce constructed photographs that are reminiscent of cinema, suggesting narratives beyond what is shown in the single photographic image. DVD was the first digital technology for the mass distribution of cinema and as such it drew the still image into consciousness. Unlike VHS, which had a shaky pause function that damaged the analogue tape, DVD could be paused as a clear still image without affecting the disc. The ability to manipulate the temporality of cinema without degrading the original file, was a key transformative attribute of the move from analogue to digital and DVD was at the nexus of this change in cinema distribution and reception. With DVD, the ability to pause a film became a common part of the viewing process, hence emphasising a link between cinema and art that has always been there as an undercurrent. This link has resonance, as cinema moves from the dominance of celluloid to that of digital mediums. Working through ideas evoked by Gregory Crewdson’s *Twilight* (1998-2002) series, this chapter will discuss my work, *No Use Crying* (2010) within this theoretical and historical context.

This chapter will draw together the arguments presented in previous chapters which have outlined specific elements of the entanglement of art and cinema, which has occurred as a result of the erosion of the boundaries between art and other disciplines. Particular focus will be placed on the introduction of new technologies for the distribution of cinema and the way they have affected audiences’ engagement with cinema. This change has created an alignment between art and cinema, in terms of
stillness, that was always there as a para-narrative of cinema, but is now becoming an explicit narrative as artists turn to cinema to generate new narratives.

**From Theatre to Home: Technologies of Home Entertainment**

It has been many years since films have been watched exclusively in darkened cinemas at twenty-four frames a second. Viewing practices have been diversified across many different technologies and viewed in many different contexts. Technologies such as Video Cartridges and Video Discs were some of the first home-viewing technologies to be released into consumer markets, however, the cost and inflexibility of these mediums made them short lived technologies (Reveaux 1973). This was followed by Betamax and VHS video tapes, which were released in North American consumer markets in 1975 and 1976 respectively, with VHS taking market dominance some years after. While films were viewed on VHS, the medium was marketed as a technology used to compliment television viewing practices (Moran 2002: 164-165). There was a clear focus on “time-shifting” through taping television broadcasts. Cinema and VHS were often defined as polar opposites. Cinema was understood to produce a much higher quality image that is inflexible and cumbersome, whereas video was seen to sacrifice quality for convenience and flexibility (Moran 2002: 165).

With the introduction of DVD, cinema and home-viewing became much more closely aligned with each other, resulting in the swift obsolescence of VHS. By 2001, only four years after its introduction into American consumer markets, consumer spending on DVD had surpassed VHS (Kendrick 2005: 59; Klinger 2006: 59). Two years later, in 2003, DVD sales accounted for three-times theatrical box office revenue. This is particularly important because it means that DVD was not only an important part of film reception, but an increasingly important part of film production, as the production of elements for the DVD release became central to film development (Hight 2005: 4). The introduction of DVD marked an historical moment, when cinema reception became de-centralised. Disc-based technology continues to have an impact on cinema distribution and production, despite the success of Video on Demand (VOD),
because it was the first medium to successfully disseminate cinema digitally and, as such, established many of the conventions of cinematic spectatorship in the digital age.

The remarkably quick uptake of DVD in consumer markets has been attributed to the medium capitalising on the successful elements of VHS and improving on those elements that were lacking (Cover 2005: 139). There are two main advantages that lead to the success of DVD as a format for the home spectatorship of films. Firstly, the increased quality of the medium, particularly in regards to the resolution and the ability to show films in their original aspect ratio,\textsuperscript{40} meant that DVD approximates cinematic standards more closely than previous mediums. Thus, DVD became the first viable substitute for cinema, particularly when viewed on Home Theatre technology.\textsuperscript{41} This was further cemented with the initial release of DVD as a read-only format, which emphasised film (rather than recordings of television) as the content of choice.

The increased flexibility of DVD was the second important element of the format’s construction of home-viewing spectatorship, allowing audiences to temporally negotiate films with ease, due to the non-linear access and extra storage capacity of the disc. Information is arranged using non-linear menus, with interfaces that are more akin to negotiating a website than a film presented on any previous format. The ability to skip through films was further enhanced by the durability of disc-based digital technology, because repeat and partial viewing no longer resulted in the denigration of

\textsuperscript{40} The increased storage capacity of the disc allowed the option for multiple versions of films which encouraged the presentation of films in their original aspect ratio. Furthermore, the introduction of widescreen televisions and projectors allowed widescreen films to be viewed full screen, rather than horizontally letterboxed. Initially, widescreen formats were introduced by Hollywood studios, in the 1950s, in order to create a distinction between cinema theatres and television. Such distinctions were reversed with the introduction of widescreen formats into home-viewing, which not only created a practical similarity between cinema and home-viewing, but created a connection between the authentic edits of films. Where cinema and VHS are seen in opposition, cinema and DVD are seen as analogous.

\textsuperscript{41} In 1998 Barbara Klinger argued that home theatre culture produced a category of viewer that she referred to as “new media aristocrats”. For these consumers the domestic reception of film had gained new social importance by creating a cinematic experience in the home, thus redefining home viewing to be more akin to viewing a film in the controlled environment of the cinema than the distracted gaze associated with television viewing. See Klinger, B. (1998). "The New Media Aristocrats: Home Theater and the Domestic Film Experience." \textit{The Velvet Light Trap} \textbf{42}(Fall): 6-19. The level of enthusiasm for extreme high-end technologies has remained. However, the increasing accessibility of projectors, DVD, and now, Blu-ray, has meant that home theatres are becoming standard modes of reception. See Klinger, B. (2006). \textit{Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home}. Berkeley, University of California.
information, as occurred with analogue technology such as VHS. This has lead to both the fragmentation of viewing practices, and the ability to closely read films. Furthermore, the use of menus allows the incorporation of multiple versions of films, including different aspect ratios, alternative endings, deleted scenes and extra features, such as documentaries, which act as supplements to cinema. Commentaries are also often incorporated, and these layer alternative soundtracks over the film while it plays. Each of these “special features” open the text up to alternative readings, presenting digital media as “incomplete texts” (Tryon 2009: 26).

The introduction of High-Definition discs into consumer markets in 2006, with Blu-ray gaining exclusive market dominance in 2008, has further enhanced the quality and flexibility of cinema viewed in the home. However, Blu-Ray has not had the wide-reaching impact on feature film reception that DVD had, because many other forms of film spectatorship have arisen in recent years, which shift the focus away from cohesive film practices (Kehr 2009). DVD was clearly the medium that shifted cinematic experience out of the theatre and into the home while maintaining a certain level of technical quality in the experience, and High-Definition formats have simply built upon that paradigm shift.

Portable technologies, such as MP3 media players and tablets, have further contributed to the fragmentation of cohesive cinematic narratives, making the interchange between film spectatorship and the internet much more fluid. These technologies arch back towards viewing practices that were established by earlier technologies, such as VHS, which preference convenience over quality.42 The limited size of the interface means that people are less likely to watch entire feature length films and instead use the medium as a supplement to cinema, watching promotional material that can in fact turn attention back towards initial releases of film in cinema theatres (Tryon 2009: 36). Downloading films is a continually shifting terrain, but it is certain to

---

become increasingly important to film reception and distribution. VOD has arisen in recent years as an increasingly prominent mode of film spectatorship, taking revenue from other hardcopy mediums and making the computer a hub for cinema spectatorship (Iordanova 2012). Contemporary debates are centered around the introduction of 4K Ultra-High Definition formats, which are currently accessed via streaming and have not yet been adequately accommodated by Blu-ray, despite the Blu-ray Disc Association projecting its imminent introduction into consumer markets (May 2014). The ability of Blu-ray to accommodate increasingly high-definition formats will be a pivotal factor in the development of film distribution over the next few years.

For some years, there was a divide between media watched on portable devices, such as MP3 players and laptops, which favour convenience over quality, and high-end mediums, such as Blu-ray and DVD, that are often watched in home theatres which focus on the connoisseur market43 (Tryon 2009: 36). In each case we see the inevitable move toward the digitisation of cinema, a move that has led to the diverse film practices that will be the underlying subject of this chapter. While cinema distribution has moved beyond DVD as a primary medium for the display of cinema, DVD remains a significant medium, because of its paradigm shifting role in the digitisation of cinema, which continues to define the boundaries of subsequent film reception, both practically and economically.44

**DVD and the Cinematic Freeze-Frame**

Laura Mulvey takes the paradigm shift in spectatorship created by DVD as the subject of her book *Death 24x a Second*. Mulvey argues that the ability of DVD to give

---

44 Hardcopy formats remain an important part of film distribution, because they are seen by distribution companies to be the most effective way of combating piracy. Nevertheless, there has been a significant move towards file-based modes of distribution in recent years. This has made the computer a hub for the reception of cinema. In this context, the ‘pause’ function is integrated into viewing process through simply touching the screen or pressing the space-bar. When the moving image is viewed on a mobile device, with its attendant capacity for interruption, via email and messages, the paused image is almost inevitable.
audience’s non-linear access to films has set up practices that displace the chain of meaning invested in linear narratives. When a film is paused, slowed or repeated, certain aspects of films are enhanced. Details that may not have been visible if viewed uninterrupted at twenty-four frames a second are given new meaning and emphasis. Mulvey likens the effect of this type viewing to the way textual analysis is used to enhance and reveal meaning that is present in a film but may otherwise go unnoticed. Like textual analysis, the paused film carries the new meaning generated by this gesture when the film is resumed (Mulvey 2006: 28).

Mulvey’s argument here, and throughout the text, relies upon Roland Barthes’s writing on photography, and in particular, Barthes’s preference of the still photograph over the moving image. Central to Barthes’s argument in Camera Lucida is the concept of the punctum. This elusive term is used to identify those small aspects of a photograph that affect the viewer in a way that is not easily defined with words – it is that for which there is no substitute in language (Barthes 1980: 51). The punctum is added to the photograph by the viewer, but is evoked by something contained within the photograph. This is the same logic Mulvey applies to the paused image. However, at the heart of Barthes’s discussion is his search for one image, out of many images in his family album, which showed his recently deceased mother as he knew her. The text centres on one image of Barthes’s mother that is described, but not reproduced in the text, because the meaning he generates could not be generated by the reader. In this way, Barthes constructs a very personal and idiosyncratic notion of photography based on a non-verbal response, whereas Mulvey utilises these ideas to create a theory of textual analysis.

Despite the elusive nature of Barthes’s discussion, there are certain aspects that Barthes’s identifies that remain constant within the photographic image, allowing the punctum to manifest differently within the limits of the medium. The connection to the physical subject that the indexical nature of the photograph creates, and the potentially infinite amount of time that stillness affords, are two recurring ideas within Barthes’s writing on the punctum. Mulvey takes these two ideas, that are prevalent in Barthes’s conception of the punctum, and updates them to account for digital imagery. The space
between the two arguments provides a way of articulating a change in film practices that has aligned cinema and art in a way that was not possible prior to the digital distribution of narrative cinema.

For Barthes, the *punctum* is reliant on the indexical nature of the photograph. The subject must have been present before the lens of the camera at the time of its inscription (Barthes 1980: 78). The stillness of the photographic image suggests the moment of capture, the point at which time was suspended. Stillness links the photographic imprint to the past of its initial inscription, making it at once present and past. This is what Barthes refers to as the “that-has-been” of photographic time – the moment of “arrest”. The physical trace of the subject in pre-digital photography is essential to Barthes’ argument. The light that touched his mother’s face, rendering it visible on film, is the same light that touches his eyes upon viewing the photograph. In this way the photograph is more than simply a record of his mother, it is a physical link to her, made all the more potent as he looks at her after her passing.

In contrast to Barthes’s notion of the *punctum* as being, in part, the result of a physical connection to the subject, Mulvey argues that celluloid film is conceptually evoked, when a DVD is paused, via an imaginative association, despite being an anachronism (Mulvey 2006: 13). This is because Mulvey focuses on stillness, thus the indexical nature of a photograph is important only in that it draws attention to the point of initial inscription, and the individual frames of the film. The physical trace of the subject within film-based photography is not important to Mulvey’s argument. Barthes is concerned with a personal link to the subject and thus its status as an index, whereas Mulvey is interested in a new form of textual analysis, thus the analysable impact of the paused image is central to her argument.

Mulvey uses the physicality of the photographic image as a catalyst to the disruption of content, identifying the form and content as discrete categories. This is

---

45 The idea that the indexical nature of analogue photography is evoked in digital photography seems sustainable only as long as people continue to consider analogue photography to be the norm. It is difficult to imagine that generations that are already growing up without contact with analogue photography would make this imaginative association. This is not to suggest that it is not there, but that this connection has a limited timeframe.
distinct from Barthes’s articulation of the *punctum*, whereby the form and content of the photographic image is inseparable. The indexical nature of the photograph necessarily implies that the content must be understood in terms of its relationship to the physical object that traces its form.

Mulvey follows Barthes’s point that photography, by virtue of its stillness, creates a “pose” that is not possible in cinema because movement sweeps it away (Barthes 1980: 78). Likewise, Mulvey argues that despite cinema and photography having the same indexical connection to the subject, the temporal difference between the two mediums creates a significant change in the way the index is registered by the viewer. The photograph is understood as a single image that registers an instant, as opposed to the film strip which registers a succession of instances. When this series of images is animated the succession of photographic instances that comprises the moving image are no longer registered, because the individual moment disappears into the illusion of movement (Mulvey 2006: 13).

In narrative cinema there is an opposition between what Mulvey refers to as the “film time”, which is the time of inscription, and the “cinema time”, which is the time represented in cinematic narrative. The “filmic time” is usually concealed to create the illusion of narrative time. Mulvey argues that when a film is paused the singular image that comprises cinema is made visible. Thus, the audience is able to expand beyond the “cinema time” in a manner analogous with textual analysis, because the film-still is given the time to be contemplated, allowing the historical and political context of the paused film to be expanded. Because the paused film is removed from the narrative context, the materiality of the image, and more specifically, the moment of inscription, is brought to the fore (Mulvey 2006: 30). Mulvey appeals to Barthes’s notion of the pose that cinema denies, in order to suggest that new technologies, which allow the photographic referent to come to the fore, expose the materiality of the image, and in turn, the initial moment of inscription that separates “filmic time” from “cinema time”. The paused image dissolves the “cinema time” and thus also dissolves the narrative drive, which moves cinema perpetually forward and obscures the cinematic *punctum*. Mulvey argues that Barthes was writing at a time before DVD was available and posits
the idea that with the presence of DVD it is now possible to achieve a cinematic *punctum* through the pause function on a DVD player (Mulvey 2006: 183).

There is a fundamental difference between the effect of the paused image that Mulvey articulates and Barthes's *punctum*. The difference is located in the relationship between form and content in the single photographic-based image. The *punctum* generates an emotive response from a single moment suspended in time. The material presence that refers to the moment of inscription refers to that moment plucked out of the stream of events that comprise life. It is the inability to know the before and after of the image, coupled with the knowledge that this moment was removed from a continuous sequence of events now past, that defines the *punctum*. The photograph gives the viewer access to a specific moment in time that is no longer present. Therefore, the *punctum* is the result of a synthesis of what is represented and the method through which it was captured. Thus, the meaning of the photograph is generated through a synthesis of form and content.

A paused film is isolated from a sequence of events, but not to the degree that a photograph is isolated, because the before and after of the paused film is accessible as a fixed narrative when the film is resumed. This is a significant distinction between Barthes’s and Mulvey’s arguments. Likewise, it is a significant distinction between a photograph and a paused film in regards to the way in which the moment of inscription is registered by the viewer. The before and after of the paused film is accessible in “cinema time” but not in “film time”. Therefore, the possibility that the audience would look to the resumption of “cinema time” in order to understand the paused film, as Mulvey makes the assertion, throughout *Death 24 Times a Second*, that DVD made it possible for the first time to see the still photograph, at the base of cinema, outside of an editing room. While VHS was not capable of a true freeze-frame, video cartridges and laser discs were capable of a freeze-frame and were available in consumer markets prior to DVD and indeed prior to the publication of *Camera Lucida*. While Mulvey’s argument about the impact of DVD is not strictly correct in terms of the consumer market availability of these technologies, it does not undermine her general argument, because DVD was the most popular and affordable medium to be able to freeze a cinematic frame, making it a more prominent part of the broader experience of film. However, when discussing Barthes, Mulvey argues for a philosophical possibility, rather than an argument based on culturally defined practices of reception, therefore it is difficult to maintain her argument given that the technology was available in consumer markets, albeit not as widely available as DVD. This seemingly small disjuncture points towards a wider disjunction between the Barthes’s and Mulvey’s use of the term *punctum*. 

---

46 Mulvey makes the assertion, throughout *Death 24 Times a Second*, that DVD made it possible for the first time to see the still photograph, at the base of cinema, outside of an editing room. While VHS was not capable of a true freeze-frame, video cartridges and laser discs were capable of a freeze-frame and were available in consumer markets prior to DVD and indeed prior to the publication of *Camera Lucida*. While Mulvey’s argument about the impact of DVD is not strictly correct in terms of the consumer market availability of these technologies, it does not undermine her general argument, because DVD was the most popular and affordable medium to be able to freeze a cinematic frame, making it a more prominent part of the broader experience of film. However, when discussing Barthes, Mulvey argues for a philosophical possibility, rather than an argument based on culturally defined practices of reception, therefore it is difficult to maintain her argument given that the technology was available in consumer markets, albeit not as widely available as DVD. This seemingly small disjuncture points towards a wider disjuncture between the Barthes’s and Mulvey’s use of the term *punctum*. 


opposed to looking backwards to the moment of inscription that is inherent in the “film
time” cannot be discounted, yet Mulvey’s argument relies on “cinema time” dissolving
when a film is paused.

Barthes restricts his discussion in *Camera Lucida* to non-fiction, or
documentary, photography because it contains only “film time” and as such his
argument relies on the synthesis of form and content. A synthesis of form and content
means the viewer is necessarily aware of the moment of inscription because it is evident
in all aspects of the work. In contrast to Barthes, Mulvey’s discussion includes both
non-fiction and fiction films which contain both “cinema time” and “film time”. Hence,
Mulvey’s discussion focuses on the way paused films create a separation between form
and content that leads to the dissolution of “cinema time” in favor of “film time”, in
order to return the paused film to the status of a photograph that contains only “film
time”. Mulvey sees the synthesis of “cinema time” and “film time” occurring when a
film is resumed, but it is my argument that the film is not inherently altered by being
paused.

The difference between the photograph and the paused film is particularly
pronounced when we consider fiction films where the “film time” and “cinema time”
represent two different moments; the moment of inscription and the moment created
through narrative illusion. When a fiction film is paused the “cinema time” is halted but
not visually dissolved, because a single dislocated image is still there to evoke the
“cinema time”. We do not see the sets, lighting, script or directors when a film is
paused, rather we see a moment isolated from the cinematic narrative. According to
Mulvey the “film time” is simply inferred, because the still image implies the moment
at which it was recorded (Mulvey 2006). Once again, Mulvey draws on Barthes’s idea
that stillness implies the moment of inscription, but, as we have just seen, this is
because non-fiction photography, which forms the basis of Barthes’s discussion,
contains a synthesis of form and content. In contrast, Mulvey’s argument acknowledges
that form and content remain separate in the paused film and, therefore, the formal cues
do not automatically translate to the content of the image and, instead, Mulvey suggests,
the moment of inscription is implied rather than witnessed. In other words one can infer
the moment of inscription from a paused film, but this is not a necessary implication of the paused film, because the “cinema time” and “film time” remain forever at odds in the paused fiction film.

As has been previously established, Barthes is concerned only with non-fiction photography and thus is able to argue that the punctum consists of certain aspects inherent to all non-fiction photographs, but the specifics of the photograph define the narrative. In broadening the scope of the punctum to include fiction and non-fiction films, Mulvey renders the possibilities for registering the punctum much broader than the non-fiction photograph. Thus, Mulvey generates an argument that is potentially true, but not necessarily true of all paused films. In a strange disjunction, Barthes punctum articulates a finite rule that generates endless possible meanings for non-fiction analogue photography, whereas Mulvey generates a rule that has a broader scope, but which delineates a very specific response to the still image that can be utilised as a form of textual analysis.

The Paused Film and the Pictorial Tradition of Art

Mulvey’s assertion that “cinema time” dissolves when a film is paused is based upon two premises. Firstly, that stillness automatically evokes the moment of inscription. And, secondly, that a film is only capable of producing narrative when the moment of inscription is concealed: the traditional context of watching a film in a darkened cinema at twenty-four frames a second, with the material apparatus hidden from sight as shadows dance on the screen and narrative unfolds. This understanding of cinematic narrative is based upon an unchanging notion of cinema as a single linear narrative that requires a fixed relationship between film, projector and viewing subject, which is facilitated by cinematic architecture and the conventions of public spectatorship (Mondloch 2010: 3).

In trying to move beyond narrative cinema, Mulvey utilises traditional understandings of cinema reception that are defined by the cinema theatre, without
accounting for the full effect of home-viewing practices on film reception. The paused film is presented in Mulvey’s text as an aberrant state of contemporary cinema that disrupts the fixed relationship between film, projector and viewing subject, undermining the ability to produce and sustain narrative. Mulvey’s argument addresses the technological ability to pause a film, without accounting for the broader context of audience’s willingness to use home-viewing technologies in ways that take advantage of the ability to time-shift, which can involve reading narratives across different mediums and timeframes. What started as the ability to fast-forward and rewind films in the 1970s has developed into much more fluid practices among contemporary audiences, with portable devices creating a fragmented approach to viewing that sees audiences extrapolating upon fragments presented on platforms such as Youtube and Vimeo. Furthermore, contemporary audiences swap between films and other media, as the computer becomes a hub for film distribution and spectatorship. The ideal cinema experience that Mulvey claims is disrupted by the paused DVD is a way of viewing cinema that could not have been considered normative since the wide spread up-take of VHS and the introduction of DVD, with its multiple platforms and emphasis on para-textual material.47

The idea that stillness and motion are oppositional states has defined much writing on analogue photography and cinema.48 Mulvey, through Barthes writing, follows this line of reasoning. In doing so, Mulvey correctly identifies a change in cinematic experience that sees stillness as a new aspect of cinematic viewing conventions; however, she fails to adjust her forms of reference to account for the wider context of such a significant change in viewing conventions. As a flow-on effect of DVD, and the subsequent mediums of film distribution that allow for true freeze


48 Barthes would be the key example here, but other theorists discussed in this chapter, such as, Bazin, Benjamin and Metz could also be included as examples.
frames\textsuperscript{49}, new ways of understanding the relationship between stillness and motion need to be established in order to understand contemporary cinematic practices that have been complicated by digital forms of film distribution.

As stillness becomes part of the cinematic experience, the recent trend in art to take cinema as its subject becomes particularly significant for art and cinema alike. The pictorial tradition of art presents a very different relationship between stillness, materiality and narrative, to that promoted by the traditions of cinematic spectatorship. Therefore, the transformation of cinema spectatorship from cohesive to fragmented has created a greater formal connection between cinema and art. As a result, certain artists whose work treads the border between art and cinema, can prove useful in understanding the effect that new technologies have had on cinematic narrative.

If we look at the relationship between content and material presence in the history of art, we see very different concerns to traditional cinema that might present a way of understanding the impact that the digitisation of cinema has had on our understanding of cinematic narrative. In the gallery, material presence is not oppositional; instead, it is a prerequisite. Even where the moving image is used, the technology of display is, more often than not, present in the gallery space. The materiality of the art object and evidence of the artist’s contribution to the production of works is essential to the economic basis of art, and as such, is of fundamental importance to an understanding of the moving image as art object.\textsuperscript{50} The use of technology as sculptural elements in the exhibition of film and video, in combination with the video loop, has aligned moving image installations with traditional art viewing practices. This moves beyond early approaches to the exhibition of moving images in gallery contexts, where films were watched from start to finish in an attempt to approximate cinema viewing practices within the gallery. Instead, video and film installations facilitate a ‘nomadic’ approach to spectatorship typical of the gallery, allowing audiences’ to move around within the space of display, gaining different

\textsuperscript{49} I refer to the “true freeze frame” created by digital technology here, as opposed to the effect of a freeze-frame, created by a series of moving images of the same frame, in celluloid-based cinema.

\textsuperscript{50} In contemporary art, if the artist’s hand is not present, these conditions are artificially implemented. The convention of editioned and signed photographic prints and video works is the most common example.
vantage points, and choosing the length of one’s temporal engagement with the work (Mondloch 2010: 56).

If we further consider the pictorial tradition of art having the immobile single image at its base, and bearing in mind the relationship between moving images and their apparatus within the gallery, Mulvey’s argument begins to provide an interesting way of understanding cinema in the context of certain art practices that negotiate the border between both disciplines. Mulvey approaches Barthes’s writing on photography from a cinema perspective; therefore, her argument opens up questions about still and moving images that cut across both disciplines. This is quite significant because in recent years, as cinema has become more obviously fragmented through digital technology, many artists have utilised stillness and material presence, as part of the pictorial tradition of art, in order to reimagine cinematic tropes.

Figure 4.1: Gregory Crewdson (1998-2002) Untitled (‘Twilight’ series), Digital C-Prints, 1219 x 1524mm.
Gregory Crewdson is one of many artists who creates photographs that appear as film stills in both style and technical quality. Crewdson’s photographs exist somewhere between cinema and photography, emerging out of the contemporary context of cinema viewing, where narratives are fragmented and films are paused. Crewdson’s *Twilight* series presents a clear example of the Hollywood aesthetic that runs throughout his photographs. Focusing on the oddities that lie below the surface of small town America, *Twilight* evokes early Steven Spielberg films through a similarity in the general aesthetic. Cars from the 1970s line vacant small town streets, which are cloaked by the dark blue light of the early evening sky; the coldness of the sky interrupted by the warm glow of domestic houses and amber traffic lights, produces a unique, yet familiar effect.

![Figure 4.2: Steven Spielberg (1977) Close Encounters of the Third Kind, 137mins.](image)

This general cinematic affect is made specific within the *Twilight* series by several references to the mound formations produced by Roy Neary (Richard Dreyfuss) in Spielberg’s *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). While many of the characters in Crewdson’s photographs produce similar mounds, the images do not copy the film directly; instead, the images appear as though they might depict characters that follow the same trajectory as Neary, but in some other small town that exists in the imagined

---

51 Cindy Sherman, Jeff Wall and Philip-Lorca DiCorica are other prominent examples.
world that extends beyond the frame of the film. This is an impression, akin to the vague associations typical of memory, rather than a connection made through direct appropriation of particular elements from the film.

The photographs that comprise Crewdson’s *Twilight* series are, as the name suggests, taken at the point between day and night. Twilight marks a period of transition, depicting an elusive point between two states. This transitory state replicates the way in which each photograph depicts a moment, either before or after a significant event. Crewdson describes this effect as the depiction of “the moment, between moments” (Crewdson 2011). The moment depicted in each of the photographs appears to be in flux, but this transitory state has been made stable through the constancy that stillness affords. As such we do not see the effects of time or motion in these photographs; instead this is implied through the narrative cues that extend beyond the temporal limits of the photograph. These cues rely on Credwson’s photographs evoking a world beyond the frame, in which the viewer is only given access to a small fragment.53

---

52 This feeling, evoked by Crewdson’s photographs, replicates the way several unrelated characters in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* make the same sculptural forms. This mound formation, and its construction, is referenced in many of Crewdson’s photographs.

53 The *Twilight* series also relies on the world created by Steven Spielberg.
The photographs present a single moment that appears as though it has been isolated from the flow of time, evoking Barthes’s “arrested” moment. However, unlike the paused film or the non-fiction photograph, these images have been constructed for this moment and this moment alone. The photographs suggest narratives, but there is no narrative external to the image: neither is there the undisclosed narrative of the documentary-style photograph, nor the fictional narrative that can be accessed when a paused film is resumed. Likewise, there is no sequence of images from which this has been taken, because the image has been constructed to allow the moment to exist only as a photograph. Crewdson’s photographs question the fidelity of the photographic image, which in turn questions Barthes’s conception of the photograph as a moment of “arrest”.

Jonathan Friday has argued that the moment of photographic inscription is not an “arrest” as Barthes suggests, but the beginning of the existence of the photographic image. Friday aligns Barthes’s writing with André Bazin’s earlier writing on photography, despite Barthes’s and Bazin’s differing conclusions, because of their
mutual reliance on the idea that photographs preserve their subject by extracting it from time, while simultaneously allowing it to persist through time (Friday 2006: 44). Friday suggests that this understanding of photographic time is predicated on a “cinematic conception of photography” which understands stillness in terms of a lack of motion. Such a concept of photography creates the complicated relationship between past and present that underscores Barthes’s notion of the \textit{that-has-been} of photographic time (Barthes 1980; Friday 2006: 44). Friday suggests that a photograph sets its own temporal limits, rendering the moment of inscription as the origin of the photograph, therefore making the relationship between past and present far less complex. For Barthes and Bazin the photograph is both here and there, present and past. However, if we are to understand the photograph as existing only as the photograph, and not an extracted event, then the time of the photograph is only connected to the moment of the photograph’s origin: that which is contained within the photograph. Friday discusses this concept in relation to all photographic images, yet it seems particularly relevant to Crewdson’s images where the photographs literally create a moment, rather than isolating a moment from the flow of everyday life.

Crewdson’s photographs rely on both “filmic time” and “cinema time” to produce meaning. Unlike Mulvey’s assertion that stillness draws attention to the materiality of the image and thus dissolves narrative content, these images demonstrate how “film time” and “cinema time” can remain compressed within the single image. The “film time” is implied through the materiality of the photograph as it hangs on the gallery wall. Likewise, the para-narrative\textsuperscript{54} of these images as staged photographs foregrounds the disjuncture between the illusion of narrative and the moment of inscription. Even without prior knowledge of the construction of Crewdon’s photographs, the use of Hollywood actors in his work, such as Julianne Moore and Jennifer Jason-Leigh, provide cues that indicate their fictional nature and intertextual

\textsuperscript{54} As briefly discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, para-narrative is a term used by Garrett Stewart to describe the way knowledge of the photographic image at cinema’s base is always present alongside the moving image, ready to be evoked at any moment. It is my suggestion here that a similar process occurs with Crewdson’s images. Both suggest the materiality of the narratives, presenting this, not in opposition to narrative, but as something that is always present alongside narrative. For more information See Stewart, G. (1999). \textit{Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photo Synthesis}, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
references. Despite the moment of inscription being referenced, the fictional narrative remains the focus of these works. The evocation of “filmic time” within these constructed images does not dissolve “cinema time”, because a photograph must incorporate its material support, rather than presenting it through the intangibility of light and shadows in the darkness of the cinema theatre. Therefore, the strength of these images relies on the viewer’s ability to acknowledge the “film time”, while at the same time maintaining a belief in the “cinema time”. In a manner more like reading a novel than watching a film, the viewer of Crewdson’s staged photographs must employ the “willing suspension of disbelief” in order to maintain a belief in the fiction (and to infer the narrative potential) of these images, as the materiality of their construction is visually presented to the viewer.55

Crewdson’s photographs create a synthesis of form and content through the synthesis of two, seemingly oppositional elements: “film time” and “cinema time”. Unlike Mulvey’s idea that “film time” dissolves “cinema time”, both times remain essential to the production of meaning within Crewdson’s photographs. The shift in focus from cinematic viewing practices to photographic can be seen here as the point at which Mulvey’s notion of the paused film begins to unravel, because the paused image, and by extension cinema, is no longer bound to the idea of complete immersion produced by uninterrupted viewing of films in a darkened cinema.

55 Samuel Taylor Coleridge famously refers to the requirement of a reader to bridge the gap between the scenes evoked in fiction writing and the words on the page that convey the scene, in order to make sense of any given novel, as the “willing suspension of disbelief”. It is my argument that a similar “willing suspension of disbelief” is required to understand many constructed photographs, of which the Twilight series is an example.
The synthesis between the “film time” and “cinema time” of constructed photographs, such as Crewdson’s, challenges traditional ideas about the fidelity of the photographic image. Bazin identifies this fidelity as a defining characteristic of photography. In “The Ontology of the Photographic Image”, Bazin posits the idea that a belief in the realism of photography is not the result of anything inherent in the medium, but comes via a faith in the objectivity of mechanical reproduction (Bazin 1967: 12). Such a belief in the fidelity of a photograph requires a correlation between what is represented and the moment of inscription. But, as Bazin points out, this condition of photography is not inherent to the medium, but is a convention that has been established through the ways photography had been used up until that point. In identifying this trait as a convention of photography, Bazin acknowledged the ability of that trait to change as our relationship to the medium changes. Staged photography, particularly Crewdson’s photographs, appear to challenge that notion.
Where Mulvey understands “film time” and “cinema time” as two mutually exclusive terms that cannot co-exist, Crewdson’s photographs sustain both “film time” and “cinema time” within a single image. The synthesis of form and content in Crewdson’s photographs occurs through recognition of the material support, which is essential to any photographic print viewed in a gallery, while at the same time engaging with the narrative presented in the fictional space created by the photograph. Crewdson’s photographs show us that we do not have to believe that the scene actually took place to be affected by its content or to be drawn into its narrative. Instead, we take part in the narrative as a known fiction. Where the synthesis of form and content occurs within non-fiction photographs as the form defining the content, Crewdson’s photographs utilise the material form as an essential part of the illusion created by the work, despite these two states being traditionally opposed. The synthesis of form and content in Crewdson’s photographs makes it impossible to understand stillness as a necessarily disruptive force to narrative. In fact, stillness creates an open-ended
narrative that is suggested through the “moment between moments” approach taken by Crewdson.

**Constructed photography and Barthes’ *Punctum***

While constructed photography is the site of a merging of form and content through the synthesis of narrative and materiality, the fabricated nature of constructed photography continues to present a significant disjuncture from Barthes’s notion of the *punctum*. Barthes’s notion of the *punctum* is indebted to Walter Benjamin’s *optical unconscious*, as the hidden moment that becomes visible through the manipulation of time inherent in photography (Benjamin 1979: 243). Photography’s revelation that a horse gallops with all four feet off the ground is an example par excellence of this idea. Edward Muybridge’s and Étienne-Jules Marey’s pseudo-scientific photographic experiments, which produced this revelation, provide examples of early research into photography’s ability to reveal hidden knowledge about movement by capturing moments so fleeting that they fall from the view of the naked eye. Barthes suggests that photography allows the hidden details that would ordinarily be lost to the effect of time to become visible; hence, the *punctum* is a small detail that is not observable without the stillness that photographic intervention affords. Barthes places emphasis not only on non-fiction photography, but on revealing the fleeting moment by suspending it in time.

The significance of the *optical unconscious* in non-fiction photography is particularly evident in Barthes’s discussion of the *studium* as a counterpoint to the *punctum*. Barthes defines a photograph’s *studium* as the readable meaning that is produced as a matter of convention. The *studium* produces what Barthes refers to as an “average affect” within a photograph, which can be understood in terms of the viewer's like or dislike of the photograph, as opposed to the *punctum*, which produces the much stronger effect of a love for the photograph (Barthes 1980: 26-28). The effect of the *punctum* cannot be constructed, but instead, must be revealed. When discussing constructed photography, the role of the *studium* moves from simply a counterpoint used to define the weight of the punctum’s affect, to being essentially linked to the
possibility of the punctum as an element of constructed photography, because the studium refers in part to meaning that has been created not captured.

To explain further, there are many photographs in Camera Lucida that Barthes argues contain the punctum, however, because of the personal nature of the definition of the punctum, it is difficult to communicate the affect it produces, unless it has been discovered without the intervention of a direct reference to the affect and its cause. Likewise, the resonances are personal, and therefore, the selection of photographs that Barthes uses to explain the effect of the punctum are not necessarily the same selection that the reader would make. Hence, when I read Camera Lucida, I was able to imagine a whole set of other images that carry meaning for me in a way that was congruous with Barthes’s argument, yet I did not necessarily share Barthes’s responses to the set of images presented in the text.

Figure 4.6: Alexander Gardner (1865) Portrait of Lewis Payne, Gelatin Silver Print from Wet-Plate Negative.
If I am to think about Barthes’s selection of photographs, there was only one photograph in *Camera Lucida* where my response coincided with Barthes’s discussion of the *punctum*. My first impression of the *Portrait of Lewis Payne* by Alexander Gardner (1865) was as Barthes describes: “the photograph is handsome, as is the boy”. And this was, as Barthes attributes, the photograph’s *studium*. Likewise, I agreed with Barthes’s assertion that the *punctum* was the knowledge that “he is going to die”. Barthes uses this image to articulate the secondary *punctum* of time, rather than the primary *punctum* of a single detail. In contrast to Barthes I will argue that the passing of time in the *Portrait of Lewis Payne* is evoked by a single detail that Barthes is careful to avoid – the nineteenth century handcuffs that lay, which in the poor reproduction in *Camera Lucida* is half veiled by shadows, in the lap of the young man. These handcuffs draw me towards questions about this man’s incarceration. The unfamiliar design of the handcuffs sets the picture at a time much earlier than I had originally presumed, based upon my interpretation of the man’s general appearance. What at first appeared to be a dark long-sleeve T-shirt is in fact a nineteenth century undergarment. It is the detail of the handcuff that lead me to think “he is going to die”, but even without knowledge of his actual fate, I know, by virtue of the period of the handcuffs that he is already dead.⁵⁶ Therefore, the second *punctum* of time was revealed to me through the primary detail of the handcuff.

The detail of the handcuff is a secondary detail of the photograph, but does not appear to be an accident; instead, it is the result of careful pictorial arrangement.⁵⁷ If we are to understand that the *punctum* is the small detail that propels the affect of the photograph, then the handcuffs function as the *punctum*, evoking an emotive response beyond the image. However, this photograph complicates the idea of the *punctum* outlined by Barthes, because the image is not an accidentally captured moment. Paynes’s hands are de-emphasised by their casual placement in his lap and the combination of light and shadow cast across his hand, whereas the focus of the light places emphasis upon his youthful face as he stares with quiet defiance directly at the

---

⁵⁶ This is an effect of the passing of time in a way that resonates with the evolution of art through time, as discussed in chapter three.
⁵⁷ This is emphasised by other images in the series of photographs of Lewis Payne, which frame the imag, so that his handcuffs are right at the border of the image, almost invisible.
viewer. Although this image is documentary in nature, it is carefully constructed to signify the harrowing disjuncture between the man’s youth, his imminent death, and the act that he has presumably committed. The photograph has been carefully constructed to reveal a detail that appears secondary to the main effect of the image, but in fact overwhelms it. So, the affect is the same as the *punctum*, but it is generated not through a captured moment, but through a constructed moment, suggesting that *studium* and the *punctum* are closer aligned in this photograph than in others. This is perhaps why Barthes chooses to discuss the *punctum* of time, and not to address the detail as the primary site of the *punctum* in this photograph.

To suggest that the *studium* and *punctum* are interrelated, rather than polar opposites, and in turn, that the *punctum* can be manufactured, cuts across the very core of Barthes’s idea. For Barthes, the *punctum* is the accidental moment, the product of chance that life entails at the instant the shutter opens and closes. Barthes’s notion of photography is bound to a belief in photography’s ability to reveal something of life that becomes readable as a result of its suspension through time, allowing the viewer to see the small details that would be imperceptible in the ordinary flow of time. But here, in the *Portrait of Lewis Payne*, we see something different, the photograph is not an accidental moment caught in time, it is a moment that has been constructed with a clear intent. It is the indexical sign of a man suspended in time, but he is shown to those who have seen the photograph in a particular light. Looking at this photograph, there is indeed, as Barthes states, a *punctum* of time, but this reveals itself via the *punctum* of detail, which is the result of careful placement and framing. The photograph captures a moment of Lewis Payne’s life as he waits in his prison cell, but the way the image is framed, the lighting and the pose, all work to create a moment that exists only in the photograph. Friday’s idea that a photograph is the origin of the moment, rather than the suspension of a moment, is as pertinent to *The Portrait of Lewis Payne* as it is to the photographs in Crewdson’s *Twilight* series, because this image creates a version of Payne that is specific to the photograph.

The *Portrait of Lewis Payne* is a documentary photograph that marks a point where non-fiction photography is carefully constructed, demonstrating the malleability
of the border between a captured moment and a constructed moment, fiction and non-fiction. Likewise, constructed photography has the ability to confuse the border between the constructed and captured moment. Take, for example, Jeff Wall’s photograph *The Volunteer (1996)*. *The Volunteer*, like all of Jeff Wall’s photographs, is a constructed image in that the scenario depicted is fabricated by the artist; however the process of its production combines fictive and non-fictive elements, situating the work somewhere between a documentary photograph and a fictitious performance.

Wall employed a man to mop the floor of a room that appeared to be an ordinary lunch room except for the absence of other employees. The man mopped the floor for several weeks. Alone in the room, unaware of the purpose of this gesture, the man mopped the floor over and over again to no understandable end. Wall waited for the time when the man appeared broken by the situation, at which point he took a single

---

*Figure 4.7: Jeff Wall (1996) Volunteer, Silver Gelatin Print, 2215 x 3130mm.*

---

photograph. The resulting captured moment combines the fictive environment and situation, with the clear depression of the man employed to indefinitely perform a lonely, repetitive, menial and senseless task. The situation was at once fictive, in that Wall completely constructed the situation, yet simultaneously documentary in that the employed man was unaware of the fictive nature of his employment. The unseen gesture of washing the floor is completely fictitious while, at the same time, the lived experience, evident on the man’s face, is completely real. The expression on the man’s face appears to compress the entire performance into this single moment and, as such, Wall is able to maintain both oppositional aspects of the work within a single image that indeed suspends a moment in time.

*The Volunteer* depicts a constructed moment and the *Portrait of Lewis Payne* constructs an actual moment. Both photographs mark a point at either end of the spectrum, where there is confusion between the constructed and captured moment, indicating that fiction and non-fiction photography exist along a continuum where one is never fully absent from the other. Given that photographs exist along this continuum, the *punctum* cannot be determined by non-fiction photography alone, because the fidelity of any image is always under question. Instead, the photograph’s status as fiction or non-fiction determines what the *punctum* references. The non-fiction photograph references the physical world, from which it has been isolated. The photograph speaks of the lived experience of the photograph’s subject and the world that we know to extend beyond its frame. In contrast, the constructed photograph is restricted to the world of its construction and the viewer is left to imagine a world that we know does not physically extend beyond the frame. However, in the case of Crewdson’s photographs, the viewer is able to draw on a history of cinematic imagery and narratives in order to construct a fictional world beyond the frame.

Crewdson’s photographs use a cinematic language to evoke narratives beyond the frame. The narratives are not linked to lived experience in the way the photograph of Barthes’s mother was linked to Barthes’s personal experience of her beyond the photograph. Instead, Crewdson’s photographs speak of the procession of visual narratives that make up cinematic history, but are in many ways linked to personal
histories, as certain films can form part of the viewer’s lived experience finding a particular place in the viewer’s personal memory. The re-occurring references to Close Encounters of the Third Kind in the Twilight series act as testaments to the way particular narratives can fascinate an individual, causing one to dwell upon certain imagery. This tendency to dwell on a particular detail of a film is similar to Barthes’s description of the affect of the punctum on the viewer. It must be emphasised that while Barthes identifies the punctum as revealing more of the physical world than is captured within the frame, Crewdson’s photographs restrict themselves to the constructed world of his photographs and cinema history. There is a sense of the familiar within Crewdson’s photographs, however, this familiarity has its origins in cinema, rather than lived experience.

Mulvey’s idea that it is possible to achieve a new type of punctum when a film is paused, finds new relevance in Crewdson’s photographs despite the contradictions that have already been outlined with regards to the way the paused image is registered by the viewer. Mulvey generates a new version of the punctum that is transcribed into cinema. Her focus on textual analysis suggests that the punctum can be understood in ways that move beyond Barthes’s original idea, but she is restricted by the idea that narrative dissolves when a film is paused. In other words, Mulvey points towards the idea that the paused film has the ability to create a cinematic punctum and in turn that we can understand the punctum outside of non-fiction photography, but she does not account for the way the digitisation of cinema has generated new relationships to cinematic history as films are watched and re-watched. Furthermore, the digitisation of cinema has resulted in cinematic narratives being fragmented, as viewers are more readily able to dwell on particular imagery, using both disc-based technologies and the internet, with websites such as ‘Youtube’ and ‘Vimeo’ providing a platform that encourages the

59 Victor Burgin identifies particular scenes from films that he believes inform part of his personal memory in his book The Remembered Film. For a more specific engagement with the notion that cinema forms part of lived experience See Sobchack, V. (2004). Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture. Los Angeles, University of California Press.

60 Anne Friedberg discusses this idea in relation to the introduction of VHS. DVD provided a much more extreme example of this phenomenon. The recent introduction of Movie-On-Demand (MOD) will no doubt see a more diversified access to cinema history, though its impact may not be on the same scale as DVD and VHS. See Friedberg, A. (1994). Window Shopping: Cinema and The Postmodern. Berkeley, University of California Press.
consumption of small sections of films. Crewdson’s *Twilight* series points towards the possibility of a *constructed punctum* that refers to a general history of cinematic narratives, rather than personal memory and lived experience, as in the case of Barthes’s *punctum*.

**Materiality and Illusion: The gallery Double-Effect**

The notion of a *constructed punctum*, developed here, has relevance to contemporary art that extends beyond photography, because it identifies the importance of the way an artwork can produce meaning through the synthesis of fiction and non-fiction, constructed and captured elements. Barthes points towards a similar interplay of fictive illusion and non-fictive material presence, as part of the cinematic experience, in his short article “Leaving the Movie Theatre” (Barthes 1986). This article presents a very different view of the theatre experience than that articulated by Mulvey in *Death 24x a Second*. Where Mulvey assumes the necessity of traditional viewing practices in conveying cinematic narratives through the complete concealment of cinema’s material support, Barthes positions the ‘cinema experience’ as inclusive of the entire experience of going to the cinema: from selecting a film, to the way people arrange themselves within the theatre, to the act of leaving the cinema.

Barthes suggests that the viewer of narrative films in a cinema theatre can be fascinated by a film “twice over”: allowing oneself to be captured by the film narrative, while at the same being fascinated by that which surrounds the film (Barthes 1986: 349). Barthes describes the feeling of becoming “unstuck” from cinema’s pull of illusion, and entranced by the setting that surrounds the screen. Given Barthes’s writing on photography and cinema, as previously discussed, it is clear that Barthes does not consider this doubling effect preferable to the fully engaging experience provided by still photography, but it points toward more complicated viewing practices than that presented by Mulvey. Barthes’s approach to cinema viewing preempts the casual and fragmented approach to cinema viewing that has occurred as a result of the digitisation of cinema, suggesting that this has always been an element of cinema viewing.
The doubling effect articulated by Barthes is analogous to the doubling effect that occurs when viewing a constructed photograph, such as those from Crewdson’s *Twilight* and *Beneath the Roses* (2005) series. The images depict fictitious narratives, while simultaneously focusing attention towards their material support and the methods of their own fiction. The two oppositional ideas are maintained within the work extending it beyond simply the creation of an immersive illusion. This is not an idea specific to constructed photography, but instead has its origins in the history of mimetic art. Kate Mondloch has identified the use of screens in video art as containing these two states simultaneously. Moving-image screens in galleries are the site of immateriality, through the illusion of representation, as well as sites of materiality, because of the presence of the film apparatus within the gallery (Mondloch 2010: 17-19). Therefore, the doubling effect that Barthes experiences in cinema theatres runs counter to traditional understandings of cinema spectatorship, but describes the usual doubling effect of illusion and material support that defines the viewing experience of photography and video art alike.

*Figure 4.8: Mike Nelson (2000) *The Coral Reef*, Installation, Installation Detail.*
In a photograph the illusion and material support are inseparable: one must see the paper in order to see the image. This is indeed the way the doubling effect has occurred within the traditions of visual arts, specifically mimetic painting and sculpture. However, if we consider the more recent history of installation art, which marks the disappearance of discrete objects in favour of immersive situations, which can be aligned with the goal of traditional cinema viewing, we see that the gallery’s established traditions continue to draw attention back toward the materiality of the work as objects in the gallery, even when they are not immediately obvious. This idea can be illustrated via a consideration of Mike Nelson’s immersive installations.

Figure 4.9: Mike Nelson (2011) I, impostor, Installation, Installation Detail.

Nelson’s immersive constructed environments, of which Coral Reef (2000), Lonely Planet (2006) and I, Impostor (2011) are exemplary, provide an extreme example of the immersive installation in contemporary art. Nelson’s installations disorient the viewer within a seamlessly constructed environment. Once enclosed within the installation, after passing through the entrance, the work literally tricks the eye, as a film set does when viewed within the confines of the frame of the camera, only here there is no frame once one passes through the doorway into the work. The viewer is
completely surrounded by the work and its seamless construction works against the knowledge that it is a facade. Sight, sound and smell all engulf the viewer. *I, Impostor* went so far as to create a stuffy claustrophobic feeling that was exacerbated by a fine layer of dust that covered every surface within the installation; tightness across the chest remained a physical remnant of the work’s effect after I had left the installation. The materiality of Nelson’s installations works to cement the illusion in sensual reality.

The single viewer, walking alone through the work, is clearly the ideal viewing position; however this is rarely possible within these works. My experience of *Coral Reef*, at the Tate Britain in 2010, was distinctly marked by a young frightened child and his frantic father, trying to find the quickest way out of the warren-like structure. This disruption to the immersive quality of the work was exacerbated by my own folly when trying to show the child’s father what I thought to be the exit, only to discover that the room I occupied was a replica of another room close to the entrance. This accidental experience within the work brought the carefully constructed facades to the forefront of my mind, despite its total visual believability. Likewise, when I viewed *I, Impostor* at the 54th Venice Biennale, my experience was disrupted, not by other patrons, as I was alone in the installation, but by the constant presence of the invigilators that sat in the corner of rooms engrossed in the glowing light of their i-books. The gallery patrons and invigilators were a necessary disruption to the seamlessness of *Coral Reef* and *I, Impostor*, reminding me of the inevitability of art’s own para-narrative of material construction within any work. Like Barthes in the movie theatre, I am at once “stuck” and “unstuck” from narratives presented in the gallery, even when it is seamlessly executed without borders before my eyes, as is the case in Nelson’s work. The degree to which the illusion of any work is able to engulf the senses is always reliant on the viewer, but the gallery context exacerbates the materiality of works due to gallery viewing conventions.

The visual immediacy of Nelson’s all-engulfing works has a paradoxical effect: the more real the work appears, the more strongly the para-narrative of its construction is felt. Each time I have been fortunate enough to occupy one of Nelson’s installations, I have experienced a feeling of displacement as though I am in two places at once: the
gallery and the fictive space of the work. Christian Metz has argued in relation to the distinction between cinema and theatre, that cinema appears more real than the theatre because the space of the cinema theatre and the diegetic space of the film are incomparable. Therefore, the diegetic space is given preference in the cinema theatre, because the world outside of the film does not interrupt the seamless fictions constructed by cinema (Metz 1974: 10-11). Nelson’s works sit somewhere between cinema and theatre. Like the theatre, Nelson’s works occupy the same space as the viewer and in so doing create a disjunction that necessarily refers to the façade. However, like an exacerbated version of cinema, the gallery and the diegetic space of the work are incomparable, allowing the viewer to become swept up as part of the work. Despite the work’s ability to engulf the viewer’s perception, knowledge that I am in a gallery necessarily infers the occupation of an artificial environment, but this knowledge exists as a para-narrative that is most clearly evoked when the environment is disrupted by others moving through the space. In Nelson’s work the materiality of the image is not referenced within the space of illusion, but instead exists as a para-narrative of the work.

The illusions created by Nelson’s works are different from the illusion created by a film or theatrical play. The effect of being seduced “twice over” in cinema occurs as the result of the viewer choosing to focus their attention upon narrative illusion, despite the illusion occupying only a small portion of the viewer’s visual field. Therefore, as Barthes articulates, the viewer may become distracted by the visual scene that surrounds the screen. Nelson’s work, on the other hand, completely engulfs the viewer’s visual field, making such distractions impossible. Furthermore, Nelson’s works are stationary objects, rather than temporal forms. Therefore, disruptions by others in the space, which evoke the para-narrative of material presence, mean that the illusion is not disrupted, instead, it exists alongside the viewer’s temporal experience of the stationary object. The viewer of Nelson’s work is not seduced “twice over”, in the same manner as cinema audiences, where the viewer’s attention may wander between illusion and reality. Rather, these two elements are fused within the single experience of the work, because knowledge of the work’s material reality is only possible through the cerebral assumption of the viewer, rather than being visually apprehended. All
installations draw attention to the gallery space in which they are exhibited, but Nelson’s works seem particularly apt at showing the way the material space of the gallery is woven into the fabric of any artwork, even where the creation of a seamless illusion is paramount.

**Illusion and Materiality within the Photographic Frame**

The frame remains essential to the creation of a seamless illusion within Nelson’s and Crewdson’s work, as it fortifies the distinction between the illusion and its surrounding context. The doorways into Nelson’s works provide a threshold between the illusion and the gallery context. In Crewdson’s *Twilight* and *Beneath the Roses* series, the camera lens conceals the constructed nature of the scene, presenting a seamless reality within the frame of the photograph. Despite the different formal limits of the works, both Nelson and Crewdson use the frame in order to focus attention on the illusion by demarcating it from the world that surrounds the work. This, in turn, allows the illusion to extend beyond the frame. The work produced by both artists evokes a para-narrative of material presence that runs alongside the seamless illusion.

Nelson’s and Crewdson’s work relies on the frame to demarcate the border of the work, creating a distinction between the work and the world that surrounds it. In contrast, many of the works that I create bring the frame of illusion within the boundaries of the work’s immersive scope, making the para-narrative part of the content of the work. *No Use Crying* is an example of such a work. The two moments that comprise *No Use Crying* exist as two distinct parts that share the same object and are viewed sequentially. The first part consisted of a structure resembling a film or stage set, that depicted a kitchen, and the second part was a video pre-recorded in this kitchen structure and projected onto the reverse side of the object. While both parts physically exist in the space as a single object, each part was seen consecutively. The work cannot be viewed in its entirety from a single vantage point, as such the work must be held in memory, even as it is being experienced.
Viewed within the gallery, the kitchen appeared displaced from its original context. The laminated bench-top and full stainless steel sink and drip tray dated the kitchen from the 1970s. However, the relatively new jars that held sugar and cheap tea bags, and the contemporary (if a little worn) refrigerator, suggested the more likely scenario of a contemporary kitchen that has not been renovated since the 1970s. The wooden floor was worn, but recently polished. The floor boards looked as though they may have predated the kitchen and, in fact, were removed from an old building and repurposed here, creating a sense of the house of which this kitchen was presumably a part. Each element was designed to create indicators of the kitchen’s (fictional) lived history that extends beyond what is visible within the kitchen itself.

The kitchen in *No Use Crying* visually resembled a film set in the sense that a set presents a facade that is designed to fool the eye into thinking that the physical location exists. In contrast to a film set, the physical objects that comprise the kitchen act as both scenery and the scene. The action of the scene is centered around a glass bottle of milk that lay on the floor. It appears to have fallen from some height and its contents spilt across the floor. The refrigerator door is ajar and light emanates from this...
gap, illuminating the otherwise darkened kitchen and gallery. The kitchen is very clean and dishes lay draining in the dish rack. The milk presents a disruption to the orderly kitchen, adding a sinister edge to the potentially imagined reasons for the presence of the spilt milk. The scene evokes questions such as: who spilt the milk, and why? What time has elapsed since someone occupied the kitchen? And, why was the mess not cleaned up? It is, after all, a very tidy kitchen otherwise. Rather than a backdrop for action, No Use Crying presented a still scene that communicates narrative beyond the objects that make up its form.

The kitchen in No Use Crying presents a single moment suspended in time and as such functions as a three-dimensional constructed photograph. The spilt bottle of milk suggests the passing of time, as the viewer knows that spilt milk will eventually turn sour along with the unseen contents of the refrigerator. The use of resin as a solid substitute for milk, results in the spilt milk evoking the passing of time, while simultaneously presenting a para-narrative about the suspended moment. As with Crewdson’s photographs, the passing of time is suggested by revealing a single evocative moment, rather than showing the scene in motion.
While the still kitchen scene can be likened to constructed photography, its physical displacement of the scene as an unexpected object in a gallery, creates a clear divergence. In Crewdson’s works, the photographic frame isolates the scene, giving the impression that the world extends beyond the frame. The scene has been captured and transformed into an image, creating a distance between the viewer and what is depicted. The inability to see where the constructed scene begins and ends in Crewdson’s work creates the appearance of an “arrested moment”, as we imagine the world beyond the frame, despite the para-narrative of the scene’s construction. Likewise, the kitchen in No Use Crying presents a suspended scene, however, the viewer is presented with the scene as an object. The viewer is able to walk around the object and, as such, there can be no confusion as to the limits of its construction. The clean edges suggest that the object has been constructed for this moment as an object in the gallery. While narrative cues suggest an action beyond the scene, the viewer is clearly presented with an object that depicts a situation in isolation from any context beyond the object in the gallery. No Use Crying relies on the willing suspension of disbelief in order to generate narrative, because the façade is visible before the viewer, as part of the work’s content, rather than as a para-narrative that sits alongside the work, as is the case in Crewdson’s and Nelson’s work.

On the opposite side of the set-like structure in No Use Crying, a video is projected that was shot using the kitchen as a backdrop. The video is a short loop approximately three minutes in duration. The video depicts a small slice of time that, diegetically, occurred prior to the kitchen scene that is physically located in the gallery. The video loop starts with the kitchen in darkness. The stillness of this first shot is broken by the reflection of someone in the tiles above the sink. Though obscured, a person is just visible, opening and reaching into the refrigerator. The video then cuts to a close-up of a woman’s torso. The bottle of milk is raised in and out of the frame as she, presumably, drinks milk from the bottle. After a few moments, she drops the bottle and the video cuts to a shot of the bottle impacting the floor of the kitchen and the milk spilling. The frame is fixed on the milk as it settles and continues to pour slowly out of the bottle. Just before the end of the loop the refrigerator door appears as though it has been knocked closed. Again, the movement comes from off-screen.
While the video adheres to the conventions of cinema (via framing and editing), suggesting that narrative extends beyond the frame, its formal relationship to the set-like structure works to counter this implication, because the boundaries of the kitchen are placed before the viewer as a facade in the gallery. Both aspects of the work convey narrative despite the work’s oscillation between illusion and material reality. Once again, this occurs because of the audience’s willing suspension of disbelief and the desire to read narrative across the fragments presented.

Figure 4.12: Simone Hine (2010) No Use Crying, Video Installation, Installation Detail.

The two elements that comprise No Use Crying use stillness to expand narrative, because in the absence of movement the viewer is given cause to embellish narrative between the fragments presented. The kitchen scene is physically still in that it is an inanimate scene. Whereas, the video, like Zidane: A Twentieth Century Portrait, is at once moving and still. The length and nature of the video tempers linear progression as the same small fragment unfolds over and over itself. Both aspects of No Use Crying truncate narrative in order to create the conditions necessary to support the expansion of narrative from the small details that comprise the work. The appeal to cinematic
experience, rather than lived experience, renders as irrelevant the need to believe there is a world beyond the frame.

As has already been established, both aspects of *No Use Crying* refer to a narrative beyond the frame of the work that intertwines both elements. The interrelatedness of the two parts of the work means that they will necessarily be read together. The only light source for this work emanates from within the work itself and, as such, binds the two aspects of the work together physically. This use of light has the further effect of bringing the materiality of the work into focus, because the edge of the object and the frame of the video are both engulfed within the light that emanates from the work and fills the room. *No Use Crying* brings the materiality of the scenes depicted into the diegesis of the work and in so doing demonstrates the way cinematic narrative can flourish alongside explicit evidence of its own materiality. *No Use Crying*, and by extension many of my other works, take the external acknowledgement of materiality, that is part of any work shown in a gallery, and make it part of the works’ content. The viewer must then hold these two contradictory states simultaneously, not as narrative and para-narrative, but as two tangible aspects of the work.

The narratives generated by the work are limited to that which can be accommodated by both aspects of the work. The video shows what happens just before the milk was spilt, revealing only a little more of the action than could be gleaned from the kitchen scene. The work’s soundtrack reveals only the sound of the milk bottle as it hits the floor, as it is that moment which binds the two elements. The audio reveals no clues about anything outside of the frame. In this way, nothing is revealed about the woman beyond her blurred reflection in the tiles. The still kitchen scene, on the other hand, provides a vision of the aftermath. It has a more sinister edge, because we see that the milk was not cleaned up and the fridge door was left ajar with nobody there to close it.

*No Use Crying* brings the frame of two separate moments within the immersive scope of a single work. Such an approach replicates the fragmentation that occurs when viewers employ the time-shifting capabilities of contemporary technologies of film
distribution. The tendency to read across the two scenes presented in *No Use Crying* engages viewers adept at reading across fragmented and paused films. The work brings into focus the desire to piece together narratives from still fragments, making it an essential part of the work. *No Use Crying* not only generates narratives across its formally disparate parts, but does so in a way that makes the work a meditation on those processes.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 4.13:** Simone Hine (2010) *No Use Crying*, Video Installation, Installation Detail.

**Incomplete Narratives, Para-texts and Cinema Re-Imagined**

Artist and writer, Victor Burgin has discussed the way audiences create narratives by piecing together films from fragments seen on the internet, in advertising and in print and television reviews (Burgin 1995: 22-23). While Burgin suggests that cinema is dispersed across various contemporary media that are largely facilitated by the internet, he maintains that contemporary technologies simply amplify what has always been part of the cinematic experience (Burgin 2004: 13-14). There have always
been film stills and trailers that have fragmented cinematic experience, creating narratives of their own, and acting as para-texts that surround the cohesive film even when watched at twenty-four frames a second. Para-texts, such as advertising material, inform audiences about the film prior to consumption, allowing audiences to make decisions about what films to watch. Given the finite number of films that can be watched, more para-texts are consumed than actual films and films that are not watched in their entirety remain understood as the sum of the para-textual material (Gray 2010: 26). Para-texts comprise a significant part of film history, despite them being relatively unstudied.

Mulvey addresses Burgin’s argument, made in *The Remembered Film*, that memory has always played an important role in the fragmentation of cinematic narrative. However, Mulvey bypasses the implications of Burgin’s argument for her own argument, by suggesting that Burgin conceives of the non-narrative effects of digital culture within avant-garde traditions (Mulvey 2006: 30). While Burgin discusses non-narrative responses to cinema as a framework to discuss art practices that engage with cinema, he does so in a way that is driven by the already non-linear para-narratives that comprise the cinema experience. Burgin’s articulation of contemporary cinema practices is used to discuss avant-garde art practices, but he clearly appeals to the free associations that are made in memory after a film is watched. As mentioned previously, Barthes himself suggests that cinema is comprised of the entire experience, from looking at posters outside the theatre, to the arrangement of bodies within the cinema, and the feeling as one leaves the darkened space (Barthes 1986). Following this idea, Burgin makes associations between films that exist as partial memories, in order to evoke the elusiveness of the moving image as it plays through time and remains in memory. Burgin applies this framework of experience to avant-garde art practices, but in doing so, he does not undermine the origins of this association, which is embedded within film reception. In this way, Burgin creates a connection between cinema and art that does not place art as an avant-garde practice beyond the scope of cinema, but instead Burgin positions both practices alongside each other: one informing the other.
Burgin suggests that memory works to fragment films, regardless of their reliance on narrative. Central to his argument in *The Remembered Film* is the *sequence-image*. For Burgin, dislocated fragments of remembered films permeate audiences’ conception of cinema. These fragments are marked by an, at once, very particular visual impression that is coupled with vagueness about the origin of the sequence. These *sequence-images* sit alone in memory without reference to what came before and after the fragment (Burgin 2004: 16). They act as both cultural memory and personal memory.

Although Burgin does not explicitly align the *sequence-image* with the *punctum*, he gives it a similar intuitive weight, suggesting that the *sequence-image* is somehow more “brilliant” than other recollections of film, which he clarifies as being in the order of “psychical intensity” (Burgin 2004: 21). The *sequence-image* points towards film’s ability to move the viewer in the way Barthes suggests the *punctum* moves the viewer of photographic images. Burgin makes reference to specific analysis in *Camera Lucida*, but falls short of aligning the effect of the *sequence-image* with that of the *punctum*. The *sequence-image*, like the *punctum*, takes form through the individual’s mental associations, but like the *constructed punctum*, formulated in these pages, the *sequence-image* is more closely aligned with the *studium* because the effect is linked to the intention of the filmmaker. However, its resonance is the result of the viewer’s emotive response making it more potent than the *studium*.

The sliding scale between real and constructed, which forms the basis of the *constructed punctum*, finds resonance in *No Use Crying*. The kitchen looks like any kitchen in any house. It was in fact partly modeled on a kitchen in a house that I used to live in. However, the memory of my lived experience and my memory of cinema are malleable. The physical manifestation of the kitchen comes from lived experience, but the scene of milk spilt across the floor is derived from cinematic memory. I may have dropped a bottle of milk before, but I know I have seen milk spilt on the floor of a kitchen in many films. Unlike the *sequence-image*, *No Use Crying* does not evoke a specific scene from a film, but instead evokes the general effect of cinematic history through a specific scene.
The effect of the materiality of cinematic images and the cinematic illusion converge within works like *No Use Crying*, so does lived experience and film experience. This is not simply the effect of the work, but draws on a broader history of representing scenes in art. These seemingly binary opposites converge in works of contemporary art more generally. The increasing digitisation of cinema has laid the conditions for formal convergences between art and cinema, as cinema has become fragmented and stilled. But there has been a further convergence in that audiences are able to read between media. Films are watched on aeroplanes, trains, at work, in hotels and so on.

The fragmentation of cinema means that the boundaries of cinematic narrative seem to escape beyond the cinema theatre and permeate life. Both in terms of the practical way in which it is used and also in terms of the way narrative is no longer contained to the duration of a film watched at twenty-four frames a second. Instead, audiences look across different platforms as well as timeframes to view cinema. Therefore, cinema can no longer be exclusively understood as an escape from reality that happens in discrete viewings. Works such as *No Use Crying*, alongside many of the other works discussed in these pages, try to evoke the way cinematic narratives extend beyond their discrete place in films and permeate life through memory as well as through their ubiquitous presence on digital interfaces. The following chapter will extend upon these ideas via textual analysis of two works that I created in recent years.
Chapter Five: Crime, Bodies and Media Temporalities: interior and Process

This chapter will analyse two works that I have produced in recent years; interior (2005 and 2010) and Process (2010). Ideas from each of the previous chapters will be brought together and furthered through analysis of the works. Both works consist of two distinctly different parts: an opening night performance and video installation, followed by a separate video installation that exists for the remainder of the exhibition. This formal division of the works into two parts indicates the way cinematic narratives are evoked across spatial and temporal forms within my art practice as a whole. interior and Process present narratives that are visually reminiscent of detective stories. However, contrary to traditions of this genre, while both works evoke the desire to solve the crime, they leave the narrative inconclusive. In this way, interior and Process present an emotive effect that suggests narrative beyond what is explicitly presented, but because the narrative is never bought to a conclusion, the work remains a series of visual moments that appear suspended in time. The following chapter will aim to identify key ways in which these two contradictory aspects, narrative drive and stasis, manifest themselves within the works.

Visual Indications of Context

interior and Process use a similar formal structure to evoke very different moments in cinema history. interior takes its cue from Film Noir. Considered as a movement rather than a genre, it suggests a very specific moment in time (Place 1998). This moment in cinematic history can therefore be evoked through the use of lighting, costuming and sets that are reminiscent of these 1940s films. The video component of interior was presented in black and white and used a 4:3 aspect ratio, which was the standard framing used in Film Noir. The mise-en-scene used in both the video and installation elements of the work, in combination with the formal layout of the video,

---

61 With the introduction of various widescreen formats, as well as colour, in the 1950s, the distinction between large Hollywood films and B-grade films became more distinct, making 4:3 aspect ratios indicative of films made prior to the 1950s and B-grade films in the 1950s. The use of 4:3 ratios and black and white suggests the time and generally B-grade nature of Film Noir.
creates a distinct aesthetic that is associated with Film Noir. In contrast, Process aimed to evoke contemporary crime cinema. The video component of the work replicates the aesthetic of contemporary cinema with a 16:9 ratio and high-contrast colour palette that is ubiquitous among contemporary crime dramas.

Both interior and Process take as their subject specific moments in cinematic history where the cross-over between cinema and other mediums is a defining characteristic. Film Noir marks a distinct cross-over between hardboiled crime novels and cinema. The dominance of narrative in cinema made the cross-over with pulp fiction inevitable, as both were important forms of popular culture at the time and both relied on plot-driven narrative. Contemporary crime cinema is a site where the cross-over between television and cinema is particularly pronounced. Changes in television technology, such as Widescreen and High Definition formats, have seen a merging of cinema and television through the formal alignment of both mediums. interior marks a point where there has been a cross-over of mediums due to a similarity in form, and Process marks a point where there has been a cross-over due to technological changes.

These moments in cinematic history, where the distinction between cinema and other mediums is blurred, are particularly pertinent to interior and Process, as the works themselves provide a crossover between the gallery and cinema, video and film. Central to the cross-over between art and cinema is the way moments in cinematic history are conveyed visually, which in turn evokes narrative. In this way, the aesthetic and subject is cinematic, yet the formal structure and methodology of the work has its basis in visual art. These works utilise the fact that the boundaries between cinema and other mediums have always been malleable. However, this tendency has gathered greater significance with the digitisation of cinema in regards to the merging of art and cinema, as has been discussed in chapter four.

---

62 The 16:9 ratio has been used in the last decade to draw cinema and television closer together, as televisions and computer screens have completely switched from 4:3 to 16:9 aspect ratios. As such, the work also relates to television crime dramas.
Detective Narrative and interior

Interior and Process draw on a history of cinematic crime narratives in order to create a readable effect, while at the same time creating a distinct approach that paradoxically expands the narrative scope by limiting the content that is revealed. interior will provide an example of the way this idea has manifested itself within the work specifically and my practice in general.

Figure 5.1: Simone Hine (2006) interior, Two-Part Performance and Video Installation, Installation Detail.

As has already been mentioned, interior took place in two parts: an opening night performance and video installation, followed by a video installation that lasted the duration of the exhibition. On the opening night the viewer walked down a dark corridor that had been constructed as part of the work. The only light in this corridor emanated from a door that was slightly ajar and held in place by a chain lock that was pulled tight. The viewer was able to peer through the slit between the door and its frame, through which a woman could be seen lying on the floor, face down. She was wearing a dark
suit, her hair was partially covering her face and one shoe lay on the ground beside her foot. A light raked across the floor as though a lamp had been knocked over. As the viewer proceeded through the corridor, a video was visible, projected onto the side of the large structure that created the corridor and contained the room in which the woman lay. The video was black and white and the camera was hand-held. The video consisted of a fifteen second section of footage of the same woman as she walks towards the door, opens it, and walks through the door. She turns back momentarily to visually engage the viewer, who is evoked through the use of a handheld camera, she looks down and then closes the door behind her and the loop begins again.

Figure 5.2: Simone Hine (2006) interior, Two-Part Performance and Video Installation, Installation Detail.

After the opening night, and for the duration of the exhibition, the door into the room was closed and a different video was projected onto the structure. This video consisted of a series of black and white photographs of the woman from the opening night.
performance lying in the same face-down position on the ground. The photographs were reminiscent of forensic photography. Initially, the editing structure of the video had a slow pace, lingering on each successive image. The images were punctuated by sections of black. As the video progressed, the length of each still image shortened until the edits were so close together that they began to meld into a single image. When the video was at its most frantic, a two second edit of video showed the door opening to reveal the woman lying on the floor, as though showing the initial discovery of her body. At this moment the video stopped and the loop began again.

It has already been established that interior uses mise-en-scene and costuming to evoke the aesthetic of Film Noir. In addition, the work draws upon the narrative structure of the crime detective novels that form the basis of many Film Noir narratives. In cases where Film Noir films do not strictly conform to these narrative structures, they often rely on the assumption that the narrative will conform in order to confound expectations. As will be discussed in the following section, interior sits somewhere between both approaches to traditional crime novel narratives.

Ernst Bloch has identified three stages to the traditional detective novel, which will be used here to identify Film Noir narratives. This model can be used as a counterpoint to way narrative unfolds in both interior and Process, however, I will focus this discussion primarily on interior. The first stage of Bloch’s model is the desire to unravel the mystery, followed by the second stage, which is the discovery of clues and information about the crime. The second stage sees detectives fixate on particular details. This is the stage where the narrative unfolds and clues are revealed to the detective and audience alike. The third stage, which Bloch suggests is indicative of the detective genre, is a revelation about the true nature of the crime. What is unique about the third stage is that the revelation occurs at the end of the film, despite the crime taking place before the film or novel began. The significance of this narrative structure is that, unlike most narratives where the viewer discovers the story as it develops, the detective novel focuses on an incident that occurs before the narration begins and which is left concealed until the detective unravels the mystery at the end of the narrative. In other words, the central incident is never depicted in the narrative, instead it occurs
outside of the narrative and is pieced together from the compilation of evidence and the intuition of the detective (Bloch 1988: 249). The viewer follows the detective and discovers what the detective discovers as he discovers it.

*interior* does not present the detective as a character within the diegesis of the work, instead it posits the viewer as the detective. The viewer is presented with a series of clues that need to be put together in order to fashion a narrative that unites the fragments presented. The live scene presented on the opening night of *interior* was truncated by the limited vantage point allowed by the partially closed door, placing the viewer at a distance from the action and creating a very particular view of the scene. The physical structure of *interior* meant that the viewer must put their face close to, if not directly against, the door in order to view the woman lying on the floor. This creates a singular viewpoint, as the audience member assumes the role of someone peering into a space. The chain lock has been pulled tight, which, not only physically inhibits the viewer from entering the space, but also creates the knowledge that the occupant of the room did not expect or want anyone to enter. If the viewer chooses to engage with the potential narrative of the scene, the scenario is open to interpretation and therefore the position assumed by the viewer may vary. The viewer may assume the role of the first person to discover the woman lying face down, this might be a neighbour, landlord, or hotel staff. Alternatively, the viewer may assume the role of the police detective surveying the scene before taking action. If the viewer was particularly engaged with the tropes of Film Noir, they may assume the role of a private eye, either slightly too late for a crime they knew would be committed, or in the process of discovering clues before the authorities arrives. Regardless of the role assumed, there is a sense in which, by choosing to look through the door, the viewer engages with the scene in a physical way that places the viewer in the role of curious observer. To use Bloch’s narrative model, it could be said that the viewer is engaged by the mystery at this point, if only enough for them to place their face against the door and peer in.

As the viewer proceeds through the work, walking further down the corridor, the second part of the work is visible. This is the video that shows the same woman who has just been viewed lying face-down on the floor, only this time she is walking to the
same door that is now ajar. By combining the installed performance and video, the connection between the installed object and its cinematic inspiration becomes more apparent. It is possible to see an analogy between the viewer’s gaze, peering through the door with its limited perspective and framing of a constructed scene, and the gaze of the handheld camera that comprises the video. The disembodied eye of the camera coincides with the embodied eye of the viewer. However, both show the same woman, in the same attire and location, at different points in time.²³

Figure 5.3: Simone Hine (2006) *interior*, Two-Part Performance and Video Installation, Installation Detail.

²³ This idea, drawing an analogy between the human eye and the camera and the further suggestion that the embodied gaze of voyeuristic observer can be likened to the disembodied gaze of the cinematic camera, is indebted to the writing of Anne Friedberg. See Friedberg, A. (1994). *Window Shopping: Cinema and The Postmodern*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
Despite the similarities, there is a stark difference between the embodied gaze of the viewer and the disembodied gaze of the camera, which is the ability of the moving image to skew time. The video appears to show a moment that presumably took place before the one physically laid-out in the space, as though an apparition of the past. It could also be seen as a memory or a reconstructed event. Regardless of the narrative the viewer chooses to adopt, what is certain, is that it occurs in a different time to the performance component that is physically located in the space.

Christian Metz has argued that cinema’s *Impression of Reality* is created because actions that are seen in motion have a sense of presence. He suggests that viewers of moving images are seduced by the *there it is* of cinema time, as opposed to the *that-has-been* of photographic time outlined by Barthes (Metz 1974: 4-6). If we take what Christian Metz has referred to as the *there it is* of the moving image to be true, the viewer is faced with a conundrum because the *there it is* of the video occurs in a different timeframe to the *there it is* of the performance, however, both exist within the same space and thus the same timeframe, simultaneously. Therefore, the video is imbued with a strange sense of the *that-has-been* of photographic time. Not by anything inherent in itself, but by its juxtaposition with the performance that continues its narrative.

The video repeats the fifteen second moment again and again. In this video we see a small set of gestures in motion, however, by repeating a small detail the video appears static as it never develops beyond the original gesture. This creates a stark disjuncture between the viewer’s gaze and the gaze presented by the camera. The repeated moment functions here as a suspended moment, which once again confuses the *that-has-been* with the *there it is*. This video fixates on a small moment, and as such, evokes Bloch’s second stage, where the detective may dwell on a detail that at first seems irrelevant. Here, the detail gathers significance through its constant repetition. For example, the viewer is able to dwell on the strangely blank facial expression of the woman as she looks back to meet the camera’s gaze. The meaning of the glance does little to illuminate the situation beyond what the viewer chooses to read into it. However, by presenting this small moment again and again, the gesture is imbued with
a significance that it may otherwise not afford. The fixation on a small detail is thrust upon the viewer and may be engaged with to varying degrees.

![Figure 5.4: Simone Hine (2006) interior, Two-Part Performance and Video Installation, Installation Detail.](image)

The video that comprised the second part of the work, can be seen in contrast to the first video in both form and content. The focus is shifted away from the present and instead arcs back to the past. In this video there is a succession of still images, as though a slide show of forensic photographs. These photographs appeal to the that-has-been of photographic time despite their progression through time, as they are viewed sequentially on the video projection. The use of still images in this video suggests the past to which they refer and document, be that the performance or a time outside of the performance. However, because the viewer is unable to set their own timeframe when looking at each photograph, the details are subject to the rhythm set by the editing, which is situated in the present as suggested by the passing of time.

Despite their differences, both videos evoke a sense of dwelling on a particular detail, whether it is a small gesture played out as an experience or the forensic evidence of a series of photographs of an event we know took place. It has been established that
by fixating on details that may at first seem insignificant, the videos evoke the second stage of Bloch’s model for the detective narrative. These first two stages are clearly established within this work, however, unlike Bloch’s model, there is no third stage of resolution: we do not find out what happened to the woman who lies face down on the wooden floor. The viewer is simply left to wonder, caught in the perpetual mystery of the narrative without resolution. The narratives continue to unravel and to be embellished as each viewer engages with the work. As an installed work, interior has no beginning and no end and, as such, no resolution. It simply continues a series of moments suspended and repeated through time, like a snapshot, or a film still that has been expanded across time and space.

The lack of the third stage can be attributed to the omission of a detective character within the work. While interior suggests the detective’s curious gaze, the viewer never actually sees the detective. Instead, the viewer is trapped within a series of suspended moments in time; moments that are defined by an uncertainty that is coupled with a desire to resolve the uncertainty. The use of different mediums means that the viewer is able to piece together a narrative from the different parts that are dispersed across mediums, in much the same way as a detective may piece together the nature of a crime from different sources. In this way, the narrative evoked by interior exists, not within the material presented to the viewer, but in the spaces between the videos, objects and performance. interior does not present enough evidence to make any conclusions as to the nature of events that exist outside of what is shown. Instead, the audience must rely on their own imagination and knowledge of Film Noir narratives to fashion, as it were, a shaky narrative that would never hold up in court.

**The Transient Photograph and Memento**

Bloch’s model is indicative of traditional crime narrative structure. It is therefore particularly relevant to interior, as this work purposely aims to replicate the traditions of Film Noir, if only to open up those narrative structures to speculation and embellishment. In contrast to these earlier films, contemporary Hollywood films are
increasingly challenging traditional ways of revealing narrative. Recent films, such as *Inception* (2010) and *Source Code* (2011) are at the extreme of this Hollywood trend. These films present a skewed version of time and reality as though it is a puzzle to be worked through and understood. After the process of understanding the logic of time and reality presented in these films, there is usually a narrative resolution that occurs at the end of the film. In this way, we see a radical aberration to the process of telling the narrative, but despite this, these films still follow the three stages of Bloch’s model; albeit loosely. Confusion creates a desire to know what is happening, as the film progresses clues begin to become obvious to the viewer and to the main character alike and, finally, resolution occurs when the nature of the confusing situation is revealed.

Many of these puzzle films adhere to the traditions of science fiction, where the parameters of reality are fundamentally different from our own. In contrast, *Memento* (2000), one of the first films in this tradition, presents a similarly skewed perspective of time, but does so by appealing to the idea of a captured moment created by Polaroid photographs. The film cleverly draws attention to the way the medium of photography, and by extension cinema, can skew time and reality, while paradoxically creating an *impression of reality*. From the opening scene to the final scene, *Memento* focuses on the Polaroid photograph and its ability to skew both time and the reality it represents, without appealing to the expanded context provided by science-fiction as a fantastical genre. Instead, the film negotiates this theme within the context of contemporary society. As the opening credits of *Memento* unfold, the once familiar action of taking a Polaroid photograph and watching it develop is shown in reverse. The photographic image is first seen dissolving then returning into the Polaroid camera. The moment of capture is seen to take place at the end of this process, rather than the beginning: it is the moment of disappearance.

The opening scene of *Memento* sets the precedent for a confused understanding of time, in which dislocated events show meaning to be relative. The film follows the main character, Leonard Shelby, as he attempts to track down his wife’s murderer, with the disadvantage of having no long term memory and impaired short term memory. He is therefore reliant on the photographic image as evidence of his lived experience. The
film presents a series of fragmented moments that are understood through a collection of notes written on the distinctive white border of Polaroid photographs, as well as tattooed notes on the character’s body. Shelby attempts to orient himself using a series of clues that have become dislocated from any context. The photographs are captured moments functioning as evidence of the people he has met and the places he has been, but they have become dislocated from a context, thus rendering their meaning variable. *Memento* presents a situation where the main character relies on the fidelity of the photograph, while all the time showing the photograph to be no more evidence of a person, place or event than the collection of handwritten notes that Shelby has cobbled together on old receipts and napkins, which form the context for these photographs. As a result, throughout the film, these photographs are the subject of constant analysis, embellishment, reinterpretation and re-contextualisation.

*Figure 5.5: Christopher Nolan (2000) Memento, 113mins.*

The initial effect of *Memento* mimics Shelby’s confusion by presenting an array of dislocated fragments. Both the audience and Shelby are thrown into the narrative halfway through. However, as the film progresses, the audience is able to piece together the film’s broader narrative by relying on their own linear memory, whereas Shelby is left perpetually adrift amongst the dislocated fragments of his past. In this way, *Memento* presents a single series of events but two narratives: that of the audience and that of the character. The narrative, perceived by the audience and character, is convergent at the beginning of the film, but diverges as Shelby forgets what the audience remembers. The two narratives converge in the last few minutes of the film.
when the elusive plot is revealed. It is at this point that the film returns to the moment of
the opening scene and the audience sees the scene of the Polaroid being taken for a
second time, only this time the audience is aware of the narrative and the moment of
capture is seen in forward time and as part of the narrative, rather than as a dislocated
title sequence. The temporal orientation of the Polaroid indicates the readability of the
narrative within the film. The opening scene is the point of most confusion, whereas the
ending of the film is the point of most clarity.

When the narrative is resolved for the audience and Shelby alike, Shelby is faced
with the choice between recording what has been revealed and not recording it. This
moment of clarity is brief for Shelby, as he decides not to record the resolution and
instead allows himself to forget. The audience, however, cannot forget and thus a
permanent divergence occurs between the two narratives. The audience is given the
three stages of Bloch’s model even though it is transferred through the hazy filter of
Shelby’s skewed logic, whereas Shelby rejects the third stage in order to return to the
first and second stage indefinitely. Shelby’s choice has particularly horrific implications
within the narrative of the film as it means that Shelby’s actions of vengeance are
purposefully devoid of a basis in reality, because he chooses the fictitious search over
narrative resolution, as he has presumably chosen before.

Shelby reverts to the fragmented reality of the search because the resolution is
too much to accept. The dislocated fragments that constitute the search and the path of
vengeance are more fulfilling to this disturbed character than the pursuit of justice that
the audience has, until these final scenes, assumed that Shelby sought. The bleak
resolution of this film, in the viewer’s narrative, points towards a tendency in film
making to evoke “the thrill of the chase” for its own sake. Shelby’s desire to be lost in
the endless search can be seen as an analogy for the broader context of crime narratives,
as the same story is told again and again in different films. With each film we have
narrative resolution, but this does not resolve the desire for another crime narrative that
will evoke the same model of storytelling.
The use of photography throughout *Memento* suggests the desire to suspend a moment in time. In the context of Shelby’s absent memory, there is a tendency to assume that the purpose of these photographs is to recall lost moments. In the light of the final revelation, that Shelby wants to remain lost in the search, the purpose of these photographs is redefined. Within Shelby’s narrative, photographs function to evoke the search. Yet, within the context of the viewer’s narrative, they function as an analogy for Shelby’s desire to remain within a suspended moment. It is as though Shelby is able to occupy the suspended moment of photography because he is only aware of the present. The following section of this chapter will explore the way photographic fragments of a crime scene are layered upon each other using the Polaroid photography that is part of my work, *Process*. This work creates a series of moments that are layered upon one another. These moments inform each other but remain suspended within time as the resolution that is sought is never fully achieved.

**Polaroids and the Suspended Moment**

*Process* took place in two parts: an opening night video and a performance installation that was three hours in duration, followed by a video installation that took place over the rest of the two week exhibition. Upon entering the gallery on the opening night, a large screen was visible to the viewer, suspended from the ceiling. The video projected onto this screen started with a series of images filmed from a hotel window overlooking a bleak cityscape. This series of slow-paced shots was abruptly interrupted by the sound of a Polaroid camera taking photographs. Each sharp sound of the camera was accompanied by a brilliant white flash that engulfed the screen. Between the flashes was a succession of still images: a broken string of black pearls lying on the floor near the window, and a splash of deep red liquid on a desktop. The rapid sequence finishes with a shot of a woman lying awkwardly on the hotel bed, dressed in a deep blue evening dress. In the left of the shot, the back of a man’s head is visible as he takes a Polaroid photograph of the woman. The scene cuts to a close-up of the Polaroid with the woman lying still in the background. The camera holds a shot on the photograph while
it develops. Once developed, the video loops. The large screen interrupted the sightline to the rest of the gallery, but as the viewer walked around the screen, a large object lying centrally on the gallery floor became visible. The object had the same ratio as the dimensions of a Polaroid, but was much larger. The object included the distinctive white border of a Polaroid and a layer of translucent acrylic was positioned where the image would be. Inside this oversized Polaroid lay the same woman from the video, wearing the same dress and assuming the same position. The borders of the object framed the woman in exactly the same way that she was framed in the Polaroid in the video. This performance lasted the duration of the exhibition opening.

![Figure 5.6: Simone Hine (2010) Process, Video and Performance Installation, Installation Detail.](image)

The two elements from the first part of the performance were removed for the second part, and in their place were three Polaroid shaped objects, each with a Perspex top where the photograph would be. A still image was projected from a data-projector onto the acrylic. The first object showed a close up of a room number and fisheye viewer on a hotel door. The second object showed the image of the broken pearls from the video in part one of the work. The third projection onto the object showed a glass of red wine smashed in a bathroom basin. Each of the projected photographs presents a
different relationship to the opening night video. The photograph of the door added a new element, perhaps a reference point for the location of the room. The photograph of the broken necklace replicated an image directly from the video, and the broken glass re-contextualised the red stain on the desk. Each of the elements in the second part of the installation added to the narrative presented in the video, while creating a further material connection to the performance component.

Figure 5.7: Simone Hine (2010) Process, Video and Performance Installation, Installation Detail.

A clear starting point for this work was Garrett Stewart’s book *Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photo Synthesis* (1999). In this book, Stewart argues that the underlying stasis of the still photograph at cinema’s base is always present when watching a film, and, in certain circumstances, this stasis comes to the attention of the audience, disrupting the mimetic qualities of the moving image. Stewart focuses on two different elements: the ‘photopan’, where a photograph is framed within the diegesis of the film, and the freeze frame, where the moving image is halted at a certain point creating the appearance of a still image (Stewart 1999: 28). *Process* contains both still images presented on moving image formats, in a manner that can be likened to a freeze
frame, and a scene where a photograph is represented within the diegesis of the video. While Stewart’s text was a starting point for Process, the use of still images within the work both converges with, and diverges from, his argument.

Stewart, like Mulvey, argues that the freeze frame disrupts motion and in so doing disrupts cinema’s illusion of embodied space (Stewart 1999). Stewart differs from Mulvey in that he suggests that the still image can at once elicit the death like stasis of the photograph, while still maintaining narrative (Stewart 1999). Stewart argues that when a freeze frame is used to explicitly reference the theme of death within a film’s narrative, the discontinuity created by the stasis of the image is naturalised, because it is woven back into the narrative (Stewart 1999: 28; 50). In other words, the formal stasis of the image is replicated by the stasis of death within the narrative. The merging of form and content works to naturalise the disruption and fortifies narrative.

In Process, the opening night video constitutes the first engagement with the work and sets the scene of a town viewed from a distance. From the quiet surrounds of a hotel room, we see the constant flow of traffic on a freeway, people and trams crossing a bridge, and kids on BMXs. This series of fixed shots of the city that record its constantly moving flows of people and vehicles is a classic filmic gesture that has its origins in early cinema. This view of the city from afar is slow but constantly moving. Drawing on the dominant themes of early Modernist cinema, the movement of the city can be likened to the flow of the moving image. In Process, the steady flow of the city is abruptly interrupted by a series of photographs that flash on screen in a brief flurry of action. A bright flash of white and the harsh sound of the Polaroid camera taking a photograph, signify the moment of capture. This is followed by the flashes of still images of objects within the hotel room.

The effect of the still photographs in the video in Process acts in a manner that is similar to the freeze frame described by Stewart, in that it arrests motion and disrupts the established flow of the video. While the still images momentarily arrest narrative,

---

64 The Lumiere Brother’s films, especially The Exit from the Lumière factory in Lyon (1895), are examples par excellence.
65 Vertov’s Man with a Movie Camera is a clear example.
they simultaneously work to condense broad narrative brushstrokes into a few seconds. This series of images creates a bridge between the city scenes and the scene in the hotel room of the man taking a Polaroid photograph of the woman. These few seconds manage to not only reveal more of the narrative, but to evoke a sense of suspense as the quick flashes of images are registered as important, but it may take several viewings to register the full content of each image. Hence, the function of these photographic images is twofold, in that they arrest motion at the same time as they project narrative forward.

These images, in the context of the video, function to pre-empt the scene that follows, suggesting the death of the woman lying on the bed. The still nature of photography creates the stasis of death as an implied effect that is only subsequently suggested within the pictorial narrative of the video. It is at this point that the quick succession of images can be re-read as forensic photographs. As such, they evoke the desire for prolonged contemplation, but this is thwarted by the quick pace of the editing. Therefore, this very short sequence manages to, simultaneously, evoke the effect of stillness as capturing a moment in time, while providing a frantic flutter that condenses narrative into the briefest of moments that simultaneously create the effect of a fleeting, unattainable moment.

The shot of the woman on the bed being photographed and the subsequent shot of the photograph developing, creates a relationship between stasis and photography that heightens the evolving nature of the physical photographic image, because the developing photograph is visible within the film’s diegesis. The photograph is imbued with a sense of time that is usually denied to the still image. Showing a photographic image coming into being presents photography as an evolving process, rather than the “arrested moment” that has defined much writing on photography, evoking Friday’s notion that the photograph is its own moment of origin.

If we are to accept Stewart’s argument, that the presence of a still photograph in the diegetic space of a film references the photograph as the hidden stillness of the cinematic image and in turn evokes the stasis of death, than we see something else
operating alongside this notion of photography in *Process*. The filmic portrayal of a Polaroid photograph coming into being, in turn, references the inevitable fading out of being that has so defined Polaroid as a medium. *Process* uses the Polaroid photograph, as a particularly transient photographic medium, to evoke the fluid nature of all physical photographic images due to decay. The stillness can only ever be implied, as opposed to being exhibited, because photography is always in a transient state, albeit a state of movement that is glacially slow. If stillness is the para-narrative of moving images, then movement is the para-narrative of the hidden stillness of the cinematic image.

The relationship between motion and stasis is further complicated in *Process* when the viewer moves beyond the screen to the second element of the first part of the work. Here, the evolving process of the photographic image coming into being within the moving image is coupled with the presence of a performer who holds a stationary pose for the entire duration of the performance. The Polaroid from the video is replicated in three-dimensional space. The image, consisting of a thin layer of Perspex, the performer and bedding, appears stationary. The use of Perspex to filter the image of the performer, as seen by the viewer, creates an effect in which the image appears,
either out of focus, or suspended in the process of coming into being. Furthermore, the performer and object were illuminated by an inconsistent light that created a blue tinge around the edge of the image, in an attempt to replicate the inconsistent processing that is indicative of Polaroid photography. Each of these elements created a situation whereby the impression of the Polaroid was physically replicated, using a live performer as the photographic subject.

The work relies on the tension created by the extra diegetic knowledge that the performer is alive and, therefore, in a process of evolution and movement despite the deathly stillness of her appearance. The knowledge that the performer is animate points towards the impossibility of stillness or death within a staged performance or photograph. The connection between photography and death in a staged event is only ever a symbolic gesture, and never an indexical connection, because the performer is always in a state of flux. Nonetheless, the constructed scene is imbued with the idea of death, in much the same way that a documentary photograph implies deaths. Both fiction and documentary photographs only ever give the impression of a suspended moment.

Stewart has argued that the inclusion of photographic stillness within the diegesis of a moving image creates a death-in-life (Stewart 1999: 42), suggesting that the notion of death, associated with still photography, permeates the moving image creating this sense of death-in-life. This dynamic is made literal in Process through the use of the performer, who evokes the stillness and image of death using the living body which animates the work. This is then replicated across the two other elements of the work. The opening night video employs a standard use of both freeze frame images and photopan and the second part of the work consists of video files of still images projected onto the Polaroid like objects. Each of the three elements of the work evoke the death-in-life approach to still and moving images, but they do so in ways that contradict each other. The different approaches are layered upon one another in order to interlace stillness and death, with moving and living forms. Such an approach seems necessary to account for the very complex and entangled way in which the para-narrative of stillness, and the sub-para-narrative of motion, function within the moving image.
Process expands each of the layers of para-narratives of the moving image and makes them the focus of the work. Process takes what is usually layered beneath the surface of the moving image as extra-diegetic content, and makes it the subject of the work. These elements are presented as different parts of the work and each are given the same prominence in the narrative presented. The audience is then left to piece together the events using the different elements that construct an impression of a crime narrative.

Process does not present a crime, but instead presents the language of a crime. The work reveals a series of slippages, as representations of the remnants of an unseen event are layered upon each other. Impressions are constantly deferred from one medium to another and are never fully present within the work. Drawing upon Jacques Derrida’s concept of the supplement66 we see that each of the elements is a supplement of the event, and the crime exists only as the interplay between elements presented. The crime in Process can never be resolved, because there never was a crime beyond the combination of fragmented moments presented to the audience. It is the potential for this uncertainty, this lack of presence, which makes all language possible (as Derrida has argued) and Process emphasises this by focusing on the interplay between evidence, rather than the resolution of the crime.

Each element of the work is flattened so that nothing takes precedence over anything else. Filtered behind translucent Perspex, still and devoid of animation, the performer’s body appears without a sense of presence. The video of the woman on the bed appears to have as much presence within the work as the live performer, but reveals more of the story because the video evolves through time. Likewise, the three still images add as much to the narrative as the moving image, helping to reiterate and redefine the ideas presented so rapidly in the moving image video. Each element reveals the narrative and evokes the crime, but none are given precedence in a hierarchy of presence. Instead, the different mediums present a different vantage point from which to imagine the same crime.

Each video has a physical weight as a result of being projected onto an object. The materiality of the image gives them concrete form within the space that helps to flatten the effect of presence within the videos. While this flattening effect worked to facilitate the interplay across different mediums, it also assisted in creating a feeling of cold austerity within the crime scene itself. The video on the opening night depicted the city from the sterile distance of a new hotel, the photographs flash on screen with the utilitarian purpose of forensic photography, a man takes a photograph of the woman without showing evidence of emotion and the woman lies lifeless on the bed. The cold austerity of each of the elements of the video was replicated by both the performance and the installation that followed. The lack of presence inherent in the live performance, was perhaps the most chilling element of the work.

It was my intention within Process, and indeed all of my works, that an emotive effect hangs over the room. This affect is inherent within the light that spills from the projections and objects alike, illuminating the space and engulfing the viewer. This overarching affect manages to knit together the many physically disparate elements of the work. In so doing, these works allow the many layers of representation to collide with an imperfect cohesion. The works lay bare the way meaning is constantly deferred across signifiers and exists only in the subtle play between imperfect signs, never held within the presence that is so often sought.

Interior and Process have been used in this chapter to highlight elements that expand across my entire practice. These works use disparate material forms to show the play of signs that operate within any artwork, while simultaneously presenting a cohesive impression of the event. By evoking a history of cinematic narratives, the works embed themselves within a specific cultural language that becomes the subject of the work. I draw upon the formal and historical tension between stillness and motion that has defined the relationship between photography and cinema since the invention of moving images, in order to locate slippages between these two seemingly oppositional formal states. The source of these slippages has been located in the opposing ways in which cinema and art have traditionally constructed narrative and as such the works

67 See Chapter Four for a discussion of the use of light in relation to the work No Use Crying.
evoke this tension in order to re-imagine traditional cinematic narratives differently in a way that synthesises both their material form and the elusiveness of the impressions they create.
Conclusion: Stillness and Motion / Reality and Fiction

*Third Memory* (2000) by Pierre Huyghe, is a work that I have thought of many times, and at many different junctures, while writing the preceding pages. This work provided a starting point to think about themes central to this project: how the border between cinema, and the reality it hopes to represent, become entangled as memory elaborates upon select details; the way contemporary video art is uniquely positioned, through the pictorial tradition of art, which positions stillness as a normative state, to re-imagine cinematic narratives; the importance of para-textual material in the contemporary reception of cinema; and the way current forms of distribution of cinema facilitate the continued presence of these moments in cultural memory. Each of these themes run through the pages of this thesis, and each finds resonance in *Third Memory*, and my practice alike.

Like *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*, *Third Memory* takes the unique situation of a specific media figure, and re-imagines that person and their experience through an extended gaze that is derived from stillness as part of the pictorial tradition of art. *Third Memory* is based on the real-life events that form the back story of the Sidney Lumet film *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975). This film was based on a large-scale news media spectacle that followed a failed bank robbery in New York three years prior. There was a massive police response to the robbery, which drew large crowds and consequently the news media. The media spectacle escalated when it was revealed that the impetus for the bank robbery was John Wojtowicz’s desire to fund his estranged lover’s sex change operation. The events of this day became the subject of the cult film *Dog Day Afternoon*.

*Third Memory* depicts Wojtowicz walking around a contemporary set that is a full reconstruction of the bank that he robbed in 1972. This was the second set of the bank that had been constructed, as a similar set was constructed for the filming of *Dog Day Afternoon*. In the video, shot by Huyghe, Wojtowicz walks around the set.

explaining what happened on the day of the robbery. This footage is cut with actual scenes from *Dog Day Afternoon* to ensure a comparison between the film and Wojtowicz’s own story, allowing two interpretations of the events to be seen simultaneously.

Tom McDonough has argued that, contrary to many readings of *Third Memory* which conceive of the work as liberating Wojtowicz by allowing him to tell his version of events, *Third Memory* actually points towards the impossibility of a ‘true’ or definitive version of events. Careful attention to Wojtowicz’s dialogue reveals a version of events that conflates his lived experience of the robbery and the events as portrayed in *Dog Day Afternoon*. Wojtowicz is even heard at one point referring to the events of his own life as the “real movie” (McDonough 2004). This is perhaps unsurprising given the layers of mediation that have informed subsequent readings of the events of the day. *Third Memory* endowed Wojtowicz with the opportunity to present the events of the day as he saw them, but the resulting dialogue presented his lived experience as filtered through the many subsequent mediations. The video component of *Third Memory* gives the impression that the events of Wojtowicz’s life are lost to time and all that remains are the many tangible mediations of the events, which are pinned to the gallery wall as a reminder of the extent to which this event has been mediated across various platforms.

---

69 Wojtowicz’s views on the accuracy of the events portrayed in *Dog Day Afternoon* have been documented prior to *Third Memory*. Significantly, Wojtowicz wrote an article that was intended to be published in the *New York Times*, which outlined the problems with the version of events presented in *Dog Day Afternoon*. This article was not published by the *New York Times*, but was later published in other journals. It was also presented as part of *Third Memory*. See Wojtowicz, J. (1977). "Real Dog Day Hero Tells His Story." *Jump Cut* 15: 31-32.
Wojtowicz’s life, and the representations of this, present an extraordinary set of circumstances that clearly articulate the extent to which cinematic narratives can become intertwined with lived experience. While the ideas presented in Third Memory pertain to a specific individual, his life can be seen as indicative of the way cinematic narratives have the ability to permeate lived experience. Wojtowicz drew on Hollywood cinema, specifically The Godfather (1972), which he watched prior to the robbery, in order to plan and execute this significant moment in his life. Hollywood, in turn, plunders that experience, and, in the process, Wojtowicz merges his memory of the events of the film with that of his actual life.

The uniqueness of Wojtowicz’s life events allowed Huyghe to examine the way cinematic narratives stay with audiences beyond the time spent in front of the screen, and the way memory conflates the consequent experiences. What is unique about Wojtowicz’s experience is not that cinema and lived experience became intertwined in his life, but that Hollywood reciprocated his embodiment of cinema, adding its own layers of narrative.

Likewise, my practice grapples with the malleable border between lived experience and Hollywood representations. Functioning at the other end of the spectrum, I present this idea as it is manifested within unremarkable, everyday situations, such as walking through the corridors of an art deco building, or through a car park at night. The women that I portray, using my own body, are not specific representations, but ones that are indicative of all films and no film in particular. The situations these women find themselves in evoke cinematic tropes that imbue lived experience with familiar cinematic narratives.

049 was filmed in a car park that I would walk through daily. As I walked through this car park, alone and at night, I would be reminded of the many cinematic scenes of women walking alone through similar car parks. If I thought too much about these scenes, I might feel a twinge of unease, as my footsteps broke the quiet stillness of the car park, alerting anyone there of my presence. The deep shadows behind parked cars might appear as harbingers of a metaphorical, as well as physical, darkness. With
this in mind, my pace might quicken, creating a physical relationship between the many films that compile this trope and myself as an actual woman in the process of traveling home. The resulting work may depict a small section of a film, or it may depict a woman frightened by her current context as a result of her recollections of cinema history. The lack of a fixed narrative, which is the result of the isolation of the scene from a broader narrative, allows the work to function as a palimpsest of narratives, as each possibility develops as part of the work.

In Chapter Four I articulated a doubling effect that occurs when moving images are viewed in the gallery. This doubling effect allows the illusion of narrative to operate alongside the many material factors that are usually concealed as part of the cinematic apparatus. What is significant to my argument here, and throughout the text, is not the specific narratives that are generated, because if the work is successful, the narratives will change according to each viewer’s perspective. Rather, it is the tendency of contemporary artists to draw extra-diegetic content into the diegesis of the work. The palimpsest of narratives allows one to be drawn into the narrative tension that comprises the work, while seeing the many layers of its construction. This allows the viewer to bring fictional narratives into the same viewing space as its material support.

*Third Memory* literally brings extra-diegetic content into the diegesis of the work, as newspaper clippings, television interviews and original news broadcasts are placed alongside each other, occupying the gallery space with the videos. This replicates the approach taken in the videos, where Wojtowicz’s dialogue is seen intercut with excerpts from *Dog Day Afternoon*: each element juxtaposed like a rudimentary collage. Such a rich source of extra-diegetic content, in combination with the central idea that Wojtowicz is able to tell his own story, means that this archive is best viewed first hand and side-by-side, with a utilitarian approach taken to its installation. Such a public life has produced an extensive collection of media artefacts and it is presented within the installation as layers in the narrative told by Huyghe.

In contrast to the unique experiences of Wojtowicz, which are presented in *Third Memory*, I create scenes that speak of the relationship between cinema reception and the
lived experience of audiences as a common and shared experience. The works are concerned with the way cinema permeates the fabric of lived experience, informing our understanding of the unremarkable situations we find ourselves within on a daily basis. For this reason it would be superfluous to bring the extra-diegetic content into the diegesis of the work as quotation in the way that Hyughe does, because the films that make up any of the tropes that I investigate are always filtered by memory. The cinematic trope, by definition, is the conflation of multiple film sequences into a single identifiable convention of cinematic representation. The extra-diegetic content functions in a work such as 049 as a para-narrative running alongside the diegetic content. The isolation of the scene from any fixed narrative assists in centralising these para-narratives as the primary content of the work. Personal memory and the collective memory that forms cinematic tropes are combined in these works.

While the inclusion of cinematic references is presented differently in 049 and Third Memory, an idiosyncratic approach to their subjects means that the medium utilised is determined by the nature of the para-textual material. Such an approach to medium is indicative of contemporary art practices, which use the conceptual basis of the work to determine material form. This approach is at odds with the production of cinema, despite the work taking its conceptual cues from para-textual cinematic material. This disjuncture arises due to the difference between sculptural and performative uses of technologies. Cinema takes a performative approach to the use of technology, which means the medium has fixed parameters. Consequently the technologies of distribution are determined by the industry as opposed to the conceptual requirements of individual films, because the specific format is considered extraneous to the film itself. Contemporary art that makes a sculptural use of technology has its medium determined by the conceptual underpinning of the work. Such an approach cuts across traditional cinematic viewing practices, but builds upon the way digital cinematic distribution has repositioned cinema as a series of “incomplete texts”. Many of the contemporary artists discussed in the previous pages go one step further, by making the extra-diegetic content the primary focus of the artwork. This is a result of the tradition of art which presents the materiality of the work at the same time as the experience of the illusion, and which also uses stillness as a method to expand narrative beyond what
is present in the text. The artists discussed in the previous pages use these traditions of art as a methodology to explore cinema as a language that defines our lived experience.

**The Constructed Punctum and the Fiction of Lived Experience**

Central to my argument throughout this text has been the development of the concept of the *constructed punctum*. Through this concept, I hope to provide a way of accounting for the sliding scale between reality and fiction in media images, and to specifically account for the effect produced by media images that evoke cinematic narratives as part of lived experience. The *constructed punctum* does not hold the promise of Barthes’s *punctum*. It cannot show us our mother as we knew her, because it does not depict our direct lived experience. Instead, it references the history of experiences manufactured by Hollywood and other cultural powerhouses. Increasingly, the breadth of cinema history is assessed by general consumers, due to the backlog of cinema becoming accessible as a result of changes in film distribution. By developing the concept of the *constructed punctum*, I seek to acknowledge cinema history as a language through which we perceive the world. Where Barthes’s *punctum* speaks of our lived experience directly, the *constructed punctum* speaks of the manufactured experiences produced by media culture and the way our culture consumes these experiences. Victor Burgin’s concept of the *sequence-film* provides a clear articulation of the way our lived experience is permeated by memories of cinema and the *constructed punctum* builds upon that idea.

Barthes’s *punctum* is indicative of the analogue age of photography, because of the care needed to produce analogue images. Without the portable screens associated with digital photography, the element of chance was more potent in the production of photographic based mediums. The eventual degradation of the film negative imbues the analogue photographic process with a sense of time. But, most significantly, it is the indexical connection to the subject that fundamentally ties the *punctum* to the analogue age of photography, because the physical connection to the subject, as it exists within
the material world, is the elusive moment that we hope to capture with the analogue photograph.

The *constructed punctum*, on the other hand, seems indicative of the digital age of photography. Photographs are snapped, selected, processed and uploaded. The fidelity of the image is no longer a central concern, the ability to take as many photographs as one wants and to check the results at the time of exposure means the element of chance is minimised. The *constructed punctum* acknowledges the current conditions with which photography, and by extension cinema, is constructed, distributed and consumed, while maintaining a sense of its post-consumption development. Digital photography’s lack of an indexical connection to the subject is replicated in the shift from the *punctum*, as something that can speak of personal lived experience, to the idea of a *constructed punctum* which is generated from a personal response to culturally produced images, the subject of which we are not physically or personally connected to.

My interest in the current circulation of cinema is concerned primarily with stillness as a contributory force in affecting the way audiences read and reread cinematic narratives in ways that permeate personal narratives. While cinema has changed dramatically as a result of its digitisation, what has not changed in any substantive way are the subjects who consume it. To this extent, a consistency can be seen between the afterlife of analogue and digital cinema once the film ends. Changes in technologies have simply exacerbated the conditions already present in cinema.

I am interested in the way memory affects cinematic narratives and the way lived experience is filtered through the cultural constructs that are derived from cinema. Works such as *Third Memory* point towards the extent to which cinematic history can permeate an individual’s lived experience. I am interested here, and within the broader project of my artistic practice, in the way the ubiquity of cinema narratives has manifested itself within the unremarkable everyday lived experiences of its audience: fictitious narratives weave their way into the fabric of our lived experience and inform our understanding of the world.
The approach taken in my artistic practice is to evoke cinematic tropes as sites of homogenised narratives. In my practice, narrative is not fixed to substantiate cause and effect, and there are often details, such as the lights turning on in 049, that complicate the trope presented and give specificity to the narrative evoked. In the absence of a fixed narrative, a palimpsest of idiosyncratic narratives cluster at the site of the original cinematic trope. I do not aim to critique or alter the cinematic tropes that I evoke, instead, I aim to engage with the process of remembering cinema. I am interested in creating a site where cinematic tropes expand, rather than contract, narrative possibilities.

**Stillness as Common Ground**

At the core of my methodological approach to the production of artworks is the interplay between conceptual and formal elements. Central to my discussion of the pictorial tradition of art has been the way narrative illusion is embedded within its material support when presented within the gallery. Such an approach to the synthesis of form and content, led to an articulation of the way contemporary technologies of cinema distribution have changed the way artists construct and present their work, and through that formal change, a conceptual synthesis of art and cinema has occurred.

The argument presented in the previous pages hinges on stillness as the point at which art and cinema have found common ground. Cinema emerged out of photography, and has continued to share an interrelated history at the periphery of cinema. However, the digitisation of cinema has bought with it a renewed connection to stillness within the methods of reception that have changed, and continue to change, the way narrative cinema is viewed. This change is the result of an interrelated use of both the incorporation of consumer grade technologies used to distribute cinema in the production of artworks, which formed the basis of Chapter Three, and the conceptual shift that has occurred due to the incorporation of stillness in the everyday consumption of cinema, which forms the basis of Chapter Four. The changes that have occurred as a result of the digitisation of cinema have placed stillness at the nexus of art and cinema.
Stillness creates a fixed view upon the subject as was established in Chapter Two through the analysis of *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*. The sustained gaze created by stillness and applied to cinema, which is the product of focused attention or the literal pausing of motion, has opened narrative cinema to alternative narratives that are of a different order to single linear narratives produced within the diegesis of a film. As cinema is fragmented, narratives are woven across the fragments to create a range of new and idiosyncratic narratives. The creation of a palimpsest of inconclusive narratives builds upon the notion of cinema as a series of “incomplete texts” through increased access to para-textual material, which is given further potency as new narratives are woven between narrative fragments, created by contemporary technologies of film distribution and their further dispersal via the internet.

At the same time stillness has created a sustained gaze upon its subject, stillness also turned attention outward from cinema, as seamless narratives are truncated, re-watched and slowed. In the absence of linear narratives, artworks that engage with cinema through the incorporation of stillness have the potential to generate new narratives based upon para-textual as well as diegetic content. In my artworks I utilise the stillness of objects, a sustained gaze in videos and stillness within performance elements to create narrative fragments that are formally disparate, but conceptually and aesthetically linked. The loop plays a further part in the truncation and repetition of action. Each of these formal aspects work to fragment narrative in a way that requires the audience to generate new narratives beyond what is presented within the work. This approach replicates the current conditions of cinema spectatorship whereby audiences draw from a wide field of para-textual material to supplement cinematic spectatorship.

The interrelatedness of stillness and motion in cinema and art, has long been the subject of structuralist film, which formed a nexus between the two disciplines throughout its analogue history, shifting focus from narrative to formal experiments. However, as narrative cinema has become fragmented through the interactive way in which audiences are able to view films distributed through digital technologies, the nexus between art and cinema has shifted toward the very centre of cinema, focusing on
narrative representations and in the case of my artworks, narratives produced and reproduced again and again in Hollywood cinema.

Traditionally, stillness has been understood as a disruption of cinematic narrative, bringing the materiality of cinematic production to the fore, as has been discussed at length in Chapter Four. What is significant about the digitisation of cinema positioning stillness as the nexus between art and cinema is that it produces a synthesis between art and cinema at the site where cinema has traditionally been understood to deviate from art. This shift has created a new context for cinema that functions as a para-narrative of cinema, which is extrapolated upon within contemporary art. Each of the themes discussed within the previous pages rely on this shift in cinematic spectatorship, which incorporates stillness, and the resulting fragments, in order to generate new narratives. Just as audiences are finding new ways to view cinema, artists are finding new ways to explore both cinematic content and the effect of this content as it permeates life beyond the time spent watching a film.

**In Conclusion**

My starting point for this dissertation was the loss of faith in art history as a discipline that can guide the production of art, which led to the intertwining of art and cinema. Changes in cinema distribution, as cinema moves from analogue to digital, has further created a physical link between the two disciplines, as stillness becomes a significant component of contemporary cinematic viewing. This physical link was foreshadowed by the conceptual shift in art, which saw a breakdown of its borders with other disciplines. This oscillation between practical and conceptual shifts demonstrates a profound cultural shift across various aspects of both disciplines, which has bought cinema and art into alignment in recent years.

As a visual artist I am concerned with the way that paradigm shifts in contemporary art and cinema manifest themselves within the consciousness of audiences familiar with both disciplines. My practice takes as its subject my own
idiosyncratic recollections of cinema. The subject of my work takes a form that is somewhere between Burgin’s *sequence-image* and a cinematic trope. I utilise the traditions of art, primarily stillness, but also the incorporation of material presence, as a methodology to open up cinematic tropes to new interpretations.

I have adopted an idiosyncratic approach to cinema that utilises the tradition of the artist as locus of ideas, in order to generate new perspectives and narratives from conventional methods of representation. Such an approach falls short of mythologies of the artist as genius, because I do not evoke this tradition in order to demonstrate the uniqueness of my response, quite the opposite: it is the way my response is synthesised and defined by cinematic tropes that is significant. This idiosyncratic approach reveals the conventions of cinema to be comprised of personal responses and memories of cinema that lie outside the diegesis of any film. This is increasingly evident through the proliferation of fan material on the internet, which reinterprets and represents cinematic iconography in increasingly idiosyncratic ways.

The key difference between Barthes’ *punctum* and the *constructed punctum*, which I have developed in the previous pages, is that the *punctum* has, as its reference point, the endless possibilities that comprise life and is derived from lived experience. In contrast, the *constructed punctum* refers to a limited range of manufactured experience, but gains significance because this manufactured experience has the ability to permeate lived experience. When considered in these terms, the *constructed punctum* has the ability to generate an endless array of possible meanings and experiences.

As a practitioner my concern is always with the effect of materials on the production of meaning within my work. While the materials are determined by the conceptual foundations of the work, the material manifestation of ideas is paramount to the effect of the work. Furthermore, as the sole creator of each element of the work my thinking is always embedded within this process once the idea is formed. For this reason the preceding discussion is likewise embedded within the materiality of the work. Changes to technologies for the distribution and presentation of cinema have impacted on what it is possible to achieve in video art, as the physical production of the work is
so closely linked to cinematic consumer markets. These changes have oscillated between material and conceptual changes that have occurred over the time I have been practicing as an artist.

I have endeavoured to use my own practice, alongside the practices of other artists working in the same field, in order to articulate a new methodological approach to the generation of cinematic narratives, which accounts for the life of the narrative outside of what is presented in the diegesis of the film. It is my intention to utilise traditional cinematic conventions in order to produce alternative perspectives that are generated through the use of certain traditions of art which favour: firstly, stillness as a means to develop narratives beyond the confines of the work; secondly, evidence of materiality as an acknowledgement of the combined effect of form and content; and, thirdly, idiosyncratic approaches that have their founding in the notion of the artist as locus of meaning, but which is tempered by the context in which it is evoked.

By re-examining familiar cinematic tropes, I open up conventional narratives to new meanings: Not as a transformative gesture, but as an exploration of processes that already occur in the consumption of cinema. My project is not one of critique, but rather one that utilises the current conditions of cinema spectatorship, in which stillness is integral to the experience of cinema. I have used this approach in order to re-direct inquiry toward that which surrounds cinema and the transformations that occur when audiences leave the cinema. This has always been a part of cinema spectatorship, but contemporary cinematic practices that have introduced stillness as part of the viewing process have presented us with unprecedented methods with which to explore cinema as a series of “incomplete texts”.
Glossary of Terms

**Cinema** refers to narrative-based moving images that are commercially produced and distributed. Standard distribution includes an initial theatre release that, since 1974, has been followed by distribution across various home entertainment platforms including: Video Home System (VHS), Digital Video Disc (DVD), Blu-Ray, online platforms (including itunes) and Ultra Blu-Ray.

**Cinema Time** is a term used by Laura Mulvey (*Death 24x a Second*, 2006) to describe the fictional time created by narrative within cinema. This term refers specifically to the fictional content.

**Cinematic** refers to the aesthetic conventions of cinema, or the series of codes, that have been established through a synthesis of the history of cinema. The term *cinematic* refers to those specific qualities that define the aesthetic utilised by cinema with such prominence that they define the medium. Furthermore, *cinematic* refers to particular conventions, indicative of cinema, which can be found across photography, visual arts, theatre, music and literature.

**Constructed Punctum** is a term developed within this thesis. The *constructed punctum* builds upon the term *punctum*, as it is articulated by Roland Barthes in his seminal text, *Camera Lucida* (1980). The *punctum* articulates a small detail that has the potential to produces exponential meaning from a documentary photograph. The *constructed punctum* refers to a similar process that occurs in staged photography, whereby a small detail is able to be extrapolated upon. However, the potentiality of the meaning created by the *constructed punctum* is limited, because a staged photograph refers only to that which has been used to construct the image. This term has been articulated in regards to cinematic imagery, therefore the field of reference is confined to the cinema history.

**Narrative Time** is a term used by Laura Mulvey in *Death 24x a Second* (2006), to describe the moment at which a photographic image is physically inscribed on film or captured digitally. This term refers to the physical inscription of the images, as opposed to the fictional time produced as part of the content of the work.
**Para-Narrative** is a term used by Garrett Stewart in his text *Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photo Synthesis* (1999). The term articulates a secondary set of ideas that exists as extra-diegetic content that pertains to the formal qualities of the medium of cinema. In more specific terms, Stewart articulates a para-narrative of stillness within every moving image, because there is always the extra-diegetic knowledge that the moving image is comprised of a series of still images. The term *para-narrative* implies that this extra-diegetic knowledge functions alongside the content of the moving image.

**Paratext** is a term articulated by Gerard Genette in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1987), which refers to material that surrounds the main text of any book. This term has been appropriated from literary theory to understand similar material that accumulates around cinema. This includes advertisements, reviews, merchandise and documentaries.

**Photopan** is a term used by Garrett Stewart in the text *Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photo Synthesis* (1999), to refer to a specific cinematic technique, whereby a still photograph is depicted within the frame of the shot. This can include a panning shot where multiple still photographs are visible within the frame.

**Punctum** is a term used by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* (1980), to refer to a small, often insignificant detail, which has the potential to produce meanings and emotions in the viewer that extend beyond what is inherent within the detail, but is nonetheless contained with the photograph. The response is intense and not easily defined with words.

**Stillness** is used in two ways in this thesis. Firstly, it is used in its common form to refer to anything that does not contain motion. Secondly, the term is defined in the second chapter, and throughout the thesis, to refer to the quality, found in both moving and non-moving images, that contains a sense of stasis produced through a sustained focus on one subject. In this regard, *stillness* is the product of a set of conventions, as opposed to a physical condition.
List of References

(2008). LCD TVs Pass CRTs. Twice: This Week in Consumer Technology. 23: 16.


List of Films

The Exit from the Lumière factory in Lyon. Dir. Louis Lumière. 46sec.
His Girl Friday (1940). Dir. Howard Hawks. 92mins.
Man with a Movie Camera. (1929). Dir. Dziga Vertov. 68mins.
Memento (2000). Dir. Christopher Nolan. 113mins.

List of Artworks Referenced in the Thesis

Various Dimensions.

Digital C-Prints. Various Dimensions.

Duchamp, Marcel. (1917). Fountain.


Turner, J.M.W. (1842). *Snow Storm and Steam-Boat off a Harbor’s Mouth*. Oil Paint on Canvas. 914 x 1219mm.

Wall, Jeff. (1996). *Volunteer*. Silver Gelatin Print. 2215 x 3130mm.


Warhol, Andy. (1964) *Brillo Soap Pads Box*. Screen-print and Ink on Wood. 432 x 432 x 356mm
Bibliography

University.
Butler. A. (2010) “A Deictic Turn: Space and Location in Contemporary Gallery Film
and Video Installation”. Screen. 51(4): 305-323.
Crane, S. A. (1997). “Writing the individual Back into Collective Memory”. The
American Historical Review 102(5): 1372-1385.


Ehrenstein, D. (1996). “Film in the Age of Video: Oh, We Don't Know Where We're Going but We're on Our Way”. Film Quarterly 49(3): 38-42.


Real, W. A. (2001). “Toward Guidelines for Practice in the Preservation and


Walters, J. (2005). “Some people are disappointed to only get the film.... What is a DVD?” Screen 46(4): 503-507.


Appendix

All documentation of Creative Work can be viewed here:

www.simonehine.com/phdcreativework.html

List of Creative Works produced as part of the PhD


Corridor. Site Specific Two-Channel Video Installation. 2009.

No Use Crying. Video Installation. 2010.


While the Moon Watches. Six-Channel Video Installation. 2010.
Author/s:
Hine, Simone Lisa

Title:
Stillness and motion: contemporary art at the intersection of the pictorial tradition and cinema’s technological shift

Date:
2015

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/56370

File Description:
Stillness and motion: contemporary art at the intersection of the pictorial tradition and cinema’s technological shift