

**Photocinema:
The Creative Edges
of Photography
and Film**

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Photocinema: The Creative Edges of Photography and Film

**Edited by
Neil Campbell and
Alfredo Cramerotti
with Huw Davies
and Jane Fletcher**



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Portfolio Section

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Preamble

The relationship between the still and moving image, inscribed in the notion of the “Cinematic”, is complementary in some ways, and oppositional in others. But it remains an intertwined and long-standing history of ever changing forms and diverse practices.

Many film-makers have consciously, openly used the still image (or indeed the notion of stillness) in their work designed for a cinema screen, while others have made the journey from the movie theatre to the photograph and, in the process, explored the possibilities of sequence and narrative.

Equally, many photographers have borrowed from, and been drawn to, the aesthetic and narrative qualities of the cinema. The list is long. Increasingly there are a number of contemporary photographers who draw on the lineage of an earlier lens-based practice, of Andy Warhol to name but one, to produce works which explore temporal and expanded time, and exist in an ambiguous world that is neither still nor moving, and yet is both.

The erosion of the boundaries between the still and moving image has recently been affected by the arrival of new technologies, too. The in-built digital fluidity of mobile devices and digital cameras inevitably throws into question the traditional distinctions between both media.

Reflecting on this hybrid landscape, the following section showcases 19 works that, in disparate ways, explore the different facets of this complex relationship. These include the work of photographers who have crossed back and forth between the two media in their practice, in addition to the likes of Victor Burgin, Eric Baudelaire and Hollis Frampton, who explore conceptual themes about time, memory, space, as well as architectural, literary and cinematic metaphors.

In short, this section gives tangible, visual examples of why and how both media have been drawn to each other, and how the moving image has changed our relationship

with the still. From film stills and flipbooks to slide shows and digital imaging, hybrid visual forms have now established an ambiguous realm between motion and stillness. This section begins to articulate a missing history, where photography and cinema have been each other’s muse and inspiration for over a century.



Fig. 7.1 Martina Lindqvist, *Rågskär Island*



Fig. 7.2 Simon Roberts, *Polyarnye Nochi*



Fig. 7.3 Gregory Crewdson,
*Untitled (Union Street), Beneath
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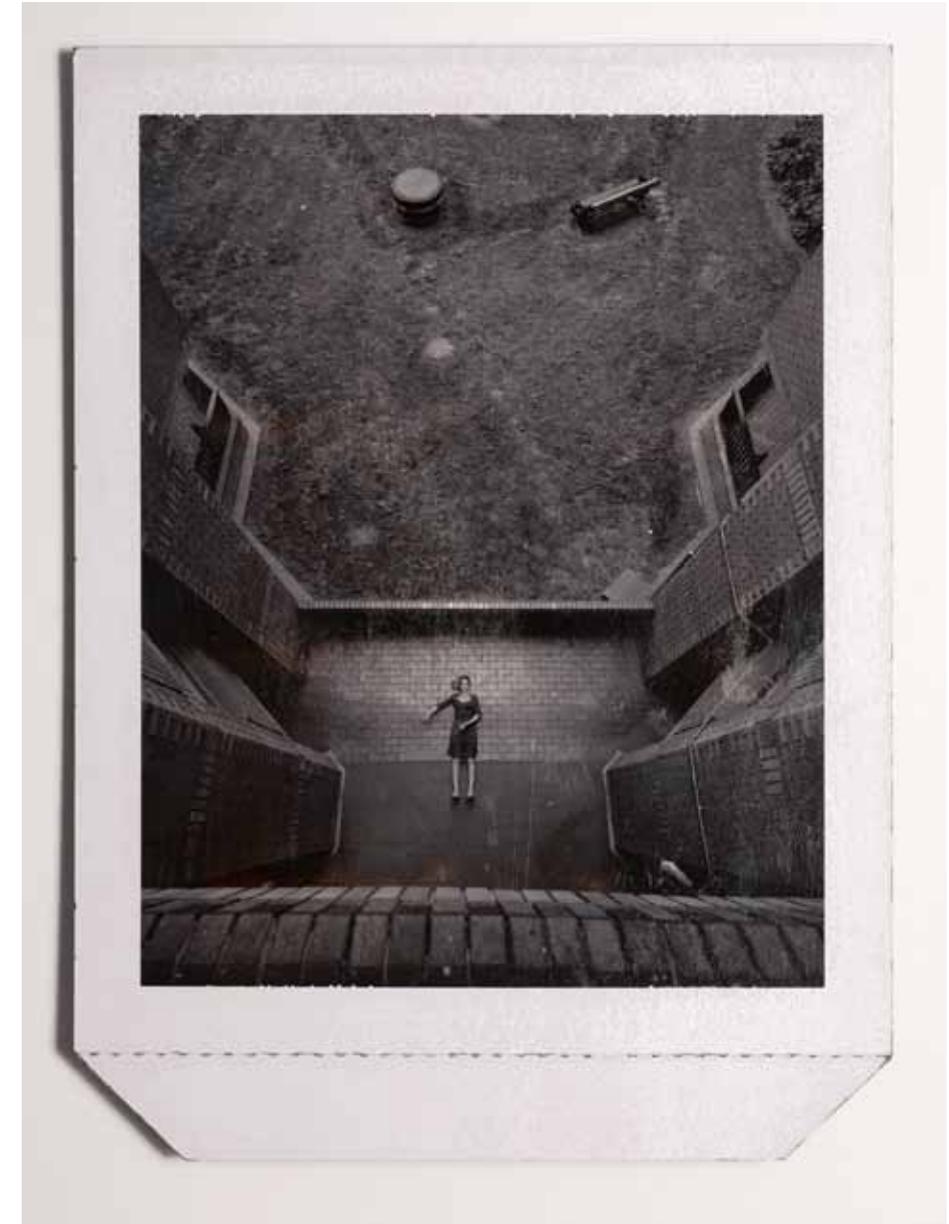


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Fig. 7.19 Minou Norouzi, *Imago*



Fig. 7.20-7.21 Michael Ormerod, *Untitled*





Fig. 7.22 Michael Ormerod, *Untitled*

Portfolio Artists

Martina Lindqvist, *Rågskär Island*. Rågskär is a Finnish island Martina Lindqvist has been visiting since she was a child. The memories of visits have built in her mind’s eye, to create a fictional island where the oppositions between reality and illusion finally dissolve. The island as she knows it can only therefore be touched in pictures by circumventing the usual way of the camera, and each image is consequently an interpretation and recreation in miniature of a snapshot taken on the island. These images make an introspect world visible. **p122**

Simon Roberts, *Polyarne Nochi*. Unforgiving and dramatic winters have often been regarded as one of Russia’s most defining characteristics. A Russian winter is redolent both of great hardship but also great beauty and for centuries it has been romanticised in the country’s painting, music and cinema. Inspired by Russian cinema, *Polyarnye Nochi* explores the winter landscapes of Northern Russia during a period known as Polar Nights, when the region is shrouded in darkness nearly 24 hours a day. **p122**

Gregory Crewdson, *Untitled (Union Street), Beneath the Roses*, 2006. In the series *Beneath the Roses*, shot between 2005 and 2008, the artist explores the lush and ragged edges of small-town America. While much of his earlier work focused on character and drama, Gregory Crewdson here shows a greater awareness of atmosphere and setting; he shot these photographs in and around the same town in upstate Massachusetts, but the scenery varies widely, from leafy summer landscapes to stark, ghostly interiors and—a first for the artist—austere winter scenes.

The stillness depicted in each photograph suggests a suspension of everyday life, and yet any hint of narrative or action is deferred by a mood of mystery and incompleteness. The atmosphere is tactile and moist, the light a substance that seems to cling to the leaves and bodies that occupy the space. The summer photographs bring to mind American realists such as Edward Hopper and Walker Evans, filtered through the damp, saturated colours in the work of eighteenth-century French painters such as Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Jean-Antoine Watteau. The importance of David Lynch and Alfred Hitchcock are evident in the interiors, which have an

otherworldly intensity, and paralysis haunts the winter scenes. This body of photographs concludes Gregory Crewdson’s *Beneath the Roses* series. *Images courtesy of White Cube, London.* **p124**

Bethany Murray, *Avoided Spaces*. The Polaroids of the series *Avoided Spaces* are made in London. The work refers to throwaway tests used in film and looks at the idea that through re-enactment memory can be a fluid concept, open to change and transformation. The artist uses herself as the performer in the work, describing stories that have taken place in each scene. **p125**

Arno Roncada, *Avalanche*. Roncada doesn’t take photographs. He invents them. Pictures or fragments of perspective. Sceneries and landscapes. They are created from a mix of instinctive ideas, critical considerations and rational models, existing or not. He takes the time to give form to a space; to show us in full what there is to see and—if possible—what he himself thought to see. In such a way, locations are found or sometimes even literally personally constructed. Here, the language of modernistic films serves as a pretext for exploring an enigmatic or subjective state of the landscape, using specific cinematographic shooting techniques (e.g. day for night) and thematic affinities. **p128**

Mark Pilkington, *Working the Desert (Storm)*. An extensive development of the United Arab Emirates region is emerging from the once barren undulating and shifting sands of the desert. There is an intended silence in the work, not so much a decisive moment more a pause in some form of a narrative. Responding to the environment in which he lives, Mark Pilkington interacts and intervenes with this particular transforming landscape he is at once in front of and behind the lens. **p129**

Andy Warhol, *Screen Tests*, 16mm, 1964–1966. (1928–1987). Warhol’s *Screen Tests* featured a range of famous and less known visitors to The Factory, selected for the sitters’ ‘star potential’. Arranged in different compilations such as *13 Most Beautiful Women* and *13 Most Beautiful Boys*, the subjects were often asked to hold completely still for each two and a half minute portrait, the length of a roll of 16mm

film. These were subsequently projected back in slow motion at 16 frames per second producing hypnotic and mesmerising studies on the act of the gaze. *Courtesy ©The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA, a museum of Carnegie Institute. All rights reserved.* **p130–1**

E-J Major, *Try To Do Things We All Can Understand*. This screen based film installation was motivated by a desire to slow down and disassemble those scenes which represent the crux of a movie (348 scenes from 29 films). By divorcing dialogues from their original scenes and presenting both independently on several different screens the material is represented in a way that encourages the viewer to make narratives of their own. **p133**

Zhang Xiao, *Shanxi Province*. “These photographs were taken in Shanxi Province in northwest China. They document the ancient customs that originate from pagan religious beliefs. They are the product of Ancient voodoo totem worship. In the past, people used to worship the gods of religious activities. Today a number of these customs have survived to remain one of the most important cultural practices in the New Year throughout most of Shanxi Province northwest China. To me, theirs is a world that is not real; people have an otherworldly presence. I like those people, sometime they are better than the people I meet everyday in ‘normal’ life, like in a dream land. I always take their photograph when they are not aware of me, because I do not want wake them up from the dream.” Zhang Xiao **p135**

Marcus Coates & Huw Davies, *The Changing Face*. Digital video, 2007. A series of animated morphed portraits created from the faces of over 200 participants aged between 14–18. Its appearance transforms from a merged single face, through to images of separate characters—reflecting a collective community as well as that of the individual. Screened in various site-specific locations and commissioned as part of the Welcome Project for Dotto7 (Designs of the Times), One North East and the Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival 2007. **p136–7**

Muge, *Silence* “These photographs were taken in Chongqing, the biggest city along the Yangtze River in the Three Gorges area in China, where my home

town is. This series of photographs were taken between 2006 and 2008. When I met these people, the only thing that I relied on was the realities around me and my own intuition. Pressing the shutter release button became a ritual of understanding human beings and their lives.” Muge **p139**

Julieta Sans, *Well Read. Swann’s Way, Marcel Proust*. *Well Read* is a series of portraits of people as a character from a fictional book of their choice, be it a classic novel, pulp fiction, poetry or children’s stories; in any case, highly personal recreations of works of fiction as chosen by the models. The story behind every image is open to the spectators, giving place to myriad possible interpretations. Borrowing artifices from cinema to recreate fiction through a visual interpretation of the written word, the series goes beyond the mere portrayal of reality that is usually attributed to photography, lovingly integrating word and image. **p140**

Nadège Mériaux, *Mises en Scène*. *Mises en Scène* evokes the fantastical world of magic realism and children’s imaginations where elements of dreams, fairy tales, folklore or mythology combine with the everyday. Nadège Mériaux’s photographs are ambiguous narratives where innocence meets darkness, humour borders on the absurd and beauty is tinted with menace. Some of the photographs have been carefully staged with the help of animal handlers. However unexpected the scenes may be they were all enacted for real, with live animals leaving the outcome of the work less controllable and allowing ‘natural’ behaviour to become part of the underlying narrative. **p141**

Vincent Lafrance, *Le Jongleur*, Digital video. Lafrance’s work *Le Jongleur* (2007) captures the apparently gravity-defying suspension of objects in mid-air using the most basic forms of illusion. *Le Jongleur* humorously freezes an action pose of a juggler into a living videographic sculpture. **p142**

David Boulogne, *Inadequates*. The artist’s work questions the way we anticipate a photograph. His interest lies in the friction of oppositions to reveal some kind of truth, paying mostly attention to

ordinary details to trigger bigger question marks. The *Inadequates* series were shot over a period of three years in order to achieve a sense of honesty with time and the milieu. A collection of portraits looking at people found slightly out of context with their environment, the photographs create a tension and suspense reminiscent of stills from a British version of *Twin Peaks*. They are mini dramas performed by non-actors in a devised piece playing with the exposure of private moments in public space. The mix produces a compelling unease. **p143**

Kelly Richardson, *Waggons Roll (The Remake)* Digital video, (2007). A car hangs suspended in mid-air, in a scene immediately identifiable from a Hollywood action movie. Although the car is frozen in time, the clouds drift slowly overhead against a background of natural sounds, creating an uneasy stillness and calm, in counterpoint, to a moment of high drama. “My work is linked primarily by the idea that all sensations can be summed up in key, slight moments. I try to make work about these loaded moments, which are found in the everyday, of everything at once or that are somehow simultaneously absurd, hilarious, beautiful, sad, pathetic, lonely, futile, exciting”. Kelly Richardson **p144**

Kate Peters, *Stranger Than Fiction*. The American landscape has influenced photographers for many years. The homogenisation of many Middle American towns has meant that chain stores and chain restaurants dominate much of the landscape. Kate Peters is interested in how we contribute to personalising our surrounding environments, asserting our individuality both consciously and subconsciously on a place and the ways in which we exist within these spaces. It was her intention to seek out expressions of individuality within areas that are gradually being taken over by shopping malls and fast food chains. Photographed in a number of locations across the USA these images are united by their expression of human nature, alluding to the history of a place and the marks we make. **p145**

Minou Norouzi, *Imago* Digital video. Conceived as a hypothesis that ones favourite line from a movie contains within it the essence of a person’s ideal,

Authors' Biographies

Victor Burgin is an artist and writer. He is Professor Emeritus of History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz; and Emeritus Millard Chair of Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Burgin's theory books include *Parallel Texts: interviews and interventions about art* (2011), *Situational Aesthetics* (2009), *The Remembered Film* (2004), *In/Different Spaces: place and memory in visual culture* (1996), *The End of Art Theory: criticism and postmodernity* (1986), and *Thinking Photography* (1982). The most recent books devoted to his visual work are *Components of a Practice* (2008), published by Skira, and *Victor Burgin: Objets Temporels* (2007), published by the Presses Universitaires de Rennes. A new monograph on his work, *Projective*, will be published by Black Dog in 2013.

David Campany writes and curates. Recent books include *Photography and Cinema* (Reaktion Books, 2008), *Jeff Wall: Picture for Women* (MIT/Afterall, 2010), *Gasoline* (Mack Editions, 2013) and *Walker Evans: the Magazine Work* (Steidl, 2013). In 2010 he co-curated Anonymes: unnamed America in Photography and Film for Le Bal, Paris. Two shows of Victor Burgin's work curated by David will open in London in 2013. He has published over a hundred essays and writes regularly for *Aperture*, *Source* and *Frieze*. He teaches at the University of Westminster, London.

Neil Campbell is Professor of American Studies and Research Manager at the University of Derby, UK. He has published widely in American Studies, including the books *American Cultural Studies* (with Alasdair Kean), *American Youth Cultures* (as editor) and co-editor of *Issues on Americanisation and Culture*. He has published articles and chapters on John Sayles, Terrence Malick, Robert Frank, J.B. Jackson, Wim Wenders, D.J. Waldie and many others. He has recently edited the essay collection *Land and Identity* (Rodopi, 2011). His major research project is an interdisciplinary trilogy of books on the contemporary American West. The first two are *The Cultures of the American New West* (Edinburgh, 2000) and *The Rhizomatic West* (Nebraska, 2008) and the final part, *Post-Westerns: Cinema, Region, West* is due in 2013.

Louise Clements is Artistic Director of QUAD a centre for contemporary art and film, as well as being the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of FORMAT International Photography Festival in Derby, one of the UK's leading contemporary photography and media festivals. She has curated 6 editions of the biennale festival including PHOTOCINEMA and RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW. As a curator, since 1998 she has initiated and curated many commissions and exhibitions of international and emerging contemporary art, including several major mass participation projects. She has recently been awarded the Milapfest fellowship 2012/13. Louise regularly writes about photography for catalogues and magazines in both print and online media including: *Creative Review*, *Next Level*, *South Korean Photography* and is Editor at Large/writer for www.1000wordsmag.com, and co-editor of *Hijacked III* Aus/UK. She is an international portfolio reviewer, Juror and nominator at festivals, awards and galleries extensively throughout Europe, America and across Asia.

Alfredo Cramerotti is a writer, curator, editor and artist working across a variety of media such as TV, radio, publishing, Internet, media festivals, photography, writing and exhibition making. He directs MOSTYN, Wales' leading contemporary art centre, co-directs AGM Culture, roaming curatorial agency, and CPS Chamber of Public Secrets, media & art production unit (co-curator of Manifesta 8, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, Region of Murcia, Spain, 2010; curator of the Maldives Pavilion at the 55th Venice Art Biennial, 2013). Alfredo is also co-curating the Wales in Venice Pavilion at the 55th Venice Art Biennial in 2013. He is Research Scholar at the European Centre for Photography Research, University of Wales, Newport, Visiting Lecturer in various European Universities among others Nottingham Trent University, University of Westminster London, HEAD Geneva and Dutch Arts Institute, and Editor of the Critical Photography book series by Intellect Books. His own publications include the book *Aesthetic Journalism: How to inform without informing* (2009) and *Unmapping the City: Perspectives of Flatness* (2010).

Huw Davies is a photographer, filmmaker and curator. He is currently Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Design and Technology and Professor of Lens Media, at the University of Derby. He co-founded the Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival in 2005. Its most recent edition Pictures in Motion (2012) explored the relationship between the still and moving image.

Jane Fletcher is a writer and curator, and is currently sub-editor for *NextLevel* Magazine. She writes regularly for the photographic press as well as for exhibition catalogues, photographic encyclopaedias and anthologies. She has a PhD in Photography History and Theory.

Tan Lin is the author of over ten books, most recently, *Heath Course Pak*, *Bib. Rev. Ed*, *Insomnia and the Aunt*, and *7 Controlled Vocabularies and Obituary 2004 The Joy of Cooking*. He is the recipient of a 2012 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant, a Getty Distinguished Scholar Grant and a Warhol Foundation/Creative Capital Arts Writing Grant to complete a book on the writings of Andy Warhol. He is working on a sampled novel, *Our Feelings Were Made By Hand*. He is an Associate Professor of English and Creative Writing at New Jersey City University.

Rachel Moore teaches in the Media and Communications Department at Goldsmiths, University of London. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship for her project, 'In the Film Archive of Natural-History' which investigates the use of old movies and footage to produce new meanings in film practice, a portion of which was published as 'Love Machines' in *Film Studies* no 4. She is the author of *Savage Theory, Cinema as Modern Magic* (Duke, 2000) and a monograph on Hollis Frampton's (*nostalgia*) (Afterall, 2006) as well as articles on Patrick Keiller, James Benning, and Kenneth Anger.

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