

Film and Its Resonance in Space: Notes on Expanded Cinema in Spain*

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In the past decade, there has been a noticeable convergence in Spain of film experiences that could be contingently inscribed within the realm of expanded cinema, that is, interventions, film situations, built environments and performances in which the traditional *mise-en-scène* of projection is reorganised. From a historical and international point of view, this lineage of works has often been neglected due to its ephemeral, site-specific form that challenges the old formats of artistic economy based on archiving, documentation, marketing and collection. Expanded cinema is the result of a confluence of events that never really brewed in Spain. For these reasons, and because the contemporary scene is not solid, but rather circumstantial, in the following text I only tentatively propose to map a field that is moving, elastic, and definitely unfinished. Nevertheless, in view of a comprehension of what these renewed practices can specifically provide to a critical history of expanded cinema, it may be necessary firstly to acknowledge their capacity to usufruct the heritage of such a discovery.

Paradigm Shift

If there is something that could define expanded cinema as it originally manifested itself in contexts as dispersed as *Lettrisme* (*cinéma amplique*, infinitesimal, polythanasie), the *Movie-Drome* project of Stan Vanderbeek, or the subversive actions in public spaces by Valie Export and Peter Weibel, it may not just be a strongly local nature disassociated from art-institutions that exploited the inadequacy of these institutions as spatial devices that regulated its social insertion. The genuine expanded cinema –as distinct from the many misleading uses of the term[1] probably generated by its own redundancy and against a consideration of cinema, not as a discipline but as an abstract, a-disciplinary[2] power proper (“cinema itself is so heterogeneous that the label “expanded” seems redundant”[3])– clearly exploited one of the genetic components of the medium from its most primitive age, that of actions performed live [4] connected with the act of projection. This component -whose affinities with cinema might be rooted in the experiments of Moholy-Nagy and

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Francis Picabia in the 20s/30s, and even shadow plays from prior to the invention of the cinematograph- also shares with the film medium's mise-en-scène elements bound to present-ness, site-specificity, and social rite, as well as the fundamental preoccupations that were at stake in the arts precisely at the time when expanded cinema emerged more forcefully, preoccupations around the notions of the body, perception, and process.

In its advance towards vital praxis –the fundamental project of the avant-garde consisting of inserting itself in life inasmuch as experience- cinema had no other option than to negotiate the materiality of its own medium, that is, the conditions of enunciation and presentation of film. Expanded cinema could be seen as the result of such project, although the facts were actually, and in addition, complicated by the very deconstructive programme that had been building up at the core of experimental film culture throughout decades internationally: an attempt –often suicidal- to define the medium's own specificity and artistry. This is precisely what Annette Michelson called the 'radical aspiration' [5] of film and what Jonathan Walley has more recently defined as its 'identity crisis' [6]: the problem generated by the confluence of the two phenomena from which expanded cinema emerged as it is commonly known and framed within a concrete historical moment, the dematerialization of art and the struggle to establish experimental film's history and identity.

That is, in broad strokes (and, in order to delve further into it, I would refer the reader to the aforementioned texts), the context from which a cinema that questions its material and negates its analytic centre based in the traditional coordinates film / screen / projector comes to flourish, generating with it new hybrid, intermedia practices -installations, performances, environments, and so-called time-based works. Inevitably, experimental film began to expand and occupy other spaces, flirting with its performative, conceptual and sculptural possibilities. It's quite difficult to reconstruct a similar historical context in Spain. The scarce anthologies on national experimental film published in the country, which unfortunately had very little impact at the time,[7] pointed out clearly the insular nature of Spanish art culture in relation to more advantaged countries. In addition to a general incomprehension towards any artistic expression beyond the traditional disciplines, the lack of institutional or independent support, the categorical repression and censorship imposed by the Francoist dictatorship, and the non-existence of a consistent cinematographic industry against which an avant-gardist film aesthetics could rise in a critical, transgressive way, the historical development of a national experimental or subterranean cinema was simply unthinkable.

Approaching Expanded Cinema in Spain: A Historical Overview

During the transitional years to democracy and the so-called 'aperturismo' (the emerging liberalization in the final years of Franco's regime), Spain's socio-economic and cultural situation experienced transformations and improvements. The most

radical proposals remained hard to assimilate though, and the production of experimental films was similarly scarce, too isolated and –what is even worse- poorly spread, complicating the establishment of a disciplinary identity or a unifying consciousness amongst artists working on film. The minuscule experimentation that existed made use of the film medium as an extension or testing ground of the other arts: José Antonio Sistiaga and Ramón de Vargas, to name two major examples, translated techniques and ideas that were fundamentally pictorial into film, echoing the strong presence painting still had in Spanish art. Carles Santos' films addressed notions related to sound and music. On the other hand, there existed a personal, lyrical cinema (Oriol Durán, Iván Zulueta), and a subversive, provocative one (Adolpho Arrieta, Antoni Padrós), but, with few exceptions, there never solidly emerged a film practice that exhausted the inherent materials and properties of the medium leading to a breakup, zero degree, or critical moment which could be identified as the 'entrance hall' to expanded cinema. The exceptions include the first film by Carles Santos, *L'apat* (1965), a shot entirely without images accompanied by the sounds of a banquet, as well as a number of works that Eugeni Bonet and Manuel Palacio contextualized within the polemical frame of minimalist and anti-cinematographic creation that took place at the International Congress of Film Schools in Sitges, organized by Spanish critic and historian Román Gubern in 1967. Examples of this were:

“*Del tres al once* (1968) by Antonio Artero, a series of numbered film tails in positive and negative; *Blanco sobre blanco* (1969), also by Artero, a projection of transparent film; *Esta es la película* (1968) by Pere Costa, or the four minutes of *Los diez mandamientos*[8] eliminated by Francoist censorship; *El 17 de Elvira* (1968), by painter Manolo Calvo, a shot of the artist going out of his home repeated in loop; *Duración* (1970), by Paulino Viota, another loop, a shot of a clock during the entire turn of the second hand.”[9]

Travelling (1972), by Lluís Rivera –artist member of Grupo Valenciano de Cine Experimental- is worth mentioning here, because “it focuses, in a way reminiscent of structural-materialist film, on the process of its own gestation,”[10] although it doesn't reach the anti-representational radicalism that I am trying to get to here, one that would put into crisis the medium's conditions of presentation. Nonetheless, its conditions of enunciation were indeed questioned in unusual works like the aforementioned ones, as well as in *La celosía* (1972) by Isidoro Valcárcel Medina- a two-hour film in which *Jealousy*, the novel by Robbe-Grillet is shot so that the text becomes the only image of the work- and more explicitly in Javier Aguirre's project *Anticine*. This project consisted of a programme of eight films made between 1967 and 1971 and a homonymous essay in which Aguirre develops his cinematographic theory. Among the films I would highlight *Múltiples, número indeterminado* -a loop of clear film that gathers dust and scratches while it passes through a projector- and *Impulsos ópticos en progresión geométrica* -a flicker film of chromatic modulation with a soundtrack composed by Eduardo Polonio, a pioneer of Spanish electroacoustic music. Bonet and Palacio were, to my understanding, too severe in

questioning the interest of some of Aguirre's Anticine works simply because Fluxus artists were developing similar film explorations, especially if we take into account that they were practically contemporaneous (Fluxus film was at its highpoint in 1965-66 while the flicker experiments of Paul Sharits, comparable to Aguirre's Impulsos, begun in 1968).

The most significant avant-garde event of the 20th Century that took place in Spain seems to be The Pamplona Encounters, a rare exception in our art history celebrated in the summer of 1972. Madrid's Reina Sofia Museum has dedicated two major exhibitions to the Encounters, in 1997 (the event's 25th anniversary) and 2009-10. According to the Museum, these were "[...] set up as an opportunity to subvert the order established at the end of the dictatorship in Spain"[11]; according to Franco, they were set up as "an invitation to fill up the city with whores and queers".[12]

Organized by artists, privately financed, and with very little national press coverage, The Encounters took over the city of Pamplona as an international public art festival that offered a panorama of the most radical intermedia practices exactly at a time "when everything artistic was immediately interpreted as an ideological event." [13] Against constant obstacles offered by the police and other governmental forces, the festival managed to gather together live works by renowned artists such as John Cage [14] and David Tudor, Steve Reich and Laura Dean, the Spanish group ZAJ, [15] the Vietnamese musicologist Trần Văn Khê, and Equipo Crónica among others, and included shows with works by Carl André, Art & Language, Christo, Walter De Maria, Jan Dibbets, Joseph Kosuth, Bruce Nauman, Dennis Oppenheim, Edward Ruscha, Robert Smithson and Lawrence Weiner, to name just a few. The architect Prada Poole realized a construction project articulated in a series of 11 interconnected plastic domes whose structures were lifted with compressed air. Inside the domes a variety of art events took place, from screenings [16] to exhibitions, poetry readings and ephemeral interventions. [17] In a context of expanded cinema, Valcárcel Medina (who had also created a tubular structure set up in a public space that was brutally vandalized), Javier Aguirre (who premiered his Anticine series), and Antoni Padrós showed their films alongside works by Dennis Oppenheim, Philippe Garrel and Stan Vanderbeek that were also included in the programme.

The memory of The Encounters was intentionally erased due to the political situation that conditioned the general frame of mind of the country, and intensive studies were avoided for decades. [18] Moreover, the historical non-existence of archives, cooperatives, or autonomous spaces and initiatives like the aforementioned one, dedicated to distributing and providing knowledge and visibility to film works belonging to an avant-gardist tradition in Spain hasn't helped create historical awareness, a more continuous production of films of this kind, or the creation of laboratories open to artistic experimentation. In other words, the infrastructure necessary for providing an identity to experimental film never existed in the country and, furthermore, without being able to establish its own specificity, video began its incursion into art in the 1970s, making the problem more critical.

A crucial case has also been the perennial neglect of the creative magnitude of José Val del Omar, a unique figure in our film culture and the only clear Spanish precedent for expanded cinema. His current rediscovery confirms that experimental film, its history and its practices, is reverberating now more than ever before in Spain. It is only in recent times that the art institution has become interested in this lineage of work in order to renew itself. Besides this more general contemporary interest and awareness, the recent production of works of this kind has generated a cultural necessity to revisit Val del Omar's oeuvre, and with it has come the publication of books and DVDs along with a touring exhibition of his work in 2010. In my view, however, the question remains to be posed of whether or not this cultural necessity has biased the true universe of the 'cinemist', usufructing and territorializing it within a critical topology of sorts.

Still, I would affirm the idea that expanded cinema is a phenomenon practically imported into Spain, because we haven't been aware, until very recently, of the pioneering progress made by Val del Omar. We certainly could have seen his films but there is more to his work than that. As an 'engineer' and a 'cinemist', the research, writings, and inventions he developed in his laboratory of experimentation Picto-Lumínico-Audio-Táctil (or PLAT), many of them widely unknown until recent years, clearly pointed out the expansive potential of the *mise-en-scène* of cinema. I won't go into details in this regard, as I have previously written about Val del Omar's cardinal projects in this journal.[19] In short, his explorations confirm one of the most important theses produced by flicker film: that cinema's Achilles' heel, leading to the medium's dematerialization, effectively descends through luminous pulsation, and that it is this plastic, expansive potential of the limits of the illusionist space of projection that actually inaugurates a field of exploration in expanded cinema of special repercussion in contemporary practices: the body.[20]

Now, before attempting to situate what I consider to be a genealogical panorama of practices heir to expanded cinema in Spain with a strong performative tendency, I would like to refer to a few other approaches framed within the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. The following are works –and in regard to José Antonio Maenza, I would rather call it an attitude- that have a rather contingent relationship with expanded cinema. As far as I know, these artists never used the expression nor did they demonstrate a visible awareness of international, contemporary developments within this field of creation, although they did indeed dislocate the traditional site of cinema. As with Val del Omar, José Antonio Maenza's oeuvre and life seemed to be obscured until the publication of a book that recovered them from the ruins.[21] The Zaragozaian filmmaker and activist[22] made a series of silent films with a soundtrack created live during projections. Such was the case in *Conversaciones con Luis Buñuel* (1968), the soundtrack of which changed in each screening, and *El lobby contra el cordero* (1967-8), in which “attention should be paid to the utilization of procedures analogous to the ones used by the French Letterists [...]”. [23] Live interventions included simultaneous readings by three different voices, gesticulating, and the insertion of various sound pieces.[24] In *Hortensia/Beance* (1969), a four-hour

unfinished film produced by Pere Portabella, Maenza integrated “posters, quotes, masks, and constant cultural references”[25] during projections. Luis Puig, one of Maenza’s colleagues, tells about his participation in the simulation of a shoot for the film *Flash: Kábala 9 en 16 para 4 en 8* (1969), whose crew ignored the fact that there was no film in the camera whatsoever. Although the intention was to convince Portabella of constant work in order to get the finances for the film production, Maenza’s work seemed to overcome the boundaries that separate art and life (or reality and representation), just as expanded cinema proposed in general. His destructive attitude towards the medium elevated the act of shooting to the level of such artistic activities as happening, ephemeral art, and performance.[26] In his own words: “there is room for a cinema without filming, without representation, death on the horizon, birth as a passed overture”.[27]

Pedro Almodóvar’s direct interventions during screenings should be also noted. With a background in theatre and avant-garde activism, between 1974 and ’78 Almodóvar made projections of Super-8 films while he himself commented, *viva voce*, on them, simulating dialogues between the different characters, singing, or using a cassette player for specific musical inserts.[28] Other film-situations of no significant repercussion are *Texto 1* (1975) by Lluís Rivera, during the screening of which the audience was asked to read pieces of writing and use signs following certain instructions, and the projections of drawings in public spaces –specifically on building walls in Madrid around 1960- by Ramón de Vargas.[29] Another street projection of the time was *Pluraridades seis* (1972) by Javier Aguirre, who screened six genre films simultaneously, so that passers-by could compare them or watch them individually.[30]

The Contemporary Scene

There seems to have been an immense lack of activities of this kind from the mid-70s to the turn of the century, at least involving the use of film.[31] In the past decade, the situation has changed enormously and keeps improving. (Even as I write these lines I am informed of a major show by Eugeni Bonet at MACBA in Barcelona, entitled *The Listening Eye: Screens, Projections, Writings*; this is almost certainly the most comprehensive show by probably the most important voice in experimental film in Spain from the 80s on.) However, this new interest, as far as it concerns artists and curators, is undoubtedly due to the effects of globalization and the Internet, which have facilitated international travel, influences, shared affinities and exchange. The availability of written documentation and publications has been improved, although not substantially in the Spanish language.[32] Nevertheless, some interesting publications and projects have emerged, such as *From Ecstasy to Arrebato* (Cameo, 2009), a retrospective of Spanish experimental film from the late 1950s to the present-day in the form of a DVD box-set and a booklet as well as a touring programme, and *Asociación Lumière*, a society of critics and curators involved in annual publications (*Revista Lumière*) and film programming. Nowadays, there are a

considerable number of spaces that provide a regular platform for experimental film. Examples of these are Xcéntric (CCCB, Barcelona), an institution active in experimental film programming since 2002 which has organized a few biannual international symposiums; film festivals such as Punto de Vista (Pamplona) and [S8] Mostra de Cinema Periférico (A Coruña) which has a section exclusively devoted to expanded cinema; and autonomous spaces such as Puerta (Bilbao), La Enana Marrón (Madrid, 1999-2010), Márgenes and PLAT (Madrid). Furthermore, there have even been recent significant events that involved presentations of expanded cinema works: The Expansive-Hypnotic Encounters (2013) organized by Garbiñe Ortega and Azala, an autonomous space run by Spanish choreographer Idoia Zabaleta in the Basque Country; the section Cine de acción: camina o reinventa of Laboratory 987 (MUSAC, León, 2013), an exhibition by Nilo Gallego, Silvia Zayas and Chús Domínguez that included live presentations by several invited artists; and El Cine Revelado (CA2M, Madrid, 2014), a series of film performances and associated activities curated by Playtime Audiovisuales. Considering all this, it seems obvious that, for the first time ever in Spain, experimental film and its practices are experiencing substantial attention and visibility. There seems to be an infrastructure for this lineage of works too, but this may be weak and mutable -the precariousness of film laboratories persists[33] while festivals and autonomous spaces struggle to continue. On the other hand, if there is a contemporary ‘radical aspiration’, it remains to be seen if the discipline we have chosen will survive long enough to sustain it.[34]

Artists and filmmakers who form the contemporary scene share skills and information, and occasionally collaborate. There is a clear sense of community. Moreover, plenty of us also help to spread the knowledge of experimental film and its practices by organizing diverse activities. In terms of practices and works linked to expanded cinema, the contemporary scene doesn’t share a formal unity. Ranging from interventions in the public space to live cinema, film situations to choreographically elaborate performances, what they all share is an exploration of the possibilities of direct intervention in the act of projection, expanding and widening its *mise-en-scène*.

One of the first manifestations of expanded cinema projects that attracted my attention for its subterranean nature and strongly local character was the activity of LILI Films, an art collective funded in 2003 in A Coruña by Ángel Rueda and Ana Domínguez (where they have run [S8] Mostra de Cinema Periférico for five years), along with Fernando Pujalte. The collective exploited the antithetical logic found between expanded cinema and the inadequacy of the institution as a spatial instrument that regulates its social insertion. LILI Films associated its screenings with spaces characterized by a special sensibility, focusing its activity on rescuing, recycling, cataloguing, exhibiting and analysing what they called a “sleeping cinema”, that is, domestic films in the super-8 format found in flea markets and forgotten storage-rooms of private homes, shot between 1950 and ’80 by amateur filmmakers and other individuals. The collective reclaimed the quotidian and a sense of reality represented in the family life and social encounters pictured in those home-

movies, which led them to convoke a 'Cinema of Truth' by offering a home delivery film service. Their travelling cinema came alive in private homes, where they screened films while chatting with their owners, and continued the journey in streets, bars, schools, asylums, prisons, markets, and a variety of public and private spaces. They also elaborated on their found materials to create new films and presented multiple projection events articulated as performances, installations and interventions that often requested participation from the audience. *Los Jueves Milagro* (2004), for instance, consisted of a vertical diptych double projection that concluded with a 'celluloid communion' in which the audience literally took communion from fragments of filmstrips.

As previously mentioned, the body and its visibility during the act of projection is one of the most widely explored elements in contemporary practices that are heir to expanded cinema. The body has the potential to unstructure the traditional unidirectionality of projection, inverting the philosophical formula that sees the body as an obstacle for cinema to reach thought.[35] Formed in equal parts by its mechanical support (screen, film, projector), the body of the audience and of the artist/projectionist, the body of cinema is a presence that in effect remains invisible during the act of projection as we commonly know it. The darkness of theatrical venues and the invisibility of projection booths (where the projector, its operator and rattling sound are hidden) facilitate an immersion and identification with the screen, or suspension of disbelief. Expanded cinema inverts this logic and gives presence back to the bodies, while the spatial relations and tension lines created by the body and its mobility generate new choreographic and performative possibilities around the syntax of the medium.

Recent film-performances with a special focus on the body are *Deconstrucine* (2009), by the collective *Familia de Idiotas no tiene TDT* (Ana Domínguez, Miguel Mariño, and Ángel Rueda), which consisted in creating a live screen formed by white curved panels and an audience in motion dressed in white tunics. Images projected on Super-8 were screened on this moving composition, simultaneously video-captured and projected back on it in real time. *Cinema, Corpus Vs Cerebrum* (2008-10) is a project I conceived and presented in collaboration with other artists in Dublin. In an embryonic, ludic and improvisational state, it was presented with Oriol Sánchez, Albert Alcoz, Antoni Pinent, Maximiliano Viale, and Neil O'Connor who created a live soundtrack with analogue synthesizers at *Thisisnotashop* gallery. The audience participated by manipulating 16mm and super-8 found-footage, and the moving projections invaded the streets, exploiting the halting of trams just outside the main door and side windows of the gallery. The piece was further developed in collaboration with Maximilian Le Cain, Victor Esther G., and Rafael Martínez del Pozo in 2010, taking a very different, rather conceptual direction that focused on the elemental components of film projection. Oriol Sánchez has recently presented a series of performances in domestic environments in which he uses notions of autoscopy by projecting specific images on bodies and faces. And *Operation Rewrite*, the collaborative project by Le Cain and myself, has also presented a number of

performances in Spain and Ireland that take as a starting point a materialist investigation of both the artist's body and the body of cinema. In *Manila Sand Trap* (2013) and *Feather Mirror* (2012), for instance, the artists presented themselves interacting with elaborate film projections, pre-recorded and live sounds, as well as objects arranged to form mutant installations.

Apart from this line of work focusing on the body, among the variety of expanded cinema works that have been produced in recent years, a distinction could be made between at least three different lines of investigation, although these lines should by no means be taken as impermeable or hermetic. One of them investigates notions around the medium's materiality, uses found or personal footage, and is often presented as multiple, simultaneous screenings in collaboration with sound artists. Examples of this are *D.R.A.M. ¿Dónde Realmente Acaba el Movimiento?* (2007), by filmmaker and founder of La Enana Marrón David Reznak and sound artist Alex Mendizábal; *Papel Médium* (2011) by Dúo Cobra (Javi Álvarez and Álvaro Barriuso); *Weird War* (2011) by Albert Alcoz in collaboration with circuit bending specialist Juan Matos Capote; and *Erosión* (2011) by Oriol Sánchez and Alfredo Costa Monteiro.

Another lineage of contemporary works is the film situation, that is, a presentation in which the artist intervenes in the screening or its circumstances without having necessarily conceived the event as an articulated performance. Time, space, and presence (gestures, movements, talk) condition the situation in which a film is presented. Recent film situations are *Cau d'orella* (2012), in which Albert Alcoz modifies the speeds of projection of his films *Monocrom #1* and *#2*; *Kubrick* (2012) by Chús Domínguez, which consisted in projecting on the front wall of a demolished cinema of that name images that had been previously shot within the venue and its projection booth; and specific shows of *Esculturas Fílmicas* (2012) by Alberto Cabrera Bernal, especially when he hands the film rolls to the audience before screening them, or when he blocks the projector's light in order to let the audience experience the soundtrack of his films alone. David Domingo often expands the situations in which his films are screened by using live or pre-recorded sound, distributing his fanzines personally among the audience, and sometimes even raffling objects and actors (!). His sense of humour is present also in *Beach Warriors* (2011), in which he projects two unedited versions of the same 16mm film shot by accident while telling stories and anecdotes about them. In *La Fábrica del Prado* (2012) Oriol Sánchez has also created unusual film environments in nature, using site-specific films that explored pre-linguistic and phantasmagorical notions of pre-cinema in relation to primitive, animistic rites.

The other contemporary tendency I would highlight puts its analytic focus on the formation of light as a quasi-sculptural and tactile matter that exploits aspects of its resonance in space and the natural performativity of mechanical projection. Diverse facets of the act of projection are explored (itself a phenomenon that belongs to the fields of geometry, physics, optics, psychology, pictorial representation, and

spectacle)[36] in all its repercussions, including its ephemerality, temporality, process, instability, spatiality, accidents, and reification. I would include here my own *The Gas Works* (2012-13) in which I present a series of choreographed actions around the syntax of cinema, the use of specific objects, and the projection of two 16mm films specially conceived to compromise the functioning of the projector, as well as a recent performance by *Operation Rewrite, A Piece of Broken Mirror Suspended on a String* (2014), an exploration of failure in language, game, and projection, whose starting point was *Witches' Cradle*, an unfinished film by Maya Deren and Marcel Duchamp. *Reels and Lights* (2011) by Crater Collective (Adriana Vila and Luis Macías) also shares this line of research while accomplishing the reductionist proposal of flicker film. In a choreography of sorts, both artists throw stroboscopic light at different rates on a projector that holds a loop of black leader, creating spectacular pulsating shadows on the walls and ceiling, and generating a highly hypnotic, tactile experience of plastic light. In *Fomos Ficando Sós* (2013), a film-performance inspired in a poem by Manuel Antonio about the procedural situation of a maritime journey, Miguel Mariño creates the entire piece live by painting a loop of clear leader that passes through three different projectors.

Given that the nature of the cinematographic medium is so heterogeneous, it is perfectly possible to expand and multiply its elements, allowing the conception of an expanded cinema as an intrinsically filmic practice. Contracting or eliminating those elements or some of them would legitimate a discourse closer to paracinema. In this regard, I would finally like to add three interesting recent performances that I find closer to this second approach: *Esto ocurrió* (2013) by Victor Iriarte, who simply uses his voice and memory to translate cinematographic techniques such as flicker, the cut, and traveling to poetry; *Boom* (2012) by Alex Reynolds, in which two foley artists recreate the sounds happening in real time in the street, seen from the window (transformed into a 'reality screen') of a disused video store; and *Black Tulip* (2012) by Marc Vives, which, from the perspective of the absurd, lays out exercises of relaxation and hypnosis that manage to generate an experience between the expansion of consciousness and a mental cinema.

Concluding Notes

In recent times, a growing resurgence of practices that expands cinema's conditions of presentation and enunciation is clearly perceived, and in the work of some Spanish artists there is a sense of compromise and responsibility that brings to the forefront the cultural and artistic importance of the specificity of the film medium. The proliferation of technological forms of the digital image may displace such importance to the point of threatening with an uncertain future the continuity of the discipline (and its fruitful dialogues with the other arts) that we have chosen. The future of a thriving film art undoubtedly relies upon efforts like the aforementioned ones, which remind us of the true powers and potentialities of cinema, itself a 'house' that indeed contains many different rooms, paths and corridors. One of those rooms

looks at one of the genetic components of cinema to connect with live action, presentness and performativity, and coincides with the idea of expanded cinema that I have proposed here, one that is heir to its historical emergence and sits against wider, imprecise considerations that only in more recent times can be examined with critical distance.

I am indebted to all of the contemporary artists that appear in this text, who have generously shared details of their works from different angles, and especially to Juan Antonio Suárez, for inviting me to write this piece and publish it in Spanish in *Arte y Políticas de Identidad Journal*. Eugeni Bonet, Antoni Pinent, and Alberto Cabrera Bernal enlightened several aspects of the piece and facts that I wouldn't have otherwise been able to put precisely.

Experimental Conversations has been pricelessly supportive during all these years as far as Spanish experimental film is concerned, in both historical and contemporary approaches. I am not just extremely grateful and indebted to it for publishing my own pieces of writing on diverse cinematographic subjects, but also for its interest in and support of Spanish artists and filmmakers. The journal's editorial has undoubtedly invigorated the knowledge of our work in a universal language, and has given voice to works and artists that were at the time very little known outside Spain. The imminent disappearance of the journal will be felt and very much regretted from this country too, and the development of this present text, as I'm sure is the case with the rest of contributions in this probably last issue, was imbued with a special sensibility around this sad fact. Finally, it only remains to keenly encourage the prompt resurrection of *Experimental Conversations*.

Notes

- [1] Today, the term ‘expanded cinema’ is often misused. Any film, when presented deconstructed on multiple screens in a museum context, turns magically into an expanded cinema work, although –as Donal Foreman put it in a different context- this is its most bastardised form. An ill-informed utilization of this expression is in effect becoming a catch-all, supposedly reliable term to define audiovisual projections in institutional contexts. And such utilization not only denotes a profound ignorance regarding the original problems and formal preoccupations of this practice, it even ridicules its critical potential of resistance.
- [2] As Armando Montesinos suggests in his introduction to my book *Paracinema: la desmaterialización del cine en las prácticas artísticas*, Trama editorial, Madrid, 2012, p. 14. An excerpt of this book has been published in this journal. <http://www.experimentalconversations.com/articles/1245/paracinema-the-dematerialization-of-film-in-art-p/>
- [3] Jonathan Walley, "Identity Crisis: Experimental Film and Artistic Expansion", October 137, MIT Press, Summer 2011, p. 27.
- [4] Eugeni Bonet, "Visión expandida. Extralimitaciones cinematográficas en la encrucijada de la electrónica," 2013, <http://www.macba.cat/eugenibonet/?l=es>
- [5] "Cinema, on the verge of winning the battle for the recognition of its specificity [...] is now engaged in a consideration of its aims. The Victor now questions his Victory. The emergence of new "intermedia", the revival of the old dream of synesthesia, the cross-fertilization of dance, theatre, and film... constitute a syndrome of that radicalism's crisis, both formal and social." Annette Michelson, "Film and the Radical Aspiration," in *The Film Culture Reader*, ed. P. Adams Sitney. Cooper Square Press, New York, 2000, p. 420.
- [6] Jonathan Walley, op. cit.
- [7] I am referring to the very first publications on the subject: *Práctica Fílmica y Vanguardia Artística en España, 1925-1981*, by Eugeni Bonet and Manuel Palació (Madrid, 1983) and *Cinema de Vanguardia en España*, by Francisco J. Aranda (Lisbon, 1953).
- [8] The Ten Commandments.
- [9] Eugeni Bonet and Manuel Palacios. *Ibidem*, p. 36.
- [10] Antoni Pinet, "Panorámica Sintética / Parcial del Cine Experimento en España desde la década de 1960 hasta la "última generación"", in *El Discreto Encanto de la Tecnología. Artes en España*. Giannetti, C. (Ed.), MEIAC-ZKM, 2008, p. 158.
- [11] <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/exhibitions/pamplona-encounters-1972-end-party-experimental-art>
- [12] The quote appeared in an article published by El País. Available online http://elpais.com/diario/2009/10/26/cultura/1256511601_850215.html
- [13] op. cit., Museo Reina Sofía.
- [14] When Cage was asked about his performance in a country subdued to a dictatorship's burden, he answered: "If I perform in Nixon's America, I don't know why I wouldn't do it in Franco's Spain". Quoted in Iván López Munuera, *Los Encuentros de Pamplona: de John Cage a Franco pasando por un prostíbulo (II)*. Salón Kritik, October 2009. http://salonkritik.net/09-10/2009/10/notas_articulo_encuentros_pamp.php#inicio
- [15] Juan Hidalgo, Walter Marchetti and Esther Ferrer formed ZAJ, among other artists. Their collaborative work included experimental concerts, happenings and performances, which was ignored in Spain. When George Maciunas invited them to become part of Fluxus, they ironically replied by inviting Fluxus to become part of ZAJ. <http://www.estherferrer.net/Textos/accion.html>
- [16] According to Vicente J. Benet, the Encounters "offered an overview of audiovisual media characterised by a hybridisation that may seem somewhat baffling today. The array of options for the viewers ranged from the most heterodox trends in the new video media of the time to vestiges of the earliest films, slices of the historical avant-garde of the 1920s, recent experimental films, examples of professional-quality films with ties to modern writing and independent films".
- [17] op. cit., López Munuera.
- [18] *Ibidem*.
- [19] <http://www.experimentalconversations.com/articles/1245/projection-as-a-magnetic-field-the-overflowing-of/>
- [20] Val del Omar designed a whole architecture of perception around the body. His devices and mechanisms, such as the modulation of vibrations in theatre seats, aimed to allow a penetration of cinema into the spectator's body and through the senses, including taste and hearing.
- [21] Pablo Pérez and Javier Hernández, *Maenza filmado en el campo de batalla*, Departamento de Educación y Cultura, Zaragoza, 1997.
- [22] In the book aforementioned, the authors tell about Maenza's tendency to irrupt in conventional cinemas, as when he interrupted the screening of a western movie at a cine-club of his hometown, shouting: "This is not cinema!" "Out with the merchants of the Only Credible Church of the 20th century!"
- [23] Bonet and Palació, op. cit. p. 32.

- [24] Luis Puig, (2007), Vicios (personal blog of the author). Universidad de Valencia, <http://www.uv.es/puigl/vicios.htm>
- [25] Bonet and Palacio, op. cit.
- [26] <http://gtce.blogspot.com.es/2010/06/antonio-maenza-un-artista-descubrir.html>
- [27] Ibidem.
- [28] Ibid, pp. 49-50.
- [29] Aramburu and Trigueros (Ed), Caras B de la Historia del Video Arte en España. Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 2011, p. 24.
- [30] <http://www.javieraguirre-anticine.com/biografia.html>
- [31] In fact, there was a notorious scene amongst dance and performance artists using video projection.
- [32] An exception is Jonas Mekas' Movie Journal, which was published in Spanish in 1975 by Editorial Fundamentos (Madrid). Gene Youngblood's Expanded Cinema, originally published in 1970 and out of print since 1977, was translated into Spanish in 2012 in Argentina (EDUNTREF).
- [33] Crater Collective (Adriana Vilas and Luis Macías) has just opened an independent lab in Barcelona, Crater Lab. <http://crater-lab.org>
- [34] See Tacita Dean, Film (a book about film and the importance of analogue in the digital age), Ed. Nicholas Cullinan, Tate Publishing, London, 2011.
- [35] Gilles Deleuze, La Imagen-Tiempo, Paidós Comunicación, Barcelona, 1986, p. 251.
- [36] Dominique Païni, "Should We Put an End to Projection?", October Magazine 110, MIT Press, 2004, p. 23.