

## Medium Affect Desire: Hybridising Real Virtual and the Actualised through Affective Medium Ecology

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### Yen

Amongst the most difficult words to translate into English are the Portuguese word *Saudade* and the German word *Sehnsucht*, which – to a certain extent – cover the same lemma. Deeply rooted in romanticism, they both express a resilient and intense longing for something or someone, which comes with the admonition that this state does not necessarily require an actual object of desire: yearning for yearning's sake is an independent, auto-referential condition. The English expression, *yen*, dates from the era of the passionate consumption of opium, and indicates the intensity with which the 'prolonged unfulfilled desire or need' would have been felt, although the reference to physical addiction does not include all its capacities.

It is exactly this unfulfilled-ness which French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan<sup>1</sup> calls *Spaltung*, an equation involving two prosaic human drives (appetite and demand), leaving a definitional gap for desire, which is not (able) to be satisfied.<sup>2</sup> It is in this part of reality – the part that is not materialised, the part we call the virtual – that we find another vector field moving towards the one containing our mundane tendencies. Political theorist Jane Bennett calls it the *vitality* of (nonhuman) bodies, by which she means 'the capacity of things – edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans, but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities or tendencies of their own'.<sup>3</sup> This exposes a mayhem of non-anthropocentric desires,

creating an arena of strange attractors and other topological vector fields in which our own unconscious drive is as effective as that of the steel ball in a pinball machine. How, then, can we isolate the intrinsic drive of the medium from its subservient position in the aesthetic, freeing its desire from the anthropocentric dominion?

The point of departure lies in the concept of meta-media, which is not to be mistaken for cross-media, trans-media or multi-media. In all of the latter categories, the particular media specifics are combined, connected and transposed to achieve a higher goal, to create a stronger expression of communication. A specific denotation of meta-media is found in the reversal of media-philosopher Marshall McLuhan's conception<sup>4</sup> of meta-media, referred to as 'the totalizing effect of media'. Media theorist Lev Manovich<sup>5</sup> expounded this concept by referring to it as a field of new interactions between form and content in the field of emerging media, and the convergence of technology and medium.

Elaborating specifically on a particular part of the meta-media system is the state that occurs when a certain concept, belief, or idea is heavily present, or cultivated to such an extent that it dominates all other potential notions. This state of the 'real virtual'<sup>6</sup> – as opposed to virtual reality – saturates the mental-medium (the concept is therefore often referred to in terms of highly volatile media, like air or ether) to such an extent that the mere expression of it can only be demanded by a particular medium.

Information is the pivoting point between the actual and the virtual, in this case the virtual is overflowing with concept, leaving no option than to crystallise in some type of medium. This crystallisation is contingently obligatory for the emersion of expression. From the non-anthropocentric point of view, the question is, what does the medium do? What does it want? What does it *yen for*?

For this expedition we have to distinguish a multitude of layers within the definition of medium. If it were still possible to search for the smallest signifying part within a tangible medium, the question arises whether that systematic would fail when going digital. Moreover, since the medium operates on the verge of the physical and the virtual, we need more abstract points of reference: the medium as the extension of man (effect), the medium as substrate (capacities), the medium as crystallised sensation (real virtual), and the medium as entity (desire). All of these are parameters for examining the overarching quality of the medium: the affective capacity of the medium (affect). Therefore we need to identify a medium-message system that excerpts itself from the realm of representation and signification: the asignifying sign.

### Simulacra

The asignifying sign is not reducible to any other sign, yet neither it is a simulacrum in the Baudrillardian sense<sup>7</sup> since it only simulates itself in relation to itself (and not to anything it is not): it is auto-referential by nature. In the Lacanian tripartite division it would be named the 'real';<sup>8</sup> it would escape from philosopher C.S. Peirces *infinite semiosis*.<sup>9</sup> The asignifying sign would be the ultimate instrument for examining its affective effect without 'pollution' from any semi-otic systematic. Logic would dictate a search for an image which contained no meaning at all. For this, the asignifying sign should be stripped of any meta-language, narrative, context or symbolism, refusing any instruments of analysis. The main criticism of Baudrillard's four-stroke layering would be

the failure to include this auto-referentiality. Social theorist and philosopher Brian Massumi's critique on Baudrillard focuses mainly on the reversal of signification – the substitution of signs *of the real for the real*. In Baudrillard's state of hyper-reality, signs would no longer represent or refer to an external model, but only stand for themselves and refer to other signs. In the words of Massumi:

In the absence of any gravitational pull to ground them, images accelerate and tend to run together. They become interchangeable. Any term can be substituted for any other: utter indetermination. Faced with this homogeneous surface of syntagmatic slippage, we are left speechless. We can only gape in fascination.<sup>10</sup>

Besides that, the logic of this reduction hinges again on the structuralist premise that there would be one type of systematic, with only one type of classification – regardless of which classification is used – that probably largely disregards the perspective of the beholder. Yet it would be unwise to approach this mechanism of the asignifying sign through a phenomenological or existentialist gateway. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the concept of art lies in its potentiality: it is not what it is, it is what it creates in percepts and affects. Percepts are not perceptions and affects are not affections. In the words of cultural theorist Claire Colebrook, 'A percept is that which *would be perceived*, and an affect is that which *would be felt*.'<sup>11</sup>

How, then, to prevent structuralism without becoming rudderless, how to get to the middle ground, not too close, yet not too far either? First we need to exit the realm of representation. In order to do that, philosopher Gilles Deleuze proposes overthrowing Platonism, which in his words means:

[...] to raise up simulacra, to assert their rights over icons or copies. The problem no longer concerns the distinction Essence/Appearance or Model/Copy. This whole distinction operates in the world

of representation. The goal is the subversion of this world, 'the twilight of the idols.' The simulacrum is not degraded copy, rather it contains a positive power which negates *both original and copy, both model and reproduction*. Of the least two divergent series interiorized in the simulacrum, neither can be assigned as original or as copy.<sup>12</sup>

The danger in this reasoning is to assume that images start with their 'physical' appearance; it is rather the consumption that proves their existence. If an individual regards an image as an image, than that individual is already primed<sup>13</sup> to see an image. Psychotherapist and philosopher Felix Guattari suggests 'It is simply quite wrong to regard action on the psyche, the socius, and the environment as separate.'<sup>14</sup> And as it is impossible to prevent *Deutung* at any level. It is wise to define simulacra in a detached and abstract way (as opposed to the concrete and direct Baudrillardian approach). At this point, Deleuze's definition of simulacra seems to suit best: 'those systems in which different relates to different by means of difference itself. What is essential is that we find in these systems no prior identity, no internal resemblance'.<sup>15</sup>

### 'Eye' of the beholder

Secondly, to reattach the human to the aesthetics would also demand a search for the middle ground (the excluded middle),<sup>16</sup> and for this it would be helpful to consider philosopher and artist Manuel DeLanda's position on reductionism.<sup>17</sup> DeLanda distinguishes what he calls 'macro-reductionism' whereby the existence of individual persons is acknowledged, yet the assumption is made that they would have completely co-opted the values of a higher social order or class to which they supposedly belong (individuals are products of society, *pars pro toto*). He refers to the work of Durkheim, Marx and Parsons in this respect. Unsurprisingly, the opposite position would be that of 'micro-reductionism', which states that 'society as a whole' does exist, but only by the grace of being the surplus of

the aggregation of its parts (its individuals).

A third position could arise from the recognition of (medium) large, non-human entities that do not possess a social nature by default, but which form the true agency of society from which both social structure and individual activity emerge; this so-called 'meso-reductionism' could be attached to scholars such as Giddens. But this is not what we are looking for. DeLanda elaborates on Deleuze's *assemblage* theory (he calls this a 'neo-assemblage theory' or 'assemblage theory 2.0'). The key component of this theory is the acknowledgement of *entirety as the relations of exteriority*. This means that any assemblage consists only of the relations between its components, and these relations are determined by the capacity of the components to interact. These capacities might be offered by the components' properties, but they can never be reduced simply to that. After all, the capacities are also dependent on the interaction within the assemblage. On the other hand, any component is always part of many assemblages, so therefore its properties can never explain the relations that are exterior to its body, let alone explain anything about it as a whole. This whole does not exist out of the connections of its components in a formally logic way, that would make the component a logically necessary part of that totality (and assuming a predetermined position, the whole is then supposed *to be* prior to its own existence). Rather, these relations are 'only' contingently obligatory in order to create the whole.

In addition to this, DeLanda defines the concept of assemblage along two dimensions: 'One dimension or axis defines the variable roles which an assemblage's components may play: from a purely *material* role at one extreme of the axis, to a purely *expressive* role at the other.'<sup>18</sup> The second measurement defines 'variable processes in which these components become involved and that either stabilize the identity of an assemblage [...] or destabilize it'.<sup>19</sup> The stabilising processes are referred to as

*territorialisation*, and the destabilising processes as *detrterritorialisation*. Thus, to prevent any (post-) structuralism, it will always be essential to include 'The "Eye" of the Beholder' (EotB) – note that eye is already a metaphor – which indicates the absoluteness of actuality and psychological temporal conditions of the *author casu quo* the *interpretant*, and his or her existence in the assemblage (Ironically we need a sign to indicate this: ⊕).

Now this is where it becomes very interesting in terms of the asignifying sign. Following painter Francis Bacon, the sign has a very brutal quality, it can bypass our consciousness, prevent any interference by the brain whatsoever, and go straight to our nervous system. This occurs before recognition, automation and classification. At the very moment it acts in this way, it *detrterritorialises* the system to which it also belongs (a semiotic system for example) to such an extent that it will not be able to hold its position in the assemblage; it has become a *free radical*.<sup>20</sup> This is the 'moment' before causality kicks in – without causality there is no chronology – it is a state of non-chronological time.<sup>21</sup> This is when the Eye of the Beholder ⊕ is not yet assured; or to be more precise, it is in fact ruptured (Deleuze calls this the 'fissure'). The fissure of EotB ⊕ can be understood as the birthplace of the crystal image.<sup>22</sup> It is the *ratio cognoscendi* of time. How to understand could not exist without those who understand. Obviously the asignifying sign can only exist very briefly, its own appearance creates a point of reference and changes the field in which it appears. But since the *Dynamic Interpretant*<sup>23</sup> is born every split second, these instances of existence appear unconnectedly continuative, at best categorised by their capacity to affect (affordance). Should an asignifying sign survive its own appearance, the moment it shows, it will act self-referentially.

### Virtual and sublime

The third and final element to consider is how the asignifying sign relates to the realm of the virtual and the sublime. As Deleuze points out:

Aesthetics suffers from an agonizing dualism. On the one hand it designates a theory of feeling as the form of possible experience; on the other, it marks out a theory of art as the reflection of real experience. In order for these two meanings to join, the conditions of experience in general must become the conditions of real experience.<sup>24</sup>

But how does this work when the experience is not yet experienced, if it is still in the pre-conscious phase? To approach this topic we return briefly to philosophy scholar Daniel W. Smith<sup>25</sup> as he summarises Deleuze's theory of Sensation:

In the 'Analytic of the Sublime', the faculty of the imagination is forced to confront its own limit, its own maximum: fated with an immense object [...] or a powerful object [...], the imagination strives to comprehend these sensations in their totality, but is unable to do so. It reaches the limits of its power, and finds itself reduced to impotency. This failure gives rise to a pain, a cleavage in the subject between what can be imagined and what can be thought, between the imagination and reason.<sup>26</sup>

This gap, this yearning, can well be understood in a natural context or in a context of growth and experience; to engage in such systems even seems unavoidable, just for the purpose of learning itself. But when we look at a system in which the exposure to a body of the sublime is not incidental; i.e., manmade and deliberately frequented, then something else must be at work, since it is evident that the yearning is not felt because it occurs as part of the experiencing of the sublime, but more likely because of the sensation of the yearning itself. The yearning is not meant to be stopped – it is the yearning that we yearn for. To a great extent

one might wonder if this system is fundamentally different from the system of desire.

Lacan distinguishes desire from need and demand. Desire is the excess produced by the enunciation of need in demand. '[D]esire is neither the appetite for satisfaction nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second, the very phenomenon of their splitting' (*Spaltung*).<sup>27</sup> Hence desire can never be satisfied, or as sociologist and philosopher Slavoj Žižek<sup>28</sup> puts it: 'desire's *raison d'être* is not to realize its goal, to find full satisfaction, but to reproduce itself as desire'. Can we boldly replace that desire with our yearning, or vice versa? That would imply that the yearning for the sublime equals the demand for love minus the experience itself.<sup>29</sup> If we regard the sublime as a proto-theory of singularity<sup>30</sup> and widen the definition of desire to 'a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it'<sup>31</sup> then it would make a perfect fit. According to Deleuze, the work of art is first and foremost a machine that produces a sensation:

By means of the material, the aim of art is to wrest the percept from perception of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensations, a pure being of sensation.<sup>32</sup>

This is the quest at this moment: the appearance of the asignifying sign, also known as the *punctum*<sup>33</sup> (or to be more precise; the *pre-punctum* without the *studium*), also known as the singularity, formerly known as the sublime, is the precise topic of this paper.

### **Natures of pervasion as sets of relations**

The central premise in this experiment is that the asignifying sign is most likely to exist in an environment which is highly charged with (visual) information, probably containing a multitude of

(symbolic) narratives, various (visual) semiotic and semantic systems, and many denotative and connotative layers. The logic in this comes from the proposition that any constructed image has no representational value at all, representation does not exist, returning here to the real virtuality through the work of psychologist J. J. Gibson: '*Images are neither necessary for thought nor for perception!*' As a consequence of this, there would be no fundamental difference between the empty canvas or the saturated photograph, the image itself does not provide the modes of perception. Besides this, the canvas would never be empty to start with (as Deleuze puts it, we always start in the middle; thought has no beginning, just an outside to which it is connected). To steer away from any over- or misinterpretation, or actually, from any interpretation at all (the asignifying sign operates on the pre-conscious level), it would seem preferable to forcefully, perhaps even violently, attack our modes of perception. The empty canvas leaves too much room for interpretation; the abstract image makes it even worse. It becomes really serious if the artist starts to believe in the independent state of *Deutung*<sup>34</sup> as the genesis of the deeper. Painter Kasimir Malevich wrote after a visit from his friend, the poet Velimir Khlebnikov,<sup>35</sup> who was heavily involved in calculating laws of causality:

The numbers that Khlebnikov has discovered [*in my paintings red.*] suggest that something powerful lies within 'Supremus'; an inherent law governs this sphere, perhaps the very same law that has guided world creativity. Through me passes that same force, that same mutual harmony of creative laws that governs everything. Whatever existed heretofore just wasn't the real thing.<sup>36</sup>

This raises several questions since Malevich's suprematism was oriented towards the circumvention of the system of *sense-making*, as he adequately stated:

Under Suprematism I understand the primacy of pure feeling in creative art. To the Suprematist, the visual phenomena of the objective world are, in themselves, meaningless; the significant thing is feeling, as such, quite apart from the environment in which it is called forth.<sup>37</sup>

This apparent conflict between sensation and sense-making, suggests that we need to start at the other end; we need to overwhelm our capacities with information, overload our circuits. To stack meaning upon meaning, sign upon sign, semiotic on semiotic and convention on convention beyond the point at which the system collapses, to the point where we simply can't make any sense out of it. That is the precise *moment* the asignifying sign appears. However, this *moment* has nothing to do with duration of time, it is the moment *chronos* (in its appearance as one of the avatars of *kairos*) stops unfolding out of *aion*. It is the *moment* before the causality of logic, consciousness and sense-making sets time in motion, before the transgression from the static universal to the dynamic individual. This is the moment of the fissure in The Eye of the Beholder ©. The asignifying sign is not only a sign, it is a conditionality which seems more likely to be composed in a highly saturated environment rather than in a low saturated field. The descriptions used here are mere *reflections* of the progression of time from the moment it transgressed from *aion* to *chronos*. Any shape of *kairos* stands to *chronos*, as an Euclidean space stands to a topological space. It is the trace the snake leaves in the sand after it moves through it, it is the shadow cast on the wall. Therefore we can never totalise all *kairos* into one *chronos*.

When Deleuze writes that 'the crystal reveals a direct time-image, and no longer an indirect image of time deriving from movement. It does not abstract time; it does better: it reverses its subordination in relation to movement',<sup>38</sup> he is expressing that exact moment when *aion* is addressed solely on its very

existence. It is when time is only expressible as a singularity, which, in the words of architectural theorist Sanford Kwinter, can be understood as 'those critical points or moments within a system when its qualities and not just its quantities undergo a fundamental change'.<sup>39</sup> The asignifying sign is a singularity *par excellence*. Bear in mind that this discussion has no relation to the transition of time in mediated form. Any mediated distortion of time solely indicates the transition of the temporal and spatial conditions of object/subject; namely, the artificial conversion of the *here* and *now*, into the *everywhere* and *always*.

### Media

Media theorist Thomas Mitchell<sup>40</sup> goes straight to the heart of the discourse when he claims: 'Images are like living organisms; living organisms are best described as things that have desires (for example, appetites, needs, demands, drives); therefore, the question of what pictures want is inevitable.' Yet according to the initial premises, this argument lacks two essential elements; firstly, the issue of representation. Following Bennett, we would not need any comparison to a living body to deal with the question of the desire of matter, even without short-circuiting the matter-image in the Bergsonian sense. Building on the work of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman,<sup>41</sup> we could claim that under the social conditions of liquid modernity, a mediated state of affairs is the closest, if not the only, perceivable shape of veracity. Leaving the notion of pure trueness on a conceptual sheet, we could adopt media theorist Mark Deuze's<sup>42</sup> concept of a life lived not through, but *in* the media. In that condition, the alterity of all the physical is *owned* by our individual perception and subjective representation of neutrality, and the closest 'moment of objectivity' is only generated by the accumulation of all mediated notions. Presupposing that non-human bodies would have desires, then the question would not be, 'What desires do they have?' but, 'What desires do they have under which conditions?' Or, to be even

more precise: 'I never desire something all by itself, I don't desire an aggregate either, I desire from within an aggregate,' as Deleuze explains.<sup>43</sup> The definition of the aggregate (*assemblage*) should also come from within the *assemblage* itself.

Amidst the techno-social avalanche in which media transforms into an amorphous, ubiquitous entity, it is not surprising that the cry for reconnection with the non-mediated generates a revitalisation of a desire for the lived incident. Incorporating strategies such as *dérive*<sup>44</sup> seems to have a potential in facilitating this aspiration, but given that the relation between the lived and the represented has a dichotomous character in this context, it would not appear to be possible to translate such techniques directly into an exploration and mapping tool for socio-aesthetic conditions if we want to include the use of *any* medium. Yet it would be unwise to classify this failing attempt as an unjustifiable exercise. As much as the *dérive* was not about finding reality, *Kino-Pravda*<sup>45</sup> was not about finding truth. Both strategies are basically games with only one player. The mere fact that this player entered the game created a fundamental gap between player and game board, leaving all notions of objectivity behind. The creation of a third way, a dismantling of the *artistic Tower of Babel*<sup>46</sup> as filmmaker Dziga Vertov suggested, seemed appropriate in making way for the omnipresent distances between the investigator and the investigated, whether it be the heroic cameraman, or the *flâneur* versus the old city. To incorporate the *drift* merely as an objectified instrument for socio-urban exploration without connecting to its ideology or translating its socio-political objectives into one's own aspirations, would completely denounce its original intentions and, ironically, transform the event into a spectacle. Besides, the *drift* requires an 'un-mediated' level of participation, and therefore it seems impossible to incorporate any medium during the act itself. Only in hindsight could one reflect using transferal intermediates. But this is not about embodiment, nor is it

about representation.

Although Deleuze is obviously referring to media as part of a much bigger system than what is being directly dealt with here, it cannot be denied that the structural changes in society with respect to the role of the media will affect our efforts to incorporate the role of the media from the times of Guy Debord. With the acknowledgement of this impossible unification, by amplifying one's own (political) vision, the discussion shifts from what is true to: 'is this particular truth more valuable than that general notion of truth?' By adopting the above-mentioned notion of fragmentation as the creation of a whole by the collection of its fragments, we – the present – can enter the field of games and still produce very valuable truths to prevent us from becoming mindless spectators. Guy Debord asserts:

The spectacle presents itself simultaneously as all of society, as part of society, and as instrument of unification. As a part of society it is specifically the sector which concentrates all gazing and all consciousness. Due to the very fact that this sector is separate, it is the common ground of the deceived gaze and of false consciousness, and the unification it achieves is nothing but an official language of generalized separation.<sup>47</sup>

The effects of exposure, the endurance of the spectator, and the seemingly distant state of the events, create a different mindset, a different mental model. A result of spectatorship in the Debordian sense could have been that the passive-participant felt confirmation in the fact that all problems could be solved in ninety minutes, that cars did not need gasoline, heroes did not use the bathroom and dark alleys were always dangerous. These notions were not mental models when they were initially presented, but became so when they became part of a view that was reflected in the organisation of a social covenant such as modernity. By constantly reinforcing comparable notions in a society, obviously

such notions take hold, regardless of their origin – if there ever was an original. We need to reassess our relation to the media in the same way we need to reassess the relationship between the individual and the social: the media has become part of our environment. To assume that one can still maintain a certain distance and have some degree of control over the media's influence is rather dangerous: awareness of the socio-political implications is not a topic *of* the media, the media *is* the topic. According to Felix Guattari:

The decisive factor, it seems to me, is the general inflexibility of social and psychological praxes – their failure to adapt – as well as a widespread incapacity to perceive the erroneousness of partitioning off the real into a number of separate fields. It is quite simply wrong to regard action on the psyche, the socius, and the environment as separate. Indeed, if we continue – as the media would have us do – to refuse squarely to confront the simultaneous degradation of these three areas, we will in effect be acquiescing in a general infantilization of opinion, a destruction and neutralization of democracy.<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

This article does not strive to reach a conclusion; that is, the answer to its central question: what does the medium want? 'Medium' can be seen as sets of relations, an interplay of thresholds that use information, blocks of sensation, to hybridise the virtual (as in real virtual) and the actualised. Medium is always a conditional ecology of (non-) human capacities and desires, and therefore it is already plural from the start. It is the yearning that is the central force of interaction – the true interaction between medium and man works not through narrative or representation, it emanates through the asignifying and the affective. In order to be able to move towards an understanding of its workings one has to become part of that same system, since only from within the action comes the action. It would only make sense to classify a medium on the basis

of its affective quality; a comparison could be made with an iso-affective<sup>49</sup> argument that would link to the initial argument of the relative efficiency of the medium, seen from the perspective of drive (and the inherent relation with the affective facets of events). It is unmanageable to distinguish anything but scale in these systems; it is impossible to pinpoint the exact moment of affection. The Portuguese claim that only a Portuguese can understand the full meaning of *Saudade*, and even then there would be a semantic gap, since it is precisely the unnameable unfulfillable which holds the key. This gap is not meant to be filled, since it is the yearning we yearn for. The asignifying sign cannot be isolated, it is neither here nor there, yet it is conditionally omnipresent, it inhibits the gap, its desire is to affect. To end with the legendary words of Dziga Vertov:

I am kino-eye. I am a builder. I have placed you, whom I've created today, in an extraordinary room which did not exist until just now when I also created it. In this room there are twelve walls shot by me in various parts of the world [...] From one person I take the hands, the strongest and most dexterous; from another I take the legs, the swiftest and most shapely; from a third, the most beautiful and expressive head - and through montage I create a new, perfect man.<sup>50</sup>

## Notes

1. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), pp. 575-85.
2. Slavoj Žižek, *How to read Lacan?*, (London: Granta Books, 2006).
3. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).
4. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: New American Library, 1964).
5. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).
6. Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).



7. French sociologist and philosopher Jean Beaudrillard distinguishes four types of simulacra:
  - (i) it is the reflection of a basic reality.
  - (ii) it masks and perverts a basic reality.
  - (iii) it masks the absence of a basic reality.
  - (iv) it bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum.
8. Lacan distinguishes the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. In the words of Amanda Loos: 'In the Lacanian arena, the symbolic-real-imaginary forms a trio of intrapsychic realms which comprise the various levels of psychic phenomena. They serve to situate subjectivity within a system of perception and a dialogue with the external world.' Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*.
9. Lev Manovich suggests: 'We can say that a hyperlinked image, and hypermedia in general, 'externalizes' Pierce's idea of infinite semiosis and Derrida's concept of infinite deferral of meaning – although this does not mean that this 'externalization' automatically legitimizes these concepts.' Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), p. 290.
10. Brian Massumi, 'REALER THAN REAL, The Simulacrum According to Deleuze and Guattari', *Copyright*, 1 (1987), pp. 90-7.
11. Claire Colebrook, *Blake, Deleuzian Aesthetics, and the Digital* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. vii –xxxvii. Emphasis added.
12. Gilles Deleuze, 'Plato and the Simulacrum', trans. by Rosalind Krauss, *October*, 27, 1983, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 45-56.
13. Priming is an implicit memory effect in which exposure to a stimulus influences a response to a later stimulus.
14. Felix Guattari, 'The Three Ecologies', trans. by Chris Turner, *new formations*, 8 (Summer 1989).
15. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (London: Continuum, 2012). p. 299.
16. James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) p. 72.
17. Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory And Social Complexity* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006).
18. DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, p 12.
19. Ibid.
20. This is a parable: free radicals are atoms, molecules or ions with unpaired electrons or an open shell configuration. Free radicals may have a positive, negative or zero charge. The analogy lies in a body willing and able to (re)act, cooperatively or forcefully.
21. '[W]e constitute a continuum with fragments of different ages; we make use of transformations which take place between two sheets to constitute a sheet of transformation. For instance, in a dream, there is no longer one recollection-image which embodies one particular point of a given sheet; there are a number of images which are embodied within each other, each referring to a different point of the sheet. Perhaps, when we read a book, watch a show, or look at a painting, and especially when we are ourselves the author, an analogous process can be triggered: we constitute a sheet of transformation which invents a kind of transverse continuity or communication between several sheets, and weaves a network of non-localizable relations between them. In this way we extract non-chronological time.' Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2* (London: Continuum, 1989), p.119.
22. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2*.
23. Peirces describes three types of interpretant: the immediate interpretant, the dynamic interpretant and the final interpretant: 'The [Dynamic] Interpretant is whatever interpretation any mind actually makes of a sign. [...] The Final Interpretant does not consist in the way in which any mind does act but in the way in which every mind would act. That is, it consists in a truth which might be expressed in a conditional proposition of this type: "If so and so were to happen to any mind this sign would determine that mind to such and such conduct." [...] The Immediate Interpretant consists in the Quality of the Impression that a sign is fit to produce, not to any actual reaction.' *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. by Arthur W. Burks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p.1909.
24. Gilles Deleuze, 'Plato and the Simulacrum', p. 51.
25. Daniel W Smith, 'Deleuze's Theory of Sensation:

- Overcoming the Kantian Duality', in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. by P. Patton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pp. 29-34.
26. Ibid.
  27. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, pp. 575-85.
  28. Slavoj Žižek, *How to read Lacan?*.
  29. Maurizio Bolognini's work has been considered relevant to the theory of the technological sublime and the aesthetics of flux (as opposed to the aesthetics of form).
  30. Singularity definition: '[T]hose critical points or moments within a system when its qualities and not just its quantities undergo a fundamental change.' From Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time: Toward a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), p.13.
  31. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (New York: Continuum, 1987), p.170.
  32. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), p.167.
  33. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 27.
  34. Deutung bezeichnet den Prozess des Erkennens oder Konstruierens einer Bedeutung. Dabei ist es unerheblich, ob es sich um einen tatsächlichen oder vermeintlichen Erkenntnisprozess handelt.
  35. Velimir Khlebnikov was a poet and central figure in the Russian Futurist movement.
  36. Kazimir Malevich, Letter to M. Matiushin (4 April 1916) in *Malevich*, trans. by Marc Schreurs (Moscow: Ministry of Culture USSR, 1989), p.158.
  37. Kazimir Malevich, *The Non-Objective World: The Manifesto of Suprematism* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003).
  38. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p.95. 'The crystal is like a ratio cognoscendii of time, while time, conversely, is ratio essendiii. What the crystal reveals or makes visible is the hidden ground of time, that is, its differentiation into two flows, that of presents which pass and that of pasts which are preserved. Time simultaneously makes the present pass and preserves the past in itself. There are, therefore, already, to possible time-images, one grounded in the past, the other in the present. Each is complex and is valid for time as a whole.'
  - i the ground of knowledge: something through or by means of which a thing is known.
  - ii the cause or ground of the existence of a thing.
  39. Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time*, p. 13.
  40. Thomas Mitchell, *What do pictures want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), p.11.
  41. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).
  42. Mark Deuze, *Media Work* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).
  43. Gilles Deleuze interviewed by Claire Parnet, in *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, 1992 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdSyuqlkVCA>> [accessed 09 July 2013].
  44. Marxist theorist and co-founder of the Situationist International organisation, Guy Debord offered *dérive* (drift) as 'a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances'.
  45. *Kino-Pravda* was a newsreel series by Dziga Vertov. Its main goal was to capture parts of actuality which showed a deeper truth that could not be seen without the aid of the camera and various montage techniques.
  46. In Vertov's view, 'art's tower of Babel' was the dominance of narrative over cinematic technique – in film theory also known as the Institutional Mode of Representation – which he saw as a direct threat for the construction of true cinema.
  47. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Cambridge: Zone Books, 2000).
  48. Felix Guattari, 'The Three Ecologies'.
  49. 'Iso-affective': being of the same affective effectiveness.
  50. Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, trans. by Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 17. Dziga Vertov is a pseudonym for David Kaufman.

**Biography**

Marc Boumeester worked for various major television- and film-producing companies and actualized dozens of audiovisuals in a range from commercials to feature films. He is appointed as researcher and lecturer at the Delft University of Technology, theory section at the faculty of Architecture and he has co-founded (and leads) the department of Interactive / Media / Design at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. He lectures in the field of media philosophy and design theory. His research focuses on the liaison between affect, socio-architectural conditions and unstable media, in particular cinema.

