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ARTICLE

LIMINAL INTERVALS: FOR ALL DEAD/ALIVE TIME

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Abstract

When asked in an 1984 Photogenies magazine questionnaire 'Does photography teach you something about cinema? Or vice versa?', Angès Varda responds: "Photography never ceases to instruct me when making films ... every image becomes a memory, and all memories congeal and set". The late filmmaker gleans and revives a failed film's ill-fated amber inscriptions from their mortal coils and boxed obsolescence. For the space of Grande Salle concert hall, she recycles the cabane du cinéma (cinema shack) motif from her previous work, building a large scale box with walls comprising strips of photographic cinema's moribund DNA, the film reel. Diurnal rhythms draw fleeting images through filtered and ephemeral light—the solar pencil shaping time. As luminous waves breach the glass panes of the gallery, the transparent celluloid strips come to life, shivering and awash. Beginning with her film "The Beaches of Agnès", and eliciting examples from her later gallery work, this paper will elaborate through visual and film-theoretical texts, the intersecting material and medium specific, ontological and phenomenological operations between the image and its projection, screens and contemporary installation. Varda's intervention interrogates and elucidates the metaphysical and immanent relations of the image, charting irresolvable temporal paradoxes of the liminal interval: a thawing or melting zone between the frozen instant of the photographic still and the fiery flux of post-photographic and cinematic modulations.

Within her perceptual, affective, and pictorial multi-media poetics, Varda registers oscillations within and beyond the instantaneous image through various framing devices—the physical and figurative thresholds between reality and fantasy; presence and absence; dwelling and dying. Frames are ensconced within the logic of a continual re-framing and images caught in time, flickering resurrections.

Keywords: intermediality, cinematic, heterochronies, liminality, Agnès Varda.

I. THRESHOLDS

The Beaches of Agnès (2008) begins as a visual eponym: on a beach. We begin with frames. Frames and mirrors. Along a shore, we see the reflection of a mirror in a frame, framed by the camera, reflecting another mirror, another frame, and on and on. An infinite regression, a spiral-like movement, the mirror's automatic image-making and frames' makeshift apertures. A *mise en abyme* of reflections (Figure 1). Couched with an infinite loop, the spiralling evokes a snail shell or the self-similar curving form of a nautilus. The late French filmmaker, photographer and video installation artist, Agnès Varda (1928-2019) — a prominent member of the Left Bank group of French New Wave directors who began her career first as a photographer – frames her opening scene in a continuum of infinite reflections of infinite surfaces.

In *The Beaches of Agnès* opening sequence, one of the few feature length films of the latter part of her career as a cinéaste, Varda operates within intentionally ambiguous thresholds, in-between and liminal spatio-temporalities. Within her perceptual, affective, and pictorial multi-media poetics, Varda registers oscillations within and beyond the instantaneous image through various framing devices — the physical and figurative thresholds between photography and cinema; reality and fantasy; presence and absence; dwelling and dying. Moving from the space of black box cinema to the white cube gallery, Varda's filmic and photographic interventions elicit and elucidate the metaphysical and immanent relations of the image, charting irresolvable temporal paradoxes, thereby effectuating the liminal

interval: a thawing or melting zone between the frozen instant of the photographic still and the fiery flux of moving image, post-photographic and cinematic modulations[1].

Liminality finds its etymological root in the material world. The Latin root *limen* denotes an architectural structure, a threshold[2]. Consider the threshold a kind of indissoluble hinge, a way of holding together what is disparate or discontinuous. Anthropologists annexed the term liminality to articulate the often "ambiguous and indeterminate" passages between social and cultural states in transformation or transition, particularly metamorphoses which become ritualized[3]. A passage or threshold is a space in between, an intermediation or interruption, both bound yet excluded by the terms or parameters which define and condition its existence.

A threshold is an interception: it disrupts the unimpeded flow of habit, tradition, geometry or linear temporality. Social psychologist Paul Stenner posits liminal zones endure through a play of terms in suspension of the rules, a kind of secret worlding or enfolding "a world within a world" that emerges "within and between" incommensurate or incompossible worlds by the temporary interruption of established and accepted boundaries of "ordinary spatio-temporal reality"[4]. Suspension facilitates a new yet previously impossible union, opening up an unmappable interval "betwixt and between"[5]. Converging outlines become the swell of intervallic pulsations, a perpetually ungraspable present from which contours re-emerge scarcely recognizable and illegible as nebulous fog[6].

As much portal as interval, both frame and surface, the mirrors which proliferate throughout *The Beaches of Agnès* reflect and extend a world of optical appearances. The delineating frame of the mirror as a surface or window suggests

Figure 2.
Agnès Varda, filmstill *The Beaches of Agnès*, 2008..

both division and connection between dualities internal and external, private and public. Reflective surfaces often symbolise the capacity to envision and envisage truth, reality, or portend alternative times through the medium of a physical substrate. Mirrors can also signify infinity or eternity, doubling as interiorised or spiritual reflection. In one scene, Varda, with her face obscured as she looks through the viewfinder of a camera grasped between her hands, anchors the camera's (and by extension, her own) focus within a prop mirror, and in doing so, twists the asymmetrical and immobilizing cut of the lens (or filmmaker's purview), redirecting movement through a series of self-perpetuating spirals. In another, through a frame, she faces the camera with her own camera still obscuring her face, the audience becoming the reflective mirror (Figure 2). The frame elongates a tunnel of indivisible movements perpendicular to the pictorial plane, returning through itself its symmetrical inverse.

The mirrored gaze mirroring its gaze becomes gestural. The act of looking, modulated through recursion, reflects through the audience, reflected back through the camera, reflected back by the mirror interface, reflected through Varda in a fractalising series of self-(ef)facing portraits — an image of herself in the very process of her filming herself, ad infinitum. Film theorist Jenny Chamarette suggests in "filming herself filming, [she] becomes both a filming subject, a filmed subject and a screen image [or mirror] — a filmed object"[7]. Varda intensifies the conditions between filming's scopic and specular regimes becoming an intersubjective zone. She destabilises the act of looking as an interminable reading between the static given and the momentum of transition. By divulging the indices of illusion or representation, she involves viewers in the gambit of filmic virtuality or simulacra, as she situates her own body in the frame as a frame. Chamarette asserts this negotiation is the ethical dimension of Varda's gaze: a refusal to be placed at the summit in a hierarchy of gazes, actively and intimately decentering herself within a field of animate and inanimate relations, as one among many[8].

The panoply of frames and framing props and devices embedding non-camera cuts and images within the mainframe of filmic space double as figures or operative objects exposing the artifice and logic of representation always already at work. Accordingly, Varda's moving image grammar and montage less "dialectic" than triptych or polyptych[9]. Her prodigious use of multiple image structures in multiple scales of filmic and photographic installation is one of strategic reconfiguration of pictorial and spatio-temporal logic and possibility. When binary or dyadic structures appear — be it through medium or montage, technique or subject — division becomes generative. An internal movement emerges wherein relations and meaning proliferate and are reconfigured through imbrication and transgression rather than strict delineation, mutual opposition, cancellation or displacement. An architecture of contemporaneous multiplicity, poly-image and polyptych frameworks, whether contained within one another or displayed spatially as a series or frieze, re-organise and expand an alternative spatio-temporal field obliquely through amplification and multiplication.

Media theorists Richard Grusin and Jay David Bolter describe *remediation* as the tendency for newer media to "refashion" older or obsolesced media and modes of representation[10]. In Varda's work, remediation (re)constructs new passages within and between media, i.e. intermedial. Whereas in "transparent immediacy" the medium divests itself of obvious presence to ensure near real-time subliminal experience, an immersive "transparent interface" concealing its operation as a medium, hypermediacy employs "multiple representations inside [...] a heterogeneous space"[11]. Varda's formal syntax and unusual use of framing indexes this heterogeneity, "the logic of hypermediacy [...] fracturing of the space of the picture as a hyper-conscious recognition or acknowledgement of the medium"[12]. Hyper or meta media-conscious dilates the collapsed real-time of filmic immediacy's simulated transparency, a double exposure revealing one medium or representation always already contained or informed by another. This "'doubled' feature [...] which to function as art must somehow fold back on and re-enter itself" distinguishes "between itself and something like reality" or ordinary spatio-temporality, reciprocally imbues her audiovisual art with the coordinates of the image of (its own) thought, an intermediate time-zone[13].

In the essay "Of Other Spaces", philosopher Michel Foucault conceptualises intermediate and interstitial zones as *heterotopias*: circuits between the actual and virtual constantly renegotiating moving parameters, sites of reflection, of memory, imagination and speculation. Foucault extends this notion to time through the concept of *heterochrony* positing, "Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time [...] they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies [...] a sort of absolute break with [...] traditional time"[14]. Heterotopias and heterochronies impart a simultaneously physical and psychological proximity and distance, precisely the affective and ambiguous states conjured by photography which delocalises an image wrested from a specific time and space, propelling it out-of-joint and thereby making it perceptually available to subsequent times and spaces. In cinematic experience, it is intervallic concurrence of a shared abstraction we are swept up in, the patterns of light and moving interrelations before us dissolving into simulacra, yet constantly negotiating the incursion of the obdurate materiality of a screening substrate.

Varda's oeuvre proliferates through interstitial states, heterotopias and attendant heterochronic openings, both conceptual and material. Repurposing and remediating older mediums, her personal archive of photographs and films recombine and are reanimated, becoming both subject matter and the literal material of her late career work. Referring herself to the construction of cinematic worlds as *cinécriture* or ciné-writing, Varda's formalist techniques, (re)framings, poly-image montage and medium-conscious poetics of late work elicits new possibilities for the technologically reproduced picture, mediated space-time and archived memory in the contemporary[15]. Between and beyond images, heterotochronic sutures, and liminal intervals, frames are ensconced within the logic of a continual (re)framing images caught in time, flickering resurrections.

II. THE AFTER LIVES AFTER IMAGES

Zgougou, Varda's beloved feline, dies many deaths in the afterlife of images. Zgougou finds at least a ninth life in her afterlife after death mourning, performed through an eclectic video installation and recording, assembled in three-dimensions. Projected images manifest a contemporary update to the "funerary portrait." *Le Tombeau de Zgougou* (2006) is virtualised taxidermy, a spectral effigy (Figure 3). The "grave" (a looping projected video) is continuously resurrected, travelling through international museum circuits. One of the installation's permanent sites, *La Cabane du Chat* (2016), was a commission for the Foundation Cartier in Paris. Built for the exterior garden, it houses the video projection within a wooden and iron *cabane* or shack.

One sequence of the video loop involves a time-lapse performance wherein Varda covers Zgougou's grave with a colorful collage. The recording is the performed action edited through stop-motion-like animation. An automatic collage or montage, without visible human intervention, arranges as if by magic. Across an actual dirt ground (physically recreated in the *cabane*), a kaleidoscope of projected shadows, stones, shells, and paper flowers superimpose transparently as whimsical music narrates, the real ground and simulated image becoming indiscernible. Zgougou is projected as various "still" video portraits. The cat sequences eventually zoom out to other familiar motifs (from a tree with a uniquely large paper flower to the sea), rising upwards to an aerial elevation, panning the environment of the burial site on Noirmoutier island below.

Varda's cats pervade her work, becoming motifs, icons, and symbols which transcend the medium, animate and shape her tableaux, yet afford a responsiveness to an outside. In their peculiarity and familiarity, reflexivity and intertextual resonance, they open up the space not for empty universals but for generous invitation and expansive community. Through the Zgougou's charnel image, she articulates one of cinema's earliest origin stories: critic and cinema's proto-theorist André Bazin's assertion that communal and collective mourning ritual begets the plastic arts[16]. Bazin posits, Egyptian mortuary ritual catalysed the antidote for an enduring primeval desire, namely, the need to stave off the finality of death by transforming absence into presence: through "embalming the dead" or preserving time against its passing and disintegration[17]. This material (re)presentation, a "last word" against death's complete obliteration, arrives as an artefact: art which makes a fact[18].

The image as arefact manifests the desire for temporal preservation which precedes any advent of camera technology[19]. Bazin claims this impulse is re-inscribed within the very matrix of the apparatus's operation, encoding the genetic material of cinema's photogenic inheritance and photo-graphic instinct[20]. The origin of cinema, which is photography and thereby death, Bazin declares, is its destination[21]. The seeds of cinema's ultimate desire — the full illusion of movement or life — are first planted in death ritual, as absence made present presence.
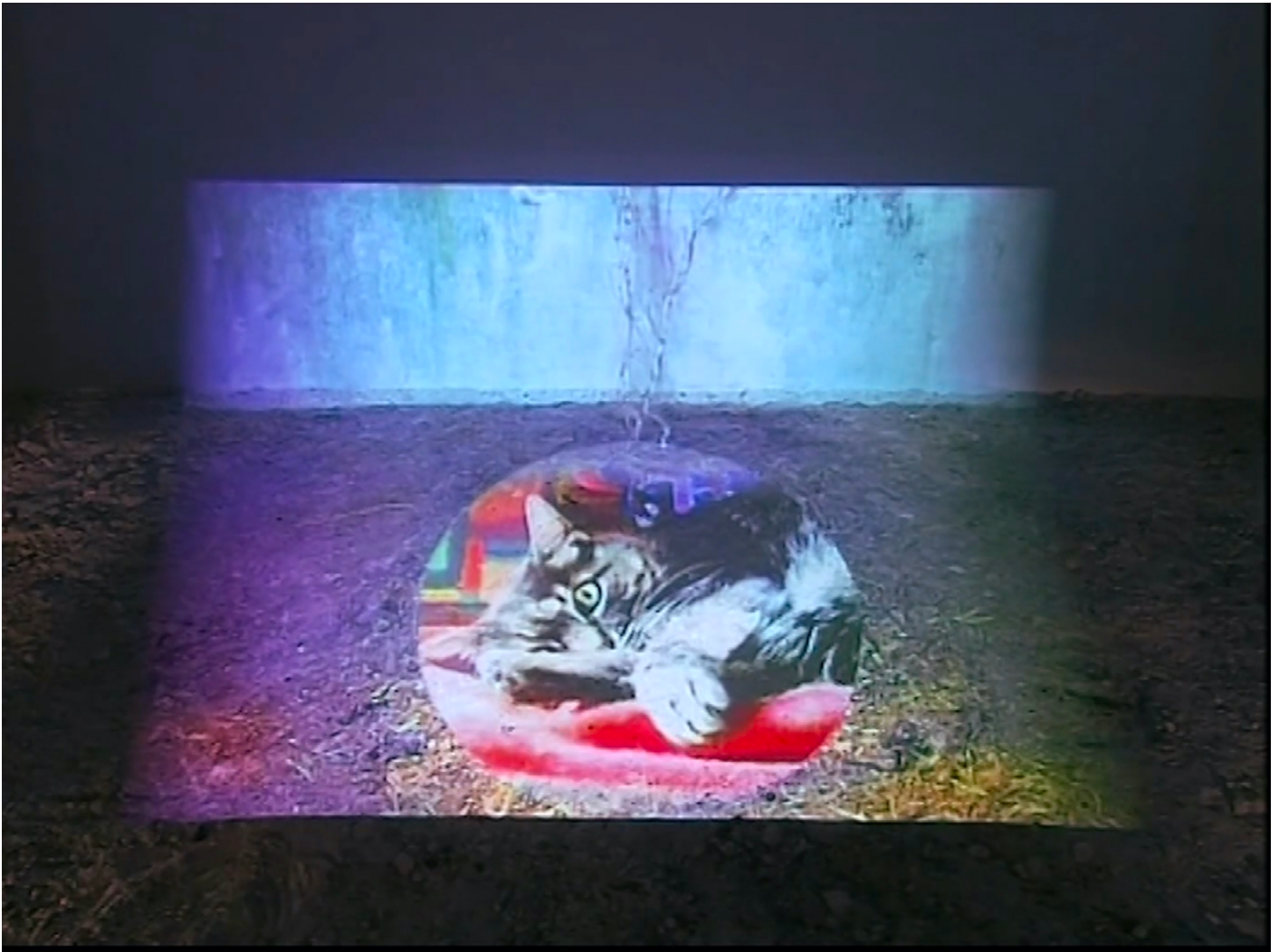
Figure 3.
Le Tombeau de Zgougou, 2006.
Installations by Agnès Varda in T*he Complete Films of Agnès Varda*. Criterion Collection, 2020.

Likewise, Varda begins with an ending which is also a beginning.

For Zgougou's filmic life, mortality as coda or final frame operates neither as resolving denouement nor finality which would function in mutual exclusion of life. Unlike the exclusion of the life/death contradiction, the non-life/non-death double negative is obliquely generative[22]. The not-quite-life but not-quite-death of Zgougou's projected image is the "dead-time" of the tomb art. As life contracts and recedes, temporalities expand and proliferate. The projected "distilled" video ensemble makes "space past" present[23].

The installation choreography synchronizes physical body, psychological interior, and spiritualised space, making co-extensive profane and sacred. Life's ordinary limits in abeyance, the video reverses time's asymmetric arrow of entropic dissolution. We enter through the hut's threshold portal, the video projected directly onto the physical wall, entangling virtual image and actual structure. The framework of the cabane intercepts the linear progression of the exterior world's space and time. Disoriented viewers immerse within the circuitous logic of the loop: a deceased cat as animated icon is resurrected and reanimated multiplying non-death in unbroken looping which elides beginning or end[24].

When Varda refers to the video loop in *Varda by Agnès* (2019), a self-

Figure 4.
Le Tombeau de Zgougou, 2006.
Filmstill, *Varda by Agnès*, 2019.

reflexive medium-conscious subtitle emphasizes the temporal reversibility of technical image runtime (Figure 4). The video artefact replays as an index of its own mediation, time frozen defrosts and thaws through decompression by virtue of ongoing (re)projection. In the *cabane*, the heat of projector light dissolves the frozen moment into a pool of flickering duration, like the flame of a religious candle, alit for a certain eternity. The invisible and absent are virtual yet (re)materialised and reconstituted as transparent and transient but perceivable images. Death and life, before and after, the interval between. Through Varda's tender and magical burial incantations, Zgougou the cat lives on in flickering images after death.

Twentieth century theorist Roland Barthes articulation of the inherent past that is made present by the photograph, the disturbing and uncanny contraction which delocalises time yet still contains a temporality within its stilled frame, is particularly moving here. Moreover, when Barthes writes, "the Photograph was an image without code [...] do not take the photograph for a 'copy' of reality, but for an emanation of *past reality*: a *magic*, not an art. [...] The photograph possesses an evidential force [...] its testimony bears not on the object but on time," he echoes Bazin[25]. For Bazin, the trace of the past is imprinted in the photograph, like a fingerprint[26]. It is time itself that is embalmed, like an insect caught in amber, or a relic, or a fossil inscribing eons of earthly rhythms and movements, forces shaping

and molding thereof[27].

Varda appropriates this logic for what becomes effectively a tomb-cum-mausoleum comprising images. Like Magritte's infamous painting of a pipe (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*), it is not Zgougou or her reproduction, but it is her representation albeit virtualised, reanimated and revitalised. Varda's deconstructed and decompressed contemporary "funerary portraits" evince the power of representation that is both documentation and fictional: partially real and partially (re)constructed, time that is static and moving, both dead and alive. Whether they fix and re-present what is "caught in time" by a photo-sensitive medium, or if they encode through digital video sensors, the performance time of projection transgresses the limits of past and present, imbricating the virtual with the real, memory with perception.

Notably, these shared spaces and experiences of collective and individual (re)enactments of mourning ritual in virtual ensemble evoke the power of images to effectuate and, as the late critic and writer Susan Sontag writes regarding photography, to "testify to time's relentless melt"[28]. Sontag elaborates, "All photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt"[29]. The "funerary portrait" is a kind of moving photograph, which is to say, the recording camera's fixed position creates a "time exposure" like framing, delimited by the cut or field of vision the camera lens is afforded[30]. Varda distends Zgougou's funerary portrait as a loop so that it exceeds itself while still maintaining itself in a continual stasis: its contracts yet distends, freezes yet thaws, melts and liquefies. Yet, the "performance space" of the installation intercepts the tautology of the loop, making it co-extensive with the extraneous duration of viewers and off-screen life[31]. An interval opens between perception and active recollection, within and beyond the environment of the installation: this is Zgougou after life after the image, relentlessly melting.

III. (UN)DYING TIDES

Screens become windows, become surface full of surfaces—they shape the purview of our synthetic and mediated perception through an apparatus. We see through their automatic aperture or makeshift viewfinder and immerse within their projected world planes — they make absences visualisable though diaphanous[32]. To these spectral presences, our own absence registers, becoming felt[33]. The recorded spaces and surfaces of past times through cinema and photography are reconstituted through optical projection—a reconstruction wherein exists an apparitional oscillation between perception and memory, presence and absence.

Concerning the interface or indefinite threshold between death and memory, the decaying body and the eternal image, philosopher Stanley Cavell astutely

with widows walking around it.

remarks on absences materialised and effectuated by a photograph: "Photography maintains the presentness of the world by accepting our absence from it. The reality in a photograph is present to me while I am not present to it; and a world I know, and see, but to which I am nevertheless not present"[34]. Photography evidences an intermediate heterochrony which breaks with conventional time: an absence which is present, a presence which is absent, real and yet the virtual locus whereby we experience our own absence[35].

Varda continually negotiates the inextricability of these dualities, concretised most acutely between dwelling and dying. The titular reference in the installation *Les Veuves de Noirmoutier* (*The Widows of Noirmoutier*, 2004), the island where she and her late beloved Jacques Demy often spent time, is both the subject and locus. Noirmoutier is imbued with the past — her memories overlay, vaporous like a transparent projection across the present. The island is a frame and sign; a location and interlocutor; a lens and situation. Every place is always two, and landscapes themselves are sundered in fragments, both past and present interweave and co-exist. The doubling of places figures prominently in her oeuvre, through motifs and syntax. She recombines the pieces, building a sense of the place in the present,

Figure 5.
The Widows of Noirmoutier, 2004. Installations by Agnès Varda in *The Complete Films of Agnès Varda*. Criterion Collection, 2020.

though the parts slightly mismatch. Never fully an exact reproduction or replica of either past or present alone, fragments are always an incomplete and partial representation or fictional reconstruction. Places enfold, infold with other places, other spaces and other times — a passage along a mnemonic labyrinthine whereby location itself demarcates and holds together a composite of disparate parts.

The Widows installation — originally conceived for Foundation Cartier — is a documentary displayed in a square polyptych arrangement, a frieze of fifteen concurrently playing rectilinear screens upon a wall (Figure 5). The smaller square screens surround and frame the largest rectangle, which displays a projected loop of a video of the widows all together. Each separate screen corresponds to a single widow as well as a single seat in the audience. Each with its own individual headphone set which can be listened to in any order. In the central film, the widows of sailors — all in black attire — walk in a circle on a beach, one following after another, ritual-like in their movements. Their encircling suggests an absence: a black empty bench or table in the center. At first glance, the table might perhaps appear to even be a pedestal for a missing sculpture (or coffin), absence re-materialised or re-presenced by virtue of an architectural support exposing what is not there. This conspicuous elision or redaction is nearly invisible yet framed by its very nonexistence upon the horizontal plinth.

Every loss becomes another frame or aperture as each widow embodies or indexes different points along the journey of mourning — one, a recent widow, another speaks about her over twenty-year loss. The widows are accustomed to the temporal rhythms and demands of life in relationship to water. Their livelihoods are circumscribed both by the forces between sky and sea, time and space, climate and resources, patterns and change. Regular diurnal cycles alternate with often unpredictable events and elements, defining and redefining the shape of their pasts and lives. As people who live by the rhythms of the sea, they exist at the conjunction of planetary ecology and the demands of the local and global economy.

Varda uses metonymic cuts and fragmentation to focus on the widows' hands and gestures. Close-ups emphasise their faces and expressions during each individual testimony. These gestures and expressions are felt and present, each viewer linked to only one individual screen, thereby unfolding a one-to-one correspondence and personal communication shared between one widow and one spectator. The separate conversations are embedded among a collective. The gallery room creates a sense of both community and separation. This evinces the sense of mourning both as a common yet isolating experience. The headphones can be passed around or viewers can physically switch seats, the order one views incidental or contingent. In the absence of a set of headphones, one hears only the violin and movements of the waves, the sonic experience of the ocean from the center screened film. The waves mark or inflect time, both visual and aural, the pattern of tides' ebb and flow. Ambient noise within the gallery space and real-time audio fragments become entangled with the pre-recorded soundtracks and dialogue, sound waves overlay, diffuse throughout.

The photographic form imparts what art critic and theorist Thierry de Duve suggests: "time exposure, of which the photo-portrait is a concrete instance [...] whether alive or dead, the portrait is funerary [...] it liberates an autonomous and recurrent temporality, which is the time of remembrance"[36]. Varda mobilises the genre or form and reconfigures it to become more than itself. Varda's time "collected" portraits (time-exposure photograph-like) and time "constructed" portraits (indivisible time of the fixed camera's long take) are re-presented and framed within the tangible physicality of a window-like screen. The intimate moving image portrait distill an image of each deceased sailor through the framing window of each widow's time of remembrance.

Within each widow screen, various symbolic ephemera materialise and refer to the island and the beloved. The widows include many still photo portraits and other snapshot-like artefacts to evidence the lives of their beloved sailors, both as temporal punctures and symbols. Like a Russian doll, there are funerary portraits nested within the funerary portrait interview itself. A "tableaux post-mortem," they are a (re)constructed picture of the deceased, an amalgam of fragmented yet materialised vestiges of time past. The documentation of a real emotive testimony and the "ephemera objects" as "memory-traces" is transcribed through the recorded time of the filmed interview[37]. Peter Wollen suggests physical states and elements as an apt metaphor to illustrate this tension between the piercing icy "time without decay" recession of the photograph in contrast to the pyretic "incessant motion" whirling flame of film[38]. Elaborating upon Barthes' notion of death and the photograph, de Duve further explicates the dimension of mourning immanent to every photograph, whether a snapshot or time exposure. He suggests the funerary portrait especially becomes a "consoling object," or in Freud's words, "the work of mourning [emphasis in original]"[39]. This process involves "cathexis" or a transfer of intensive investment: the love and memory, affection or "libidinal affect" for the beloved transferred in the absence of said beloved or presence towards a substitute viz. The image[40].

The past world of surfaces or optical appearances transcribed and fixed within the surface of the photograph is "hyper-cathected" as "memory and expectation" disanchors from its original object and is redirected, affixing to another object which stands in the absence of the original referent or object of desire[41]. The process itself recalls, once more, Bazin's astute insight into the origin of the plastic arts, namely photography's fulfilment of an innate psychological desire or need whereby the function of the photograph is like mummification—a surrogacy which preserves what passes and makes present what is absent[42]. Death and mummification, the image and mourning. Crucially, however, de Duve suggests insofar as we confer an "indexical nature" accorded to photography, "there is something like a process that occurs within the semiotic structure of the photograph [...] photography is probably the only image-producing technique that has a mourning process built into its semiotic structure, just as it has a built-in trauma effect. [...] The referent of an index cannot be set apart from its signifier"[43]. Each operation is a temporal

and semio-material index. The "superficial series" or long exposure portraits stand in as substitutes for what is absent or dead; the "referential series" or snapshots index a fractional shard of a reality which is always already lost to the instant, indefinitely[44].

De Duve continues, "This particular surface temporality of photography is congenial with the ebb and flow of memory [the funerary image or portrait] does not limit its reference to the particular time when the photograph was taken, but allows the imaginary reconstruction of any moment of the life of the portrayed person"[45]. Each photograph is a privileged moment, a landmark, yet the liminal interval created between photographs allows for our mnemonic and perceptual participation and for indetermination[46]. Varda's moving image "memory portraits" appear to affirm the inherent mourning process embodied within the image—the "two opposite libidinal attitudes," the loss of the reality which the instant inscribes, as well as the resurrection of what has passed on[47]. Significantly, however, Varda overrides the "stasis" of both operations — she thaws frozen instants or memories and melts the wax mortuary frames, catapulting cold matter back into fiery orbit.

The appearance of photographs in each moving image interview make multiple temporalities synchronous. The "time of the photographs" enduring presence within a film is an embodied paradox[48]. Like a zombie, "the moving picture of the motionlessness subject," this installation is a cinema of the undying, the persistence of the undead[49]. The past and the beloved virtually intertwined through the performance of recollection. The runtime inscribed by the nonhuman camera apparatus, witness to the resurrection of memory by each widow's recounting, synchronizes with each subsequent viewer's psycho-perceptual apparatus. Through each corresponding headset, the extension and amplification memory as a process through the ritual of mourning is felt and witnessed.

A collectivity coalesces through the individuals brought into the communal experience, a kind of filmic seance. The ensemble solicits and elicits our sensory apparatuses, the luminal virtuality of sights and sounds become affectively embodied, becoming another's memory. Lit across the polyptych of multiple screens, the "partial determined form of reference," both memory and moving images automate the need for a contextualisation and spectatorial presence for perception, misalignment and permutation[50].

Not unlike any attempt to remember the past or reconstruct what is absent, in this installation the viewers fill within the lacunae of representations, an always insufficient attempt to represent (a) life in whole through mosaic, the always incompleteness of both subjects and traces, memory and images. We are summoned spectators or witnesses. We let the widows' aural testimonies and their faces inscribe through us and within us they reverberate and inhere. The cinematic unfolding of virtual movements continues. It subsists in the gallery space and allotted interval for the installation, simultaneously lingering and liminal, co-existing within us and our sensorium. We carry their testimony in our embodied memory, even once we exit the gallery, long thereafter.

This shack has a story.

VI. LUMINOUS LAMENT

When asked in an 1984 *Photogenies* magazine questionnaire, "Does photography teach you something about cinema? Or vice versa?", Angès Varda responds, "Photography never ceases to instruct me when making films [...] *every image becomes a memory*, and all memories congeal and set [emphasis in original]"[51]. Further, in a 2019 text for her art exhibition at Domaine Chaumont-sur-Loire, she voices an unusual enthusiasm, near fetishistic nostalgia for the film reel and its box: "My nostalgia for 35-mm cinema films turned into a desire to recycle them [...] A royal arch made of empty 35mm film boxes invites us to make our way into the kingdom of the *second life of films* [emphasis in original]"[52].

The film box—where memories are set to congeal—is haunted with ghostly traces of the inscribed matter which within it once coiled and dwelled. It is the hollow drum home (or coffin) of cinema's material and photographic DNA, the celluloid film strip. Ever the gleaner, Varda gives film a second life and second home, quite literally. The late filmmaker gleans and revives a failed film's ill-fated amber inscriptions from their mortal coils and boxed obsolescence.

Near the end of *The Beaches of Agnès*, Varda conjures a liminal and intermedial zone of exchange between photography and cinema. She queries, "What is cinema? A light source, captured by image either dark or colourful"[53]. The flat, immaterial and two-dimensional diaphanous motion pictures, the ceaseless flow of projected photographic cinema, is re-materialised in three dimensions within an architectural framework for the space of the Grande Salle concert hall designed by architect Jean Nouvel. The installation, *Ma cabane de l'échec* (2006), comprises 11,500 feet of celluloid strips hung from the nine reels of her film that flopped, *Les Créatures* (1966) (Figures 6, 7). This "cabane de cinèma" (cinema shack) returns the exhausted movie to life through a spatialised and photo-graphic logic.

Here at the end, we return to the beginning—cinema's photographic origin is its destination[54]. The *cabane* is a box, much like a camera obscura, though

[Left] Figure 6.
View of installation *Ma cabane de l'échec*, 2006.

[Right] Figure 7.
Agnès Varda, filmstill *The Beaches of Agnès*, 2008.

its walls are made of unwound and stilled reels of transparent photochemical images. The rotations of the earth on its axis keeps time: the diurnal and circadian transformations are nature's illuminating incantation. The home made of images becomes its own projector, rhythms drawn by the "solar pencil" shaping time[55]. As luminous waves breach the glass panes of the gallery, the transparent celluloid strips come to life, shivering and awash. Bathing the space in a dance of colours, gossamer ephemeral light weaves intervals of fleeting images through the vertical sequences of photographs. Seated within this scintillating abode, Agnès Varda looks at the camera and remarks, "In here, I feel like cinema is the house I live in. It's like I have always lived there"[56].

Agnès died on the day of the Domaine Chaumont-sur-Loire inauguration.

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_____ *The Beaches of Agnès*. Ciné-Tamaris, 2008. The Complete Films of Agnès Varda. 1 hr., 52 min. https://. www.criterionchannel.com/videos/the-beaches-of-agnes.

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1   Wollen, 2007, 110.

2   Turner 2011, 94.

3   Ibid, 95. Turner refers to anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep.

4   Stenner 2021, 22, 29.

5   Turner 2011, 95.

6   Stenner 2021, 35. Stenner theorizes liminality as 'intermediate' temporality which, rather than clearly define a state of being (ontic), occasions becoming (ontogenesis).

7   Chamarette 2012, 121.

8   Ibid, 122-123.

9   Dialectical montage (see Sergei Eisenstein Towards a Theory of Montage) draws from the "Kuleshov effect" whereby the juxtaposition of two shots in linear consecutive sequencing (one image follows and displaces another) generates affective meaning for and by viewers. Less oppositional or linearly sequential, Varda's non-linear syntax and (re)framings incorporate overlay, simultaneity, immediacy and hypermediacy (see Grusin and Bolter) whereby myriad images, mediums, and screens do not displace or oppose one another but co-exist, displayed concurrently, adjacent or embedded within one another, allowing multiple networks of meaning-making to proliferate.

10   Grusin & Bolter 1999, 19.

11   Ibid, 23-24, 32.

12   Ibid, 38.

13   Stenner 2021, 4.

14   Foucault 1986, 22-27.

15   Smith 1999, 14.

16   Bazin 1960, 4.

17   Ibid.

18   Refer to the etymology of artefact, from Latin arte "by skill" and factum "thing made". https://www.etymonline.com/word/artifact.

19   Bazin 1960, 6.

20   Ibid.

21   Bazin 1967, 21.

22   Baker 2008, 175-188. Baker refers to Rosalind Krauss who theorizes oblique expansion generated between double negations through a quaternary diagram of relation-

ships.

23   Rodowick 2007, 65.

24   Stenner 2021, 18.

25   Barthes 1982, 88.

26   Bazin, "Ontology of the Photographic Image," 8.

27   Ibid, 8.

28   Sontag 1977, 26.

29   Ibid.

30   Cf. Thierry de Duve on the "funerary portrait." De Duve, 2007, 54-55.

31   Grant 2010.

32   Cavell 1979, 73. Cavell writes, "A succession of automatic world projections."

33   Ibid, 23.

34   Ibid.

35   Foucault 1986, 25; Also see: D.N. Rodowick in *The Virtual Life of Film for exegesis on cinematic virtuality*.

36   De Duve 2007, 54-55.

37   Catherine Grant quotes Robert Smithson on his land art 'Incidents of Mirror-travel in the Yucatan' (1969) wherein his photographs 'document' the ephemeral and temporarily installed site: "If you visit the sites (a doubtful probability) you find nothing but memory-traces." Cf. Grant 2010, 7.

38   Wollen, 2007, 110.

39   De Duve, 2007, 59.

40   Ibid.

41   Ibid.

42   Bazin 1960, 4.

43   De Duve, 2007, 59.

44   Ibid.

45   Ibid.

46   Refer to Chamarette on the circulation of affect across the surfaces and interfaces of Varda's oeuvre which co-constitutes the actual-virtual circuit. Cf. Chamarette, Phenomenology, 10.

47   De Duve, 2007, 59.

48   Wollen, 2007, 110.

49   Ibid.

50   Cf. Schröter, 2013. Schröter quotes Edward Branigan's notion that a "reference understood as fiction is an only partially determined form of reference." Varda, however, appears to wager that the mourning process, through remembering, is too a "partially determined form of reference"; a quasi-fiction in the absence of the dead person being mourned; a fictive reconstruction re-contextualised through "true artifice", both material and psychological.

51   Agnès Varda, "On Photography and Cinema, 1984." in *The Cinematic*, ed. David Campany (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 62.

52   Agnès Varda, "Agnès Varda, Trois pièces sur cour: La serre du bonheur, à deux mains et L'arbre de Nini, " *Domaine De Chaumont-Sur-Loire*, accessed December 1, 2021. http://www.domaine-chaumont.fr/en/centre-arts-and-nature/2019-art-season/agnes-varda.

53   *The Beaches of Agnès*, directed by Agnès Varda, (Ciné-Tamaris, 2008), 1:48:40.

54   Bazin 1967, 21.

55   Eastlake 1857, 3.

56   *The Beaches of Agnès*, 1:48:55.