

## 400 Feet in Forgotten Time

a found-footage film by Pavel Prokopic

music by Isabel Benito-Gutierrez

Year: 2019

Format: Super8

Duration: 24min33sec

<https://aberlabordy.org.uk/shifting-ecologies-videotheque/#Pavel>





## *Affect as a Structuring Principle*

- The Film Emerged from an AHRC-funded Practice-as-research project **Affective Cinema**
- The wider research is concerned with producing new experimental film structures that transcend conventional storytelling and coherent communication of meaning by being structured on the basis of audio-visual affects.





## *Affect as a Structuring Principle*

- Affects, based on Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, are impersonal, undifferentiated singularities contained in the work they exist independently of the human being as a subject – they exist as 'sensible experiences in their singularity, liberated from organising systems of representation' (Colebrook 2001: 22)

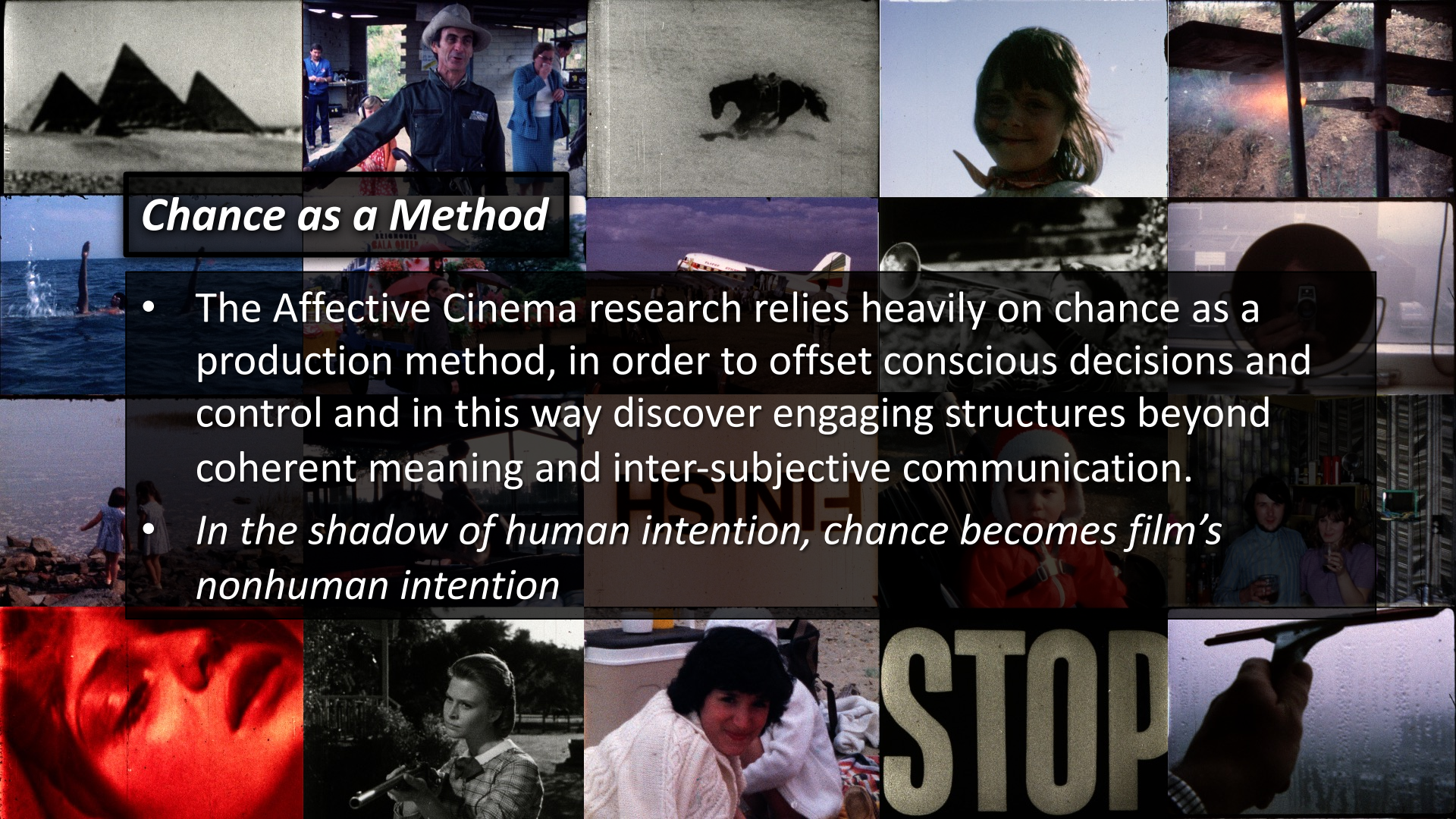




## ***Recent publications that emerged from the Affective Cinema research***

- **‘I’m Not There Anymore’: Film Performance Affects and the Loosening of Narrative in *Open Screens***  
<http://doi.org/10.16995/os.38>
- **Mirrors and Tears in *Screenworks***  
<https://doi.org/10.37186/swrks/11.1/3>
- **Affective Cinema: Experimenting with Feelings of Meaning in *IJCMR*** <https://doi.org/10.33008/IJCMR.2019.17>





## *Chance as a Method*

- The Affective Cinema research relies heavily on chance as a production method, in order to offset conscious decisions and control and in this way discover engaging structures beyond coherent meaning and inter-subjective communication.
- *In the shadow of human intention, chance becomes film's nonhuman intention*

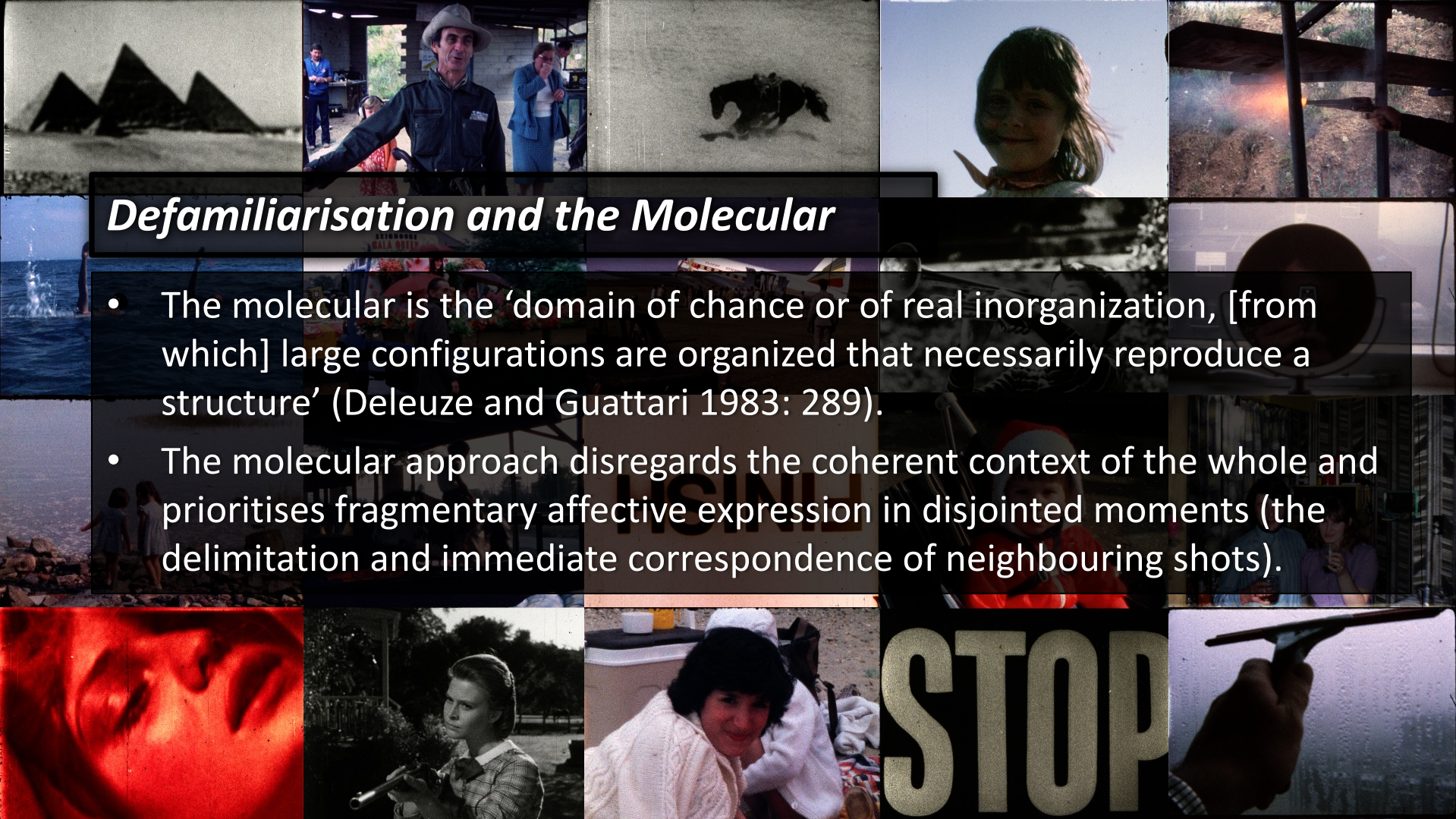




## *Defamiliarisation and the Molecular*

- Another important method, chiefly applied in post-production, is what Shklovsky's (1997) refers to as 'defamiliarisation' – removing 'objects from the automatism of perception' (4).
- My use of defamiliarisation in post-production expresses the Deleuzian notion of 'molecular' (as opposed to 'molar') fundamentally linked to affects.





## Defamiliarisation and the Molecular

- The molecular is the 'domain of chance or of real inorganization, [from which] large configurations are organized that necessarily reproduce a structure' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 289).
- The molecular approach disregards the coherent context of the whole and prioritises fragmentary affective expression in disjointed moments (the delimitation and immediate correspondence of neighbouring shots).

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## *The Found-footage Context of the Research*

- *400 Feet in Forgotten Time* represents a radical shift in the approach to Affective Cinema, since it applies the production methods concerning chance and defamiliarisation to working with found footage and archive, rather than filming new original content and applying methods of directing performers.





## *The Found-footage Context of the Research*

- The film nevertheless also exposes important ontological questions pertaining to the distinction between the indexicality of digital and photochemical film (photochemical film has an additional indexical layer).
- Super8 is an ideal format to express both chance and defamiliarisation on the aesthetic level of the image (due to the various imperfections being magnified by the small frame and amateur technology).
- A video essay that deals with this subject in more detail and that was presented at the recent BAFFTS conference:  
<https://vimeo.com/523727372/6dd118652a>





## The Process

- Instead of applying strategies to capture contingency in reality (such as filming excessive amounts of footage) or applying methods of directing actors focused on non-representational results, *400 Feet in Forgotten Time* utilised eBay as a source of chance.
- Over a period of a month, I indiscriminately purchased various Super8 reels of film, focusing on low price (thus quantity) rather than specific content.
- The budget allowed me to acquire around 60 film reels, including commercially-released dramas, cartoons and home movies.





## *The Process*

- As the footage arrived in mail, I captured a rough digital representation by filming the material off a projector, numbering the film reels and digital representations correspondingly.
- I then made precise decisions about the edit (focusing on finding and combining molecular affective moments) using non-linear editing software.
- Once this process was complete, I identified the shots – and their precise delimitation – in the physical film and then edited and spliced them together, filling up a 400ft reel.





## *The Process*

- The reel was eventually scanned. The final digital version fully exposes the haptic damage and imperfections of the disparate films, as well as the marks of the splicing process and imperfect alignment of sprockets.







## *The Process*

- **The approach combines two layers of chance**
- Chance in the process of acquiring the material indiscriminately and blindly on eBay (analogous to filming in unpredictable reality).
- Visual chance on the level of the image: imperfections/damage but also the affective moments that could be isolated from the ordinary context of the dramas and home movies (the real and singularity of the image revealed).





## *The Process*

- Music was composed by Isabel Benito-Gutierrez to respond to and amplify the (latent) fragments of feeling in the images, helping to defamiliarise their ordinary context.
- The music also brings non-narrative unity to the piece, which is nevertheless rooted in the molecular flashes of significance in the individual shots.