

**AFFECTIVE CINEMA: BETWEEN STYLE,
CHANCE AND THE MOVING BODY**

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Note on Supporting Materials/Practical Outcomes

All the film work, and audio-visual documentation and evidence of this practice research project can be viewed on Vimeo and Youtube. Where names of films or materials are in bold and underlined in this thesis (e.g. **Affective Sign 1**, **Video 10**, **Text 2**), these names are clickable and will take you directly to the relevant file on Vimeo, Youtube or Google Drive in your web browser, where the materials can be viewed.

For all *Vimeo* videos that require a password, the password is: bergson

All video materials can also be viewed on the following Vimeo and Youtube playlists:

Main Practical Outcomes (Affective Signs): **<https://vimeo.com/album/5937800>**
password: **bergson**

Evidence and Documentation (Videos 1–29):
<https://bit.ly/2Pz9m5g>

Evidence and Documentation (Videos 30-34): **<https://vimeo.com/album/5939688>**
password: **bergson**

In case the password or any video links do not work please email **pavel.prokopic@gmail.com** to request a new link and/or a password.

While the Main Practical Outcomes represent a key, precise aspect of the research, the Evidence and Documentation video materials are on the whole more extensive, in order to allow the reader to fully consider the issues illustrated by the videos in this thesis. It is therefore not essential to watch these videos at their full length, especially if engaging with them as they appear referenced in the text. Rather, the reader should feel free to only watch each video to the extent that it satisfies its purpose of clarifying and illustrating the particular matter discussed.

List of Main Practical Outcomes

Affective Cinema collage (9min10sec)
Affective Sign 1 (5min)
Affective Sign 1 Ver2 (5min)
Affective Sign 2 (5min19sec)
Affective Sign 3 (5min42sec)
Affective Sign 3 Ver2 (5min42sec)
Affective Sign 4 (5min8sec)
Affective Sign 5 (5min54sec)
Affective Sign 6 (8min49sec)
Affective Sign 7 (5min44sec)
Affective Sign 7 Ver2 (5min44sec)
Affective Sign 8 (6min12sec)
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Affective Sign 9 (15min6sec)
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Video 13 Stage 2 Music Affective Mimicry (2min34sec)

Video 14 Stage 2 Mimetic Differences in Dubbing (5min36sec)

Video 15 Stage 3 Meditative Direction (9min50sec)

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Abstract

Affective Cinema is a practice research project in film, informed by art cinema and experimental film traditions, and by conceptual fields derived from film theory and philosophy (specifically film ontology, and the philosophy of Deleuze, Bergson and Barthes). The primary outcome of the research is a series of short films, or ‘Affective Signs’, which are structured on the basis of affective significance – an original concept identified in various film moments from the history of cinema, and subsequently developed through the project. Affective significance is a sense of meaning that is felt before it can be thought: it eludes language, and transgresses the boundaries of traditional knowledge and (inter-subjective) communication. Affective significance is produced by chance being captured and revealed on film, in combination with stylistic aspects and decisions that do not coherently assimilate these flashes of contingency into the film’s ordinary signification, but instead amplify their nonhuman origin in the real outside of the human world of reason, concepts and understanding. Through experimenting with film performance, and its ability to expose the nonhuman nature of the moving body as the real (below the human surface of intention, self-control, subjectivity, and meaningful gestures), the sense of affective significance can be amplified, when combined with the aforementioned aspects of style and chance.

The research expands the potential of cinema by producing experimental film structures in which affective significance can be identified, and by analysing and describing the methodological and aesthetic conditions needed for it to arise. In the process, both established and new methods of film production are tested, and formulated into an applicable set of approaches to filmmaking, cinematography and directing performers. Furthermore, the research contributes to the ontological understanding of film by defining the conceptual field surrounding affective significance, which is rooted in established film scholarship on affect, semiotics and the movement/stillness paradox of film, but also uniquely acquired through and embedded in practice.

Introduction: Affective Significance

The idea for this research originates in my dissatisfaction, as a filmmaker, with valuing narrative as the basis for understanding and construction of film. While it is exciting to create (or to experience) a complex narrative structure that ‘works’ – a structure that provides a sense of unity, harmony and balance of all the story elements, releasing information in a controlled manner that simultaneously engages, challenges and stimulates the viewer – this is essentially an accomplishment of the imagination, an achievement of literary craft.¹ In this sense, the tradition of cinema is deeply rooted in literature, and the ability to make a film is in effect secondary to the ability to write (and structure) a text. Film style, and the meaning delivered in film through visual rather than verbal means, is then also subservient to the story it is supposed to tell – a story that was contained in its entirety in the script. The aspects unique to the film form – such as cinematography and editing (including the particular way a plot could be exposed in film through editing) – essentially serve to improve upon the story, or tell it with particular lucidity, sense of novelty, or visual efficacy peculiar to film. However, this insistence on storytelling (which includes most of documentary film also, albeit without the absolute primacy of the written text) negates and suppresses what is truly unique about film: *its direct relationship to the real*. The focus on narrative hinders the (aesthetic) exploration of what film *is* in its own right: we fail to expose and experience its elusive and problematic *ontology*.

This realisation of what makes film a unique and distinct form of art emerged from my fascination with certain brief, singular moments in cinema that seem to be subservient to the film’s narrative, moral or existential meaning, yet seem to momentarily dislocate the intentional and controlled function of film as inter-subjective communication. Furthermore, I realised that my recognition of these brief moments had coincided with my deep appreciation for broader aspects of form and style (in films by directors such as Tarkovsky or Kieslowski) that seem to be more concerned with the unique possibilities of film expression than with narrative-engagement strategies. I realised that for me, as a

¹ See, for example, Robert McKee’s *Story* (1999) for his influential exposition of the craft of screenwriting.

viewer and as a practitioner, these aspects of cinema are not secondary features emerging from the adaptation of the written word of the script to this particular audio-visual medium; they *are the film*: they are the aspect that makes film different from any other form of art and/or communication. I wanted to understand and try to define exactly what this aspect of film is, and whether it would be possible to approach (fiction) filmmaking with the primary purpose of giving rise to this particular cinematic form, without the aim of telling a story or communicating a message.

Apart from a particular kind of style that prioritises the aesthetic potential of the moving image over seamless impression of (fictional or documentary) reality, I realised that it is the unique ability of film to directly capture and expose reality – in movement – that contributes to the mysterious cinematic expression in these moments. Because the real is not in itself controlled, orchestrated or designed by humanity (as fundamentally opposed to the constructed reality of fiction *and language*), the impossibility to fully control reality *has* to register on film, if it is based on an indexical, photographic image (rather than animation or computer-generated imagery). And it is when something is (or appears to be) markedly originating in reality without human control and intention – by chance – that film can bring attention to it, by revealing it, by amplifying it, by abstracting it, even if (and especially if) it concerns a subtle aleatory arrangement that could have easily appeared insignificant (or entirely invisible) to the naked eye perceiving it directly. In the way film captures an unpredictable arrangement of reality as a *still, permanent image* (a sequence of still images), it gives rise to this very contingent arrangement *as chance*. If this moment of chance – as a particular sliver of space and time – was visible in quite this way *only* to the camera (or if only the privileged view of the camera revealed it), then this amounts to saying that this moment of chance has only ever existed *as image*, that the moment of chance arrangement in reality is inseparable from the still image. It is the moment of capture and framing where this aleatory arrangement originates as a singularity and as significance – as a mark of the very point of contact between becoming and being. *In the shadow of human intention, chance becomes film's nonhuman intention*. This also results in a particular effect in the case of film performance, because the 'privileged view' film gives of reality unlocks in the body a sense of meaning and importance *beyond* intention and

communication. It reveals to the human viewer – in a nonhuman way – the inherent, pre-verbal significance of the human body of the other.

Stemming from these considerations of cinema, the initial conceptual research in film theory and philosophy exposed the ontological problem of film movement to be critical to the understanding of these moments where chance, style and performance uniquely, and significantly, align. One of the underlying ontological problems in film theory is that the medium can be thought of as simultaneously moving and still: the chaotic movement of reality is being captured, preserved and framed by film as a finite sequence of still images. (The ontological/aesthetic issues surrounding the movement-stillness paradox of film have been discussed by a diverse range of authors – see, for example, Metz 1991, Deleuze 1989, Arnheim 1957, Remes 2012, Gunning 2004b, Mulvey 2006, Bellour 1990 or Bergson 1944.) However, whilst being *inherently semiotic* due to its permanence and re-playability (always opening up to a reading and interpretation *as text*), film also has the unique ability to *reveal* ‘affective nuances’ of the movement of the real – which are outside of representation, and not accessible to ordinary perception – because of its automatic, nonhuman *access* to the real (movement). The automatic, indexical nature of film is reflected in influential theories of Bazin (2005), Benjamin (2008) or Kracauer (1960), but also relates to non-representational (or affect) theories and readings of cinema influenced by Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy (see Shaviri 1993; Del Río 2008); however, while addressing film’s *direct* relationship to the real (and in this way transcending dominant theoretical/philosophical approaches to film rooted in semiotics, narrative or psychoanalysis), the non-representational reading is insufficient to account for the elusive, semiotic aspect of film, which results from the very point of contact between the movement of the real and the stillness of film, rather than from its narrative or communicational levels.

Thus a specific and creative ‘structuralist re-turn’ is necessary, I would argue, to reconcile the fundamental paradox of movement and stillness at the heart of film. Such possibility was foreshadowed by Roland Barthes’ concept of *third meaning* (1977), which is fundamentally related to my understanding of the unique expression of film

resulting from the intersection of becoming and being, of movement and stillness, but nevertheless fails to account for the critical aspect of movement in film. Eugenia Brinkema (2014) then suggests a specific *reading* for affect in the formal structures of film, but goes perhaps too far in the direction of formalism, and in the process denies the significant element of the (filmic) real that is arguably at the heart of Barthes' third meaning, but is also a fundamental element in the conception of affects for Shaviro and Del R o. This is because film gives rise to a direct, indexical imprint of the chaotic, unpredictable movement of reality – capturing a trace of the nonhuman basis of reality – making this image (and sound) of reality still, yet also capturing something of the fundamental temporality of reality.² The moving-still nature of film allows for the direct imprint of the real to be aesthetically and temporally manipulated. No other established medium or art form can do that. This attribute of film represents its unique creative (and philosophical) potential; it is a way in which film contributes something entirely new to the world.

My concept of affective significance emerges from this research in film ontology, in response to trying to understand the particular effect of the combination of chance, style and performance as a form of expression unique to film. The concept relies on the inherent duality of film between movement and stillness. It relies on the capacity of film to preserve an imprint of the incessant movement of reality (the nonhuman origin of which can best manifest itself as chance, which by definition cannot be *constructed* by human intention), but then shape this imprint aesthetically and temporally as image (a sequence of still images), through the creative and technological means of cinema. Affective significance is a sense of meaning that is felt before it can be thought: it eludes language, and transgresses the boundaries of traditional knowledge and (inter-subjective) communication. Affective significance is produced by chance being captured and revealed on film, in combination with stylistic aspects and decisions that do not coherently assimilate these flashes of contingency into film's ordinary regime of signification, but instead amplify their nonhuman origin in the real outside of the human

² As Steven Shaviro (1993) puts it, 'the automatism and nonselectivity of mechanical reproduction make it possible for cinema to break with traditional hierarchies of representation and enter directly into a realm of matter, life, and movement.' (31)

world of reason, concepts and understanding. As my reflection on cinema and on the practice conducted for this research reveals, in light of the relevant theory, if the aspect of representation and communication prevails (that is, if the viewer recognises human structures, principles and meaning in the narrative, people's behaviour, or in the representation of three-dimensional space) then the potential for affective significance of film is reduced or negated altogether. Likewise, if the role of chance is not apparent, then the aspect of intentional communication will likely dominate the effect of the film. If, on the other hand, the presence of chance is maximised in the image (or chance contributes to its origin), and the image is shaped and amplified by stylistic means, which themselves are not guiding the image back to coherent, meaningful representation of a story or human reality, then the potential for affective significance will be maximised.

Similarly to Elena Del Río (2008), I argue (and evidence through this practice research) that the human body is the most prominent element of the real that can be filmed, especially as film is a privileged medium for exhibiting bodies, and therefore, a nuance of the movement of the body can be revealed and captured on film that would otherwise go unnoticed. This captured detail of the moving body can entirely elude representation (illuminating the body's nonhuman origin in reality), but it can equally be overtaken by representation, if that specific body serves to relay a communicated meaning, plays a part in a narrative context, or signals a recognisable gesture or emotion. However, in film performance (whether fictional or non-fictional) where the communicative and representative aspect is suppressed or ruptured, the body has the power to contribute to the overall contingency (real-ness) of the image; it has the power to enhance the affective significance of the film (I outline the aspect of film performance in more detail in 4.1).

My focus in this practice research project has been to maximise the interplay of the factors that contribute to affective significance, by developing and applying new and established/re-imagined methods and approaches to film production. The factors that combine to create conditions for affective significance to emerge are the nonhuman real captured on film in the form of chance (in both performance, and the surrounding reality

that is being filmed), and making such aesthetic and temporal choices that enhance the non-representational effect of this chance (or offset and rupture its representational effect). In this way, the unintentional, nonhuman origin of the contingent elements can be amplified, rather than suppressing or overshadowing this origin with communication of meaning and with coherent representation of human reality. These aesthetic and temporal choices dispelling the film's conventional representation can also be understood as defamiliarisation, a term coined by Victor Shklovsky (1997). Shklovsky defines two essential aspects of the image: 'imagery as a practical means of thinking, as a means of placing objects within categories; and imagery as poetic, as a means of reinforcing an impression' (3). For him, 'the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known', for art has the potential to remove 'objects from the automatism of perception' (4). Ultimately, for Shklovsky, 'an image is not a permanent referent for those mutable complexities of life which are revealed through it; its purpose is not to make us perceive meaning, but to create a special perception of the object – it creates a "vision" of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it' (4-5, emphases in the original).³

Mirroring the axis between movement and stillness that underpins my concept of affective significance, the primary basis of the concept is a synthesis of specific works of Bergson, Deleuze and Barthes. As Bergson explains in *Creative Evolution* (1944), the real (the world as it is beyond the human realm of language, concepts and cognition) is an incessant flux, a constant flow of movement, *becoming*. We don't really ever see this movement of the real, because the basis of the intellect is to grasp the world conceptually as still. Even our understanding of movement (of an object moving from point A to point B) relies on conceptually stilled and abstracted space and time. While being part of the movement of the real (becoming *within* the real), we are only able to consider the world as still, through fixed concepts, language, and, most importantly, through seeing things as both permanent and carved out from the constant, undivided

³ In a similar argument, Siegfried Kracauer (1960) relates this notion directly to film. For Kracauer, the film image delimits without defining, and 'any film narrative should be edited in such a manner that it does not simply confine itself to implementing the intrigue but also turns away from it toward the objects represented so that they may appear in their suggestive indeterminacy.' (71)

flux of reality. According to Bergson, film corresponds with the conceptual stillness of the mind: it is a still representation of movement, which nevertheless moves (appears to move), just like our impression of conceptually still reality. The relevant Deleuzian concepts essentially mirror this division between stillness and movement: the human world of language, concepts, subjectivity, being, versus the nonhuman world of impersonal, undifferentiated intensities and becoming. Affect, defined by Deleuze and Guattari (1994) as the ‘nonhuman becoming of man’ then very much dovetails with the realm of movement, in a useful opposition to emotion, which is a conceptualised, habitual form of affect.⁴ For the concept of affective significance, it is important to consider that the camera, despite being a human invention and mostly under human control, has itself a *nonhuman view* of reality, because of its automatic, mechanical capturing of light entering the lens in a given moment in time. In this way, it contains a still, indexical imprint of the becoming of reality (18 or more times a second), and through the replaying of this movement (the illusion of movement of the film apparatus) it reanimates what I refer to as the ‘echoes of real movement’. The echo of real movement can be described as a particular sense of significance derived from a completely singular event or occurrence – a moment of chance or serendipity, the encounter with the radically *new* that eludes representation.⁵ Barthes’ third meaning describes precisely this echo of real movement when he studies specific still frames removed from a film. However, as this practice research project seeks to demonstrate, it is precisely the element of the illusion of movement in film that makes the echo of real

⁴ Shaviri (2010) and Massumi (2002), in their writings inspired by Deleuze, distinguish between affect and emotion, where emotion is a specific and qualified experience of a subject, confining or reducing affect to an intelligible (human) form, which nevertheless always has a certain affective surplus beyond meaning and outside the boundaries of subjectivity (Shaviri 2010: 4).

Affect can also be entered into opposition with *the sublime*, which can be understood as an excess of representation or meaning, a defeat of the ability to know something, resulting in blockage and frustration – something that transcends beauty in a profound, perhaps masculine way (Shaw 2007). Therefore, while the Sublime is a traumatic excess of meaning, affect rather *precedes* or *bypasses* meaning in a way that is *indifferent* to meaning; rather than surpassing beauty in an overwhelming way, affect can be understood as a fleeting, impersonal form of beauty – a glimpse of an accidental spark of beauty not belonging to any wider, meaningful context.

⁵ This sense of singularity is also fundamentally related to Deleuze’s concept of affect. Deleuze (1986) states that ‘the affect is impersonal and is distinct from every individuated state of things: it is nonetheless *singular*, and can enter into singular combinations or conjunctions with other affects. The affect is indivisible and without parts; but the singular combinations that it forms with other affects form in turn an indivisible quality’ (98, emphasis in the original).

movement *resonate* within the moving-still structures of film – stirring autonomous affects within the film itself – where Barthes’ concept of third meaning is destined to merely resonate within the mind of the attentive ‘reader’ of the still image. I return to this in much more detail in 2.1.

In this sense, affective significance can also be thought of as *overtonal resonance* between movement and stillness – a secondary, collateral vibration, and a term I borrow from Eisenstein (see 2.1). Overtonal resonance is a complex, *unpredictable* resonance that transcends the distinction between dissonance and consonance, and it can emerge from the interaction – in movement – between aspects of style, performance and the wider reality (and contingency permeating any of these aspects), but also between coherent/recognisable (consonant) elements and abstracting/distancing (dissonant) elements of either style, performance or contingency. In this sense, overtonal resonance corresponds with the concept of defamiliarisation outlined earlier – as it is specifically applied in this project. This sense of overtonal resonance as a defamiliarising force concerns especially the relationship between image and sound; for example, when the film is redubbed to create an unnatural yet intimate closeness, or when music is used to work against the expected, predictable or overt (consonant) emotion of the scene (I discuss the relationship between image and sound more in 3.2.7).

Deleuze’s concept of affect also relates to film form and style – the possibility to manipulate the image aesthetically and temporally, which relies on film’s ontological stillness. However, affect equally relates to film performance, to the extent that both style and performance can be conceived of non-representationally, minimising their contextualising, syntactic effect as signifiers of narrative, communication and/or coherent meaning. While a clear separation between movement and stillness in film is not possible, so too it is not possible to clearly demarcate the role of performance, chance and style in the constitution of affective significance. There is a degree of chance or unpredictability involved in the constitution of stylistic aspects and, vice versa, elements of style can add a sense of contingency to the image. Similarly, (affective) performance relies on chance and unpredictability, while style is critical to the constitution of film performance (as I explain in 4.1, film performance is as much

about ‘film’ as it is about ‘performance’). Equally, even in relative separation, these individual elements can lead to a degree of affective significance, as the examples from the history of cinema (especially in 3.2) illustrate.

The most intense moments of affective significance – where all three elements of style, chance and performance enter into a state of complex, overtone resonance – are often rather brief, since a significant moment of chance (whether in performance, wider reality, or style) always presents a certain rupture within the more habitual, expected flow of events. This is especially the case in films, which are primarily narrative or ‘human-reality’ driven, and where the sense of recognisable meaning and context rapidly closes the rupture opened up by affective significance. However, such brief, emancipated moments of affective significance can, arguably, occur in mainstream fiction films, art films and documentaries alike. Perhaps the only difference is that the looser commitment in art cinema to narrative and the reality-effect of film (and a heightened degree of authorial integrity)⁶ leads to these moments of aesthetically captured contingency being deliberately included in the films, where more conventional narrative structures might demonstrate a level of unconscious inclusion of such moments. For example, *Black Peter* (1964) features an interesting moment of affective significance, while *Good Work* (1999) closes on such a rupture, recognising the value of what I refer to as affective significance to forge an anti-climactic ambiguity in the art cinema tradition. In a more mainstream film, like *On the Waterfront* (1954), a technical fault contributes to a more ‘unconscious’ production of affective significance. Affective significance can also be recognised in documentary films where the aspect of expressive style is often absent and the aspect of performance is limited to ordinary behaviour of people representing themselves (although such behaviour can also contribute to affective significance). In such films, the emphatic moment of contingency is key to the sense of affective significance; *Grizzly Man* (2005) or *Bitter Lake* (2015) are good examples of this. Then there are films such as *Gummo* (1997) or *Hapax Legomena III*:

⁶ David Bordwell (2002), when considering the unifying features of art cinema, suggests that ‘what is essential is that the art film be read as the work of an expressive individual’ (98) and that ‘across the entire film, we must recognize and engage with the shaping narrative intelligence’ (98). It is of course impossible to know for certain to what extent this is a ‘shaping intelligence’ of a *single* individual, but accounts of work of film directors famous for their creative autonomy, such as Bresson, Kubrick or Malick, would suggest that that applies in their case.

Critical Mass (1971, Directed by Hollis Frampton) where affective significance emerges solely from the aspect of performance; while films such as *Visions in Meditation* (1990), create a clear sense of affective significance through the striking combination of chance in film style and reality, while completely devoid of the aspect of performance. *Bodysong* (2003, Directed by Simon Pummell) or *Our Trip to Africa* (1966, Directed by Peter Kubelka) have a potential to produce affective significance, but this is overshadowed by communication of meaning and concept – cancelling out the impact of abstract style or the echoes of real movement. Films such as *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991) forge affective significance primarily through style, while *Mirror* (1975) or *Face* (2009) construct complex moments of affective significance, combining affective style and performance with elements of ‘staged contingency’ in reality (creating the impression of contingency through careful choreography). Finally, *Blade Runner* (1982) constructs moving structures of style that become aleatory due to their complexity, with further affective (abstract) value added by slow motion, music and sound design. In trying to explore and maximise the potential and intensity of affective significance, the film practice experimentation in this research project took inspiration from all of the outlined possibilities. (I return to many of these examples from cinema in 2.2, 3.2 and 4.2, where my interpretation and reading for affective significance is supported by and related to still images from these films.)

As I explain earlier, affective significance is rooted in aesthetic considerations of cinema and conceptual research in film philosophy. However, it is ultimately the element of film practice (informed by art and experimental cinema-practice traditions), and the way the concept was explored and developed *through practice*, that define the function of affective significance in this practice research project. What is more, the practical exploration of film makes the ontological distinction between movement and stillness (forming the basis of the conceptual framework) a *direct experience* – resulting in an oscillating between the encounter with the unpredictable real (movement) during production and the shaping of a still sequence of equidistant photographs through editing. The practical outcomes (and the reflection on practice) presented throughout this thesis combine with the context in cinema history and film theory/philosophy to produce an argument that (hermeneutically) justifies the validity of the concept.

However, as I demonstrate throughout the following chapters, this combination of theory and practice also illuminates and provides an insight into the concept in a way that would not be possible through conceptual research alone. Furthermore, the reflective communication between practice and theory, guided by the aim to produce suitable conditions for affective significance to emerge, defines new methods of film production emerging uniquely from this project, which bear relevance to wider filmmaking practice. Finally, the practical outcomes of the research represent a new work of art/experimental film that is uniquely inspired by the conceptual basis of the project. Therefore, the inquiry of this research was guided by these principal questions:

- 1) What are the hermeneutic/theoretical, aesthetic/formal, and methodological conditions that lead to the production of affective significance?
- 2) In what ways can the theoretical understanding of affective significance be deepened through practice?
- 3) In what ways can the methods developed for making Affective Cinema, and shaped by this process, be applicable to experimental/art film practice?
- 4) How can the concept of affective significance be implemented as a structuring principle of a unique film work in the tradition of art/experimental cinema?

I used some of the film examples introduced above to foster understanding of what affective significance is (as a particular, elusive audio-visual effect of film), and subsequently applied this understanding in order to contextualise affective significance in philosophy and film theory. This contextualisation deepened and extended the theoretical understanding of affective significance, but it also informed the ensuing film practice, which in turn enhanced the theoretical understanding of affective significance through testing and evidence in practice, while producing audio-visual insights into the concept embedded directly in practice. The film examples from the history of cinema also shaped experimental methods that were applied in order to create suitable conditions for affective significance to emerge. These methods continued to evolve throughout the course of the project, due to the implementation of Trimmingam's (2002)

hermeneutic spiral methodological model. This chosen methodology relies on alternating practice and reflection, where each stage of practice is completed and reflected upon, so that a new stage of practice can subsequently commence with more advanced understanding (see 1.1). Through this approach, the methods of the project evolved in light of a gradually increasing understanding of the ways in which conditions for affective significance can be created (and the ways in which affective significance can be amplified further through various stylistic means). The methods stem from the initial research and context in cinema and film theory/philosophy, but this research gradually became absorbed and internalised through the hermeneutic spiral, and instead the practice itself inspired the direction for further practice, as the reflection on completed stages opened up new questions and uncovered new research potential, which would not exist without this gradual, incremental journey through practice.

Some of the key methods that emerged within the project to create conditions for affective significance involved filming continuously on multiple cameras, so that unexpected moments of contingency could be discovered in the footage. Such moments were subsequently shaped by editing: rather than focusing on coherence, narrative, context or meaning, the delimitation of shots and the structuring through montage prioritised the singularity of contingent moments, the fortuitous alignment of style, chance and performance, and the singular, unpredictable combinations that arose from joining shots together. Dislocating the reality-effect of the film by sound design, music composition and voice re-dubbing further enhanced the breaking up of the representational function of the image, and amplified affective significance. These sound elements contributed to overtone resonance stirred by the singular, unexpected moments of affective significance, rather than producing dramatic or emotional coherence in the films. The methods of directing performers had aimed to bring full attention to the present moment, so that the sense of becoming with the surrounding reality superseded, during production, any sense of planning, preparation and rational control (I discuss the production methods in detail in 1.2; methods of directing performers are covered in 4.3).

As the project evolved, the techniques of directing performers clustered around the new concept of ‘affective atmosphere’, which blurs the boundaries between performance and film production, and between the sense of atmosphere of the production and the atmosphere of the resulting image, in order to initiate and maximise spontaneous/contingent audio-visual results. Stylistic considerations were originally derived from examples of affective significance in the history of cinema, but gradually became condensed and embodied in the new concept of ‘affective space’, which experiments with the aesthetic potential of the absolute merger – in the two-dimensional field of the image – of the attributes of the image and attributes of the filmed reality. This experimentation involved, for example, considerations of the depth of field, focal length, close-up framing, slow motion, contingent lighting designs, low-light filming, and the combining of digital and traditional photosensitive chemical technologies. Affective space also broadly concerns atmospheric locations and environments, and the construction of such spaces through cinematography; here, nevertheless, the concept of affective space becomes absorbed in the aforementioned method of affective atmosphere, which ultimately aims to bring the aspects of style, chance and performance into radical interplay. I explain the concept of affective space in 3.1 and provide visual examples from the history of cinema as well as my practice in 3.2; affective atmosphere is covered in 4.4. However, before moving on to discussing in detail all the aspects of the research outlined in this introduction, I want to first briefly present the main practical outcomes, in order to allow the reader to orient him or herself through the work, and to provide some basic context in case the reader chooses to view the films at this stage. However, all of this work is discussed at various points of the thesis, and many attributes merely hinted at here are expanded upon in due course. Furthermore, the overview of the five stages of practice (see 1.2.1–1.2.5) provides further outline of the way the films were produced.

Introduction of the Main Practical Outcomes

A total of five stages of practice were conducted throughout the period of three years, which has resulted in 12 short films, each exploring and exposing a different side and potential of affective significance. There are ten originally produced films, entitled

Affective Signs, with the 11th film, Found Affective Sign, manually edited out of Super8 found footage (in the production sequence of the films, Found Affective Sign precedes Affective Sign 10). Some of the films have two distinct music/sound versions that illustrate the singularity of affects activated in the image by the artistic sensibility of each composer. The final, 12th film, entitled **Affective Cinema**, is a visual collage of the most affectively significant visual material from across the ten originally produced Affective Signs, accompanied by a voice-over that synthesises – affectively rather than rationally – the underlying film philosophy, especially as it gradually became absorbed and developed through the intuitive and reflective processes of the practice research. In this way, the Affective Cinema collage loosens the linguistic format of the conceptual field, and aligns it instead with the audio-visual structures of the project, contributing to the affective significance of the image (to the extent that it operates as significant sound rather than signifying language), while using the meaning of the words to illustrate and illuminate the conceptual field of affective significance in an abstract, connotative correspondence with the images.

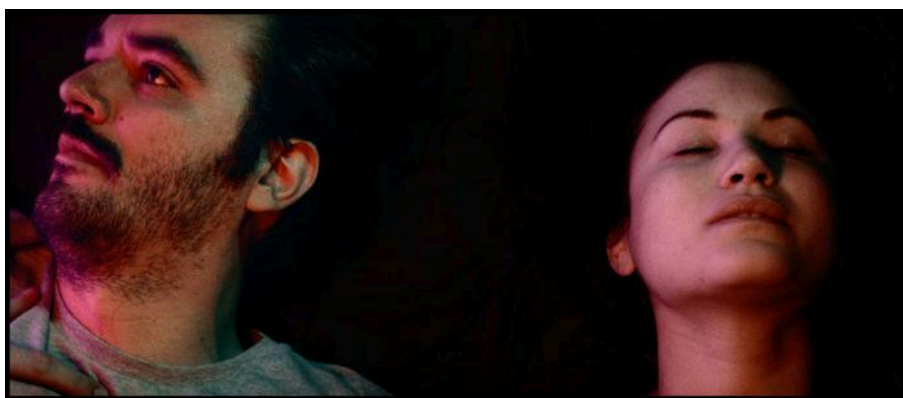


Figure 1: Affective Sign 1

Affective Sign 1 (Sound Version 1 and Sound Version 2) arose from a casting workshop with a group of performers during Stage 1 of practice. In the workshop, the element of chance was significantly reduced, as the greatest source of chance is the wider reality, which is markedly absent in the studio environment. This reduction also allowed for more freedom in exploring and testing methods of directing performers (see 4.3 and 4.4), and constructing visual style through lighting (see 3.2.1). Although the workshop revolved around dramatic scenes based on simple dialogue and monologue scripts and other spoken improvisation, this film zeroes in on the unplanned moments

‘in between’, the pure being and nuanced movements of the body and the face, which help to create a sense of affective significance. The two sound versions produced by two distinct music composers/sound designers demonstrate how the affect in the image (the non-specific emotion) is open and alive, and can be subsequently ‘locked’ into a very different overall mood and tone.



Figure 2: Affective Sign 2

Affective Sign 2 relies on the same material as Affective Sign 1, but it is structured on the basis of a simple narrative monologue written for the workshop. The film is nevertheless edited in the same way as the rest of the project: it focuses on strange or interesting moments of performance, rather than prioritising the overall narrative or dramatic coherence (see 1.2.6). Here the aspects of style and chance are less dominant, and instead the film oscillates around the sense of storytelling preserved from the script. In this way, it explores a certain narrative boundary of an Affective Sign, while hovering around the point where the story and the sense of affective significance diverge or clash.

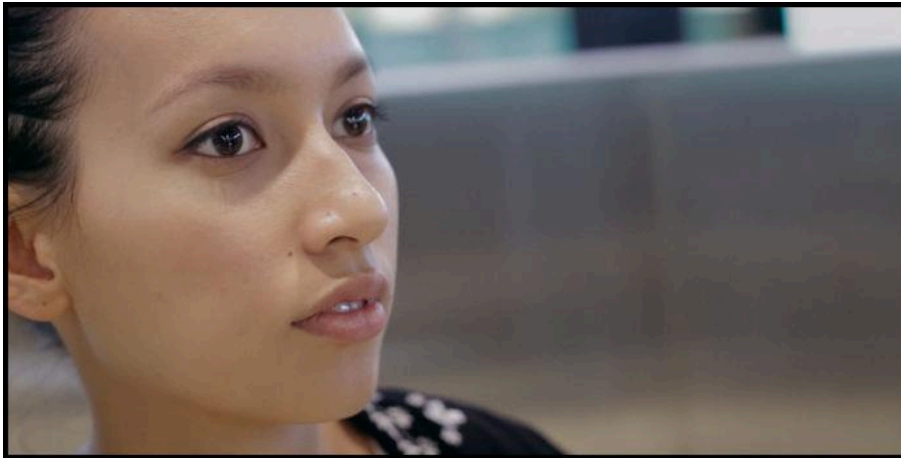


Figure 3: Affective Sign 3

Affective Sign 3 (Sound Version 1 and Sound Version 2) is a film that emerged from Stage 2 of practice, following a group of performers through the London Underground system. Their performance stems from simply being in the moment, being sensitive to the environment, and allowing all sights, sounds and scents to affect them and vibrate through their bodies, while moving around freely and intuitively. The camera follows them wherever they go, and they feel the camera's presence, feeling its look, being affected by it, and looking back. This is the basic approach to all performance on the project, as by prioritising sensual stimuli in the present moment over thoughts and intentions, it is possible to bring the performer just a little bit closer to reality as it becomes, unpredictably, in front of the lens of the camera – a lens that is an inherent part of this reality (see 4.4). I discuss various visual aspects of this film in 2.2 and 3.2.

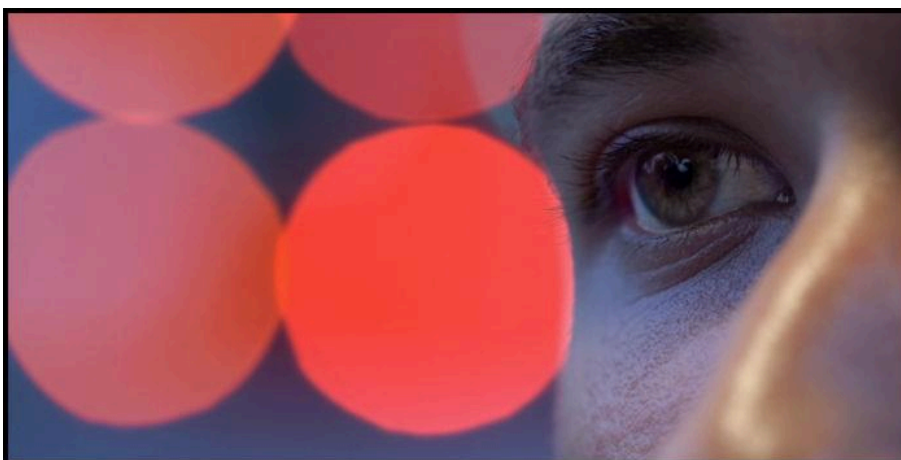


Figure 4: Affective Sign 4

Affective Sign 4 is the product of the same stage of filming as the previous piece, but while the environment of the London Underground has visually unified Affective Sign 3, this film has nothing particular joining it together. There is no sense of pattern or external structure in this piece, other than the four performers appearing throughout, and the slice of real time and place that coincided with the making of the film. The work is shaped by random passage through a variety of visually stimulating locations in London, as much as it is defined by stylistic choices about camera movement and framing (I discuss various visual aspects of this film in 2.2 and 3.2). The music and sound design play a major part in amplifying the affective significance in the images, but the sound element always grows out of the image, being guided and inspired by the particular ‘visual feelings’, as if discovered inside the silence of the film image.

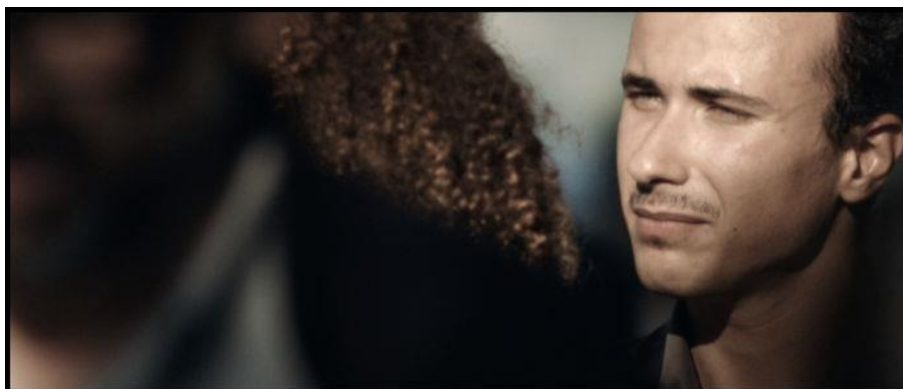


Figure 5: Affective Sign 5

Affective Sign 5 is a short dramatic scene filmed during Stage 2, involving a simple situation: a fundraiser stops a passer-by on a busy street, in order to pitch to him a charitable cause. He nevertheless takes this as an excuse for a clumsy and tone-deaf (and perhaps a rather disturbing) wooing attempt. This is not quite a story, although the dialogue itself follows a certain back-and-forth logic, building up a context of a dramatic situation. However, since the aim was to produce affective significance, rather than to focus on coherent (conventional) drama, all creative decisions beyond the scripted dialogue were motivated by creating interesting, strangely captivating moments where chance, nuances of performance and elements of cinematic style coincide. I discuss visual aspects of this film in 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 3.2.2.



Figure 6: Affective Sign 6

Affective Sign 6 was filmed throughout one Friday night in Central London with two performers on the backseat of a car. Similarly to the previous Sign, this film combines a scripted dialogue with un-staged, unpredictable elements of reality. It is a simple dramatic situation: two relative strangers sharing a taxi from a nightclub, presumably heading for a one-night stand. Similarly to the previous Sign, it focuses on the shifting dynamics of power between a man and a woman. However, here the scripted dialogue was very sparse and much less coherent and logical, letting unexpected, improvised moments to arise from it. This has allowed the edited film to diverge as much as possible from the initial narrative premise: like all Affective Signs, the film itself was discovered through the editing process, structured by brief moments where chance, elements of cinematic style and unpredictable nuances of performance coincide, in order to create affective significance. The dialogue was later re-dubbed by a pair of different performers, who knew nothing about the film and had not seen a single image from it – thus emphasising the fragmentary nature of the Affective Sign. I return to the aspect of editing in 3.2.6 and dubbing in 3.2.7. I discuss visual elements of this film in 2.2.2 and 3.2.1.



Figure 7: Affective Sign 7

Affective Sign 7 (Sound Version 1 and Sound Version 2) arose from Stage 3 of filming, and it combines predominantly slow-motion shots from experimental filming sessions coinciding with the second performance workshop (the main part of which lead to the production of Affective Sign 8). Slow motion has been identified since the early stages of the project as a potent source of affective significance. Slow motion amplifies film's inherent and unique capacity to reveal something more of reality that would otherwise be missed by the naked eye, or would simply seem entirely ordinary to it. Combined with the other potent revelatory aspect of film – the close-up shot – and further stylistic choices, slow motion can uncover minute details of movement of the performer's body and their facial expressions, as well as the complexity of movement of the wider reality. I discuss this aspect of affective significance in 3.2.5.



Figure 8: Affective Sign 8

Affective Sign 8 (Sound Version 1 and Sound Version 2), the main outcome of Stage 3, builds on the experience of the first workshop with performers (which resulted in

Signs 1 and 2). The lighting complexity of Stage 1 was here expanded: it included three camera angles, each with a distinct sense of atmosphere created solely by light, capturing simultaneously a conversation between two performers. The workshop involved eight performers delivering in pairs ten simple dialogue scripts in two-hour, meditative sessions, involving experimental directorial techniques developed throughout the project. The film is edited on the basis of forging affective (or entirely random) connections between singular moments of performance, rather than building a coherent narrative sequence. The two sound versions reveal the fluidity of affects activated in the performance through different sonic moods, each giving rise to different flows of intensities leading to affective significance. (I discuss the visual aspect of this film in 3.2.1; I elaborate on the directorial techniques in 4.3 and 4.4.)



Figure 9: Affective Sign 9

Affective Sign 9 is the sole outcome of Stage 4, and it represents a significant development of the affective atmosphere method, shaped by the previous stages of practice. It resulted from a 36-hour trip to Barcelona with a pair of performers. There was not a specific plan or story, other than the journey itself, to a place where none of us had ever been. In this way, the travel became a continuous source of chance, guided by the desire to produce captivating images, but otherwise exposing us constantly to the unknown. I filmed most of the time, and so the resulting film is a radical condensation of the amount of material produced. The footage nevertheless remains organised in a chronological order, so that the trip, as it happened in reality, is what ultimately structures the film. While this chronology creates a coherent order of events, like a story, this sense of story coincides entirely with what really happened. And yet, the

resulting film is clearly fiction, not a documentary. The film rather inhabits a space between documentary and fiction, exploring an aesthetically-real, affective dimension of becoming, where image and reality entwine, forming a new reality of the image. I return to this aspect of the film in 4.4; visual elements of it are discussed throughout 2.2 and 3.2.



Figure 10: Found Affective Sign (multiple stills)

Found Affective Sign opens with a four-minute montage of various (commercially available, yet obscure) fiction films and cartoons, which brings the initial method of identifying affective significance in cinema directly into practice, while entering into marked contrast with the (private, intimate) remainder of the film edited solely out of home movies. The idea to collect reels of found footage and edit a film out of it emerged from the use of Super8 film stock during Stage 4, and introduced additional aspects of working with the medium that were worth testing in line with the aims of the project. First, instead of a direct encounter between the filming apparatus and the becoming of the present moment, it was interesting to arrive at the particular footage by chance (I never knew in any detail what the acquired reels of film actually contain), yet already fixed in time. Nevertheless, as I explain in 2.2.5 and 2.3, the physicality of film emulsion exposes it to continuous becoming of reality, which gradually becomes inscribed on the image. As all the footage used in this film dates back to the period

between 1960s and 1990s, this inscribed contingency is clearly a factor here. Second, it was an opportunity to approach the aspect of performance completely differently: identifying moments of ordinary behaviour in home movies that possess some of the non-representational quality pursued in the rest of the project. And third, it was an opportunity to edit the film *physically*, so that the cut is not merely a virtual (absolute) gap in the moving-still structure of film, but rather a physical, *plastic* event in the actual movement of the film itself.



Figure 11: Affective Sign 10

Affective Sign 10 builds on the affective atmosphere method explored during Stage 4. Here too the performers stayed ‘in character’ for the entire duration of the filming: instead of representing a character (whether a fictional character, or their usual, habitual self), they related (mimetically) to the becoming of the present moment, like a sort of ‘affective mirror’ (see 4.4). Similarly to Affective Sign 9, the filming was defined by a journey to a location that we had never been to before, but here it was a secluded cottage in Wales, and we drove there rather than flew. The performers’ voices were being continuously recorded and the film is structured based on brief, affectively significant moments of sound obtained from this recording. Affective Sign 10 is dominated by the use of sensitive Super8 film stock, which adds a high degree of noise and imperfection to the images, combining strangely with the Welsh countryside and

coastline (see 3.2.4 and 3.2.5). It is a combination of two material aspects of reality, whether the natural environment (radically different to the city locations dominating the previous Signs) or the physicality of the film emulsion with which the former coincides. Together, the scenery and the film stock create a new (aesthetic) reality of the image – affective space – transcending the original world, in order to reveal a reality that is equally less and more human, less and more real (see 3.1).

The principal chapters of this thesis use all of the practical outcomes outlined above to illustrate, evidence and reflect upon the key aspects of this research project: chance, style and performance. As well as discussing the practice, I provide a thorough theoretical/aesthetic context and rationale pertaining to the subject of each chapter, and put a particular emphasis on the gradual development of the project through the five stages of the hermeneutic spiral. Rather than including a separate literature review or context in practice, both of these elements are integrated into all the main chapters, in order to forge a meaningful and productive link between the context in existing practice and theory, and the new practical/theoretical outcomes. Through the oscillation between practice and reflection, and through the development and combination of practical methods and the conceptual framework, the project therefore generates new knowledge, insights and application possibilities, which emerge from the individual chapters but are organised and summarised in the conclusion.

1. Methodology

As I explain in the introduction, this practice research project benefited immensely from the implementation of the hermeneutic spiral model. It enabled a gradual development of the practice, which led to an increased focus and research-specificity of the implemented methods, in response to the deepening insights into the theoretical basis of the project. Ultimately, this had an impact on the practical outcomes, increasing the potential for affective significance in the resulting films. In this chapter, I first outline the methodological framework for the project, providing rationale for the implementation of the hermeneutic spiral. Subsequently, I give an overview of the developing methods through the five stages of practice, as well as consider other issues pertaining to methodology.

1.1 Methodological Framework

The theoretical framework of the project is based on the relationship between the non-representational real and its photographic (moving) image, and the related problem of synthesising movement and stillness. This also implies a specific relationship between practice and theory, where the filmmaking process is inevitably a part of the contingent becoming of reality, whilst the fixed image – the filmed and edited material – opens up to a hermeneutic reading: a reading that is not grounded in any objective truth, or a specific and fixed, denotative relation between signifier and signified, but is instead open, creative and ongoing. This duality of the project invites aspects of non-representational methodologies (ways of responding to unpredictable reality), but also hermeneutic methodological approaches (acknowledging the fluidity of the meaning produced by or derived from both the practice and the theoretical concepts that precede it). Ultimately, this duality can be thoroughly utilised through an oscillation between action and reflection, which Trimingam (2002) refers to as the ‘hermeneutic spiral’ methodological approach.

This combined approach resonates with Gray and Malins’ (2004) assertion, that ‘characteristic of “artistic” methodology is a pluralist approach using a multi-method

technique, tailored to the individual project' (21). Whilst calling for a more 'visually oriented research methodology' (97) in response to the specific issues of practice-based research, they nevertheless also identify – as a critical element of such a practice-based methodology – the idea of *reflective practice*. Reflective practice

attempts to unite research and practice, thought and action into a framework for inquiry which involves practice, and which acknowledges the particular and special knowledge of the practitioner. It is a framework that encourages reflection in different ways. Retrospective reflection – 'reflection-on-action' – is a critical research skill and part of the generic research process of review, evaluation and analysis. 'Reflection-in-action' is a particular activity of professional practitioners and involves thinking about what we are doing and reshaping action while we are doing it. In this sense it is improvisational and relies on feeling, response and adjustment (Gray and Malins 2004: 22).

Both the 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action' approaches are significant aspects of the present methodology, since in their mutual interplay, they prompt the emergence of the particular research outcomes, as it is through reflection that these outcomes become apparent.

Being able to rethink and reshape action during the film production process is a way to *respond* to reality, of rooting the production process in the moment of production and in the context of the moment, without being burdened excessively by preconceived ideas. While it is important – for both creative and research reasons – to have a conceptual and practical framework for each instance of filming, this ultimately pales in comparison to the endless complexity and unpredictability of the real event, which, after all, is a key source of affective significance in film. It would therefore be unwise to prioritise the conceptual plan in the moment of production (such as would be the case in a traditional approach to filmmaking), rather than responding, with creative immediacy, to what is actually happening. On the other hand, as a lot of the production process was captured on film, this allowed for some of the intuitively applied methods stemming from the creative immediacy to be reflected on, and then formally utilised for the subsequent stages of practice, thanks to the hermeneutic spiral approach.

Melissa Trimingam (2002) claims that 'the "disorderliness" of the creative process must be incorporated into the methodology. The paradigm model of progress that allows for

this is the “hermeneutic-interpretative” spiral model where progress is not linear but circular: a spiral which constantly returns us to our original point of entry but with renewed understanding’ (56). Applying this model to my project allowed for working in discreet stages – creating a hermeneutic oscillation between action and reflection, and being able to reflect on each stage of practice before commencing the next one. This approach led, at each stage of the process, to increasing my practitioner knowledge related to the specifics of the project (and to filmmaking practice in general); but it also allowed me to relate the insights, gleaned in the particular stage, to previous practical stages and to the underlying conceptual framework.

This chosen approach resonates with Nelson’s (2009) suggestion of a dynamic model for practice-as-research methodologies, where new knowledge is produced in a dialogic, cross-referring process between practitioner knowledge, critical reflection and a conceptual framework. Practitioner knowledge implies that ‘practitioners have embodied within them, enculturated by their training and experience, the “know-how” to make work’ (127); and while critical reflection encompasses both a reflection on established practices and the aforementioned ‘reflection-in-practice’, the conceptual framework is an opportunity for a creative practice to become innovative ‘by being informed by theoretical perspectives, either new in themselves, or perhaps newly explored in a given medium’ (128). My practitioner knowledge (rooted in filmmaking experience), critical reflection (reflection-in-action as well as reflection-on-action) and the conceptual framework rooted in film ontology, and the philosophy of Deleuze, Bergson and Barthes have proven to be an inspiring and productive, methodological basis for the project, especially when combined with the unpredictable encounter, during production, with the contingent real itself.

This element of action – the unpredictable encounter with reality through practice – is best expressed by what Vannini (2015) refers to as ‘non-representational methodology’. Such methodology is inherently experimental, and its unique strategy is to focus on ‘what is happening now and what can happen next’ rather than on what happened in the past: it focuses on ‘enactment, rupture, and actualisation’ rather than ‘depiction, reporting, or representation’ (12). A ‘non-representational research concentrates on

events. Events are happenings, unfoldings, regular occurrences inspired (but not over-determined) by states of anticipation and irregular actions that shatter expectations' (7, emphasis in the original). Furthermore, non-representational researchers 'study performances as expressive engagements of the body's kinaesthetic and intuitive power to produce certain effects, whether expected or unexpected, intended or unintended, inventive or uninventive, effective or ineffective' (8).

Vannini's description of a non-representational methodology corresponds with what is at stake when creating a filmed event that involves performance and/or the wider reality – a kind of event that is essential for producing the conditions for affective significance. Since the key objective of Affective Cinema is to capture on film contingent moments of performance and reality *as significance*, it was essential to open up the production process fully to the moment in reality, which the filming process is a part of, and to offset – through experimental, disruptive and intuitive techniques – the plan and the anticipated development of the event. In this way, the production approach welcomed in and maximised the potential of chance and serendipity – turning unexpected occurrences into creative opportunities, rather than seeing them as constraining challenges. I outline these production techniques in detail in the following section of this chapter.

My project-specific methodology therefore began with hermeneutic, conceptual research that framed the theoretical basis of my project and identified suitable aesthetic and formal references. However, this conceptual stage was itself creative – a process of discovery – and in this way it mirrored and foreshadowed the processes of the practice. This conceptual research subsequently informed experimental film practice, where the directorial, aesthetic/formal choices were offset by non-representational immediacy (inviting in chance and uncontrollable elements of performance and the wider reality) and by improvisational 'reflection-in-action', which was partly informed by my previous experience and education in filmmaking. The result of this practice, amplified through editing and other post-production choices, was reflected upon in order to increase the knowledge framed by the initial theoretical research. But this reflective

process also led to the development and improvement of the methods employed in the subsequent stages of practice within the adopted hermeneutic spiral approach.

In this way, my project-specific methodology implemented film to create a productive spiral between a non-representational approach to practice and hermeneutic reflection, especially by producing comprehensive video recording suitable for evaluation, interpretation and the gathering of evidence about each stage of filming. This approach allowed for the exploration of affective significance in practice, but it also led to the discovery of specific conditions that could give rise to it, and to the production of films structured on the basis of affective significance. Furthermore, it generated unique insights – attainable only through practice – into the underpinning conceptual framework, and into experimentation with directorial methods. In order to fulfil the underlying aims of the project, which were to create suitable conditions for affective significance to arise, and to expand on the potential of art/experimental cinema style and filmmaking techniques, it was both practical and logical to employ the hermeneutic spiral methodological model – alternating repeatedly between periods of non-representational production and reflection – for it uncovered a unique journey of discovery, which itself represents new knowledge emerging from the project (I elaborate on this kind of knowledge in 5.4.1). The hermeneutic spiral approach led to various epistemic outcomes of the project, but it also repeatedly fed back into the project itself – in the form of specific conceptual steps, and in the form of enhanced tacit, embodied and intuitive practitioner knowledge. In this way, the journey through the multiple stages of practice and reflection took the project in an unpredictable direction and towards unexpected creative outcomes, which could not have been reached without employing this model. Given that the project had set out to search for something elusive, relative, open and fluid (having an aesthetic rather than empirical value), through experimental and hermeneutic methodological procedures (rather than employing quantitative or qualitative research methods in order to establish or prove objective facts), the hermeneutic spiral model simply maximised the potential and scope of those findings and outcomes.

In the following section, I outline the development of methods across the five stages of practice. A detailed consideration of the methods and the supporting evidence is presented in the following chapters, to the extent that they pertain to each of the main constitutive aspects of affective significance: chance, style and performance.

1.2 The Development of Methods through the Hermeneutic Spiral Approach

1.2.1 Stage 1: The First Casting Workshop (Affective Signs 1 and 2)

Even before I commenced with any practice, the understanding of affective significance emerged from the initial recognition of it across diverse works from the history of cinema, and its subsequent grounding in the context of established film theory and philosophy. The latter helped with the understanding and rationalisation of what affective significance is, and in turn contributed to the framing of an initial set of methods that might lead to producing suitable conditions for its emergence.

I wanted to explore the potential of a larger group of performers in a more controlled environment, where new directorial methods and lighting techniques could be tested, at the expense of excluding the potential of contingency of wider reality. Therefore, Stage 1 was based around a workshop to which performers (selected on the basis of an online casting process) had been invited: this involved experimental interviews and dialogue scenes, based around simple monologue and dialogue scripts. A key method of maximising the likelihood of capturing an emphatic instance of contingency was to film for prolonged periods of time without interruption, using simultaneously two or more cameras. Stylistic choices contributing to contingency and helping to defamiliarise the image – thus reducing the ordinary representational processes – were inspired by the initial research in cinema. These choices included shallow depth of field, slow motion and complex, stylised lighting techniques. All these choices were implemented and tested during the Stage 1 workshop.

The workshop resulted in many hours of video material, obtained simultaneously from two cameras. I thoroughly revised the footage, looking out for potential moments of

affective significance, as well as observing my directorial methods and the effect they had had on the performers. I edited three film structures out of the process, two of which became Affective Signs 1 and 2 (the third is Video 19 discussed in 4.4). The primary focus of the editing process was to identify moments of affective significance (delimiting shots in which the elements of style and performance align in a markedly singular way), and subsequently to structure the films based on these shots (in Affective Sign 2, the narrative thread of the script is preserved, but the choice of individual shots does not aim to contribute to an overall coherence of the piece, but rather, their singularity is prioritised). The footage also produced other useful examples of the applied directorial methods, and generated evidence illustrating key points of the research (I discuss these later on, especially in 4.3 and 4.4). One of the significant outcomes for the following stages was the intuitive discovery of a meditative approach to performance, which involves performative participation of the director and an uninterrupted work with the atmosphere of the scene. All of these aspects contributed to what gradually evolved across the stages as the ‘affective atmosphere’ method (discussed in detail in 4.4). The work with a monologue script (resulting in Affective Sign 2) was an opportunity to experiment with and to consider the oscillating line between narrative and affective significance, which led to renewed understanding of this problematic relationship for upcoming stages of practice. An experimental combination of close-up shots, coloured, alternating lighting, slow motion and different music scores gave rise to the concept of ‘affective space’, which relies on the non-representational merger of the attributes of the image and the attributes of the filmed reality, abstracting recognisable reality into a new aesthetic whole of the image (see 3.1).

1.2.2 Stage 2: The First Real Location Filming (Affective Signs 3, 4, 5, 6)

Following the preparation, production, post-production and reflection of Stage 1, I introduced the element of wider, unpredictable reality into the process, especially with the complex interaction of dynamic elements in the urban environment.⁷ This allowed

⁷ As Kracauer (1960) points out, ‘the affinity of film for haphazard contingencies is most strikingly demonstrated by its unwavering susceptibility to the “street” – a term designed to cover not only the street, particularly the city street, in the literal sense, but also its various extensions, such as railway

for a more thorough exploration of chance, with moments of affective significance being initiated by the complex flow of reality. Contingency also influenced the visual style: I replaced the artificially controlled lighting of the Stage 1 workshop for (often) expressive, seemingly stylised lighting that nevertheless originated from naturally occurring lighting sources. The lighting led to contingent formations in the image, while the encounter with it was usually spontaneous and unplanned (but its stylistic potential maximised in the moment by reflection-in-action and by focused, intuitive participation in the event of production). This added to the explorations of the potential of affective space, since some of the most marked elements of style originated in the filmed reality, rather than through stylistic manipulation of the image field (I analyse this in detail in 3.2). At the same time, the meditative, uninterrupted approach to performance and to directing performers that emerged from the previous stage had to be subdued due to the busy, chaotic production conditions. The performances nevertheless benefited from the stimuli of the city environments – rooting the performers firmly in the present moment – and unplanned, fortuitous alignment of performers and their surroundings contributed to the subsequent construction of film performance on the level of the edited film.

Stage 2 consisted of three distinct filming events in London. The first was based on travelling with performers around a variety of locations that had an anticipated affective potential: due to the geometrical shapes or the lighting conditions, these spaces had the potential to contribute to the sense of non-representational affective space abstracted from an ordinary impression of reality. However, we discovered many locations in the process of flowing through the city, and in the process of intuitive reflection-in-action that the filming event represented for me as the filmmaker. I used a mixture of three cameras here, combining shallow depth of field, slow motion and an extended-focal-length macro lens, which are some of the key attributes of style that abstract real space through the camera technology (I provide specific visual examples in 3.2). I also employed a Steadicam camera stabiliser (which lent the option of a more organic, spontaneous following of performers) and a two-camera rig I had designed for this stage

stations, dance and assembly halls, bars, hotel lobbies, airports, etc. If the medium's descent from, and kinship with, photography needed additional confirmation, this very specific preference, common to both of them, would supply it. Within the present context the street, which has already been characterized as a center of fleeting impressions, is of interest as a region where the accidental prevails over the providential, and happenings in the nature of unexpected incidents are all but the rule' (62).

of practice: this rig allowed me to obtain two very different images simultaneously, creating stylistic opportunities for affective significance while adding a layer of contingency to the process (I could not consciously control both cameras at the same time). This filming resulted in Affective Signs 3 and 4.

The second filming event, resulting in Affective Sign 5, was a short dialogue scene between two performers that took place on one of the busiest streets in London. I filmed it using an extreme telephoto lens, which both distorted and abstracted the filmed space – giving rise to a particular instance of affective space – but also made the filming process inconspicuous to the passers-by (due to the significant distance between the performers and camera), who nevertheless themselves became an abstract, blurred aesthetic element within the image, adding a key layer of contingency to the film material. I implemented a more conventional (non-meditative) directorial approach here (reflecting a certain narrative specificity of the scripted dialogue), but the methods of working with performers, which were successfully tested through this process, formed an inherent part of the affective atmosphere approach in the upcoming stages. The narrative specificity of the scene was preserved in the editing (similarly to Affective Sign 2), but also offset by prioritising moments where chance, style and non-representational performance had aligned, rather than focusing on conventional dramatic/narrative coherence. Similarly to Affective Sign 2, a certain narrative boundary was explored here, providing an important point of departure for the upcoming stages of practice. The dialogue was entirely re-dubbed in post-production, which opened the possibility to strip the scene entirely of any noise of the busy street. This enhanced the distancing effect of the ultra-long focal length, and contributed to the artificial yet intimate dimension of the image reality *as* affective space. The music composed for the film likewise contributed to this multifaceted defamiliarisation of the constitutive, filmed reality.

The final event of this stage, resulting in Affective Sign 6, was filmed with two performers during a Friday night on the back seat of a car, on three cameras simultaneously. Similarly to Affective Sign 5, it focused on the narrative aspect of

conflict⁸, reflecting darker, sexualised dramatic elements inspired by art cinema (such as the films of David Lynch). The scripted scene was loosely structured, which inspired certain ‘cinematic clichés’ to emerge in the improvised moments, but such signifying elements were continuously offset by contingent, non-representational moments in the performance and unpredictable complexity of the image. There are more pronounced echoes of the history of art cinema in this film than in the other affective signs, and, similarly to the previously discussed film, it represents a certain point of departure for the subsequent stages of practice. At the same time, the contingent-yet-stylised lighting (caused by incidental sources outside the car) represents a successful experiment in progressing the lighting methods of Stage 1 into real locations. The film was re-dubbed in post-production by a pair of different performers, which emancipated the image further from the constitutive reality in which it is based.

1.2.3 Stage 3: The Second Casting Workshop (Affective Signs 7 and 8)

The reflection on the past two stages exposed the importance of expanding upon the experimental work with performers initiated during the Stage 1 workshop, while exploring (and complicating) the tension and relationship between affective significance and aspects of narrative. At the same time, it was meaningful to progress the investigation of affective space by maximising the impact of contingency through stylistic choices. In order to satisfy those objectives, Stage 3 consisted of two disparate filming events: the first event was a second workshop with performers in a controlled basement-room environment, where I could address the issues of narrative, and expand upon the directorial/cinematographic methods (that had been developed through the first workshop); this resulted in Affective Sign 8. The second event was a series of lighting

⁸ McKee (1999) distinguishes between three types of conflict: inter-personal, extra-personal and internal, and all the best drama, according to him, is able to combine all three types of conflict. However, I would argue – based on the experience of and reflection on the Affective Cinema practice – that it is only the inter-personal, or rather, *inter-organism* conflict that is the most simple and archaic form of conflict. Internal conflict clearly requires the complexity of the human mind in order to take place, but I would posit that even the extra-personal, or more accurately, extra-organism conflict (such as a snail trying to escape a piece of wood under which it is trapped) requires a level of abstraction, in order to identify such predicament as conflict. I would suggest, therefore, that without the abstractive ability of the human mind, the only relevant conflict is that between two entities, two organisms – and it is *this kind* of conflict that is truly non-narrative and non-human in nature, and it this kind of conflict explored in Affective Signs 5 and 6.

camera experiments outdoors, which combined stylistic manipulation with unpredictable elements in reality, resulting in Affective Sign 7.

The workshop increased directorial and cinematographic complexity, helping to deliver unpredictable results in visual terms, but also performance and narrative-wise. I filmed the workshop over five days with eight performers, focusing on dialogue scenes between two performers. I did not give the performers the scripts in advance, and instead a pair of actors off-screen was feeding them the lines. Each session with two performers lasted for around two hours and was filmed in its entirety on three cameras; I periodically encouraged the performers to remain present in the moment, in a focused, meditative state of mind. I had undertaken a weeklong training in hypnotherapy to help me develop the appropriate directorial approach in order to sustain such meditative focus (see 4.3.6). The lighting set-up created complex foregrounds and backgrounds unique to each of the camera angles. This was a useful development in the work with affective space (having multiple affective spaces of the image emerging simultaneously) but it also contributed to the atmosphere within the room, which helped to sustain the meditative approach to the scene. This work therefore contributed to the incorporation of elements of style into the directorial approach of affective atmosphere. I wrote ten simple dialogue scripts for the individual sessions with performers, which did not represent any specific situation, emotion or a dramatic context. (**Text 2** contains some of these scripts.) Gender or character names were not specified either: the conversation was merely a one-line exchange between character A and character B. The performers started each session by delivering the dialogue (repeating, mimetically, the lines after the pair of performers off-screen), and in the second part, they improvised a dialogue loosely based on what they retained in memory from the first part of the session, without actively trying to remember anything. The editing process focused on specific lines of dialogue where the words resonated non-representationally with the performing body as a moment of affective significance. This allowed for further dislocation of any remaining context of the original dialogue, and instead made the speech enter into allogical correspondence with other singular lines, forging a sense of significance rather than signification.

In the second filming event of this stage, I focused on using slow motion, in order to expose nuances of contingency initiated through other directorial and stylistic choices. One of the shots involved the performer walking through a crowd of people during the Pillow Fight Day in London. In combination with shallow depth of field, extended focal length, and gliding smoothness of the Steadicam (enhanced by slow motion), the close-up framing created a sense of intimate affective space, to which the surrounding chaotic movements were in marked contrast (helping to defamiliarise the scene), but they also registered in the image as abstract, non-specific visual elements of pure contingency. Another shot focused on giving rise to chance through stylistic choices. The performer was spinning fire (Poi performance), which was nevertheless outside of the close-up frame; this created a rapidly changing, complex illumination of her face – enhanced and revealed through the slow motion. Another source of alternating light increased the lighting complexity, beyond the point of predictable structure, and into the realm of singular affects (I return to this in 2.2.2 and 3.2.1).

1.2.4 Stage 4: A Trip to Barcelona (Affective Sign 9)

The reflection on Stage 3 inspired a continued development of the affective atmosphere method, bringing the meditative approach to performance together with enhanced opportunities for contingency in the wider reality. In terms of affective space, the variety of experiments with lighting and camera work of the previous stages exposed significant, yet unexplored avenues. One of those possibilities was the use of film stock (as opposed to digital film), which represents an essential contribution to the theoretical aspect of the project related to film ontology and investigates the different relationships film and digital can have with reality (these issues are explored in 2.3). However, the use of film stock also presented an opportunity for enhanced contingency on the direct level of the image, especially when using the imperfect, small-size medium of the Super8 film. The choice of this material was nevertheless also practical, especially when combined with the continuous, meditative approach of affective atmosphere, so that the process of filming could be simple and fluid, and not overly complicated by technical challenges (such as loading a 16mm camera, for example).

The method of affective atmosphere evolved in several ways for this stage of practice. The edited result of the Stage 3 workshop (Affective Sign 8) had become the initial inspiration for a script written for this stage. This script was nevertheless not a linear, cause-effect structure of an ordinary narrative script, but rather a disjointed, open structure, which – inspired by Deleuze and Guattari’s *Thousand Plateaus* – I refer to as a ‘rhizomatic script’ (I discuss this in detail in 4.4). The script included meditative instructions, directions and otherwise disjointed utterances, some of which had emerged from the scripts and improvised speech of the Stage 3 workshop process. The filming consisted of a 36-hour air trip to Barcelona with a pair of performers. While they both had taken part in the second workshop, they had not physically met before the Stage 4 filming, which was an important consideration, as I didn’t want any prior relationship to alter their encounter within the affective atmosphere. The affective atmosphere approach extended throughout the entire trip, during which we all tried to sustain a deep connection to the present moment, being affected by our environment and by each other, rather than enacting fictional characters, representing meaning or narrative, or engaging with each other in an ordinary, habitual way.

I was filming continuously for most of the trip, using three digital cameras and the Super8 camera (using them individually, rather than simultaneously filming). The alternation between the cameras was often motivated practically, but also intuitively – making choices through the embodied and emplaced reflection in action. In this way, the aesthetic quality defined by the affective space of the image and by the employed camera technology emerged, to an extent, directly from the becoming of each moment. Likewise, I didn’t set up or control any lights for this filming, yet the stylised impression of some of the shots simply emerged from intuitive decisions in response to the aesthetic potential of the places in which we had found ourselves by accident or without prior consideration. As part of the affective atmosphere process we didn’t have a fixed itinerary for most of our journey, but instead allowed ourselves as much as possible to be channelled by the becoming of reality around us, while pursuing the aesthetic potential of the given locations. This approach brought the concept of affective space and the method of affective atmosphere into a single plane, since most of the

aesthetic choices emerged from the process of filming, which in turn was driven by the affective atmosphere approach (I return to this in 4.4).

The structure of the resulting film, Affective Sign 9, is chronological; this gives it a clear sense of narrative, but this is nevertheless different to the structure of some of the previous films (Signs 2, 5 and 6), where a script defined some initial narrative boundaries. Here, instead, the narrative structure reflects the chronology of real events: the structure is the trip itself, which took place for us in actuality. Another structural layer is also added on the level of the image through the alteration between different digital cameras and the Super8 film camera. This creates a sense of a (meaningful) visual pattern; however, this does not reflect any predefined visual concept, but rather corresponds with the intuitive choices made in the event of filming, while being immersed in the becoming of the moment, without any clear separation between reality and fiction, or one between the process of filming and the process of becoming. These choices about the use of specific cameras are therefore already merged with parts of the filmed scenes or situations, and the visual pattern emerges organically from the editing process.

1.2.5 Stage 5: A Trip to Wales; FACT Residency; Super8 (Affective Sign 10 and Found Affective Sign)

The final stage of practice was defined by varied experimentation with Super8 film stock. It advanced the method of affective atmosphere further, based on the reflection on the previous stage. The experience of the previous stages and the knowledge of the completed films was also an opportunity to root the final outcomes in the context of the previous practice, exploring untested methods and approaches, and in general doing things a bit differently, while pursuing the same underlying aims of the project. This final stage consisted of three main parts: the first part concerned a search for and collection of Super8 found footage, and subsequent physical edit of this footage into a film, entitled Found Affective Sign. The second part was a casting process and a three-day filming in Wales – one of the outcomes of my residency at the FACT gallery in Liverpool (as well as a final exhibition of the work at FACT, which I discuss in 5.1).

The third part was an experimental photochemical development of 37-year expired Super8 film stock, some of which I had used in Barcelona during Stage 4. This allowed for the subsequent incorporation of this footage in the Affective Sign 9 film resulting from the previous stage.

The process of acquiring found footage was largely blind (as I didn't know in advance the precise content of the films), and so the results were unpredictable. This introduced a level of contingency, bringing the process of searching for footage on eBay to a comparable level of producing new film material – the basis of the rest of the project. The footage was of course fixed in time, but the search for it nevertheless unravelled as an unpredictable becoming of the present moment. Similarly to the film production methods applied throughout the project, quantity of footage was an important consideration, in order to discover moments of affective significance, where chance and aspects of form/style coincide fortuitously. Therefore, price was often a consideration, so that I could maximise the amount of material I could acquire for the available budget. I ended up obtaining around 60 reels of film, combining home movies with a variety of commercially printed films, such as dramas, documentaries and cartoons. As the footage arrived by post, I continuously filmed the projected image with a digital camera, which allowed me to thoroughly consider and make appropriate choices about the moments of affective significance. This is because the easy access to and replaying of short segments of film, offered by non-linear digital editing, exposes affective significance in the moving-still structures of film. (Perhaps this was the technological obstacle for Barthes when he could only account for the third meaning in a still image removed from the film.)⁹ Once the film was fully edited digitally, I implemented all the (virtual) editing decisions in the physical, linear cutting and splicing of the film reels.

⁹ It is a paradox, illuminated through this process, that the physical strip of film lays out openly the still existence of film as a series of static frames, yet for it to exist as film, it has to physically move – and that makes the movement harder to access, precisely because the physical animation of the strip of film is cumbersome and inflexible. Digital, on the other hand, is not directly bound to a physical medium (it is information independent of the physical stuff that contains it) and so its movement is a virtual representation, a particular organisation of the non-linear data, rather than bound indexically to real movement (the individual, still frames bear indexical connection to the movement of reality, but physical film, additionally, also relates indexically to the movement of the strip of film). The virtual nature of the digital moving image makes it more accessible *as stillness*. I return to this in 2.3, and discuss Barthes' third meaning in more detail in 2.1.

The experimentation with found footage had a clear aesthetic impact on the production of Affective Sign 10 during the second part of Stage 5. I was drawn, in the amateur home movies, to the layer of contingency added by the ‘uninformed’ camerawork, which usually seems to be driven by a desire to ‘get’ the image, to use the camera in order to *look*, rather than to compose an image. The random, disorderly way in which such composition emerges – not bound by cinematographic conventions and biases built up by studying and appreciating film and visual composition in general – has arguably a strong aesthetic value, adding to the singularity of the image, and giving rise to overtone resonance between the image frame and the filmed reality, and between the distinct compositional elements of affective space. I therefore wanted to apply this unconscious approach as much as possible during the making of Affective Sign 10, especially through the use of a zoom lens (an inherent part of most Super8 cameras, and hence used plentifully in amateur films, precisely due to its libidinal pursuit of direct, crude vision – getting as close as possible to the filmed object).

The scope of the residency at FACT allowed for a casting process that involved people with no previous acting experience, something which was harder to achieve previously, due to budget limitations. By engaging such individuals, the experimental directorial methods could be tested without the (uncontrollable) influence of prior knowledge, experience and habit, on the side of the performer, of established acting methods. Through reflection on the preceding stages of the project, where I had directly participated in the affective atmosphere, I wanted to pursue this method further, and take part even more as a performer during this stage of filming. I approached the casting process with this in mind, and the session with each candidate was based around a random, improvised conversation between me and them, in which, as I explained to them, we are neither fictional characters nor our ordinary selves, but are simply in the present moment, allowing ourselves to be affected by it and by each other. In this way, I could explore the potential of such verbal exchanges, as well as my direct participation as a performer. I filmed the entire casting process, which facilitated the selection of suitable performers, but I could also use the footage to reflect, ahead of the main filming, on the effects of my interaction with the performers. (I return to this in 4.4.)

The filming of *Affective Sign 10* was building on the experience of *Stage 4*. It was about making a trip with performers, during which we stayed continually committed to the affective atmosphere – as the potential for chance activated by spontaneously travelling through reality while being affected by the present moment had proved to be a fruitful avenue. However, here I wanted to explore the countryside (as compared to the city environments of the previous films), which reduced the unpredictable complexity of the visual elements. Nevertheless, inspired by many of the home movies I had viewed and edited, I was interested in the affective potential of precisely such an environment. Furthermore, the dense complexity of the city encountered on foot was here compensated for by making the trip in a car, which gave us the opportunity to cross considerable distances (often at random), and so, at this speed, the potential for contingency of the countryside environment was increased.

I selected three performers through the casting process, as I was intuitively drawn to the specific differences and similarities between the three. This inspired me to alter the concept of *Stage 4* by making the car trip from Liverpool to the Welsh coastline twice, swapping one of the performers after the first day. The change in dynamism between the two pairs of performers had a radical influence on each trip, and so the two adjacent trips to the same destination ended up forging a different sense of atmosphere. The unique energy between the two performers influenced the spontaneous choices made about the journey itself, which altered the locations we found ourselves in (and where locations were dictated by the general logistics, such as the cottage that we stayed in, a different navigation and use of these locations naturally emerged during filming). This, in turn, had an influence on the film material itself, giving rise to unique, singular moments in which performance and locations combined unpredictably or fortuitously.

Similarly to *Stage 4*, the voice of the performers was being constantly recorded on their smartphones, using a hidden clip-on microphone. However, while in *Affective Sign 9* this voice was subsequently re-dubbed, in order to forge a heightened degree of intimacy (but also to create a more constructed sense of affective space), here the continuous, digital sound recording created a strong contrast to the limited nature of the Super8 footage (I had 20 rolls of film, each giving around 3 minutes of footage at 18

frames per second). Where digital and analogue film are juxtaposed in Affective Sign 9, here a similar juxtaposition of digital and analogue takes place, but affects the narrative rather than the stylistic aspect of the film, since a continuous stream of singular moments of sound recording underpin the entire film, giving it an elusive, disjointed sense of narrative (similar to Affective Sign 8). While it made sense conceptually, in this stage of practice, for the entire piece to be filmed in Super8, I also obtained a continuous digital video recording from a near-identical angle (with a very different aesthetic impression), due to having an iPhone attached to the Super8 camera. This footage is very useful in providing documentation and evidence of the process, and also to illustrate the singularity of the affective space constituted within the Super8 image (in contrast to the iPhone footage, which often lacks the sense of affective significance arising from the combination of reality and the Super8 materiality of the recording medium). **Video 26** and **Video 27** illustrate this contrast; I return to this in 4.4.

The final part of Stage 5 involved the development of three rolls of Kodachrome film stock, which expired in 1981. Since the chemical for developing this film is no longer manufactured, I had to develop it as black and white film in a substance called Caffinol, the main ingredient of which is instant coffee. The degradation-damage and reduced sensitivity of the expired film combined with the imperfection of the Caffinol development technique (especially as I was forced to use an unsuitable 35mm still photography developing tank), resulting in contingency on the level of the image. This made the film unevenly developed, with sections of partial development, or places where pieces of film had become superimposed over each other, creating disjointed layers on the surface of the image. (I discuss this more in 2.2.5.)

1.2.6 The Editing Process

Since the structuring principle of Affective Cinema is affective significance, the editing could not be concerned with creating a meaningful or narrative whole. Rather, the first logical step of the post-production process was a form of distillation: a gradual reduction of the excessive volume of footage into shorter segments – shots – that stand out as affectively significant in comparison to the rest of the footage, and in which an

emphatic moment of performance coincides with contingency in wider reality (including elements directly linked to the filming process itself) and other non-representational formal aspects. When it comes to the dialogue scenes, a certain level of logical coherence of the scene had to be preserved, in order for the films not to become avant-garde: for affective significance to arise, the focus has to be on nuanced overtone resonance of all elements of the film, rather than a forceful emphasis (or denial) of meaning through (dissonant) montage techniques, such as would be the case in many examples from the avant-garde tradition (most notably in the Soviet montage films of Eisenstein and Vertov). The dialogue-editing process nevertheless did not serve to *enhance* the narrative or emotional logic of the verbal exchange through the choice of shots – as would be the custom in conventional narrative cinema – but rather focused on the affective significance of individual shots, and the affective relations between adjacent shots. During Stages 1 and 2, the writing of the scripts dictated a certain narrative logic to the dialogues or monologues (as apparent in Affective Signs 2, 5 and 6), while the singularity of shots, and the immediate connections between shots, were still prioritised over the dramatic coherence of the whole. Furthermore, in Affective Sign 6, where the logic of the written dialogue was looser, the editing offered more liberty in terms of the sequencing of the affectively significant elements. The editing process of Stage 1 and Stage 2 initiated the evolution of the approach to editing monologue/dialogue scenes in the Stage 3 workshop (Affective Sign 8), and in the Stage 4 and Stage 5 films (Affective Signs 9 and 10). In these films, editing was employed to construct completely new conversations or connections between disjointed spoken lines. I return to the aspect of editing in 3.2.6.

1.2.7 The Use of Sound Design and Music

The implementation of sound and music during post-production is one of the key methods of amplifying affective significance, by abstracting/defamiliarising the image (rather than illustrating any specific emotion, or enhancing the coherence and meaningful context within the structure of the film), and by responding mimetically to

the molecular singularities of the image, rather than trying to enhance any molar,¹⁰ structural whole of the image (or a scene) as a meaningful representation. By removing the image from any coherent dramatic or emotional context, and instead creating unexpected affective connections between the image and music/sound, a new, singular whole can be created, rather than forging a representation of emotions or of a relatable human experience. I collaborated with three music composers/sound designers throughout the project, with a fourth one eventually taking part to compose music for *Found Affective Sign*. The selection of sound-designers/composers depended on their personal style and approach that could be gleaned from their previous work. In selecting collaborators, I focused on achieving a variety of styles, which all have the potential to amplify affective significance by responding intuitively and/or mimetically, and in a non-representational way, to the nuances of the moving image: giving rise to a new affective resonance between the image and sound. Many of the *Affective Sign* films have two sound/music versions made by two different composers. This has proved to be very valuable in exploring the fluidity and impermanence of affects in the image, opening up to different moods and intensities, depending on the artistic sensibility of the given composer intuitively responding to the image. A thorough reflection on the aspect of music and sound-design in the *Affective Cinema* project is beyond the scope of this thesis; I nevertheless return to this subject in 3.2.7.

1.3 *Casting and Ethical Considerations Surrounding Performance*

There was no budget available to pay actors a salary until the Stage 5 production at FACT. It was therefore essential to engage performers who I considered suitable to work with as a practitioner, but who also had a clear interest to appear in the films.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari (1983) make the distinction between molar and molecular to describe the unified view and understanding of beings and things (the molar), as opposed to the constitutive, undifferentiated, unspecified elements (the molecular) from which the meaningful units originate. The molecular is the ‘domain of chance or of real inorganization, [from which] large configurations are organized that necessarily reproduce a structure’ (289). This molar state can be recognised when things or beings ‘become structured by the statistical unities of their persons and their species, varieties, and locales; when a machine appears as a single object, and a living organism appears as a single subject’ (287). As a simplification it can be postulated that the molecular is fundamentally related to affect (to singularity and multiplicity intertwined), while the molar relates to meaningful organisation (the unification in habit, law or recognisable structure).

Semi-professional casting portals such as Casting Call Pro and StarNow were ideal for this, as there are a lot of up-and-coming actors registered, for whom the acting experience and the resulting film material was a clear benefit. This mutual interest resulted in true artistic collaborations, for the performers cared about the quality of the resulting footage as much as I did, and they were therefore personally invested in the performance. In place of a salary, the quality of our joint director-performer work was the ultimate reward – for creative as well as pragmatic reasons. Their motivation to commit fully to their performance was strengthened by their recognition of my professionalism and seriousness of intention, as well as by my track record as a director. I therefore cared immensely about maintaining this impression and reputation throughout our collaboration – building up strong relationships of integrity and mutual trust.

One of unintended consequences to this zero-budget casting approach was that in the workshop films (Affective Signs 1, 2 and 8) and in the real-location visual/non-verbal films (Affective Signs 3 and 4), there is a dominance of female characters. The primary reason for this is that the majority of performers expressing interest in taking part in the project were female. Because there are significantly more female actors and performers registered on these casting portals, it is understandable that more female actors would be attracted to an unpaid opportunity such as this, simply to build up their professional portfolio. Male actors might be less likely to see value in applying for unpaid opportunities, since the competition for male roles is lower overall (and there are more ‘good-quality male roles’ available in the film industry, which makes a serious and interesting, although unpaid, unisex opportunity such as Affective Cinema especially attractive to female performers). Either way, when putting together a larger group of performers – such as required for the casting workshops or the visual films – it was harder to achieve gender balance without compromising the perceived suitability of all participants for the project.

When working with performers, it was imperative for me to make sure that they were comfortable with the filming process. The first step I took during every stage of casting was to explain thoroughly the filming approach and the concept of the project, both

verbally and in writing (through an information sheet and a participation agreement/release form), allowing all participants to raise any questions or problems. Furthermore, it was critical for me that all selected candidates were genuinely interested in the filming process and they were fully open to the methods and techniques I applied. I gauged this by meeting performers individually ahead of the filming, and spending sufficient time having a conversation with each of them. In this way I made sure that there was full understanding of what I expected of them, but it was also an opportunity to establish a friendly, honest rapport. I am confident to say that strong relationships of trust, respect and creative participation were established with all performers involved throughout the project, as apparent to me from the multiple positive conversations I had with them during and after filming. I believe such positive, honest relationship is valuable in ethical terms, and, based on my practitioner experience and intuition, it is the most productive approach to directing performers. During filming I repeatedly assured myself that everyone was comfortable and that they found my direction useful – and I gave them plenty of opportunities to express any concerns or hesitations. When working as part of the continuous, uninterrupted performance of affective atmosphere (see 4.4), I made sure everyone fully understood the process, and that there was a clear mechanism for stepping out of the affective atmosphere, for example by saying ‘break’ when the performer felt tired, or ‘too much’ when he or she felt uncomfortable or the situation of performance had become too intense. This mechanism was written directly into the rhizomatic script of the Stage 4 affective atmosphere. The only time throughout the whole process when I could not be certain of a performer’s continuous wellbeing was when casting a non-actor with limited English comprehension during Stage 5. In this case I involved an assistant who could speak the performer’s mother tongue, to make sure all my explanations and directions were translated to her. In this way I made sure that there were no misunderstandings and that the performer was comfortable throughout the whole process.

Collaboration with performers was at the heart of this practice, and it *was* a true *collaboration*, not an employer-employee relationship or a formal, impersonal research participation – rather it was an *equal creative partnership* with individuals highly interested in the processes of film performance, keen to appear in the films and allow

me to help them as a director to deliver a strong performance. My contact and collaboration with most of the performers continued beyond their involvement on the project, as I provided them with specific edited pieces of footage from the raw material based on their various requests (on top of the final, edited films), and in many cases I edited entire showreel sequences for them. Furthermore, I have informed all performers about each public screening of the project, which in many cases they have attended, in order to take advantage of the professional exposure arising from these screenings. From all the conversations I've had with many of the performers since their involvement on the project it is clear to me that the experience of taking part was creatively rewarding for them as much as it was for me.

Found Affective Sign is the only film from the series that did not involve working with performers and the process of casting. It nevertheless features a *kind* of performance, based in moments removed from their amateur, home movie context. Through the radical selection of editing, the performance is removed from this ordinary, documentary context, and becomes aligned with the sense of affective film performance as I define it in 4.1. While the processes of film production and of acquiring found footage differ categorically, the ultimate construction of film performance – and its potential contribution to affective significance in the film – arises in the same way: by identifying, in the *moving image*, singular moments where performance aligns with aspects of chance and form. However, where in the rest of the project the function of affective film performance was supported by the implemented methods, in the case of Found Affective Sign, the occurrence of such moments depends *entirely* on the editing process. Nevertheless, the appearance of people in this kind of footage leads to specific ethical considerations, such as mitigating for their inability to provide consent to be in the film.

Given the amount and age of the source film reels (and the anonymous process through which they were acquired on eBay), it would be very difficult to seek individual consent of the people who appear in the footage. There are nevertheless two ways in which I believe this problem was mitigated. First of all, as opposed to other found footage projects, the main point of which is often to piece together the story of the people who

appear in the film and in this way produce and reveal coherent narrative meaning (such as *Private Century* [2006, Directed by Jan Siskl], for example), my film is doing the exact opposite. Precisely because Found Affective Sign aims to create a sense of affective film performance out of material that does not overtly contain it (creating the *effect* of, rather than giving directly rise to, performance), the film aims to remove coherence and context rather than to create it. As a result, the appearance of people is brief and disjointed, and in a way *accidental*. It is almost as if they were passers-by playing an accidental role in affective significance, rather than being performers directly contributing to it. Furthermore, often the most affectively significant moments of the found footage did not involve performance at all – in contrast to all the other films of the project that directly aimed at working with performance and hence which *always* contain it. By focusing on the nonhuman, and by prioritising texture and defamiliarisation of the affective space of the image over a sense of performance, I believe the privacy of the people appearing in the footage is being respected. The second way in which I mitigate the lack of consent is by limiting and controlling the public dissemination of this particular film. The intended, primary presentation of this film is in the form of dedicated, live screenings – in a research and/or academic context – and ideally bound with the unique, physical medium of the edited film as Super8 projection (I return to this in 5.2). In this way, I want to respect the singular, unreproduced physical moving images in the form in which I legally purchased them from their rightful owners (I of course cannot be certain of the identity of the eBay sellers, but I would consider it likely that the films had not been obtained from their original owners against their will). For this reason, I would not distribute a digital version of the film on the internet or in a form in which I might lose control over the way in which it is being viewed and/or copied. I also don't believe that this film would be suitable for inclusion in a long-running, open-space public exhibition such as the one conducted for the project at FACT (see 5.1); the presentation should instead be limited to a group of viewers attending in person a particular, single screening of the film.

2. Chance and the Echoes of Real Movement in Film

As I explain in the introduction, chance (or contingency) is one of the fundamental constitutive elements of affective significance. My understanding of film that is at the heart of affective significance – and which has been developed through this research project – is that it represents a threshold between the becoming of the real (which I refer to as ‘real movement’) and the conceptual stillness of human language and intellect. While film is (ontologically) a still structure made out of equidistant photographs, it captures a mechanical imprint of (something of) the becoming of the real – namely, the movement/becoming of the particular arrangement of light in the moment of photographic capture. Because of the indiscriminate automatism of this process (within the de-limitation of the frame), something of the becoming of the real persists within the ontological stillness of film – and I refer to this something as ‘echo of real movement’. The echo of real movement can be recognised in the image as chance (as something unpredictable, unexpected or unplanned). This aspect of chance can contribute to the destabilisation (and hence defamiliarisation) of the coherence of the image – it can contribute to a rupture of a coherent narrative signification and of a coherent, indexical representation of the filmed reality. This contribution can be amplified if such stylistic/formal choices are implemented (during production and/or post-production) that prevent the aspect of chance from being easily re-assimilated into the coherent representation of the film. Instead, these stylistic choices help to reveal the echoes of real movement as emancipated within the image from the becoming of the real with which they share an indexical link (through the process of filming). This gives rise to a *fundamentally new* reality of the image in which it is impossible to separate the (three-dimensional) attributes of the filmed reality and the (two-dimensional) attributes of the medium. I focus on this new reality of the image (and the aesthetic choices that can lead to defamiliarisation through exposing the echoes of real movement) in the subsequent chapter. This present chapter, however, is dedicated to the aspect of chance, and, more broadly, to the underlying duality of real movement (becoming) and (conceptual) stillness, and to the fundamental nature of film as a threshold between movement and stillness.

I first outline the philosophical basis of the project that underpins the notion of chance. Subsequently, I present examples from cinema where the echoes of real movement reveal themselves through various degrees of chance and unpredictability, linking these examples to specific elements of contingency as they emerged from my practice. Finally, I outline the progressive development of my approach to chance, as it evolved through the hermeneutic spiral. This chapter therefore demonstrates one of the fundamental aspects on which this research is based, but also how this philosophical basis creatively inspired the practice. Ultimately, this research approach informed new film work (as one of the key outcomes of this project), and led to enhanced understanding of the theory – through reflection, alteration between reflection and production, and through directly embedding the theory in the practice (as demonstrated in the **Affective Cinema** collage).

2.1 Movement/Stillness: Bergson, Barthes and Deleuze

In Bergson's philosophy, the concepts of becoming and duration are fundamentally related, to the extent that they are in opposition (or in hierarchical supremacy) to abstract/geometrical space, and to individual objects moving through this geometrical space according to divisible, reversible time. These secondary, conceptual kinds of movement and time represent the way in which the human intellect understands and views the world.¹¹ As Bergson (1944) points out, 'we become unable to perceive the true evolution, the radical becoming. Of becoming we perceive only states, of duration only instants, and even when we speak of duration and of becoming, it is of another thing that we are thinking' (297). However, for Bergson (2002) the true nature of reality 'is global and undivided growth, progressive invention, duration: it resembles a gradually expanding rubber balloon assuming at each moment unexpected forms' (226);

¹¹ For Bergson (1944), the mechanism of film is analogous (or synonymous) to that of the intellect, where film, like our ordinary perception, 'manages to solidify into discontinuous images the fluid continuity of the real' (328). Bergson says that: 'Instead of attaching ourselves to the inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside them in order to recompose their becoming artificially. We take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality, and, as these are characteristic of the reality, we have only to string them on a becoming, abstract, uniform and invisible, situated at the back of the apparatus of knowledge, in order to imitate what there is that is characteristic in this becoming itself. Perception, intellection, language so proceed in general. Whether we would think becoming, or express it, or even perceive it, we hardly do anything else than set going a kind of cinematograph inside us' (332).

reality, for Bergson, is the ‘flow of unforeseeable novelty ... the moving originality of things’ (232). Or as Ronald Bogue (2003) puts it, ‘for Bergson the universe is a vibrational whole, various entities being diverse contractions and dilations of *durée*, and that vibrational whole may be thought of (with due caution) as time-space or matter-flow – that is, as universal movement, in which there is no division between motion and things moving’ (32). Bergson’s (2002) concept of duration reflects ‘the continuity of real time’ (211), as opposed to ‘spatialised time’, and is fundamentally related to consciousness; as he affirms, ‘we cannot speak of a reality that endures without inserting consciousness into it’ (207). However, the aspect of his philosophy more aligned with becoming – yet also fundamentally related to duration – which reflects ‘the perpetual flux of things’ (1944: 344), ‘the continuity of the real movement’ (377), is more useful to my ontological approach to film. Matilda Mroz (2012), whose application of Bergson’s thought to film analysis resonates in many respects with my approach, focuses, on the other hand, on the *viewing experience*, where the aspect of duration related to time becomes more pertinent. As a practitioner, when I deal with the unpredictable unfolding of reality in the moment of filming, it is the aspect of *movement* that ushers in the radical novelty and chance in reality, and which later gives rise to affective significance within the moving-still structure of film. Furthermore, making aesthetic decisions about the creative process, including the experience of working with the film material in post-production, makes the ontological stillness of film a *methodological given*. Therefore, negotiating movement and stillness (and creatively utilising the potential that arises at their intersection) is a critical aspect of the practice. Significantly, however, it is the understanding of movement and stillness rooted in Bergson’s philosophy that is at stake: real movement (becoming) and human, conceptual stillness (meaning) – and film as a new kind of reality on the threshold between the two. It is this threshold state of film that creates the potential for affective significance – capturing echoes of real movement, and giving rise to overtone resonance between movement and stillness (see below).

As I mention earlier, the way in which the echoes of real movement can be identified in film is as chance, as contingency.¹² In her discussion of early cinema (and especially the documentary-style ‘actualities’ from the early 20th century), Mary Ann Doane (2000) points out film’s unique ability to capture contingency – to capture the ‘immediacy of the real’, the ‘pure present’ (151). She claims that ‘the specificity of photography as a representational form has been, and continues to be, situated as a privileged link to the contingent’ (142). In other words, she identifies film’s *specificity* – its indiscriminating, nonhuman viewpoint – as the key aspect of its ability to capture contingency. Therefore, if the nonhuman (mechanical, automatic, indiscriminate) stillness of film has the potential to capture the echoes of real movement, while providing a privileged view of this nonhuman reality, then *contingency* is one of the ways in which such traces of the real can be described. For contingency testifies to the unpredictable complexity of the becoming of the real, transcending human intention and control. The nonhuman origin of the photographic image in the unpredictable becoming of reality can either be accounted for or it can at least be assumed. While reading for contingency in cinema has to usually rely on the latter, the production of new film work allows for an enhanced insight into the emergence of the image, and hence into the degree of intentionality and control that was involved. What is more, certain experimental methods can be implemented, which aim to maximise the element of chance in the film material. (I discuss the implementation and development of these methods in 2.3, and outline the specific filmmaking processes behind the capturing of chance – and how they relate to the achieved results and comparable examples from the history of cinema – in 2.2.)

The echoes of real movement that can be recognised as chance in film ultimately exist within, and emerge from, the ontological stillness of film as a series of static frames. And, indeed, both still photography and film have the propensity to capture chance, and there is, therefore, an important, ontological identity between still photography and film.

¹² The philosophical understanding of becoming and chance bear some resemblance with the ‘chaos theory’ in science, which defines the *fundamental unpredictability* of nonlinear dynamic systems. Although the chaos theory is working on the basis of a mechanistic, deterministic model of causality (interacting particles moving through geometrical space), it in itself describes ‘those dynamic phenomena for which the whole differs from the sum of its parts ... in other words, [where] particular effects cannot be assigned to particular causal components’ (Scott 2007: 4). Therefore, while there is an ‘original cause’ to a particular (contingent) effect, it is impossible to predict or to calculate, in a complex dynamic system, the specific effect based on the cause, although it is predictable ‘in principle’.

After all, even a still photograph requires a certain *time* to be exposed, so perhaps the difference is in the *extent of duration* of real movement *preserved*, rather than an ontological difference between movement and stillness as such. Certainly, the duration of film gives a radically enhanced *impression* of real movement, but perhaps that is not so much a qualitative such as a quantitative difference (at least from the ontological perspective). What is much more important, I would argue, is that in either case real movement is preserved and contained *as still*. Still, not in the superficial sense that it doesn't appear to be moving – as is self-explanatory in the case of a photograph – but rather still in line with Bergson's (2002) philosophy: 'unwinding a roll ready prepared' (177), always there in an identical sequential order, always ready to be re-played, always ready to be *read*. In this regard, both film and photography are inherently semiotic – *always opened up to semiosis as a text* – however, not in the sense that they necessarily have to represent something *already* specific and intelligible, but rather that new representational links can be invented, discovered, agreed upon, and even, *intuited* or *felt*. That is because film *is always there, as a static, objectively verifiable audio/visual sequence and structure*.¹³ These representational links could be with a new signified, forming a new interpretation of the meaning of the images; however, for the research in Affective Cinema, it is much more important to consider semiotic connections, which do not create or intend to create such rational meaning, but rather the intuitive or affective connections, which give rise to what I call *affective significance*. For as Mullarkey (2009) points out, in relation to Bergson, 'the new *can only* be felt' (211, emphasis in the original), and therefore, the way in which real movement is echoed in the stillness of the images can perhaps only be *read* on the level of feeling and intuition – a level which nevertheless 'overcomes the duality of rationalism and emotivism' (211) *as affect*.

In 'The Third Meaning' (1977a: 52-68), Roland Barthes outlines precisely this kind of loose semiotic connection, which fundamentally depends on the contingent alignment of the real within a photographically captured frame. He studies closely particular still images taken from a feature film (Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* [1944]), which leads

¹³ And the same is true of a photograph, but understandably without the sonic and sequential parameters unique to film.

him to distinguish three layers of meaning: the first is an informational level (this is the level of communication, the story, the message of the film); the second is a level of symbolism (this is a semiotic level *beyond message*, but nevertheless lucid and intentional; it is composed of various symbolic elements *readable* for a clearly identifiable and justifiable signified, whilst applying the fields of knowledge such as psychoanalysis, economy and dramaturgy); the third level then contains the *third meaning*.

The third meaning appears to Barthes as a surplus of meaning, a certain *insistence of the image* after all intelligible meaning has been extracted from it: he can describe in detail the various aspects of the signifier, without being able to (linguistically) grasp the signified – it bears a *significance, without signifying* anything. It is ‘at once persistent and fleeting, smooth and elusive ... appears to extend outside culture, knowledge and information ... opening out into the infinity of language ... indifferent to moral or aesthetic categories’ (54-55). The third meaning is unintentional, hidden away under the layer of obvious symbolism and ‘carries a certain *emotion*’ (59, emphasis in the original). The third meaning is situated in what is purely visual and completely outside language: it is ‘indifferent to the story and to the obvious meaning’ (61). Whilst it does not have a signified, according to Barthes, it nevertheless has an object, in the form of the elements of reality photographed; but the third meaning causes a ‘distancing effect’ (61) in the image in regard to the object.

The third meaning subverts and surpasses the story of the film – through its insistence and significance – and therefore represents the *filmic*: the visual, which is unique and peculiar to film, outside of narrative and traditional meaning; a ‘representation which cannot be represented’ (64).

The third meaning – theoretically locatable but not describable – can now be seen as the *passage* from language to *significance* and the founding act of the filmic itself. Forced to develop in a civilization of the signified, it is not surprising that (despite the incalculable number of films in the world) the filmic should still be rare ... so much so that it could be said that as yet the film does not exist (65, emphases in the original).

It is then quite paradoxical that the true essence of film should be expressed exclusively through a still image, and Barthes is aware of this paradox. But he nevertheless cannot help but seeing the ‘filmic time’ as a constraining obstacle, preventing the third meaning from asserting itself *in motion*. Furthermore, he insists that the still ‘is not a specimen chemically extracted from the substance of the film, but rather the trace of a superior *distribution* of traits of which the film as experienced in its animated flow would give no more than one text among others’ (67, emphasis in the original). However, Barthes’ description of the third meaning is perfectly consistent with the affective nuances produced by the real movement in film – in a unique alignment of film structure and contingent elements – and in fact I would argue it is precisely the traces, *the echoes of real movement*, which are reflected in the still image for Barthes: on the threshold between real movement and film’s ontological stillness.

What is more, the illusion of movement in film imbues film with a sense of *living duration*, as its time has to coincide with the becoming of reality each time it is being re-played. That gives film a sense of *its own becoming*, independent of the activity of the mind of the viewer. The affective significance that Barthes recognises in the photograph only endures in the mind; whereas film endures in its own right, producing its own sense of internal vision, stirring the echoes of real movement in new contexts, *becoming with reality anew*. That makes affect in film more fleeting and harder to pin down, but equally it makes it an autonomous part in the becoming of each moment with which it coincides in the process of unwinding of its still structure *as duration* in time. This corresponds with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994) understanding of affects in works of art as independent of both the viewer and the creator, as the ‘*nonhuman becomings of man*’ (169, emphasis in the original): 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).¹⁴ However, film lends

¹⁴ In *What is Philosophy?* (1994), Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between *affects* (‘*nonhuman becomings of man*’) and *percepts* (‘*nonhuman landscapes of nature*’ [169, emphases in the original]). However, ‘affect’ is used to mean both percept and affect (a ‘*compound of percepts and affects*’ [164, emphasis in the original]) by other authors, and indeed by Deleuze himself in his other works. While Brinkema (2014) uses the term affect to describe something almost exclusively related to film’s formal structure (irrespective of the human body), and Del Río (2008), on the other hand, focuses on the human body *as the source of affect* in film, I do see the performing body as *a more privileged, yet not exclusive location of affects* in film. The capacity of the body to produce affects is explored in the fourth chapter.

itself particularly well to this understanding, as ‘it is precisely because cinema composes images through time that it can present affects and intensities. It can disjoin the usual sequence of images – our usually ordered world with its expected flow of events – and allow us to perceive affects without their standard order and meaning’ (39). Furthermore, the power of cinema, for Deleuze, lies precisely in its ability to create new realities, new affects, rather than representing specific things as perceived in reality. It is then his model of cinema as time-image (as opposed to a more traditional mode of cinema based in narrative logic, audio-visual coherence and the representation of concrete things, characters and places) that is intrinsically linked to affect: ‘in the time-image the image is no longer perceived as an image of this or that. It is the image in its singularity, so we see imaging as such, not yet incorporated into a viewpoint, not yet ordered into a line of time’ (53). The time-image is a direct image of time, for time is no longer extrapolated from individual moving objects but we are rather presented with *real time*: the movement of time as such.

As the discussion of Deleuze’s affect and time-image demonstrates, the function of film to preserve echoes of real movement, and its potential to defamiliarise the ordinary context of reality are hard to separate. Ultimately, once film becomes fixed as image, it is impossible to separate the captured echoes of real movement and the stylistic attributes that magnify the impact of contingency by denying the image its function as ordinary representation of coherent, recognizable reality. (I discuss the stylistic attributes in detail in the third chapter.) The concept of affect in film represents, I argue, precisely the point of contact between the real and the image, the point at which the real becomes the image *as the new real* (I refer to the aesthetic dimension of the new real as *affective space*). At the same time, the tension between the echoes of real movement and film’s ontological stillness persists in film. One way of understanding this tension between movement and stillness is to think of it as *overtonal resonance*¹⁵ – a secondary,

¹⁵ I borrow the term ‘overtone’ from Sergei Eisenstein’s concept of ‘overtone montage’, developed in his essay ‘Filmic Fourth Dimension’ (1949), who in turn borrows the term ‘overtone’ from acoustics, and specifically from experimental orchestral music, where overtones – secondary, collateral vibrations of a dominant tone – are the ‘most significant means for affect’ (66). These visual overtones are experienced by the viewer, according to Eisenstein, on a ‘physiological level’, in the sense that perception is a ‘higher nervous activity’ than merely ‘psychic’ processes: ‘in this way, behind the general indication of the shot, the physiological summary of its vibrations as a *whole*, as a complex unity of the manifestations of all its stimuli, is present. This is the peculiar “*feeling*” of the shot, produced by the shot as a whole’ (67,

collateral vibration of the various elements of the moving-still structure of the film. Overtone resonance can be understood as a complex, *unpredictable* resonance that transcends the distinction between dissonance and consonance. As the still structure of film becomes animated through movement, the echoes of real movement start to resonate within this structure; they come alive, so to speak. Overtone resonance, in this sense, is precisely the aspect of becoming in the film – as it is being played – that differentiates it from its ontological state as a series of static frames, without ever entirely negating this static nature. On the contrary, it is precisely the static nature of film that can give rise to overtone resonance once it is brought to life through playback or projection (although it can likewise give rise to jarring, avant-garde dissonance, or consonant narrative engagement and satisfaction). The stillness of film gives rise to significance, as Barthes describes it; but this significance is continuously animated within the moving-still structures of film, which makes it take on a more autonomous function within the film *as affect*, having a sense of life of its own, a sense of vision that exists in the film. Through its movement, in the flickering oscillation between two and three spatial dimensions, *it is as if film was looking within its own world, even when no one else is looking* (...the mysterious life of an abandoned film projection, running on its own inside a dark, empty cinema). The meaning of film is not meaning of intersubjective human communication, but a nonhuman meaning exchanged between the real and the moving-still, virtual-yet-permanent field of the moving image. Or rather, it is a nonhuman meaning that emerges from the always-new encounter between the real and the image, an accidental meaning, a meaning that can only be felt: affective significance.

emphases in the original). More importantly, Eisenstein asserts that the visual (or musical) overtone cannot be perceived outside movement: it only emerges ‘in the dynamics of the musical or cinematographic *process*’ (69, emphasis in the original). Therefore, visual and aural overtones are of the *same kind*, of the *same substance*, belonging to the ‘fourth dimension’ of time (movement), which *is* the dimension of *physiological sensation*: the overtone is not heard or seen, but *felt* (70-1).

2.2 Chance in Film and in the Affective Cinema Practice

The philosophical framework outlined above, which defines the understanding of chance (as a recognisable mark of the echo of real movement within the moving-still structure of film), served as a guiding principle for both practice and reflection throughout this research project. The understanding of affective significance was originally developed on the basis of moments from the history of cinema where emphatic instances of chance occur – entering into overtone resonance with other stylistic and formal aspects of the films. When devising and implementing filmmaking methods that can increase the likelihood of contingency to register on film, I had its potential effect as affective significance in mind. For this reason, there either was an aesthetic context created by these methods in which chance, when registered, would become embedded, or the aspect of chance – when recognised or discovered in the filmed material in post-production – would be shaped and amplified by various stylistic means. When reflecting on the results, the theoretical framework of affective significance gradually became solidified to its existing state, with new insights being produced or inspired by the practice, and, thanks to the hermeneutic spiral approach, these new insights could also inform the ensuing practice. Ultimately, the process of reflection brought the new work back into contact with peculiar moments from cinema, as specific aleatory patterns had begun to emerge.

This section attempts to order the instances of chance based on certain common features, or based on the aspects of the film to which the element of chance relates. However, it is impossible to create a clear separation between these ‘kinds’ of filmic contingency, as every moment is, by definition, a singular instant of radical, unrepeatable novelty. Therefore, these connections and patterns are merely approximate and, in any case, could only be identified in hindsight. On the other hand, these categories are a useful tool of organising the aleatory instances in film around certain common traits, especially as after thorough reflection on the completed practice and the corresponding moments from cinema, these particular five categories (see 2.2.1–2.2.5 below) emerge as the distinct groups into which chance can be ordered. This therefore represents a specific outcome of the research with value for future film practice.

Furthermore, these categories are also a way to bring existing film moments in contact with the Affective Cinema practice, which results in a productive communication between the two. This communication ultimately exposes a different approach to these two kinds of film material. I am reading for affective significance in both kinds, through the prism of the philosophical framework, but also based on my personal, subjective predisposition.¹⁶ In the examples from Affective Cinema, however, I also have first-hand practitioner insight allowing me to account for the methods implemented in producing the specific conditions from which chance arose, and to account for my intentions – or the lack thereof. For it is precisely the contact between real movement and the stillness of film that produces instants of chance that *feel meaningful* without *intentionally* communicating meaning.

2.2.1 Chance Emerging from Encounter with Reality

Adam Curtis' documentary films have clear ideological message and purpose; yet as a filmmaker, Curtis likes to find unique pieces of archive footage to illustrate his argument. These bits of archive footage often present a fascinating alignment of elements within a complex moment in reality, and as such, these segments of film elude representation, possessing instead a sense of affective significance. A good example of this is a single shot from documentary footage of the assassination attempt on the Afghan president in Kabul, used in *Bitter Lake* (2015). (Fig. 12)

This piece of footage opens with the camera moving along the presidential motorcade on a busy, dusty road in Kabul, focusing on Hamid Karzai's car – him seated at the back. The motorcade is at a standstill, and a member of the public is talking to him through the open window. Suddenly, machine gun shots can be heard. There is a slight delay before all realise what is taking place. The camera starts swaying chaotically as

¹⁶ Affective significance is not an objective fact in reality, and it cannot be. Therefore, I am not presenting objective scientific evidence for its occurrence in film, but I am neither simply giving my personal feelings and opinions. I account for my subjective reading for affective significance through attentive description, which is, in turn, rooted in the argument of the philosophical framework of the concept. The reader (and/or the viewer) can decide for themselves whether they share this interpretation (share in the feeling of meaning produced by affective significance), or, more importantly, whether they can recognise and identify the specific (semiotic) phenomenon of affective significance in the film based on my description, explanation and/or argument.

the operator himself seeks cover. Meanwhile, the few people next to Karzai's car are falling to the ground wounded, as bullets stir the dust on the ground beneath them. The camera now represents the point of view of the operator, who runs for a nearby shelter; the shot goes completely black for a moment, but the camera nevertheless keeps rolling (and capturing sound). When the camera turns around, it reveals a chaotic scene of the individual cars of the motorcade attempting to rush away from the scene. The camera zooms in at the bodies lying next to the road: a dead body of a man is revealed with eyes wide open and a pool of blood next to him. The camera dwells on the body and then continues following the chaotic scene of the escaping motorcade. Eventually, the view of the camera turns behind and reveals an abandoned motorcycle lying in the middle of street, its hazard lights flashing to the hooting sound of an alarm. The camera operator steps toward the motorbike and makes it fill the frame for an extended moment, with a similar visual curiosity previously attracted by the dead body. Around one minute of continuous reality is captured in this shot, in which a radically contingent event unravels. Such an event possesses a sense of affective significance without any aesthetic manipulation, for the real itself structures this shot in a way that can *feel meaningful*, and the camera work appears to be an inherent part of the becoming of the moment – an immediate, primal response to the chaos of the situation.



Figure 12 *Bitter Lake* (2015, Directed by Adam Curtis)



Figure 13 *Grizzly Man* (2005, Directed by Werner Herzog)

Grizzly Man (2005) is a documentary film by Werner Herzog based on found footage; this footage was originally filmed by Timothy Treadwell as a documentary film he had intended to make about living with the grizzly bears in Alaska. Herzog nevertheless organizes this footage to shape his own understanding of Treadwell's story, imbuing the material with meaning based on his personal interpretation. At one point in the film (Fig. 13), Herzog presents a static shot from a camera mounted on a tripod; the frame is filled with a hillside covered in tall grass animated by strong gusts of wind. Treadwell sets up and orchestrates the shot as part of his intended documentary: he speaks to the camera and then runs off adventurously up the hillside, disappearing out of view. However, the camera keeps recording, and as all human participants of the becoming of this moment disappear and the grass and tree branches continue to sway in the wind, the contact between the nonhuman movement of the real and the nonhuman vision of the camera creates a marked sense of the echo of real movement *as contingency*. Herzog recognises this moment, and aesthetically manipulates its affective significance by the inclusion of music, which helps to defamiliarise the image further from any ordinary (or emotionally consonant) context. Ultimately, Herzog provides voice-over narration that

explicitly accounts for the affective significance of the moment: ‘In his action movie mode, Treadwell probably did not realise that seemingly empty moments had a strange secret beauty. Sometimes images themselves develop their own life, their own mysterious stardom.’

Similar ‘strange secret beauty’ of the moving image, or rather, the contingent movement of the real captured as an echo, is a regular theme in Stan Brakhage’s work. For example, in *Visions in Meditation #3: Plato’s Cave* (1990) (Fig. 14) and *Visions in Meditation #4: D.H. Lawrence* (1990) (Fig. 15) contingent natural phenomena such as a whirlwind of dust and hay, or an ominous gathering of storm clouds, are captured *as image* – combining with the texture of the celluloid film and the contingent, hand-held movements of the camera – forging a strong sense of the echo of real movement.



Figure 14 *Visions in Meditation #3: Plato’s Cave* (1990, Directed by Stan Brakhage)



Figure 15 *Visions in Meditation #4: D.H. Lawrence* (1990, Directed by Stan Brakhage)

Such direct encounter with contingent reality as affective significance is possible in film, whenever unconstructed reality can enter the frame, no matter what kind of film it is. In fiction films, however, which generally construct both the event and the space (to a variety of degrees), it is harder for such moments to appear, or to be clearly attributable to chance. In *Affective Cinema*, in the process of creating conditions for affective significance to arise, chance in reality was actively pursued through specific methods, such as filming in real, un-staged situations and environments, and filming for prolonged periods of time – thus maximising the possibility of unplanned moments to occur and register on camera. As a result, many examples resulting from the practice can be identified where moments of chance in reality arise to contribute to the sense of affective significance.



Figure 16 Affective Sign 3 (0min30sec – 1min02sec)

In *Affective Sign 3*, a long Steadicam shot follows a performer along a busy London underground platform. (Fig. 16) The human figures passing along and against the flow of the camera are out of focus, due to the narrow depth of field of the camera focused on the back of the performer. This visual softness helps to emancipate the image from an ordinary sense of reality but does not take away from the serendipitous alignment of movement in the situation: as the camera makes a sweeping motion to the left, a woman runs by, her reflection caught in the glass wall separating the platform from the tracks. As she passes the frame, the train doors close, and the train begins to depart, coinciding

with the fast-paced progression of the camera forward and the continuous flow of people in both directions. This wholly un-staged moment in time occurred just once, in absolute singularity – the echo of real movement captured and stilled, creating a moving-still structure that contains a sense of affective significance.



Figure 17 Affective Sign 7 (0min27sec – 1min17sec)

Affective Sign 7 features shots captured during the Pillow Fight Day. (Fig. 17) Filmed in slow motion, the shots reveal the unpredictable un-staged movements surrounding the performer, forming a singular structure that contributes to the sense of affective significance: the aesthetic emancipation of the moving image from an ordinary impression of reality is here enhanced by the slow motion, the shallow depth of field, and the narrow frame around the performer at a longer focal length, which distances her from her environment. Equally, the affective significance originates in the contingent reality, which the slow motion helps to expose and reveal, transforming it into an affective space in the process. The pillow feathers flying through the air are particularly valuable – contributing an abstract aesthetic element in the new, defamiliarised context of the shot, but also increasing the complexity and unpredictability of the environment.

In the opening shot of Affective Sign 3 (Fig. 18), the performer stands on an outdoor platform, when two London Underground trains arrive at the same time on both sides of her – this was not planned or staged, but just happened in the moment of filming; we were merely waiting to board the train, and the centre-framing of the performer was intuitive, based on the immediate circumstances. The fact of the two trains

simultaneously arriving, as well as the back illumination of the performer created by the lamp right above her, was only ‘discovered’ in the editing room. As the trains burst into the platform they send ripples of air, and the backlight illuminates individual hair oscillating in the rapid vortex forming around the performer’s head. The wind coincides with a slight swaying of the camera, perhaps contributing to it. The advance of the two trains, the wind, the pulsating camera, and the stirring eyes of the performer intently following the passing carriages in front of her all coincide to create a sense of unified movement, as if the whole image was pulsating with a single in-and-out breathing motion, synchronised to the living, heart-beating presence of the performer to the camera and to her immediate environment – the pressurised becoming of the real. Suddenly, an electric discharge on the roof of the left-side train briefly sparks into the night, to further illuminate the singularity of this moment in time, now solidified (and discovered/delimited/transformed) in the digital film imprint *as* affective significance.



Figure 18 Affective Sign 3 (0min6sec – 0min20sec)



Figure 19 Affective Sign 5 (3min9sec – 3min14sec)

Other, brief moments can be identified in Affective Cinema where chance in reality became imprinted in the film as the echo of real movement, contributing to affective

significance, in overall combination with performance and style. In Affective Sign 5, which captures a dialogue on a busy street using an extreme telephoto lens (so that many blurred human figures cross the frame), a particular moment can be identified in which a woman with a broad hat crosses the frame. (Fig. 19) This shot carries a sense of significance: there is no logical connection between this visual alignment in the frame and the particular moment of performance in the scene. The combination of staged and un-staged reality forges a sense of meaning that is not human in origin, and yet film has the unique ability to capture and shape this meaning through temporal and stylistic means.



Figure 20 Affective Sign 9 (2min25sec – 2min34sec)

Similarly in Affective Sign 9, the performer is feeling the presence of the Barcelona airport, soon after our arrival. (Fig. 20) He paces on the smooth marble surfaces of the airport lobby, on which the low afternoon sunlight casts expressive shadows. The same light is stirred by the revolving door in the background to throw visually captivating reflections. This is an un-staged, unplanned moment: we simply happened to be there at that time, just when the lobby happened to be entirely vacated, except for the performer, and a woman to the left of him, repacking her suitcase. The contingent alignment of elements in this shot was not prepared or staged, and so it does not communicate any intentional meaning; and yet, it can *feel meaningful*. In the same film, the camera follows the couple of performers through a narrow street of the Barcelona Gothic city centre. (Fig. 21) Just in this moment, the street is completely vacated; however, in the far foreground, in the street around the corner, there is an ambulance car. Only the very front of the car is visible, and the flashing lights produce a dim reflection on the wall of

the street. Here the combination of a wide lens and closed iris produces a sharp image, exposing clearly this detail of reality: the space of the scene is coherent and complete, and yet the serendipitous alignment of elements makes the image feel meaningful. The alignment itself abstracts the image from an ordinary sense of reality.



Figure 21 Affective Sign 9 (12min21sec – 12min34sec)



Figure 22 Affective Sign 9 (13min58sec)

Later on in the same film, the performers are framed in close-up with a street providing depth to the shallow-focused background of the shot. (Fig. 22) The dialogue is random, emerging from the moment, from being affected by each other and by the environment,

and the scene is just one continuous take: therefore the structure of the scene/shot – the very fact that it *feels* like a structure – relies heavily on serendipity. Furthermore, in a specific moment of emotional exchange between the performers, and in a strange alignment with the slight repositioning of their heads, a man walks by at a fast pace, looking briefly into the camera, and then continues to disappear into the blurry background for the remainder of the shot. This additional flash of contingency contributes to the overall affectively significant alignment of elements that structures the scene.

2.2.2 Chance Emerging from the Complexity of Real Movement

Even within a constructed cinematic scene that doesn't capture a direct flow of reality, the photographic, indexical image continues to be nonhuman in origin and so always has the potential to capture contingency beyond planning, intention and conscious control. Furthermore, some elements of reality register with such unpredictable complexity in the image that they appear demonstrably contingent. For example, in a final scene from *Lacombe Lucien* (1974), one of the main characters is washing herself naked in a brook, accompanied by enigmatic, minimal flute music. In a single close-up shot, the performer makes a small step towards the camera, looking intently off-screen. (Fig. 23) She continues to rise up slightly, and the camera meticulously keeps her in the centre of the frame. The other movement present in the shot are drops of water coming randomly down her face and down her wet hair, which offsets the stillness and unity of her face, giving it a strange sense of liquidity. Faint evening daylight illuminates her face softly and evenly – thanks to the wide-open iris of the lens – fully exposing her widely open eyes charged with haunting attention. Her head also reveals its unique shape in this shot, corresponding harmoniously with the frame, as it is only in this one moment of the film that the performer's hair is wet and compressed, thus uncovering the full contour of her face. While the affective significance of the shot is shaped and amplified by various aesthetic means, the singular moment of performance is enhanced by the nuanced contingency of the dripping water, revealed in the close-up shot.



Figure 23 *Lacombe Lucien* (1974, Directed by Louis Malle)



Figure 24 *Andrei Rublev* (1966, Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky)

In *Andrei Rublev* (1966), a single frontal shot can be identified, which represents the last living moments of the character as he is hit in the back by an arrow. (Fig. 24) In slow motion, the performer gradually moves toward the camera and into a shallow river. The soundtrack only consists of water-splashing sound effects (added in post-production) but eventually the shot goes completely silent. As he makes a few steps towards the camera and into the river, there seems to be a slant on the riverbed, for as he makes one further step towards the camera, he suddenly submerges deeply, and almost trips. The impact of his body and the water surface leads to a splash, and some of the water hits the camera lens, giving the shot a sudden spark of affective significance – a sense of contingency, and echo of real movement – in overtone resonance with the performance and with the aesthetic manipulation of the shot.

Moments of similar complexity of real movement captured on film can be identified in my practice research, especially where such complexity was encouraged through

practical choices. In Affective Sign 3, the performer stood in front of a doorway between the underground train carriages; the intense air blowing through the small window in the door makes her hair swirl around. (Fig. 25) This complex movement is complicated further by the camera with fixed focus and shallow depth of field making slight, gliding adjustments back and forth, creating a sense of fluid oscillation between image softness and points of focus – especially the alternating focus on the performer’s hair and her face.



Figure 25 Affective Sign 3 (3min22sec – 3min40sec)



Figure 26 Affective Sign 6 (8min4sec – 8min39sec)

In Affective Sign 6, the night scene at the back of the car is illuminated by accidental light entering the car from outside. This includes streetlights, lights of the ongoing traffic and brake lights of the cars ahead. The combination of these lighting sources

creates complex illumination on the performer's face, enhanced (exposed) by slow motion, and resonating unpredictably with specific, singular moments of performance, thus contributing to the affective significance of the scene. At the end of the film, light of a street lamp creates a deep flare inside the lens, which follows a specific moment of performance (the female performer lifts her head after a period of leaning it backwards on the seat; the male performer subsequently turns his head to look at her). (Fig. 26) This alignment of contingent elements creates a sense of affective significance, which is enhanced by the montage with a preceding shot, which is exactly the same moment in time but from a different camera angle. This preceding shot is a slow-motion close-up on the female performer, where the pulsating illumination from the street lights combines contingently with a slight softness of the image and unnatural framing: the shot was neither focused nor framed for the performer to lean her head backwards in this way, but this spontaneous action nevertheless leads to a serendipitous formation of a 'chance aesthetic'.



Figure 27 Affective Sign 9 (11min51sec – 12min21sec)

In Affective Sign 9, I captured an un-staged shot on Super8 film, resulting from the immediate participation in the affective atmosphere (a directorial/production method discussed in 4.4), which took place on a late morning Barcelona street. (Fig. 27) The hand-held camera spins around in slow motion 360°, as I follow intuitively the

performers' movement; a variety of imperfections (such as dust inside the lens, scratches on the surface of the lens filter, and blemishes resulting from the hand-development process) are alternately revealed on the grainy celluloid surface of the film as the camera spins around, at times facing the direct sunlight – producing a mixture of flares, shadows and brightly lit areas. This complex set of movements, revealed through slow motion, combines with the performers' participation in the moment, building an unpredictable, singular structure of the moving image.



Figure 28 Affective Sign 5 (multiple instances)

I identify a similar contingent combination of performance and sunlight flares in Affective Sign 5 (Fig. 28), where the flares have a particular quality and persistence thanks to the extreme focal length of the lens. Additionally, out-of-focus passers-by enhance the complexity of movement by filling the foreground and background of the shot, forging a singular and unpredictable temporal structure on the two-dimensional field of the image.

2.2.3 Chance Emerging from Aspects of Constructed Space and Light

In *Blade Runner* (1982), a short visual sequence builds up around a character being shot in the back by her pursuant; as the bullet impact causes an explosion of blood in her shoulder, the sequence goes into a slow-motion mode. (Fig. 29) The film subsequently cuts from this close-up to a wide frontal shot: this cut is marked by the sound of breaking glass as she jumps through a shop window; however, apart from the gunshot and the breaking glass, the sound track now only contains the ‘stilling’, affectively-removed music. There are multiple glass elements framing the wide shot: display windows on each side containing mannequins, the shards of glass produced by the bodily collision, and another pane of glass in the foreground placed between the camera and the character. There are also neon lights of various colours present in the shot, which contribute to and amplify the complex interaction of moving objects and reflections. Even the still structures of the set are moving in relation to the frame, as the otherwise locked camera position introduces subtle movement by slowly tilting up and down, for no apparent reason.



Figure 29 *Blade Runner* (1982, Directed by Ridley Scott)

This wide shot lasts for about five seconds, before the film cuts to a low-angle middle close-up, which is the view from the side of the (left-to-right) movement of the character, as reflected in one of the display windows along which she runs. The slow-motion effect is now even stronger, in comparison to the previous shot: this moment seems more preoccupied with the abstract detail revealed by the strange framing and the slow-motion aesthetic, rather than expressing anything specific that would contribute with narrative logic, visual coherence or emotional value to the sequence.

In this example, the contingent real is echoed in this structure through the sheer complexity of singular interactions between light sources, reflective surfaces and moving objects centring on the movement of the performer. The overall combination of all these elements is unique and contingent, but enhanced by various aesthetic and technical choices (framing, set-design, slow-motion, editing, etc.).

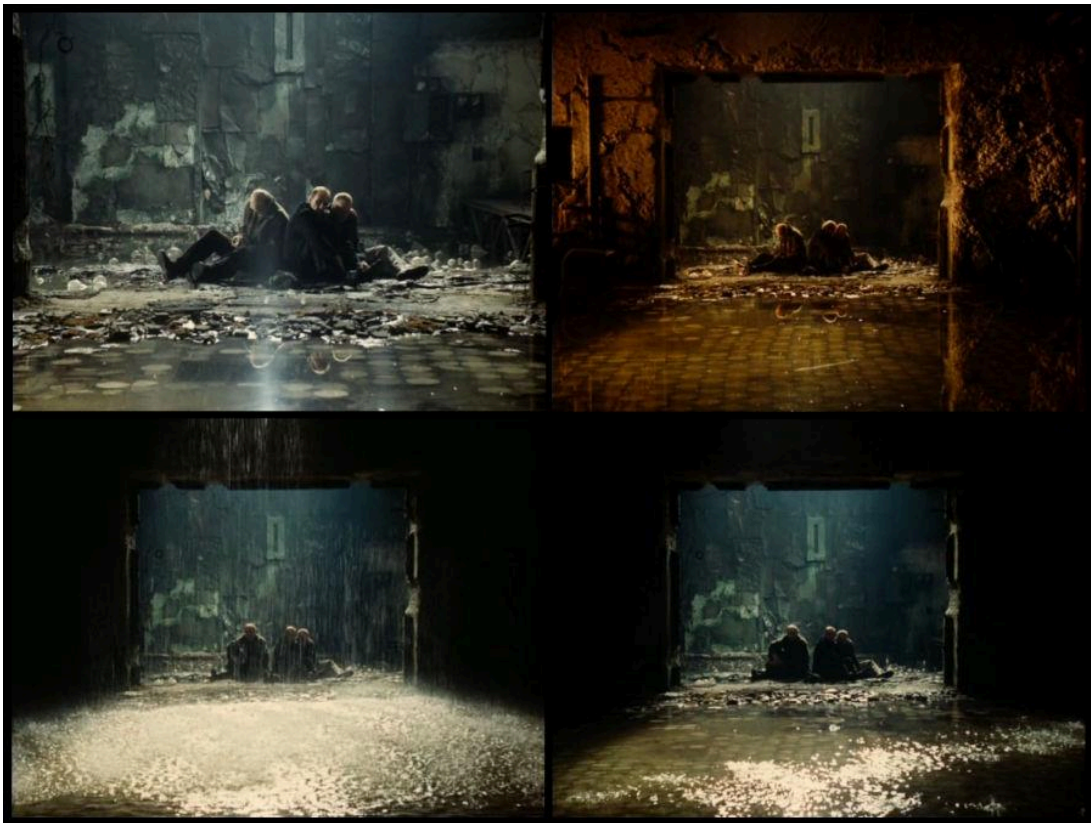


Figure 30 *Stalker* (1979, Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky)

Similar visual complexity is also achieved in *Stalker* (1979) where, in a single shot, slow tracking movement, different colours and intensities of light, the texture of

physical surfaces, water as a reflective surface, and water as (artificial) rain combine to create a complex, unpredictable visual structure. (Fig. 30)

I constructed this kind of visual complexity in Affective Sign 7, where a performer was filmed in a close-up shot, in slow motion, while spinning fire (Poi performance) off-screen, on each side of her head. (Fig. 31) This light creates complex interplay of light and shadow in the performer's face, revealed and amplified by the slow motion. This complexity was further enhanced by the employment of an additional small light with a colour gel (red and blue), which was pointed in the direction of the lens. This caused a whole portion of the image to light up with the colour, as a consequence of the light entering the lens directly rather than illuminating primarily a filmed object/figure; the face of the performer was also illuminated by the light, although not by the main portion of the light beam, which was instead directed towards the lens. This led to the coloured light registering on the camera sensor as light and colour *as such*, rather than being associated with a reflection of a particular filmed surface and/or object. The light was flashing intermittently: the sequence of flashing is actually the SOS Morse code distress signal; the meaning, however, does not register (perhaps not even to a viewer familiar with the code), due to the 4x slow motion. The intermittent flashing nevertheless combines with moments of the Poi illumination, and with the slight rocking and gliding of the camera mounted on a Steadicam stabiliser, in a wholly singular, contingent way – creating a sense of affective significance.

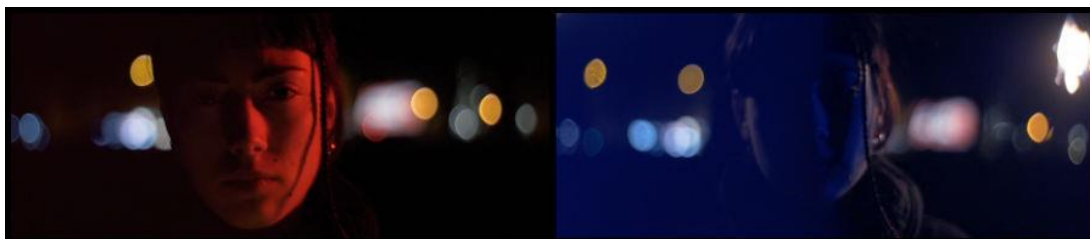


Figure 31 Affective Sign 7 (2min27sec – 3min2sec; 4min32sec – 5min5sec)

In Affective Sign 8, I created a complex lighting set-up, forming distinct illumination for all of the three camera angles involved simultaneously in the filming process. The most complex of the lighting set-ups was for a camera, filming primarily in slow motion, which was on a slider, moving towards and away from the performer. (Fig. 32)

There was also a sheet of transparent plastic glass placed between the performer and the camera, which was repeatedly sprayed by water, in order to form droplets running down the surface akin to rainwater. Furthermore, the image from the third camera was fed into a projector, which I set to project the image in real time onto a white wall in the background of the same shot: this forged an abstract ‘ghost image’ of the performer in the right portion of the shot, which was gradually changing its brightness and intensity, or suddenly appearing and disappearing again – depending on the random fluctuations of the feedback loop of light between the camera and the projector, especially as the performer was lit by colour-fluctuating sources of light. This complex interaction of elements within the frame caused an unpredictable variation, merging with singular moments of performance to forge affective significance.

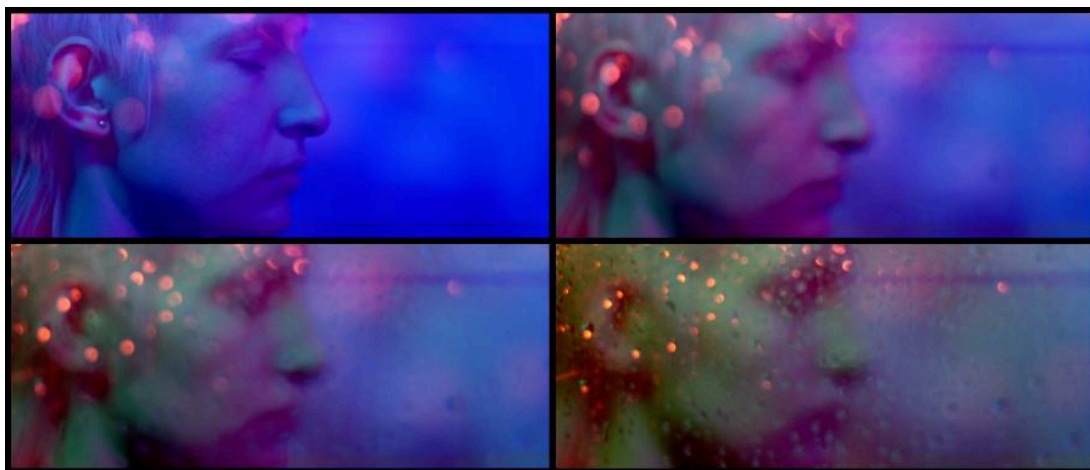


Figure 32 Affective Sign 8

2.2.4 Chance Emerging from Technical Imperfection or Fault

An unintended technical imperfection can likewise increase contingency of the image and contribute to the production of affective significance. In *On the Waterfront* (1954), a complex performance, marked by striking nuances of movement, is in overtone resonance with chance resulting from a sound imperfection of the film. This occurs in a dialogue scene between the two leading characters. They sit opposite each other at a bar table, drinking spirit, and the scene is covered in shot-reverse-shot middle close-ups. As the dialogue is clearly recorded on the set, coinciding with the reality of the image as synchronised sound, there are certain contingent imperfections in the sound quality,

reflecting the actual space of the scene. This leads to a slightly different ambient sound in the background of each performer: in the close-up, we can discern a faint sound of the film spinning inside the camera, as picked up by the microphone recording the voice. This creates a nuanced, *affective* separation between the two matching over-the-shoulder reverse angles, as there is no intentional or obvious separation created in this otherwise intimate and emotionally unified scene (the two performers are genuinely interacting face-to-face); rather, a fleeting sense of separation is forged *through, within* this intimacy – a certain ambiguous sense of urgency *beyond* the meaning and emotion of the scene. The faint sound of a rolling camera – signalling unwittingly, almost *unconsciously*, the presence of the camera in the scene – is an unintended, contingent element that combines with the non-representational moments of performance and the intended aesthetic structure of the scene to create a moment of affective significance. (I return to this scene in 4.2 when focusing on the details of performance.)



Figure 33 *Black Peter* (1964, Directed by Milos Forman)

In *Black Peter* (1964), there is one shot in the middle of the film, which is at odds with the comedic, offbeat tone of the rest of the piece. (Fig. 33) The shot is ushered in by the sound of a whistling train in the distance: this continues on the sound track for a portion of the shot, complemented, and then entirely replaced, by the sound of singing birds. There are no other sounds present throughout the shot, and even these two sound sources are not apparently coincident with the visuals as synchronised sound, but rather contribute a sense of displacement, meta-reality and aesthetic manipulation to what is essentially a silent shot. The hand-held, tracking shot starts completely out of focus, framing the sun in the sky through the leaves and branches of trees, which results in the leaves looking like abstract sparkling circles, whilst the direct light creates occasional flares inside the camera lens. The shot gradually pans and tilts downward, until it frames a close-up of the character/performer, and it is now clear that this shot is tracking along with her. The close-up on her is almost in focus, but not quite: it rather appears the camera did not change focus since it moved from the far distance (branches, sky) to framing the close-up, but – given the presumed spontaneous conditions of acquiring this shot – the focus initially set didn't quite anticipate the exact distance at which the camera eventually finds her when tilting to her. Or at least, this is a more likely explanation than the shot being slightly out of focus *on purpose*; and either way, this focus issue (which would be a good-enough reason to discard a take of a shot in a slick Hollywood production) didn't seem to be a concern when deciding to include the shot in the final film. On the contrary, the striking affective quality of the shot seems to have been recognised by the director – a quality, which the imperfect (contingent) focusing amplifies rather than hinders.

The film image is not 'correctly' exposed either: the sunlight, which comes and goes (appearing and disappearing behind the trees during the tracking movement), gives the shot a full exposure only on a few brief occasions, introducing further 'smudged' flares inside the lens. Furthermore, because of the pace of the movement of the (completely soft) forest background in relation to the performer's movement, it also becomes apparent that she is walking in a circle around the camera, and the camera is panning with her and only partially tracking: there is a sense in the shot of both a forward and circular motion, which further removes this shot from any realistic, narrative context.

The camera, besides tracking and panning, also jerks slightly due to its hand-held operation, whilst the performer bounces up and down occasionally as she negotiates the natural relief of the forest path (and the camera either mirrors her inconsistent movement or lets her temporarily ‘overstep’ the frame). The various, contingent imperfections of the image here combine with the echoes of real movement captured in the scene to produce an affectively significant structure. (I return to this shot in 4.2 when focusing on the details of performance.)



Figure 34 *Death in Venice* (1971, Directed by Luchino Visconti)

In the opening of *Death in Venice* (1971), a similar kind of shot occurs, where affective significance was, arguably, forged by accident but then recognised and left in by the artistically predisposed director. When, upon sunrise, a steamboat carrying the protagonist arrives in the Venice harbour, the well composed, baroque shots of the visual sequence (matching the carefully composed approach to the rest of the film) includes one zoomed-in wide shot of cockle pickers on the flooded beach, filmed from a boat (presumably the steamboat on the deck of which the rest of the scene takes place). (Fig. 34) As the shot pans from left to right to keep the pickers in the frame, the image judders noticeably. It gives the shot an amateurish feel, which is in contrast to the other, more controlled shots in the sequence. However, in combination with the ‘magic-hour’

light of dawn and the melancholy soundtrack (*Adagio* from Mahler's Fifth Symphony), the judders of the camera enter into overtone resonance with the remaining aesthetic elements to produce affective significance. The camera shake in this shot arises from a very long focal length (zoom) that is not adequately 'anchored' due to filming from a boat. Stan Brakhage's films, for example *Visions in Meditation 4: D.H. Lawrence* (1990) (Fig. 35), embrace such contingency and recognise the affective value of this kind of zoomed-in shaky shot, which in Brakhage's case results from hand-held operation. This kind of aesthetic gives the films an unconscious, amateurish feel, which charges the moving image with affective significance.

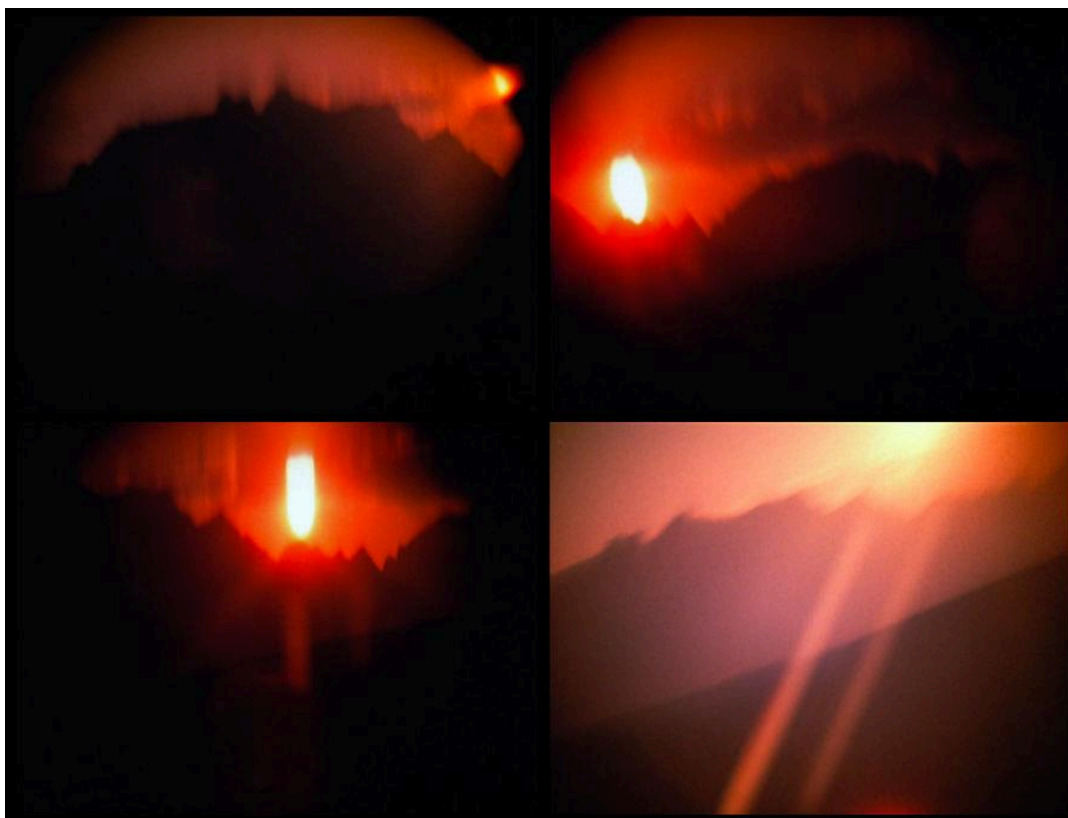


Figure 35 *Visions in Meditation 4: D.H. Lawrence* (1990, Directed by Stan Brakhage)

In my practice, such methods were employed (and developed through the hermeneutic spiral) as to invite various kinds of contingent technical imperfections, contributing to affective significance in the resulting work. In Affective Sign 10, I used a hand-held Super8 camera at the full range of its zoom lens, in order to reach a focal length where the camera could no longer be kept still when hand held. (Fig. 36) In Found Affective Sign, when identifying affectively significant moments in Super8 home movies, I

located many zoomed-in shaky shots that gave rise to affective significance (Fig. 37); these shots inspired the employment of zoom in Affective Sign 10.



Figure 36 Affective Sign 10 (0min44sec – 0min56sec)



Figure 37 Found Affective Sign

Affective Sign 6 combines footage from three cameras, two of which were firmly mounted onto the car interior, and one was hand-held: as the car moved through the traffic, it was impossible for the operator to keep the camera still, and I deliberately involved an inexperienced camera operator for this role, so that the contingency resulting from technical imperfection could be maximised. (Fig. 38) The combination of some of these jerky shots with the majority of the film (covered from stable positions) gives rise to a sense of overtone resonance, which, similarly to the example from *Death*

in Venice, amplifies or focuses the affective significance originating from the camera shake. Similarly, in Affective Sign 10 a hand-held shot out of a moving car appears, filmed by an inexperienced operator (while I was driving the car), which enhances the contingency of the camera shakes, combining with the low evening sunlight and the expressive scenery to give rise to affective significance. (Fig. 39) The affective significance is amplified further in this shot by musical composition that aims to grow out of (or is inspired by) the detailed visual nuances of the image.

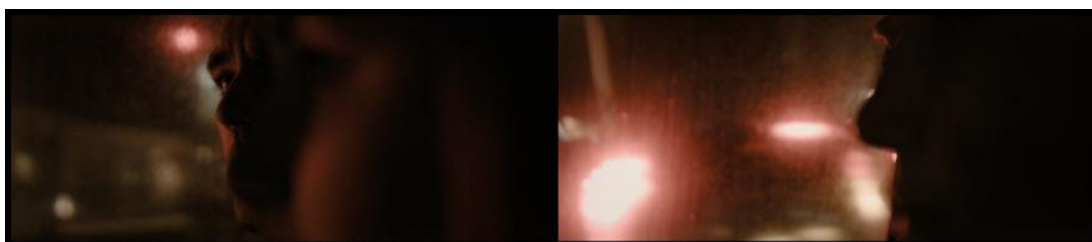


Figure 38 Affective Sign 6 (2min15sec – 2min25sec)

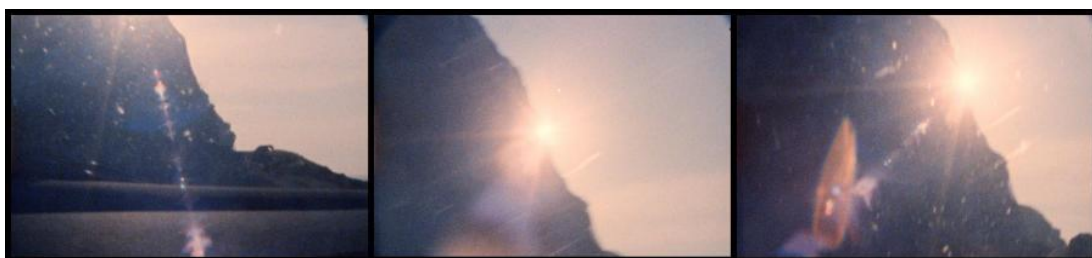


Figure 39 Affective Sign 10 (4min47sec – 5min)

In Affective Sign 9, a shot is included in the film where the performers were still being affected by each other and by the present moment (as they tried to be for the most part of the filming), but they nevertheless knew that I was adjusting the camera: in that moment, I was repositioning the camera on the monopod but it was continuously recording. When selecting shots for the film, I was struck by the affective significance of the combination of the jarring, unconscious movements of the camera, and the emotion in the female performer's face. (Fig. 40) This moment is then amplified further by deliberately manipulating the sound: the ambience of the busy street appears to cut out halfway through the shot (as if a microphone cable was suddenly/accidentally disconnected), and the remaining portion of the shot stays silent. The sudden removal of sound increases the potential of the silence to bring attention to the image, while the

sense of mistake in the way the sound is removed amplifies the genuine contingency of the camera judders.



Figure 40 Affective Sign 9 (14min10sec – 14min27sec)



Figure 41 Affective Sign 3 (1min46sec – 2min)

As part of the filming that resulted in Affective Sign 3, I was following performers on the London Underground, having the camera balanced on a small Steadicam rig. While this results in a smooth image, as the camera is suspended on a gimbal, the balance of the camera is very delicate and the slightest push would derail this balance. I was filming the performer going up an escalator, and as we reached the top, the Steadicam rig came into contact with the side of the escalator and the camera went immediately flying sideways. (Fig. 41) During editing, I recognised this contingent fault as having the potential for affective significance and deliberately included it in the film. The affective significance is enhanced by using this sudden camera movement as a cutting point to the next shot, which leads to a sense of overtone resonance between the neighbouring shots.

When using a custom-designed shoulder rig with two cameras mounted side-by-side during Stage 2, I could only operate one of the cameras at a time, so that the second camera filmed ‘unconsciously’ (without my continuous control over what and how it was filming), with its particular movement and framing resulting from my attendance to the other camera. However, one specific shot (used in Affective Sign 4) emerged when following the performer toward a filming location, while not temporarily attending to either of the cameras. Both cameras were nevertheless recording, and one of them accidentally captured a shot that, due to the use of slow motion, forged a sense of affective significance. (Fig. 42) The slow motion smoothed the wild jumps caused by my steps – here emphasised by using a macro lens at an extended focal length, which, on the other hand, resulted in reduced depth of field of the image (increased softness). The low depth of field, combined with the random, slowed-down motion of the camera, and the singular movements of the performer (revealed and amplified through the slow motion), here produced an overtone resonance of all these elements, resulting in affective significance.



Figure 42 Affective Sign 4 (2min19sec – 2min37sec)

For the opening shot of Affective Sign 10, I filmed the sun through the branches of trees, and deliberately set the camera out of focus (similarly to the shot from *Black Peter* discussed earlier). However, the combination of close focus and sunlight directly hitting the lens revealed a considerable amount of dust trapped in the lens mechanism of

this vintage Super8 camera (manufactured between 1975 and 1982), which would not be visible under normal circumstances. This imperfection adds a layer of contingency to the shot, contributing to its affective significance. (Fig. 43)



Figure 43 Affective Sign 10 (0min5sec – 0min22sec)

Finally, a Steadicam tracking shot appears in Affective Sign 7, following the performer through a dark corridor. The shot is lit by a cheap novelty police-siren light, the spinning mechanism of which temporarily ceased working during this particular shot. Rather than its usual siren flashing, this malfunction briefly produced complex, chaotic, and entirely singular play of illumination on the performer's face, before the spinning mechanism finally engaged as intended. (Fig. 44) This contingent lighting aspect entered into overtone resonance with the performer's movement, the changing illumination in the corridor, and the overall structure of the tracking shot to give rise to affective significance.

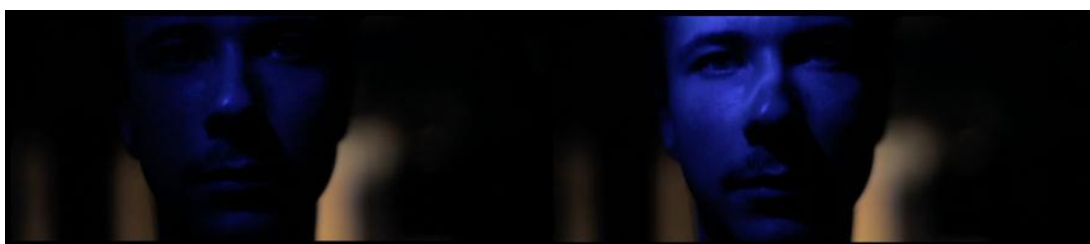


Figure 44 Affective Sign 7 (4min9sec – 4min32sec)

2.2.5 Chance Emerging from the Attributes of the Medium

Experimental films, such as *Boulder Blues and Pearls and...* (1992) (Fig. 45), explore the contingency of the film medium, as completely removed from the filmed reality.

Decasia (2002) (Fig. 46) or *Fuses* (1969) (Fig. 47) then manipulate the image, combining attributes of the medium with attributes of the original space.

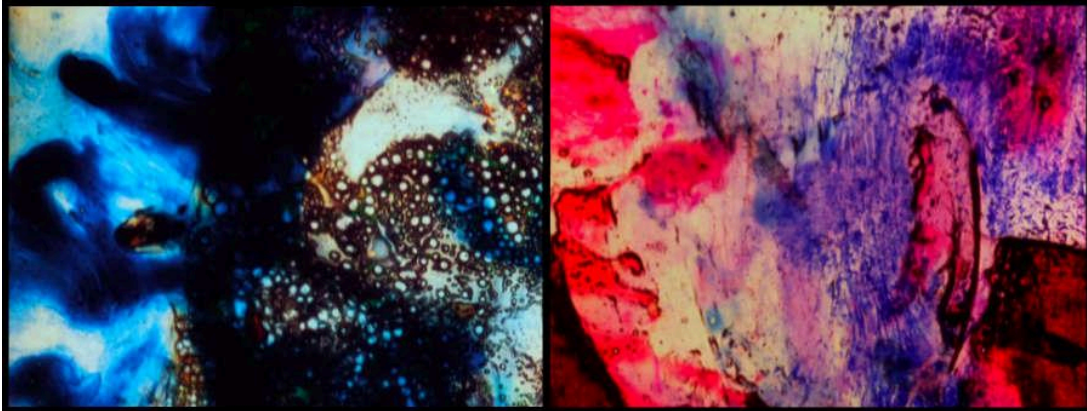


Figure 45 *Boulder Blues and Pearls and...* (1992, Directed by Stan Brakhage)



Figure 46 *Decasia* (2002, Directed by Bill Morrison)



Figure 47 *Fuses* (1969, Directed by Carole Schneemann)

This potential for contingency was explored in my research project mainly through working with Super8 film on Affective Signs 9 and 10, and Found Affective Sign. One good opportunity is the precise moment when the roll of film runs out – this very

moment cuts the filmed scene abruptly, but also marks it with a sense of rupture, contributing to the abstraction of the original space *as* image. I often included this element of footage running out in the edit, especially when it entered into overtone resonance with a singular moment of performance (and sometimes also with the following shot in the edited sequence). A good example of this can be seen in Affective Sign 9. (Fig. 48) In Affective Sign 10, I included a shot where the start of the film (before the first frame was correctly exposed in the camera) was over-exposed in a contingent way as to turn the image completely red. (Fig. 49)



Figure 48 Affective Sign 9 (8min52sec – 9min12sec)



Figure 49 Affective Sign 10 (6min16sec)

When experimenting with developing expired Super8 footage using Caffinol in a still photography developing tank, a significant, abstract and contingent layer became inscribed onto the image; the age of the stock played a part in this, but mainly this was due to the imperfect developing technique. This produced images where the filmed reality is secondary to the random, ‘chemical cloud’ swallowing it up – resulting from an improper, uneven development process using rudimentary chemicals. At times, sprockets were ‘inscribed’ on the image, when the strip of film became overlaid – as the film had been randomly squashed and layered inside the still-photography developing

tank. At times, portions of the film didn't get properly developed, and a completely abstract image has emerged, where pure contingency of the medium takes over. (Fig. 50)



Figure 50 Caffenol-developed Footage (Video 32; 3mi44sec – 4min4sec)



Figure 51 Found Affective Sign

Found Affective Sign demonstrates a contingent layer of the medium inscribed due to the age-damage of the physical film, caused by decay and repeated run of the film through a projector. In this way, each projection event adds a new layer of contingency onto the image, re-animating the still strip of film, time after time, as part of the

becoming of reality.¹⁷ (Fig. 51) As the piece was physically edited out of disparate film sources, the film sprockets don't align exactly across the varied material spliced together, which results in the frame shifting vertically between shots, when projected (or when digitally scanned). This unstable frame of the film (in relation to the fixed frame of the projected or digitally scanned image) adds emphasis to the physical basis of the image, but also contributes to the film's contingency arising from the editing process.



Figure 52 Affective Sign 9 (2min36sec – 2min52sec)

With digital film, the opportunities for contingency of the medium are very limited (given the virtuality and mathematical precision of the medium). However, a digital mistake led to a notable aesthetic moment of chance during filming of *Affective Sign 9*, which could be compared to the imperfections of the physical medium of film (although it would equally fit in to the previously discussed category of chance emerging from technical imperfection or fault). When filming at the Barcelona airport, I used the iPhone 7 Plus in combination with a 'professional' app that offers high-bit-rate filming, resulting in a better image quality. However, after recording continuously for a long time, the processing power of the phone (in combination with the app) became overloaded, and the camera could no longer record a smooth 25-frame-per-second progression of movement. Instead, it started to record at a much lower frame rate,

¹⁷ Found Affective Sign includes some cartoon footage as well, where clearly the element of the filmed real is absent. However, as these pieces of black-and-white cartoons are particularly damaged by age and the repeated projection process, they contribute with affective significance on the level of the contingency of the medium, but also by producing a particular effect of defamiliarisation (in stark contrast to any 'ordinary', contemporary example of a cartoon), which seems to be – as this experiment illuminates – unique and specific to animated film.

resulting in a strange, disjointed, jarring image. A moment of affective performance spontaneously occurred – in overtone resonance with this technical fault – as the female performer stood by the glass wall of the airport lobby looking outside, while the male performer was looking at her, seated on a chair to the right of her. (Fig. 52) The afternoon sunlight shining through the glass revealed a complex pattern of smudges on the surface. The performers stood almost still for a prolonged period of time, and the camera was also static. This minimised the disruptive impact of the jarring frame rate, and yet it has a subtle, marked presence in the image, combining with the light, the smudged glass surface and the performance to create a singular moment of affective significance. This effect is amplified further by the sound design that feeds off and builds upon the affective nuances of the image.

2.3 The Approach to Chance as it Evolved through the Hermeneutic Spiral

The previous section lays out the possibilities of contingency that can be identified in film, and also some of the specific methods and practical considerations that lie behind the emergence of chance (and its contribution to affective significance) in the Affective Cinema practice. However, these methods and practical considerations evolved throughout the duration of this research, due to the implementation of the hermeneutic spiral approach of alternating practice and reflection. As the first chapter on methodology makes clear, five stages of practice were conducted in total, which allowed for a gradual development of the methods of working with chance, leading to new, unforeseeable approaches and resulting in deeper insights into working with contingency. In this section, I therefore reflect on the developing approach to chance through the five stages of practice, and account for the new insights that emerged from this reflection.

For the first stage of filming, which consisted of the workshop with performers (see 1.2.1), I focused on the method of using multiple cameras and filming continuously, so that unexpected moments could be discovered in the material during post-production. Apart from experimenting with chance by using colour-changing light, I tried to maximise the potential of affective performance and capturing such moments that feel

significant in the context of the new real of film, outside of the performer's intention. For example, the affective significance of the first shot in Affective Sign 1 is a moment before the filming itself started, when the performers were having a personal conversation. The performer in the close-up shot is smiling; however, this smile is defamiliarised by combining a strange angle of the close-up shot, slow motion, music/sound design, and the changing light in the background, which coincides randomly with the singularity of the moment of performance. (Fig. 53) The writing and directorial methods started to experiment with increasing the occurrence of random results in the repeated takes of the scripted dialogues and monologues; however, these methods evolved significantly through the following stages.



Figure 53 Affective Sign 1 (0min10sec – 0min38sec)

Stage 2 introduced the element of unpredictable reality, which significantly expanded upon the element of chance, as many of the examples in the previous section illustrate. I also tested the two-camera shoulder rig, which created further opportunities for random results by making it difficult to control both cameras at the same time. The method of flowing through space continuously – rather than repeating the same action by shooting ‘takes’ – was also applied, or rather, intuitively discovered, in the process of filming Affective Signs 3 and 4. The dialogue-based films (Affective Signs 5 and 6) had a more traditional narrative basis, and the directorial and cinematographic methods aimed to offset this narrative/dramatic coherence to give rise to unpredictable results. Some of the cinematographic methods themselves increased contingency: in Affective Sign 6 streetlights entering the night scene at the back seat of a car introduced a contingent element; in Affective Sign 5 it was the extremely long focal length that resulted in

complex flares being formed inside the lens as I filmed against the low afternoon sunlight. (Fig. 26 and 28 of the previous section.)

Stage 3 built upon methods of the previous two stages, increasing the potential for contingency. The second workshop with actors radically increased the lighting complexity, leading to unpredictable results (for example, the background of the shot being lit by a projected image from the camera, thus creating a feedback loop of light – as described in the previous section, Fig. 32). The directorial and writing methods focused on enhancing the effect of affective performance and thus giving rise to unpredictable results. The contingency of performance was enhanced by the complex lighting, but this lighting itself created an atmosphere in the room that influenced the performance (contributing to the affective atmosphere method, discussed in 4.4). The filming in outside reality for this stage (resulting in Affective Sign 7) then focused on maximising the complexity and unpredictability of lighting design (the Poi performance, for example, as described in the previous section, Fig. 31), but also filming in the midst of a radically unpredictable environment (the Pillow Fight Day, Fig. 17)

Stage 4 developed further the method of spontaneous flowing through space first tested during Stage 2, but here it was a 36-hour air trip to Spain, and so while a certain direction to the journey was predetermined, the unpredictability of the event of filming radically increased (especially as neither me nor the two performers had ever been to Barcelona before). This approach combined with the directorial method of extending the focused moment of performance (affective atmosphere), which was first tested during Stage 1, and then enhanced during Stage 3. This approach also coincided with further loosening of dramatic/narrative structure: while the trip itself was linear (as the embodied journey through space-time is always linear) – and the resulting film Affective Sign 9 is structured on this basis – the script underpinning this experience was ‘rhizomatic’ rather than linear, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari’s *Thousand Plateaus* (I discuss this in detail in 4.4). All of these elements had an influence on the unpredictable results in performance, but they also influenced the aesthetic impression of the film, since the filming locations at any particular time were a combination of intuitive

decisions and chance. For example, the hotel room scene in Affective Sign 9 has a clear aesthetic/compositional structure; however, I had never seen the hotel room before and could not imagine what it would be like. However, once present in the space, I set up the frame of the shot so as to create the most interesting frame out of the given conditions: hence the resulting aesthetic impression is a combination of directorial intuition and chance. (I return to this example in 3.2.1, Fig. 65)

The experimentation with film stock also began during this stage, and a portion of Affective Sign 9 was filmed using Super8. I was continuously filming throughout most of the trip, combining four cameras, and alternating between them based on intuition and/or practical considerations. However, the implementation of film stock represents a radical reversal of the key method of producing a large quantity of digital footage and discovering unpredictable, contingent moments (with the potential for affective significance) in the recorded material. While the element of unexpected discovery in the edit still prevails, the quantity of produced material does not. For example, I took five rolls of Super8 film with me to Barcelona, which represents around 16 minutes of film at 18 frames per second, or 7 minutes at 54 frame-per-second slow motion; in comparison, the Stage 3 workshop had in total generated almost 70 hours of digital material! Nevertheless, while this reduces the opportunity for chance discovery in the edit, the Super8 material appears to have a greater *density* of affectively significant moments. This is because the texture and grain of the Super8 film increases contingency (as discussed in the previous section) but also contributes to the abstraction of the image as affective space (I return to this in 3.2.4). However, another consequence of using the scarce resource of 3-minute rolls of film emerges: for when a decision is made to expose the photosensitive material (to literally *roll* the physical film), this can in *itself* be contingent. Since there is not any specific script or a production plan dictating *what* to film as part of the affective atmosphere approach, the decision to film forges singularity in the image, in contrast to all the other moments that haven't been filmed, because they could not have been (given the limited amount of material available). The combination of practitioner intuition and the meditative, focused approach to becoming with the event (the affective atmosphere) helps to maximise the opportunity for capturing moments of affective performance in overtone resonance with affective style

(affective space), even at this greatly reduced amount of available recording material. Ultimately, however, the emergence of affective significance depends on a level of serendipity, of chance, which can be forged by the *forced selection* – the limitation and singularity of the available material, a singularity *within the process of filming*, rather than within the indiscriminately recorded quantity of footage. The marked materiality of the physical film stock inscribes certain singular significance upon *every* instant of filming, so that when this combines with contingency (the occurrence of which can increase in the captured material by the forced choice and radical selectivity of the filming process), a kind of affective significance arises that simply could not originate in the digital format. **Video 26** and **Video 27** illustrate the contingent emergence of the Super8 singularity within a continuous digital recording during Stage 5 (I return to these videos when discussing affective atmosphere in 4.4).

The perceived singularity of celluloid film also depends on the specific *indexicality* with which film relates to the real, in contrast to digital film. This kind of indexical bond ultimately increases contingency on the level of the medium (see 2.2.5). Both film and digital arguably forge an indexical bond with the real.¹⁸ However, where the digital

¹⁸ Steven Shaviro, in ‘Post-Cinematic Affect’ (2010), argues that the digital image does not have the same ontological connection to the real and that in the digital age, we cannot distinguish between reality and its multiple simulations. Shaviro argues that, ‘where classical cinema was analogical and indexical, digital video is processual and combinatorial. Where analogue cinema was about the duration of bodies and images, digital video is about the articulation and composition of forces’ (Shaviro 2010: 18, emphasis in the original). For D. N. Rodowick the problem is then that the digital image (which he doesn’t regard as an image at all, but rather as symbolical information) ‘is not analogical: it does not produce an isomorphic impression of its subject’ (2007: 112); there is no involvement of ‘automatic analogical causation’ (124) in the digital process. For Rodowick, in the case of the digital image, the fundamental, existential link with the real is broken; there is ‘no direct causal relationship’ (123) to the real.

However, it can be argued that the physical nature of the imprint, in the case of film emulsion, is not a result of a direct physical bond with the real, but rather the result of *the physical nature of the medium*; the nature of the imprint *as such* is then essentially the same as is the case with digital (the imprint is the virtual trace of light, which is either physically recorded by the photographic emulsion, or virtually recorded by digital translation). Furthermore, Tom Gunning in his essay on the subject makes the point that ‘although a photograph combines both types of signs, the indexical quality of a photograph must not be confused with its iconicity. The fact that rows of numbers do not resemble a photograph, or what the photograph is supposed to represent, does not undermine any indexical claim. An index need not (and frequently does not) resemble the thing it represents. The indexicality of a traditional photograph inheres in the effect of light on chemicals, not in the picture it produces. The rows of numerical data produced by a digital camera and the image of traditional chemical photography are both indexically determined by objects outside the camera. Both photographic chemicals and the digital data must be subjected to elaborate procedures before a picture will result. [...] The claim that the digital media alone transforms its data into an intermediary form fosters the myth that photography involves a transparent process, a direct transfer from the object to the photograph’ (2004a: 40). (I am considering the distinction between digital

medium coincides with the becoming of reality virtually (translating the analogical progression in time into non-linear, binary code), the physical film *itself* has to initiate movement in order to coincide with the movement in reality that it records. In this way, physical film represents an embodied becoming *with* the moment, with the event, even on the level of the medium (not just the embodied vision of the camera), and this becoming itself inscribes echoes of real movement (chance) onto the image.

Furthermore, each time physical film is replayed or projected, the film re-creates the illusion of movement on the screen (by producing a sense of virtual space and reality re-presented on the screen *as* movement), and yet it has to simultaneously initiate real movement of the strip of film in order to represent this other, virtual movement. Thus a new becoming of the moment (in which it is being projected) is inscribed onto the film, as if ‘something’ has been filmed during each projection (albeit on a surface that is no longer chemically reactive as undeveloped film). This process keeps adding small layers of contingency to the image, which accumulate over time. Above all, the physical, embodied existence of the medium contributes to the singularity of each recorded moment: for each moment becomes not only a singular moment of preserved time and space (a virtual image, affective space), but also a unique, singular *physical object* that is newly added to physical reality in which it is reactivated – interacting with the infinitely complex flow of (non-virtual) real movement. The development through practice from digital to celluloid film – on the basis of the hermeneutic spiral – produced and illuminated these new insights into film ontology.

Stage 5 progressed the method of working with performance as a continuous becoming with reality (affective atmosphere) that includes the process of filming itself. There now was a total absence of any script, and so apart from a basic journey from Liverpool to a cottage on the Welsh coastline, the car journey was spontaneous and random, and the moments of performance aligned contingently with the locations we had found ourselves in – therefore even the visual/aesthetic impression of the resulting footage hinged on this random, intuitive alignment of elements. This process was intensified by a clear orientation toward working with Super8 film, and the resulting film *Affective*

and film to the extent that it is pertinent to the production of affective significance through aspects of style and contingency; a more detailed consideration of this distinction is beyond the scope of this thesis.)

Sign 10 was made solely out of Super8 footage. Here, 20 Super8 cartridges were used, but that still posed a significant limitation to the amount of film that could be obtained. However, the method of producing a large quantity of material was still preserved: I was filming continuously on an iPhone attached to the Super8 camera, framing a similar kind of shot, and so every delimited moment when the Super8 camera was recording is effectively embedded in a much longer digital sequence. Furthermore, each performer was continuously recording sound on their smartphone using a hidden clip-on microphone, producing a thorough (sound) coverage of the entire experience (thanks to the much lower recording bit-rate of sound, which puts less demand on data storage, and due to the fact that, once switched on, the sound recording process does not need to be attended to anymore). This sound recording led to the post-production discovery of moments of (voice) performance with the potential for affective significance, which were not noticeable in the process of filming (since no one was monitoring the sound recording process), but often not even directly witnessed by me. This voice recording was subsequently used as one of the structuring principles of the film.

The combination of the randomness of dialogue and the lack of structure during filming (the absence of a script) with the capturing of the majority of words uttered during the trip resulted in an almost absolute reversal of the standard script-to-screen process: Affective Sign 10 is structured by language (even though in a non-representational sense), but this structure has only emerged in the process of editing. This represents a progression of the structuring method employed in Affective Sign 8 (resulting from the Stage 3 workshop), where a new non-representational verbal structure emerged on the basis of a preceding set of short non-specific dialogue scripts.

Found Affective Sign marks another progression of working with chance during this stage. Here, no new material was filmed as part of the becoming of reality in the moment, but the process (and the outcome) of sourcing films was itself contingent and unpredictable, as I never knew what exactly was contained on the reel I had ordered. I could only judge by the title or the description of the film, but that said very little about the moments of affective significance that could be discovered in it. Furthermore, on a

few occasions, an entirely different film was inside the box from what had been advertised (I assume the seller of the film was not aware of this).

What occurred to me through reflection on this production stage is that if a film is captured as part of the becoming of the real (as part of a specific time and place), and this real is preserved and stilled as an image, then the process of sourcing films from around the world on eBay stirs its own becoming, in which the moment of winning a bid on a film is analogical to the moment of capturing the shot in reality with a camera. Furthermore, as the method of obtaining a (relatively) large quantity of material was preserved (I acquired more than 60 reels of Super8 film, containing over 6 hours of material), the overall approach to contingency can be considered a direct extension of the wider filmmaking methods on the project. The potential for contingency in using amateur footage filmed by someone else in the past is then comparable to the method of letting an inexperienced operator handle the camera, as I explored with certain shots in *Affective Signs* 6 and 10. The work on *Found Affective Sign* can therefore be seen as an ultimate step of the hermeneutic spiral approach, especially as it reconnects with the initial theoretical research in cinema that preceded the practice itself. *Found Affective Sign* brought directly into practice the initial, hermeneutic recognition of moments where the echo of real movement becomes visible *as* contingency (in an overtone resonance with other structural elements of the film), and extended the potential of affective significance in cinema beyond well-regarded and established films to obscure, forgotten dramas, and, ultimately, it extended this potential into amateur home movies as well. What is more, in the case of amateur footage, each reel of film is absolutely singular, rather than one of multiple (commercial) prints obtained from the negative: it is a unique physical object, the (first) becoming of which had directly coincided with the becoming of the captured moment – a moment that no human being could have witnessed in the same way as the mechanical, nonhuman eye of the camera had preserved it on this aged strip of film.

3. Affective Space and Considerations of Style in Affective Cinema

As I explain in the previous chapter, chance is one of the constitutive elements of affective significance, infusing the series of still images of film with echoes of real movement – capturing traces of the singular stirs of becoming (of light) in the instant of filming. These echoes of real movement, when re-animated by the movement of film, enter into overtone resonance with the ontological stillness of the image – resonating with the aspects inherent to the image (and distinct from the filmed reality). These aspects can be referred to as the form and style of the film. These are, for example, qualities of the lens (depth of field, focal length), movement of the camera (the particular repositioning of the frame in relation to the filmed reality), but also properties of the medium/camera (the particular film stock in the case of analogue film, or the way the light hitting the digital sensor is transcribed by the camera's processor). However, as the discussion in 2.2 demonstrates, these very aspects can themselves be a source of contingency, as the major portion of the camera apparatus takes direct part in the becoming of the moment of capture. Equally, there are aspects of post-production style, such as the addition of music and sound design, or the editing process itself, which are more on the side of the conceptual stillness of manipulating the image in a non-linear/virtual way.¹⁹ And yet, the effect of sound and editing (their phenomenological existence) depends on the movement of film (the re-animation of static frames), which makes these aspects an integral part of the moving-still structure of the film, contributing to overtone resonance of all its elements, and thus amplifying affective significance of the film. Furthermore, elements of style and form in film (and the related directorial choices and decisions) have the potential to disconnect (defamiliarise) film from ordinary representation of reality (or, indeed, from the more complex representation of meaning and narrative), and in the process help to direct attention to the echoes of real movement captured and preserved in the film, whether in the form of chance in the filmed reality or chance linked to aspects of the image and/or camera. I refer to these defamiliarising aspects as 'affective film style', as their function is

¹⁹ I suggest in 2.3 that in the case of film stock, the physical manipulation of the medium through projection or linear editing becomes an inherent part of a new becoming, which can become inscribed on the image as contingency. The digital image, on the other hand, resists being affected by real movement, by becoming: the digital code, as virtual information, is fundamentally resistant to change.

fundamentally linked to Deleuze's affect – as impersonal 'sensible experiences in their singularity, liberated from organising systems of representation' (Colebrook 2001: 22). To the extent that the attributes of affective significance can be separated into three (mutually interrelated) categories – chance, style and performance – this chapter focuses on the category of style. While the previous chapter is concerned with the moment of contact between the movement of the real and the 'still surface' of the image, this chapter deals with the existence of the image *after* this moment of contact, when the real becomes emancipated *as* image – transcending mere indexical representation. As I argue below, within this 'new real' the attributes of the filmed reality and the attributes of the image are impossible to separate: they instead form an *aesthetic reality of the image*, the affective space. In the following section, 3.1, I discuss my concept of affective space in detail and root it in the context of established theory. In the next section, 3.2, I look at particular examples of affective space from the history of cinema (divided into distinct categories based on the key stylistic attributes in question) and compare them to the results of the Affective Cinema practice. Similarly to their role in 2.2, here too film examples served as an original inspiration for the practice (and for the development of the original concepts framing the practice), but the progressing methods of the research gradually extended and re-shaped the aesthetic field of these examples in the pursuit of the underlying research aims. This process led to the development of new production methods and to the creation of original visual style, which was informed by the film examples and by the underlying theory, and, ultimately, it was shaped by the gradually developing journey through practice itself, as part of the hermeneutic spiral. The reflection on this practical journey, in turn, increased and solidified the understanding of affective space to its present form.

3.1 Affective Space, Intimacy and Separation

The notion of affective film style can be understood as an aesthetic impulse against the film's seamless impression of reality – its representation of coherent space – in order to bring attention to the expressive potential of the film form. As Dudley Andrew (1984) points out, 'the structure of cinematic perception is readily translated into that of natural perception, so much so that we can rely on information we construct in viewing films to

supplement our common perceptual knowledge' (41);²⁰ nevertheless, as I argue, affective style in film disrupts this representational mechanism, instead helping to create a sense of a new reality, a new dimension completely emancipated from the reality from which it arose. The original reality has gained its coherence *through* the human observer (or the viewer, when the reality is coherently represented on film), but the mechanical apparatus of the camera is *not* human and so it captures (and has the potential to reveal) something more about the real, which is the *basis* of coherent reality (outside of the conscious and pre-conscious 'making sense' of the human mind). The film captures traces (echoes) of the movement of the real, but *it does not represent them*; for they are only revealed in the film, they can only exist in the film, and in that sense they only came into being through being captured on film (we can only deduce the past becoming of the real *from* the image, for it is *only* the image that makes it visible, as echo or a trace). The particular organisation of light within a specific slice of visible reality that is captured on film, and in which the real movement continues to exist as an echo, is emancipated from the original reality, while depending on it indexically. It carries forward the real by transforming it into something new, rather than by representing it; it becomes the *new real* of the image.²¹

²⁰ Andrew (1984) later on elucidates this concept of representation of reality in film further: 'The cinema fascinates us because we alternately take it as real and unreal, that is, as participating in the familiar world of our ordinary experience yet then slipping into its own quite different screen world. Only an unusually strong act of attention enables us to focus on the light, shadow, and color without perceiving these as the objects they image. And, on the other side, only an equally strong hallucinating mode of attention can maintain from beginning to end the interchangeability of what we perceive and the ordinary world, negating all difference of image and referent' (42).

²¹ The concept of the new real in film corresponds with Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of simulation. Rather than considering, along with Bazin (2005), the moving, photographic image to be an indexical imprint of reality – a direct representation of a segment of reality – or, because of extensive aesthetic manipulation, thinking of film as a simulacrum ('a copy whose relation to the model has become so attenuated that it can no longer properly be said to be a copy' [Massumi 1987: 91]), 'resemblance is a beginning masking the advent of whole new vital dimension' (Massumi 1987: 91). As Massumi clarifies, 'simulation is a process that produces the real, or, more precisely, more real (a more-than-real) on the basis of the real' (92). 'It carries the real beyond its principle to the point where it is effectively produced ... the point where the copy ceases to be a copy in order to become the Real *and its artifice*', as Deleuze and Guattari state (1983: 87, emphasis in the original). Or as Steven Shaviro (1993) puts it: 'Reality is not preserved and sustained so much as it is *altered* by the very fact of passive, literal reproduction – or what could better be called hypermimetic simulation' (17, emphasis in the original). The notion of 'new real' therefore clearly resonates with this understanding, while adding a new dimension to the concept of 'echo of real movement', which can also be thought of as simultaneously related to and different from the filmed real.

However, it is a critical part of my argument in this thesis that the camera that captures the traces of the movement of the real is very much part of the becoming of the real in the moment in which the image originates. Therefore, the aspects of the image produced by the camera *simultaneously* in the moment of capture (that have the potential to forge the alienation of coherent space), such as depth of field, focal length, exposure, shot size, camera angle and movement, become inseparable from the original real that was captured. The filmed real and the aspects of the camera melt into one two-dimensional field, and in their mutual interplay within this field co-constitute the affective space of the image, especially if the ordinary representation of space is reduced or denied by the aesthetic choices. The aesthetic impact of the affective space as affective significance can be enhanced further by temporal manipulation, and by introducing additional sound design and music, which can help to reveal the non-representational nature of the image by distancing it from an ordinary representation of reality.

The notion of affective space corresponds, to an extent, with Deleuze's *any-space-whatever*. For him the affective distancing from a coherent representation of space can be achieved, for example, through a close-up shot of the face, where the face 'gathers and expresses the affect as a complex entity, and secures the virtual conjunctions between singular points of this entity' (1986: 103). However, an undetermined space, a space that 'has left behind its own co-ordinates and its metric relations' (109) is for Deleuze even 'more suitable for extracting the birth, the advance and the spread of the affect' (110), regardless of the size of the shot. For Deleuze, the *any-space-whatever* 'is not an abstract universal, in all times, in all spaces. It is a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, the principle of its metric relations or the connections of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways' (109). He goes even further to say that 'as soon as we leave the face and the close-up, as soon as we consider complex shots which go beyond the simplistic distinction between close-up, medium shot and long shot, we seem to enter a "system of emotions" which is much more subtle and differentiated, less easy to identify, capable of inducing non-human affects' (110). Deleuze is primarily considering the relation between original filmed space and the frame of the film that cuts out a section of it in order to create an abstract whole *as shot*. My concept of *affective space*, on the other

hand, is based on the fundamental assertion that attributes of the original space, and all other attributes of the image (which are linked directly to the participation of the camera within that original space), are *inseparable on the level of the image*: they forge one unified affective space. In that sense, it might be thought of as an affective version of *mise-en-scène* (a widely-used concept in film theory and criticism, designating the interplay of all visual aspects within the frame).

Affective space also corresponds with Merleau-Ponty's *flesh*, if creatively applied to the moving image (and to the relationship between the nonhuman vision of the camera and the filmed reality), rather than reading it in its original context of a relationship between a human being and the world. The flesh is a kind of homogenous, sensible material, from which both the world and the body are made – in which they exist *as one*. Or as Merleau-Ponty (1968) suggests: 'where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh?' (138) He goes on to describe the flesh further:

The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term 'element,' in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a *general thing*, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an 'element' of Being (139, emphasis in the original).

And this sensible material is imbued with *vision*:

It is not I who sees, not he who sees, because an anonymous visibility inhabits both of us, a vision in general, in virtue of that primordial property that belongs to the flesh, being here and now, of radiating everywhere and forever, being an individual, of being also a dimension and a universal (142).

Merleau-Ponty's inseparability of vision and visibility, of seeing and being seen is important in relation to affective space, for it is precisely the vision of the camera where the image and the filmed reality meet and become one. The image is simultaneously vision and visibility, image and reality. Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari ultimately draw the link between affect and flesh in *What is Philosophy?* (1994), making a connection between the unity of vision and visibility, and the nonhuman, undifferentiated world outside of representation:

The being of sensation, the bloc of percept and affect, will appear as the unity or reversibility of feeling and felt, their intimate intermingling like hands clasped together: it is the flesh that, at the same time, is freed from the lived body, the perceived world, and the intentionality of one toward the other that is still too tied to experience; whereas flesh gives us the being of sensation and bears the original opinion distinct from the judgement of experience – flesh of the world and flesh of the body that are exchanged as correlates, ideal coincidence (178, emphasis in the original).

The sense of the unified affective space of the image – especially in the way it defamiliarises the coherence of filmed reality – can also be related to Marks' (2000) notion of 'haptic visuality'. Haptic visuality, as Marks explains, invites 'a look that moves on the surface plane of the screen for some time before the viewer realizes what she or he is beholding.' (163) This corresponds with Arnheim's (1957) point that 'the effect of film is neither absolutely two-dimensional nor absolutely three-dimensional, but something between. Film pictures are at once plane and solid' (12). Marks nevertheless makes a useful distinction between haptic and optical visuality to further illuminate this duality of film:

Haptic visuality is distinguished from optical visuality, which sees things from enough distance to perceive them as distinct forms in deep space: in other words, how we usually conceive of vision. Optical visuality depends on a separation between the viewing subject and the object. Haptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than to plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze. (2000: 162)

While affective space is rooted in ontological, rather than phenomenological, considerations of film, the effect on the viewing experience of the kind of images Marks describes is certainly consistent with the concept.

Affective space can be constituted by a variety of stylistic means, as the next section illustrates. These could be aspects of lighting, framing, composition, depth of field, focal length, frame rate, aspects of the film stock, as well as attributes of the filmed space (especially where they combine with the former attributes to form one affective space on the level of the image). However, the unity of vision and visibility, of image and the filmed reality in affective space is further complicated in film by temporal

manipulation (editing), which creates a tension between neighbouring shots that simultaneously forges a unity (in the normal, ‘clean’ film cut, the gap in the 18-plus-frame-per-second moving-still structure is absolute, occupying the space/duration of an invisible interval that does not exist in the impression of movement in film). This simultaneous unity and tension gives rise to overtone resonance between the structural elements of the film, which in turn amplify its affective significance.

I identify the overtone resonance between unity and tension as duality between intimacy and separation – two new concepts that expanded the understanding of affective space through the continuous process of reflection on practice. Intimacy and separation are like the two sides of the same coin in the wider affective space of the film. Separation stems from the fact that there is uninterrupted continuity of time preserved in each shot due to the mechanical, equidistant frame-rate that captures the moving image of reality, but such unity never exists beyond the shot. The sense of uninterrupted continuity achieved through editing is a consequence of successful representation of coherent space or narrative, but no such coherence exists ontologically in the film. On the level of the image, each shot represents a separate, singular instant of the new real – the real transformed into the affective space of the image – and so even two shots captured simultaneously of the same event in reality are fundamentally separate on the level of the image (I provide examples of this in 3.2.2). Shots can be cut together in order to create seam-less combinations (and in the case of shot-reverse-shot, to also suggest a basic spatial connection between performers). But there is no *actual* spatial connection, there is no actual space transferred onto film. Rather, the idea that even two cameras recording simultaneously the same scene are giving rise to two different realities points to Bergson’s understanding of the real as a constant becoming, of which coherent space is merely a conceptual, human abstraction (see 2.1). The conventional editing approach instead points to the desire of narrative film to solidify the sense, the illusion of coherent space within the diegetic reality, to shape the new, nonhuman real of film into something reassuringly human – to put film into service of the human need for making sense of the world and existence, to reaffirm or renew archetypal human wisdoms through the act of storytelling.

In my understanding of film as affective space, however, there is no actual coherence of the world transferred into the film; there is rather a new reality created within each shot, engendered by the unknowable becoming of the primary real and delimited by decisions of where to cut the shot on both ends (but even this decision should ideally respond to an inherent ‘life of the shot’, where the editing process is akin to cleaning a fossil, separating the dead organic matter from the stone). When editing shots together, one is simply creating a new, abstract whole of these separate elements – a whole which can give rise to a new aesthetic unity, and which in itself can lead to affective significance. But the tension between the whole and its separate elements persists; it is what marks the sudden moment of an edit: the creative enforcement of the imperceptible, yet absolute gap within the 18-plus-frame-per-second stilled-movement of film. Therefore the individual shots, even if matched and connected in a shot-reverse-shot exchange, are never a part of a single coherent reality. Instead, the ‘forcing together’ of separate shots into a sequence can contribute to the sense of overtone resonance, giving rise to affective significance, if the tension is revealed in the editing between coherent representation of space (and meaning) *in movement* and the ontological distance between the disparate instances of the new real. Overtone resonance can then also take place if the tension between intimacy and separation is emphasised through the cut: a sense of affective proximity is forged within the image (intimacy), yet this proximity is simultaneously made strange through the forcing together of neighbouring images (separation).

Intimacy points to the notion that within each separate shot, there is a deep sense of intimate communion with the new real: the new real of film is like a secret insight into the becoming of reality captured by the camera. Similarly to Deleuze’s concept of affect, when speaking of intimacy of the shot, I don’t necessarily mean an intimate experience of the viewer (although such intimacy could coincide with the intimacy of the shot). The intimacy of the shot is rather already in the shot, it is its self-contained, nonhuman property: it is its own experience of itself, so to speak (vision and visibility intertwined). However, this nonhuman intimacy – which is always there by the basic fact of the ‘secret insight’ created by the capturing, the stilling and preserving of the becoming of the real – could be significantly amplified by certain additional attributes

of the film. The most potent amplifiers of intimacy – as the practical experimentation and the reflection on practice have revealed – are slow motion and close-up, as they enhance, respectively, the temporal and spatial proximity between the real and the image (the new real), generating a nonhuman, affective insight in the process, while defamiliarising coherent representation of space. For Benjamin (2008), the enlargement of close-up ‘brings to light entirely new structures of matter’ while ‘slow motion not only reveals familiar aspects of movements, but discloses quite unknown aspects within them’ (37). Through the revealing potential of the close-up and slow motion, as Benjamin claims, the camera gives rise to the ‘optical unconscious’ – a term that resonates with the notion of *nonhuman intimacy*, as the self-contained intimate communion with the new real. The close-up also forms the basis of ‘photogénie’, which, as Epstein and Liebman (1977) state, releases ‘the cinematic feeling’ (16) in the film. Or as Doane (2003) puts it, in relation to the close-up and photogénie, ‘any viewer is invited to examine its gigantic detail, its contingencies, its idiosyncrasies. The close-up is always, at some level, an autonomous entity, a fragment, a “for-itself”’ (90). The close up, she continues, can lead to ‘the invocation of an otherwise unknown dimension, a radically defamiliarized alterity’ (91). Doane ultimately suggests the link between the close-up and ‘the screen as surface, with the annihilation of a sense of depth and its corresponding rules of perspectival realism. The image becomes, once more, an image rather than a threshold onto a world. Or rather, the world is reduced to this face, this object’ (91).

As I have discovered through extensive practical experimentation, the effect of a close-up and slow motion can be amplified if the shot centres on a human being, the performer: as such focus amplifies the inherent intimacy of the shot by an added intimacy between the vision of the camera and the body of the performer (revealing the nonhuman becoming of the body), as well as by the potential nonhuman sense of intimacy experienced by the viewer in relation to the performer. The practice, and the reflection on practice, have revealed the intimacy between the camera and the performer as particularly important and potent. This is because the camera can be thought of as a nonhuman vision that had to coincide with the nonhuman becoming of the performer for this particular real of the film to arise, and so – similarly to the facilitated intimacy

between the performer and the viewer – there is a *direct* intimate encounter between the vision of the camera and the body of the performer. As the practice (and the visual examples in 3.2.5) illustrate, it is *this* intimacy that is at the heart of the affective significance of the shot. Furthermore, since this encounter is facilitated through vision, the eye (as the source of vision on the side of the human body) is a good source of intimacy – and a good amplifier of affective significance. Thus a direct look into the camera can intensify the intimate encounter between these two embodied sources of vision beyond a certain limit – a moment of intensity in which a burst of affective significance is suddenly discharged. The lens is like a window into the future, or rather, a window into the *eternal stillness of the new real*; the lens already *is* the film, it is the *sensitive surface* on which everything that the frame is able to contain is *reflected, absorbed, transformed*. Therefore, the look into the camera is the look onto itself, it is a look that covers the whole of the frame, but from a position within it: it not only acknowledges the embodied, nonhuman vision of the camera in the becoming of the real moment, it simultaneously *is* the centre of vision in the affective space of the film. The look into the camera is the reflection of the camera's look in the surface of the *all-permeating feedback-loop of vision that is flesh*.

Rather than an inter-subjective encounter of two agencies, two 'objective-subjects', the encounter between the camera and the performer can also be thought of as an 'inter-objective', embodied encounter of two 'subjective-objects', as Vivian Sobchack (2004) refers to it (herself inspired by Merleau-Ponty's flesh). It is an encounter with the other as a 'passionate devotion to the world, acting on and enfolding its and our own materiality through our *senses* and with *feeling*, [which] intimately engages us with our primordial, prereflective, and material *sense-ability*' (Sobchack 2004: 290, emphases in the original).

My reflection on the practice suggests that the reason why slow motion and the closeness of the shot are amplifiers of intimacy is because they both provide a more enhanced, nonhuman access to the (new) real, while at the same time having the potential to reduce the coherence and representation of the shot. All film is, in principle, a nonhuman, privileged access to the real; however, when the camera assumes a

perspective that presents the becoming of reality in a more detailed state, not ordinarily accessible to human perception, then this access inevitably leads to a more intimate, yet defamiliarised encounter with this reality. However, it is a *nonhuman intimacy*, rather than a sense of ‘narrative intimacy’ between performers: if it coincides with such narrative (emotionally meaningful) intimacy, then it simultaneously defamiliarises it, entering into overtone resonance with it, revealing its nonhuman, molecular state *as* affective significance. Possibly the most intense variation of this nonhuman intimacy, as the practice has revealed, is a combination of all of the elements mentioned above: an extreme close-up of a performer’s eye looking into the camera in slow motion. This kind of combination initiates an inter-objective contact between the camera and the performer, while offering a privileged, nonhuman (spatial and temporal) proximity to the performer that is intimate yet removed from any coherent/meaningful context in reality and/or narrative. Such shots were experimented with in Affective Sign 4 during Stage 2, and I discuss this in 3.2.5.

3.2 Affective Space in Film and in the Affective Cinema Practice

As I allude to at the outset of this chapter, the concept of affective space, as well as the related concepts of intimacy and separation, gradually emerged from the practice, in the alternation between action and reflection. I framed the initial sense of affective space through the study of examples from the history of cinema, and from this research derived methods that could be applied in the production of new practice, such as contingent lighting, slow motion, close-up framing, shallow depth of field, etc. However, as the project progressed, the newly produced practice itself helped to define further steps in relation to affective space for the later stages. During Stage 1, an abstract space was constructed through light in a controlled environment, and this technique was later advanced through the Stage 3 workshop. Stage 2 provided an opportunity to experiment with extreme close-ups, slow motion, Steadicam movements, and the two-camera rig that generated two different shots (two distinct affective spaces) of the same action simultaneously (previously discussed in 1.2.2). While working in real environments during Stage 2, it was possible to position the camera in such a way, in relation to the specific locations and the intuitive visual opportunities emerging from

them, as to produce an effect of stylised lighting without directly controlling light. The camera experimentation during Stage 3 (resulting in Affective Sign 7) combined many of the techniques explored during Stage 2, but also introduced an element of controlled light (for example the spinning flames of Poi Performance discussed in 1.2.3 and 2.2.3). As the project progressed into the final two stages, the concept of affective space became increasingly absorbed into the overarching approach to direction and performance (affective atmosphere, see 4.4), and so many of the stylistic choices experimented with during the first three stages became internalised, and applied intuitively, while the primary motivation for filming was driven by the affective atmosphere method. The use of controlled, artificial light was abandoned for the final two stages, and instead, film stock became a significant new element, which offered the opportunity to compare and contrast the effect digital and photochemical images have on the sense of affective space. During Stage 4, I alternated between digital and Super8 cameras; however, for Stage 5, I adapted the design of the two-camera rig (employed during Stage 2) to Super8, so that the digital and photochemical images could be obtained simultaneously. While the editing (the delimitation of shots) contributes to the abstraction of affective space, the use of found footage during Stage 5 introduced a process in which affective space became defined solely through editing: rather than delimiting a shot based on an appropriate beginning and ending within material already expressing a sense of affective space, in the found footage (especially the amateur home movies), abstract moments were identified and separated from an otherwise coherent context of ordinary life.

The following subsections provide detailed examples of the results of all these implemented filmmaking techniques and processes, and outline how such processes activate and also provide new insights into the notion of affective space. These examples and processes are linked to (and introduced by) comparable visual references from the history of cinema that carry similar stylistic traits. However, these examples from cinema are often particular shots isolated from the (coherent) narrative context of the film, rather than representative of the films as such; although examples from films driven more directly by the aesthetic principles of what I refer to as affective space also appear (particularly from the films of Tarkovsky, Kieslowski, Van Sant and Tsai). My

practice, on the other hand, was inspired by all of these references in order to *maximise* the effect of affective space as described in the previous section.

3.2.1 Aspects of Light

Lighting cannot be neatly separated from the filmed space, yet in the intertwined vision and visibility of the image, it occupies a virtual dimension between the image and the filmed space – being both and neither at the same time. Although light can be (and often is) manipulated and constructed as part of the filmmaking process, it transcends the geometrical conception of space toward a more direct sense of real movement, of the becoming of the real. At the same time, within the image, it is a key aesthetic aspect: the translation, in the process of filming, of the becoming of light in reality into echoes of real movement as colour and contrast is critical to the constitution of affective space. Lighting designs can contribute to the constitution of affective space by abstracting the image from an ordinary impression of reality and coherent representation of space, and in the process bringing attention to the aesthetic nature of film: its two-dimensional, moving-still surface. A good example of such techniques is *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991) where coloured light is used, without any realistic motivation, to create an abstract, aesthetic space – focusing on the affective value of the image, rather than communicating meaning or narrative. (Fig. 54)



Figure 54 *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991, Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski)

The narrative of *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), whilst adhering to a certain realist aesthetic, is staged entirely during Christmas, which provides a diegetic motivation for the affective use of fairy-light backgrounds and other more stylised, non-realist lighting effects,

forging a sense of affective space: adding a level of abstraction to some shots, enhancing their affective rather than narrative value. (Fig. 55) *Persona* (1966) creates affective space in a close-up by using a gradually dimming frontal spotlight that reflects in the performer's eyes, and this reflection is sustained much longer than the illumination of the face. (Fig. 56)



Figure 55 *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999, Directed by Stanley Kubrick)



Figure 56 *Persona* (1966, Directed by Ingmar Bergman)



Figure 57 *Run Lola Run* (1998, Directed by Tom Tykwer)

In *Run Lola Run* (1998), red light is used to abstract ordinary space and instead define the space of the image based on light, forging an affective space. (Fig. 57) In *Face* (2009) or in *Taking Off* (1971), moments can be identified where space is abstracted through the absence of light, with a minimal source of light adding an affective rather than narrative value to the image. In case of *Face*, this light source is a cigarette (and a lighter) shared by two lovers in a dark room (Fig. 58); in *Taking Off*, it is car headlights through the back window of a car revealing dark silhouettes in the foreground. (Fig. 59)

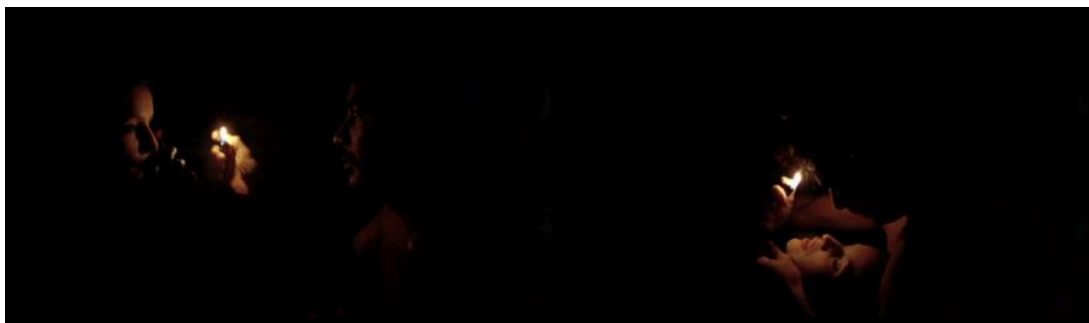


Figure 58 *Face* (2009, Directed by Ming-liang Tsai)

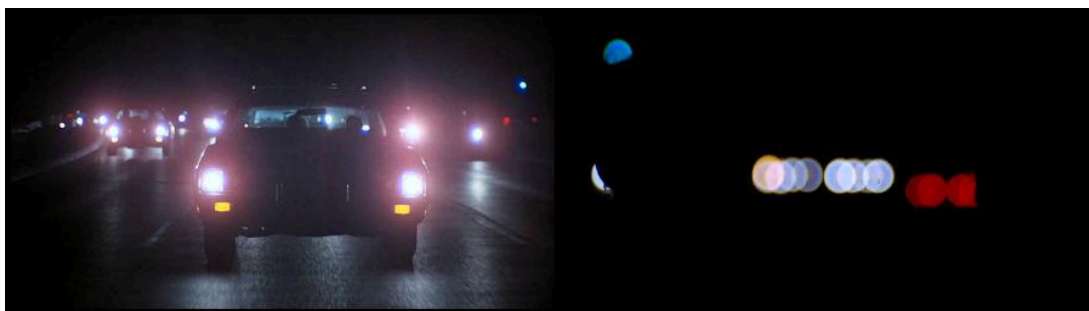


Figure 59 *Taking Off* (1971, Directed by Milos Forman)

In the Affective Cinema research project, I experimented with lighting designs to constitute affective space, and contribute to affective significance of the image. In this way (and as the following visual references illustrate), the initial inspiration in cinema was re-shaped by these research-specific aims and by the gradual evolution of the production methods. During Stage 1, coloured and changing lights were used to forge an abstract space of the image, defined primarily or solely by light. For Affective Sign 1, I fitted a soft-box light with colour-changing LED light bulbs, and framed the close-up shot so that the surface of the light forms the entire background. I used colour gel filters to control other sources of light. (Fig. 60) This approach was later advanced

during Stage 3: in Affective Sign 8, each of the three (simultaneously filming) camera angles had a different lighting design. (Fig. 61)



Figure 60 Affective Sign 1



Figure 61 Affective Sign 8

The first camera had an out-of-focus background created by coloured fairy lights on a black backdrop, while the performer was lit by a red light, back-lit by a purple light, and also lit by a transitioning LED light from above. The second camera – the reverse-shot angle of the first camera – had a background formed by a black blind with a red light

behind it, and the performer was lit by a ‘palpitating’ disco light from above. The third camera had the most complex visual setup (as outlined in 2.2.3; Fig. 32), filming through a transparent glass sprayed with water, with its image feeding directly into a projector illuminating the background of the shot. This complex three-camera lighting experimentation amplified the sense of three different instances of affective space emerging simultaneously, which were combined experimentally through editing across the footage from the entire workshop. The lighting setup also increased the randomness and unpredictability of these formal elements – coinciding with unrepeatably moments of performance in this otherwise controlled environment – while having an atmospheric influence on the performance itself: contributing to the sense of affective atmosphere.

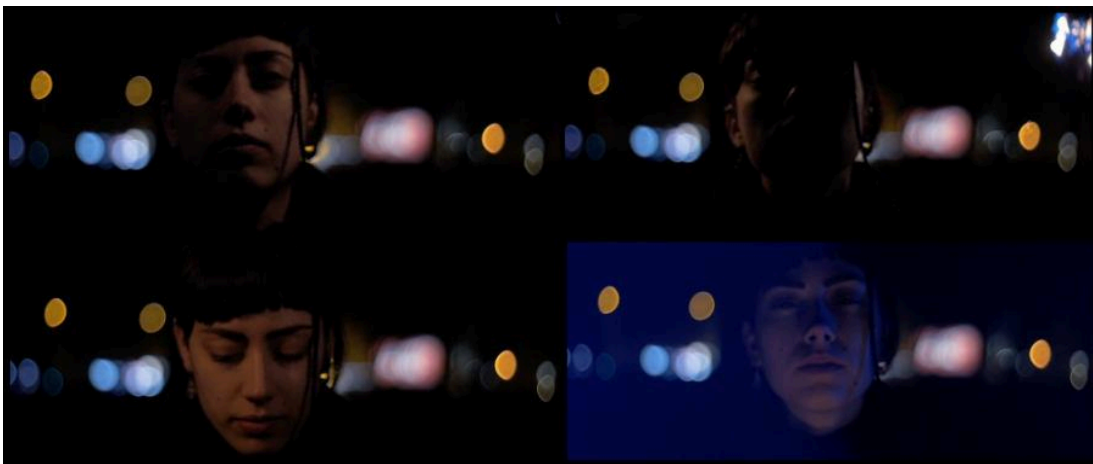


Figure 62 Affective Sign 7 (4min32sec – 5min4sec)

In Affective Sign 7, the naturally occurring lighting of the night street was combined with artificial, complex sources of illumination, such as flashing red and blue light, and the spinning flame of the Poi Performance, in order to create abstract, expressive affective space of the shot. The overall darkness played an important part in this shot, providing an abstract base against which the alternating light is contrasted (from which it emerges). (Fig. 62)

In the films of Stage 2 I focused on working with naturally occurring light. However, in many instances, I used this in such a way as to create a stylised look to the shot, giving an impression that the light was artificially constructed. In Affective Sign 4, I obtained shots outside a shopping window using a macro lens and slow motion. A greenish glow

emanated from the window, which structured a rich, abstract environment within the close-up shot. (Fig. 63) In Affective Sign 6, a combination of light entering the backseat of the car (street lights, ongoing traffic, brake lights of the car in front) gave rise to a complex play of light on the performer's face. (Fig. 64) I also placed a small light with a purple filter inside the boot of the car, which illuminated the white surface of the roof in the background. This was a simple, intuitive decision that, in combination with slow motion, contributes to the abstraction of the shot as affective space.



Figure 63 Affective Sign 4 (1min40sec – 2min01sec; 3min10sec – 3min31sec)



Figure 64 Affective Sign 6 (0min5sec – 0min50sec)

In Affective Sign 9, I framed a shot taking advantage of the immediate conditions in the hotel room, leading to a sense of predesigned lighting set-up, without the use of additional lighting. (Fig. 65) There were two lamps on each side of the bed, which gives the performers side-illumination, each of a slightly different colour temperature (this colour temperature difference was dictated by the given conditions in the room, but it nevertheless contributes to the aesthetic dimension of the shot as affective space). The headboard of the bed had an inbuilt strip of LED lights, which becomes a significant

compositional feature of the shot. I was aware of this lighting feature during production; however, when cropping the image in post-production from 1.78:1 to the widescreen, ‘cinematic’ format of 2:35:1, I was able to position this strip of light exactly in the middle of the screen. (This exposes the key benefit of the widescreen cropping process, which opens compositional potential in certain shots, while allowing for repositioning of elements along the vertical axis.)

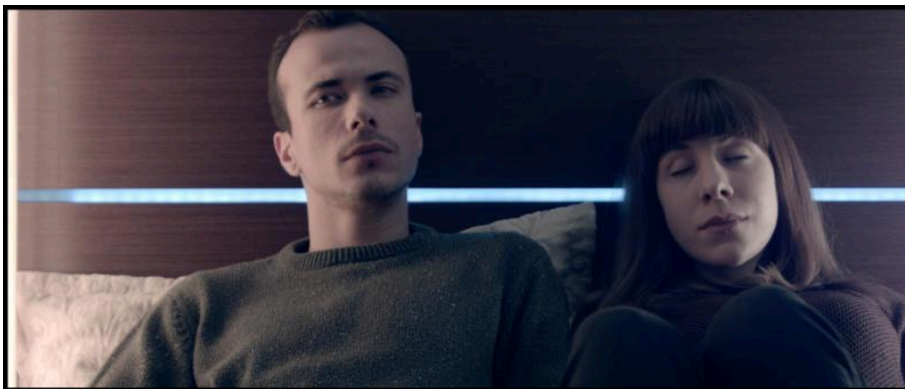


Figure 65 Affective Sign 9 (9min14sec – 10min38sec)

In this shot, therefore, the lighting elements combine with the film frame to forge an enclosed world of the shot – affective space – especially as the entire scene is enclosed within this narrow frame, not revealing wider (representational) spatial context. In fact, the scene involves one cut to a side angle filmed using Super8; because of the high-ISO grain in the darkened room, however, this shot momentarily transports the scene to yet another affective space – here forged by the Super8 format – rather than providing spatial context. This change of affective space is amplified by a shift in sound design that gives the brief Super8 cutaway a sense of echoing distance – or rather, it gives it a heightened sense of *nonhuman intimacy*. (I discuss similar editing choices in 3.2.6, and return to sound-design in 3.2.7; the kind of affective space constructed primarily by the Super8 texture is covered in 3.2.4.)

3.2.2 Aspects of the Camera: Movement, Framing, Depth of Field, Focal Length

Aspects of the camera, such as movement, framing, depth of field and focal length, can play a key role in establishing affective space of the image. As the following examples

from cinema illustrate, these attributes have the power (individually or in their combination) to defamiliarise representation of reality (and context in narrative), while bringing attention to the aesthetic nature of the film. In *Nostalghia* (1983), affective space is constituted by the atmospheric lighting in the room and a very slow dolly-in movement of the camera. (Fig. 66) While the expressive design and lighting of the room play a part in the constitution of affective space, it is ultimately the camera movement that transforms the representation of space into an aesthetic world of the moving image.



Figure 66 *Nostalghia* (1983, Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky)

In *Elephant* (2003), a long, continuous tracking movement of the camera following a performer through high school corridors elevates the space and the situation to an abstract level of the image. (Fig. 67) What would be an ordinary corridor is gradually transformed through the long, persistent tracking movement into a hypnotic, visual structure, and what would be naturally occurring light becomes a durational structure of alternating luminous intensities that emanates affects instead of narrative meaning.



Figure 67 *Elephant* (2003, Directed by Gus Van Sant)

In *Barry Lyndon* (1975) extreme low depth of field creates hazy, undefined backgrounds to close-up shots and leads to a soft image, diffusing the specificity and clarity of ‘ordinary vision’, giving rise instead to the *flesh* of the image. (Fig. 68) *A Man and a Woman* (1966) employs extreme focal length to crush perspective and narrow depth of field, leading to a self-contained world of the image frame: affective space. (Fig. 69)



Figure 68 *Barry Lyndon* (1975, Directed by Stanley Kubrick)



Figure 69 *A Man and a Woman* (1966, Directed by Claude Lelouch)



Figure 70 *Diary of a Pregnant Woman* (1958, Directed by Agnès Varda)

Diary of a Pregnant Woman (1958) (Fig. 70) and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967) use the composition of the frame in order to create a world of the image removed from ordinary sense of reality. (Fig. 71) Similar effect is achieved in *Face*. (Fig. 72)



Figure 71 *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967, Directed by Jean-Luc Godard)



Figure 72 *Face* (2009, Directed by Ming-liang Tsai)

In Affective Sign 7, a dolly-in camera movement combines with atmospheric lighting and slow motion in order to create affective space. (Fig. 73) I describe the specific processes that went into constructing this affective space in 2.2.3 and 3.2.1; here I merely want to bring attention to the slow dolly-in movement that bears resemblance to (and is inspired by) the example from *Nostalghia* mentioned earlier (Fig. 66). However, in comparison to the shot in *Nostalghia*, here the camera has its focus fixed on a close distance, which combines with the low depth of field of the image (the iris of the camera was wide open) to make this dolly-in movement also a *movement into focus*, starting from hazy softness to gradually reveal the face of the performer as the camera moves closer to her. Given the fact that the image from the camera was immediately projected in the background of the shot (as explained in 2.2.3), creating a feedback loop

of light, the combination of the dolly-in movement and the soft, fixed focus had a significant, yet unpredictable effect on the appearance of the background. In this way, the affective space of this shot as a whole – as one unified flesh of the image – becomes emancipated from the initial inspiration in cinema.

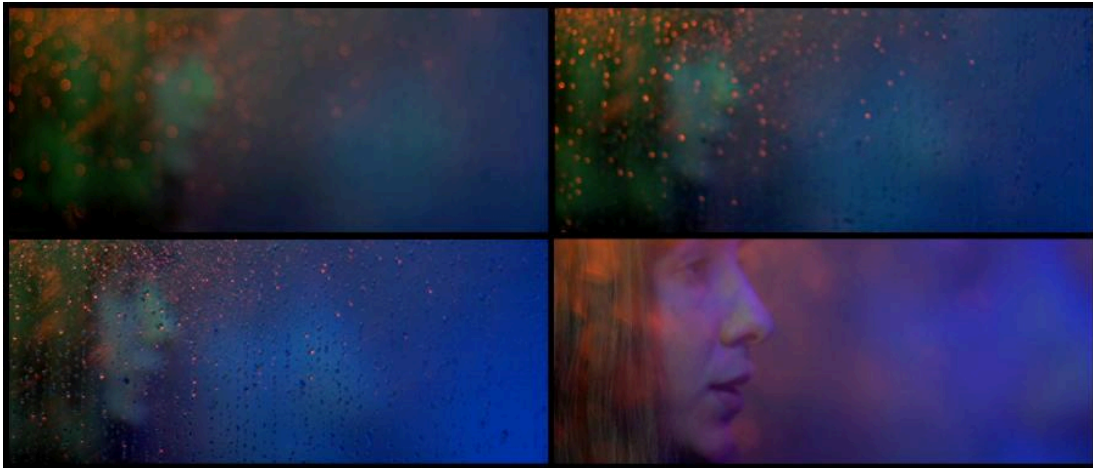


Figure 73 Affective Sign 7 (2min9sec – 2min26sec)



Figure 74 Affective Sign 9 (11min33sec – 12min34sec)

In Affective Sign 9 I cut between smooth steadicam movement and hand-held camera operation in order to (aesthetically) disrupt coherent representation of reality. (Fig. 74) Therefore, here the camera movement combines, in each individual shot, with the particular framing and slow motion to constitute affective space, but this effect is enhanced by providing a contrast through editing between these kinds of affective spaces within a continuous sequence. This contrast disrupts a sense of spatial and/or

narrative continuity of the shared environment of the shots (the Gothic centre of Barcelona) and brings attention to the image as such, rather than producing narrative meaning.

The difference between the smooth and shaky camera movements emerged from the circumstances, to an extent, since it would be very difficult to mount the Super8 camera on a Steadicam, given its handheld-operation design. This fact contributes to the contrast between the two affective spaces since the handheld camera movement is always associated in this film with the particular texture of the Super8 image (and with the contingent imperfections resulting from the development process). Furthermore, while my practitioner intuition in post-production (usually) led me to crop the digital image from 1:78:1 to 2:35:1 widescreen – in order to explore its compositional potential and thus enhance its effect as (cinematic) frame rather than documentary representation of reality – my approach to Super8 was different. This is because the native frame ratio of Super8 is just 1.33:1 rather than the wider 1:78:1 native format of digital, which would lead, in the former case, to cutting out a significant portion of the image if cropping to 2:35:1 – and such significant crop would have to be taken into account when framing the shot during production. Furthermore, similarly to the imperfection of the handheld camera movement, the narrow frame of Super8 has an affective, haptic quality – linked to the actual, *physical* shape of the film – that combines with texture and the imperfect development process to produce the distinctive affective space of this format. However, I always considered the structure of each film as a whole when making cropping decisions. Therefore, I decided to crop the Super8 shots in Affective Sign 9 to 1:78:1 (except for the closing, expired-footage shots – see 3.2.6), as the *repeated* alternation between 2:35:1 and 1:33:1 would be too jarring (dissonant), given the difference between the types of footage based on texture and camera movement. By reducing the contrast of frame ratios (to 2:35:1 and 1:78:1), on the other hand, balance was achieved – giving rise to overtone resonance between intimacy and separation.



Figure 75 Affective Sign 4 (4min31sec – 4min55sec)

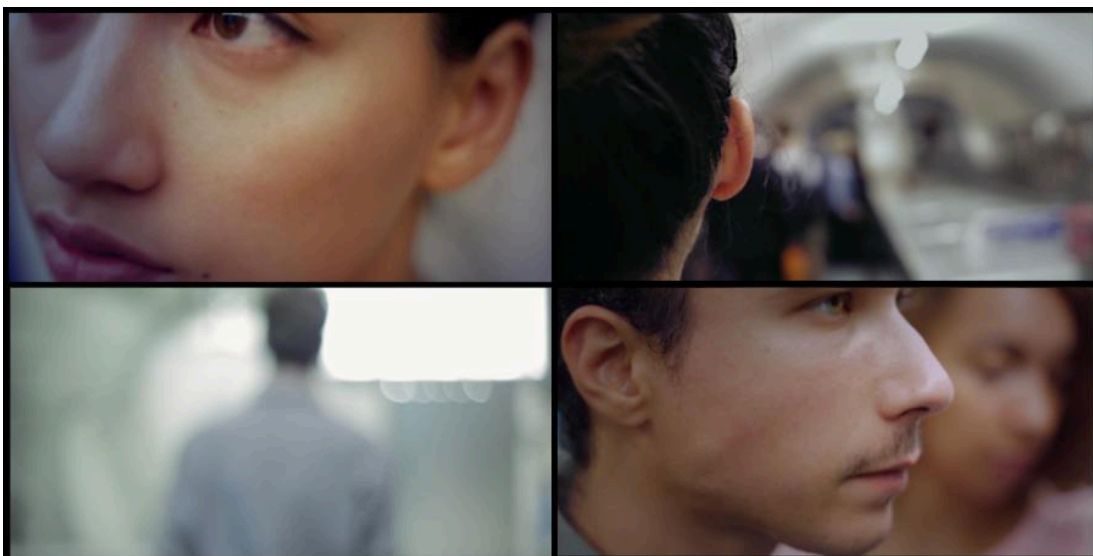


Figure 76 Affective Sign 3

In Affective Sign 4, a tracking camera movement combines with low depth of field, which leads to an abstract, defamiliarised space of the shot. (Fig. 75) In Affective Sign 3, low depth of field creates a soft, abstract space of the image, removed from coherent representation of reality. (Fig. 76) I cropped these films to a 2:1 ratio (somewhere between the 2:35:1 widescreen and 1:78:1 native digital format), since after some post-production experimentation, this shape emerged as the most suitable for these films. In this ratio, I could still enhance the composition of each shot by repositioning the frame while being able to accommodate jarring camera movements that would otherwise result in constraining dissonance if cropped to 2:35:1. These jarring movements – which

in themselves contribute to affective significance (through their contingency and abstraction) – are produced by the combination of close-up shots and standard frame-rate (not slow motion), which defines many of the shots in this film (including the examples discussed here).

I achieved the extreme low depth of field of these shots by combining a wide-open iris of the lens with a ‘full frame’ digital camera (the sensor of the digital camera is twice the size of the sensitive field of a standard 35mm cinema camera, which in turn, is considerably larger than the tiny image size of the Super8); this gave rise to images even softer than the still from *Barry Lyndon* above. The focus remains fixed at close distance, which makes the film oscillate – flow smoothly – in and out of focus, making sharp portions of the face momentarily emerge from the unified flesh of the image, without forging a coherent context of the specific filmed space.

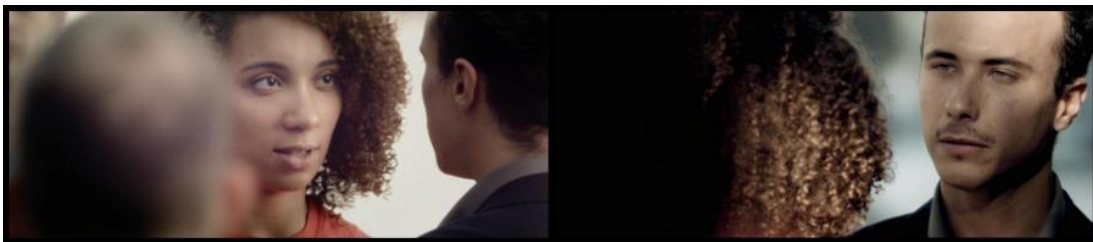


Figure 77 Affective Sign 5

In Affective Sign 5, extreme focal length crushes perspective, transforming the ordinary location of a busy city street into complex out-of-focus background and foreground of the shot-reverse-shot close-ups. (Fig. 77) The passers-by flowing through the considerably wide space between the camera and the performers in this way turn into abstract, dynamic elements within the two-dimensional world of the image. This also sets up a marked separation between the physical distance of the performers and the lens of the camera during the filming process, and their *absolute proximity*, within the close-up shot. The performers are at the very centre of the intertwined vision and visibility of the image – and in this way, the nonhuman intimacy of the affective space is forged. This nonhuman intimacy is enhanced by combining the visuals with post-production dubbing and sound-design. I re-recorded the voices at a very close distance to the microphone (in stark contrast to the distance of the camera), and this proximity to

the microphone is apparent in the particular quality of the sound recording. The dubbing allowed for naturally occurring sounds (mixed inseparably with the original dialogue recording) to be completely removed; this led to defamiliarisation of the space as recognisable location (whether a specific street, or a realistic representation of *a* street). This defamiliarisation combines with the close proximity of the voices and the nonhuman intimacy set up by the focal length of the camera to give rise to affective significance. (I discuss sound design and dubbing more in 3.2.7.)

In Affective Sign 10, I implemented unconventional framing, in order to prioritise the two-dimensional field of the image over a seamless impression of reality. (Fig. 78) The framing was (intuitively) inspired by the preceding editing of Found Affective Sign, where unconventional (unconscious, amateur) framing often amplified affective significance of the selected shots. (Fig. 79)



Figure 78 Affective Sign 10



Figure 79 Found Affective Sign

A more complex instance of unconventional, singular framing stemming from the immediate potential of the filming conditions can be identified in Affective Sign 9. (Fig. 80) As part of the affective atmosphere method (see 4.4), I followed the performers from the Barcelona airport to the city centre, filming continuously. On the way, we found ourselves on the Barcelona Metro underground train; while this route from the airport was planned in advance, I had never been on or seen the Barcelona Metro

before. I nevertheless responded intuitively to the space with my camera, making immediate decisions based on reflection in action. The actors sat down next to each other and I was filming them from various angles. Given the immediacy of the situation, I was using the camera handheld, and so intuitively looked for opportunities to stabilise it by resting my elbow and shoulder onto surfaces. The angle behind the actors was an ideal place for achieving a steady camera position, for I could lean with my arm and shoulder into the nook behind the seats (while seated next to the performers) and anchor my body against the glass window. When trying to find a suitable composition given the fixed focal length of the camera, I intuitively framed the image so that the back of the train seat splits it in the middle, doubling up the performer as a mirror reflection in the window. Therefore, rather than through careful planning, preparation, or through making aesthetic decisions based on narrative/emotional requirements of a scene (or a wider film), the affective space of this shot emerges in the moment of making, applying intuitive choices informed by my practitioner knowledge, and by the objective of capturing reality in a defamiliarised (rather than conventional or representational) way.



Figure 80 Affective Sign 9 (3min21sec – 3min33sec)

In Affective Signs 3 (Fig. 81) and 4 (Fig. 82) I employ a two-camera rig, filming simultaneously on two cameras with a different focal length, and at a slightly different angle. This produces two contrasting frames of the identical moment in reality, giving rise to two distinct instances of affective space. I designed this camera rig based on the aims of the project, in order to increase contingency (as I explain in 2.2.4), but also to experiment with the possibilities of affective space. My concept of affective space depends on the assertion that each instant of filming (each series of rapidly captured

equidistant frames) forges a singularity that transcends indexical representation *as the new real* (the attributes of the image merge inseparably with the filmed space) and this has the potential to dislocate coherent representation of space. The visual results of the two-camera rig can be read as evidence of this assertion, as they reveal two moving images obtained simultaneously, looking in one direction from roughly the same position (the lenses are side-by-side rather than occupying exactly the same point in space, which they cannot do). Apart from slow motion, it is the aspects of the camera that I discuss in this subsection (depth of field, framing, focal length, and the camera movement altered by the increased focal length) that distinguish the two shots as singular instances of affective space. Editing these shots together in a sequence then simultaneously exposes their ontological difference and indexical identity, which contributes to overtone resonance between intimacy and separation, and hence amplifies the affective significance of the film.



Figure 81 Affective Sign 3 (4min39sec – 5min11sec)



Figure 82 Affective Sign 4 (3min31sec – 3min43sec)

3.2.3 Aspects of Filmed Space

Based on Bergson's understanding of reality (see 2.1), we are unable to see and comprehend the becoming of the real as such – as incessant flux, real movement – but instead perceive the world as geometrical space, which individual objects traverse.

While film, as I contend in this thesis, captures echoes of real movement by its direct, automatic, nonhuman contact with real light, it nevertheless also carries the impression of geometrical space *as representation*. The degree to which this representation of space is abstracted defines the balance between the three-dimensional spatial representation and the two-dimensional, aesthetic reality of the image as such – it defines the defamiliarisation of the image. There are different ways in which this spatial representation can be defamiliarised – some of which are linked to lighting and aspects of the camera discussed in the subsections above, and some are linked to physical elements present directly within the filmed space. When considering the overall defamiliarisation of the image, it is not really possible to separate the aspects of filmed space from the aspects of lighting and the camera. There are nevertheless certain moments (shots) in cinema where the main abstracting element of the shot constituting affective space – and contributing to affective significance of the image – can be identified as a physical element present in the filmed space. For example, in *The Double Life of Veronique* a shot is inserted into the visual structure of a scene (which on the whole represents a coherent space and situation) that is filmed through a semi-transparent surface (it is not clear from the image, nor established in the diegesis, what this object is); this creates a rich, abstract surface of the image *as image*, forging a defamiliarised affective space. (Fig. 83) In *Antichrist* (2009), a similar effect is achieved by inserting a shot through the mesh-window of a hearse – here the origin of the surface is established through the context of the scene (we know it is a hearse), but the result is nevertheless an abstract shot, where the foreground and background, sharply-focused and out-of-focus fields merge into one to form affective space. (Fig. 84)



Figure 83 *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991, Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski)



Figure 84 *Antichrist* (2009, Directed by Lars Von Trier)



Figure 85 *Three Colors: Blue* (1993, Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski)

In *Three Colors: Blue* (1993), a complex play of light reflections is initiated by framing a close-up of a child looking through the back window of a car driving through a tunnel. The reverse angle of the tunnel is also filmed through the glass, leading to a diffused, ‘unstable’ image. (Fig. 85) While framing and light play a significant part in the constitution of this affective space, the tunnel and the glass through which the shot is filmed play a critical part in its structure. Similarly in *A Man and a Woman* (1966) a night-rain scene inside a car motivates the filming through the windshield, at an extended focal length. This produces a blurry foreground obstructing alternately the performer’s face in close-up, thus forming affective space in the two-dimensional field of the image. (Fig. 86) The glass, the water and the car itself can all be considered as features of the filmed space (as distinct from light and aspects of the camera, from

which nevertheless they cannot be separated) that support and motivate the particular lighting and framing to abstract the space beyond mere ‘faithful representation’.



Figure 86 *A Man and a Woman* (1966, Directed by Claude Lelouch)

In *Nostalgia* the atmospheric attributes of a derelict interior are used to constitute affective space, turning the shapes and textures of the object surfaces into abstract elements that enhance the aesthetic quality of the image, rather than representing an ordinary, three-dimensional space. (Fig. 87)



Figure 87 *Nostalgia* (1983, Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky)

Similarly in *Face* (Fig. 88), a large sewer is used in combination with light to constitute abstract space (on the left). In another scene, a narrow frame on two performers inside a

thicket constitutes a simple abstract space without providing any narrative or meaningful, visual context (on the right). The affective space in *Good Work* (1999) depends on the frame of the shot that carves out the scene from a wider spatial and/or narrative context, but ultimately the shot is defined by the attributes of the filmed space, especially the diagonally-patterned mirror wall that fills the frame. The framing and the space are therefore impossible to separate; rather, they *constitute each other as affect*. (Fig. 89)



Figure 88 *Face* (2009, Directed by Ming-liang Tsai)



Figure 89 *Good Work* (1999, Directed by Claire Denis)

In my practice, there were various ways in which the physical attributes of the filmed space played a part in constituting affective space. Some emerged from designing and manipulating space (in combination with lighting techniques) and some arose from given conditions of real locations that were intuitively explored through specific camera techniques and creative decisions in the moment of production. The example from

Affective Sign 8 relates to a complex set-up that I discuss on multiple occasions (2.2.3, 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). While the affective space here was primarily constructed by lighting techniques in combination with aspects of the camera (such as depth of field), I nevertheless want to bring attention here to the physical attributes of the constructed filmed environment. For this particular shot (Fig. 90), I inserted a sheet of plastic glass between the performer and the camera. The glass was regularly sprayed with water and the camera operator was pulling focus between the droplets of water and the glass, either through adjusting focus or by dolly-in, slider movement. This object (the glass with running droplets of water) placed between the camera and the performer therefore played a critical part in the constitution of affective space. While it is inspired, to an extent, by many of the visual references from cinema outlined above, the combination here with specific lighting and camera techniques – and especially the implementation of projected light in the background – makes this affective space different from these visual references, forming an abstract singularity of its own.



Figure 90 Affective Sign 8 (5min50sec – 5min53sec)

In Affective Sign 3, no manipulation or artificial lighting were involved, and it is therefore the attributes of the real locations in combination with camera techniques and intuitive practitioner choices (and reflection in action) that construct these particular images. For example, I filmed a performer through a glass partition on the London Underground, using the reflected diagonal ceiling lights as an intuitive compositional feature in the two-dimensional space of the image. In another scene in the film, I used the architectural and lighting elements of the station compositionally as an abstract, structuring element of the shot. (Fig. 91) The camera angle also plays a part in these shots – when combined with the particular frame – to abstract the filmed space beyond

mere representation of reality. In the first example (on the left) it is a low angle that achieves the diagonal reflection of the ceiling lights (I obtained this shot while sitting down). In the second example (on the right), it is instead a high angle that combines with a short focal length to turn the geometrical attributes of the filmed space into expressive compositional lines of the image frame *as affective space*.



Figure 91 Affective Sign 3 (2min – 2min14sec; 1min18sec – 1min36sec)

In Affective Sign 10, the countryside environment, the performer, and the texture of the Super8 film merge, on the level of the image, to create affective space. (Fig. 92) While the texture of the film stock (see 3.2.4) and the focal length play a significant part here, they cannot be separated from the attributes of the filmed space. Instead, their combination results in a single two-dimensional surface that, through movement, *vibrates with* three dimensions, rather than coherently representing three-dimensional space. This kind of abstraction is intensified in both of these examples by the fact that the frame collapses – through extended focal length, framing decision and the Super8 texture – considerable distances within the filmed space. In the example on the left, part of the background is formed by distant sea; in the example on the right it is a lake in the distant background, which also separates the image into a composition of horizontal thirds between the grass in the foreground, the deep blue lake in the background, and the sky in the distant background. This composition emerged spontaneously in the moment of filming; without planning the shot or arranging it, I simply discovered the composition by looking through the lens and framing the event as it took place (it was the performer's decision in the moment, as part of the affective atmosphere, to relate herself to her immediate environment in this particular way). Nevertheless, it is this composition, emerging from the decisions about focal length and framing, that, together

with the texture of the medium, abstracts the filmed space as aesthetic reality beyond coherent representation.



Figure 92 Affective Sign 10 (5min18sec – 5min39sec; 7min51sec – 8min3sec)

In Affective Sign 7, I used the space of a university corridor in combination with low depth of field, smooth tracking camera movement, and frontal-window daylight, to create an abstract, defamiliarised space. (Fig. 93) The concept for this shot emerged from my intuitive exploration of the location. I used a full-frame camera with the iris fully open – in order to adjust for the lighting conditions and achieve a maximum softness in the image. The full-frame sensor increased the quality of the underexposed portions of the image, but also combined with the fully open iris (of a ‘fast’, large-aperture lens) to produce extremely shallow depth of field. Therefore, the shot is mainly underexposed and totally out of focus; however, the combination of very low depth of field and good low-light performance (that is inherent to a full-frame sensor) allowed for the defocused image to completely transform the shapes of the corridor: the square window in the distant background and the reflections of it on the walls acquire round corners through the radical softness of the full-frame low depth of field, and thus change (abstract) the entire character of the corridor. The face of the performer momentarily emerges in focus, and the focus itself here supplements exposure: it becomes *a form of exposure*. The luminance of the face doesn’t increase particularly as the performer steps closer to the camera and into the narrow focus field: although it does catch a bit of a reflection from the window, this very reflection *becomes visible* precisely because of the change in focus. It is the well-defined sharpness of the image that makes a clear difference to the visibility of the face. At the same time, it is this moment that makes the

shot affectively significant, in the combination of the sudden, brief sharpness of the image and the performer looking into the camera, embedded in the overall softness of the aesthetically transformed space.



Figure 93 Affective Sign 7 (0min5sec – 0min27sec)



Figure 94 Affective Sign 9 (12min34sec – 13min8sec)

In Affective Sign 9, a pavement ventilator (that we spontaneously discovered while passing by) produces an upright flow of air, which combines with slow motion (in both digital and Super8) in order to construct contingent affective space. (Fig. 94) In another scene in the film, we ‘stumbled upon’ a location, which had illuminated monoliths dispersed around the pedestrian walkway, right next to a circus tent. Our spontaneous exploration of this space – as part of the affective atmosphere approach – led to the shot being structured as a hand-held walk around the performers (facing each other in a dialogue) with the Super8 camera. This camera movement, together with the specific attributes of the original space, forms the affective space of the shot. (Fig. 95) Finally, in the same film, the entrance into an underground train station combines with the afternoon lighting conditions to create high contrast between the direct, low sunlight and the dim illumination inside the underpass. I intuitively utilised this contrast by

reducing exposure on the (iPhone) camera, crushing all low light elements into complete black, and used the brightly illuminated surfaces (and silhouettes of the performers walking down the stairs) as compositional features in this abstract, affective space of the shot. (Fig. 96)



Figure 95 Affective Sign 2 (5min31sec – 6min40sec)



Figure 96 Affective Sign 2 (3min10sec – 3min20sec)

Except for the first example from the Stage 3 workshop, all the shots discussed in this subsection emerged from my intuitive, reflection-in-action response to the locations – to the visual/compositional opportunities the spaces presented – rather than planning and constructing these shots, or thinking of them as part of a wider narrative context of a film (so that their composition could contribute to intentional meaning or emotion). Although I viewed these compositional opportunities – as the filmmaker, and as a

human subject – as belonging to a fixed geometrical space, I participated in the becoming of the moment, and relied on chance (or serendipity) to contribute to the affective significance of these shots. Therefore, the spaces themselves reflect the unpredictable contingency of the becoming of the real, and the affective space that originates in them carries an echo of real movement within it.

3.2.4 Texture of the Image

As I explain in 3.1, it is critical to my concept of affective space that the filmed reality (the represented three-dimensional, geometrical space) and the aspects of the camera and the medium merge into one two-dimensional field, a kind of ‘flesh’ of the image. In the previous subsections, I cover aspects of the filmed space, the camera, and lighting (lighting is fundamentally related to the filmed space and the camera... light is like the glue that holds the filmed reality and the attributes of the image together). The notion of texture, in my application of the term, is related to the medium itself, i.e., everything that the image *is* besides filmed reality (space and light) and aspects of the camera (movement, and properties of the lens, such as depth of field, aperture, focus, focal length). In the case of digital film, I consider texture to be related to the particular properties and qualities of the camera sensor and processor: *the way* it captures and interprets colour and contrast; the potential of this can be enhanced and manipulated through colour grading in post-production (the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this thesis). The effect of such texture is elusive in the digital format, but perhaps it is best illustrated by the comparison between the results of digital cameras of two decades ago and what digital technology is capable of now. While camera movement, production design, lighting techniques, and lens technology have not *essentially* changed since the maturation of cinema mid-20th century, the rapid development of digital technology is precisely what lies behind the aesthetic quality and potential of the digital moving image today, and the fact that it can be considered ‘cinematic’ – and has in fact overtaken analogue film as the primary medium of cinema. In the case of the traditional film medium, on the other hand, texture is a much more apparent visual effect rooted in its ontological physicality. It is the physical film grain of the photosensitive emulsion, in combination with the way the particular chemical

composition of the material renders colour and contrast, that gives rise to the texture of the image. In the Super8 format, with which I experimented in *Affective Cinema*, the film grain becomes a particular, dominant feature, since the relatively small film frame requires much greater enlargement for viewing or projection. However, even in larger film formats (such as 16mm and 35mm) the element of texture is prominent, especially if employed creatively (as some of the following examples from cinema demonstrate). The prominent texture of film, in turn, contributes to the sense of the image *as* image; it contributes to the emancipation of the filmed reality, and its abstraction as affective space. Or as Marks (2000) puts it, in relation to haptic visuality: ‘graininess certainly produces a tactile quality, as the eye may choose between concentrating on figures and ignoring the points that make them up or bracketing the figures and dissolving among the points’ (175).

For Example, *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2000) shows the texture of a variety of Super8 film stocks combining with the aesthetic framing of the movement of the real, in order to abstract reality and forge affective space. (Fig. 97)



Figure 97 *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2000, Directed by Jonas Mekas)

In *Daisies* (1966), a variety of monochrome and colour film stock and development processes are employed to create the abstract, visual/aesthetic structure of the film. (Fig.

98) Similarly in *Stalker*, monochrome and colour stock is alternated between, creating a rich world of the moving image frame. (Fig. 99)



Figure 98 *Daisies* (1966, Directed by Vera Chytilova)



Figure 99 *Stalker* (1979, Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky)

In Affective Sign 9, I combined a variety of digital formats (iPhone, Blackmagic and DSLR) with Super8 film (colour film, and expired colour film developed as monochrome) to structure the piece, creating a contrast between singular instances of affective space emerging from the overlap of the filmed reality and properties of the

medium. (Fig. 100) The distinction, in terms of texture, between the respective digital formats is slight; however, the distinction between digital and Super 8 is very pronounced, as well as the distinction between the modern colour stock, and the experimentally developed, expired monochrome stock. The latter, in combination with the imperfections inscribed onto the image through the contingent development process (see 1.2.5 and 2.2.5), becomes a dominant feature of the affective space, radically reducing both coherent representation of filmed space and indexical representation of light. The filmed reality becomes secondary to the medium itself.

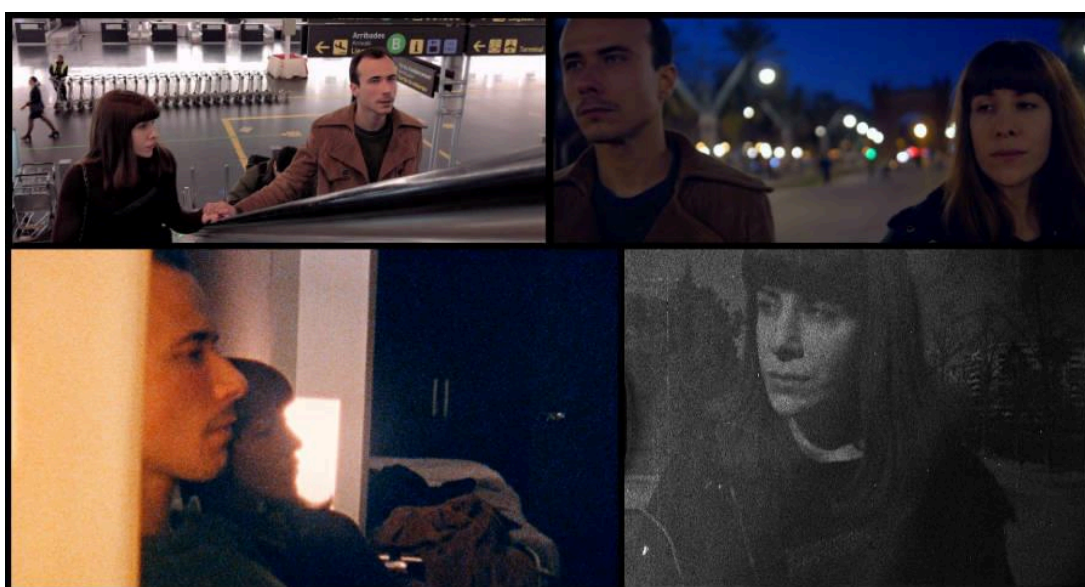


Figure 100 Affective Sign 9

I shot Affective Sign 10 entirely in Super8 colour film, giving the film a grainy texture (particularly when using fast, high-ISO stock). However, a parallel digital image of all the material was captured using the iPhone attached to the Super8 camera. The comparison between the two views of exactly the same moment in time captured on two very different mediums illustrates the quality that the Super8 film adds to the image, and how it contributes to the sense of affective space beyond an accurate representation of reality. The contrast between the two moving images perhaps also reveals the sense of texture in the quintessentially digital image of the iPhone, which is closer to ‘faithful’ representation of reality and hence much less apparent on its own. (Fig. 101; Video 26 and Video 27 also illustrate this contrast – I return to these when discussing affective atmosphere in 4.4.)



Figure 101 Affective Sign 10

3.2.5 Intimacy: Slow Motion and Close-up, Look into the Camera

As I outline in 3.1, my concept of intimacy is related to the potential of film to reveal an enhanced, nonhuman insight into reality and in the process emancipate the image beyond coherent representation. In this sense it is a nonhuman intimacy self-contained in the image – and amplified, for example, in the way the vision of the performer and the camera intertwine. This nonhuman intimacy can potentially coincide with an ‘intimate effect’ of the image. However, this effect is not simply a narrative or meaningful representation of human ‘intimacy’ (in the conventional sense of the word), but rather a defamiliarised state of such recognisable intimacy. The potential for intimacy is inherent to the formation of the single, two-dimensional field of the image – to the way film always reveals something more, or rather, something *new* of reality *as* the new real. However, intimacy of the image can be amplified through increased spatial and temporal proximity (close-up and slow motion) between the camera and the filmed reality. And as I argue, the look into the camera is a potent amplifier of nonhuman intimacy for the way it coincides with the ‘inter-subjective address’ of the viewer, while at the same time defamiliarising this address. This is because the look into

the camera is self-contained in the intertwined vision and visibility of the film, in an *inter-objective* encounter between the nonhuman vision of the camera and the body of the performer. The following examples from cinema illustrate these particular amplifiers of nonhuman intimacy (close-up, slow motion and look into the camera), and the subsequent examples from my practice show how these aesthetic choices can be implemented and transformed in Affective Cinema.



Figure 102 *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991, Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski)



Figure 103 *Gummo* (1997, Directed by Harmony Korine)

In *The Double Life of Veronique*, extreme close-ups can be identified that, together with warm light and colours, create a sense of intimacy: a nonhuman proximity, a disclosure of the filmed object/body to the point of its emancipation from ordinary reality. (Fig. 102) *Gummo* (1997) combines the look into the camera, close-up shot and slow motion to create a sense of intimate encounter between the performer and the camera. (Fig. 103) A similar effect can be identified in *Mirror* (1975) (Fig. 104) and *Visitors* (2013).

(Fig. 105) In all these examples, low depth of field brings focus to the look of the performers, while emancipating the image from an ordinary impression of reality.



Figure 104 *Mirror* (1975, Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky)



Figure 105 *Visitors* (2013, Directed by Godfrey Reggio)

In Affective Sign 4, I combined slow motion and extreme close-ups (and low depth of field) with the look into the camera in order to create a self-contained sense of intimacy within the affective space of the image. (Fig. 106) I filmed the performer inside a car tunnel, and the narrow depth of field was here achieved by using a macro-focus lens at a ‘telephoto’ focal length. The close focus of the lens allowed me to produce an extreme close-up of the eye, removing it from the context of the human subject and instead making the eye itself synonymous with the reflecting surface of the image – a radical intertwining of vision and visibility. Because of the extremely narrow field of focus, I was making slight adjusting camera movements in relation to the eye, to catch moments of sharp focus. This palpitation between softness and sharpness in the image inscribes the particular becoming of the moment into the shot – revealed by the slow motion that extends the ‘flashes’ of sharp focus. The sharp focus reveals a reflection of the round entrance of the tunnel (with daylight on the other side) overlapping almost exactly with the pupil, right at the centre of the eye. Next to it, a reflection of the camera can be momentarily discerned. This shot emerged in the moment of filming, from practitioner

reflection in action – in the pursuit of affective significance – and in the intuitively grasped aesthetic opportunities of the tunnel and the macro lens/slow motion. The subsequent reflection on this shot (after it was recognised in and shaped through post-production) reveals it as a useful illustration of the sense of nonhuman intimacy and of the potential for deep synergy of vision and visibility in film.



Figure 106 Affective Sign 4 (2min52sec – 3min10sec)



Figure 107 Affective Sign 7 (3min27sec – 3min48sec)

In Affective Sign 7, I combined smooth Steadicam tracking movement (following the performer in a close-up frame) with slow motion, which enhanced the smoothness of the camera motion, especially given the extended focal length (the more ‘zoomed in’ the focal length is, the more every minute shake of the camera registers in the shifting frame, resulting in jarring movement). (Fig. 107) The look into the camera by the performer was relatively brief (and emerged spontaneously from the moment of filming), but the slow motion extends the look to produce a sense of nonhuman intimacy. This effect of nonhuman intimacy is enhanced by an intermittently flashing red light that I pointed right into the lens of the camera. The red light fills the frame, but reaches beyond it, so to speak, as it briefly shines directly inside the lens. This light coincides with the look of the performer in a feedback loop of vision between the eye

and the camera, merging with them, as an image, into a single surface, a single luminous structure of affective space. The two available soundtracks defamiliarise the shot further, each in a different, singular way, beyond any coherent or conventional context – thus amplifying its nonhuman intimacy. Like the previous example, this shot too was not pre-planned in any way, and instead its structure emerged from intuitive practitioner response to the location, with the creative tools that I had at my disposal in the moment. The decision-making involved reflection in action, driven by practitioner knowledge, as well as by the aims of the research: the aim to produce affective significance by constructing affective space and giving rise to conditions for chance to register on film. Thus, ultimately, chance played a large part in the becoming of this shot, while the complex combination of performance, camera movement, slow motion and the flashing light inscribes an echo of real movement in the image.

An example from Affective Sign 9 (Fig. 108) shows an instant where nonhuman intimacy emerged from hand-held operation using a wide-angle lens at a standard frame-rate, with both the eye and its look into the camera totally absent. Therefore, it lacks many of the identified amplifiers of intimacy discussed earlier, except for close-up framing. And yet, in a singular and unpredictable way, this shot gives rise to its own kind of intimacy through its nonhuman viewpoint and proximity, creating a private, self-absorbed world of the image removed from any context in reality. The imperfect hand-held camera movement adds a sense of fragility to the shot, which is enhanced by the unflattering normal speed (regular frame rate) disclosing every slight vibration of the camera. The shot therefore arrives at intimacy in a different way from the previous examples; however, the revealing function of the close-up is even more pronounced: through the use of a wide-angle lens, the palpable proximity between the camera and performers is apparent, which brings attention to the image as such, and to the nonhuman viewpoint of the camera. The change in the soundtrack supports this effect, by distancing all sound, as if the camera became submerged in water. This shot emerged spontaneously from the affective atmosphere method (see 4.4): we were present in the moment, being affected by each other and by our environment and responding intuitively to it. As the performers sat for a prolonged period of time without speaking, while waiting at the airport, I was continuously filming, and it was as if the camera

guided my hand to explore new ways of entangling itself (and myself) in the infinitely complex becoming of the seemingly inert moment: in that moment it was as if a sense of inter-objective force pulled the camera ever closer toward the performers.



Figure 108 Affective Sign 9 (1min9sec – 1min30sec)

Finally, in Affective Sign 10, the sense of intimacy was enhanced by the physicality of Super8 film stock (see 2.3 and 3.2.4): where in the previous example the proximity of the wide-angle lens is ‘palpable’ in the image as an actual proximity between the camera and the performers, here it is the sense of physical proximity between the sensitive image surface and the human body, which contributes to that effect. (Fig. 109)



Figure 109 Affective Sign 10 (6min2sec – 6min10sec; 6min23sec – 6min46sec)

3.2.6 Separation: Editing

Conventionally in cinema, editing is used to bring shots together in order to represent coherent space or to produce seamless connections, or to establish an element of montage that creates a meta-layer of meaning based on the contrast or similarity between the shots. Tarkovsky (2003), when contemplating the editing process of his films, then speaks of a certain ‘self-organising structure’ that organically emerges through editing ‘because of the distinctive properties given the material during shooting’ (116). His view corresponds with the general approach to editing in Affective Cinema, where there is a clear primacy of the filmed material over any sense of montage (as the primary objective is to identify shots with the potential for affective significance). However, when connecting shots through editing, there is also the potential for a specific effect to emerge from the cut itself that can contribute to affective significance. Through certain editing connections, a non-rational, affective link can be created that makes perceptible the inherent, ontological separation between the shots, without engaging in overt formal play. In other words, the tension between the shots emerges from the *nonhuman connection* between two instances of the new real, rather than from a formal effect of tension: the effect of the cut is *overtonal resonance*, rather than dissonance (or consonance). These connections are singular and cannot be, based on my practitioner experience, entirely predicted or planned in advance: they instead emerge directly from the process of editing through intuition and heuristic experimentation. Examples of such (singular) cuts, or examples of broader creative choices that have the potential to produce this kind of editing effect, can nevertheless be identified in cinema. For example, a cut appears in *The Double Life of Veronique* within a dynamic tracking shot along a running performer: as she steps in a puddle, the film cuts from the camera framing her legs to an overexposed frame of her head (as she continues running), just when the sun hits directly the lens. This cutting point – between the puddle splashing and the sun hitting the lens – is clearly not seamless or continuous, and it attracts attention to itself, but at the same time, it forges an affective connection between the two shots – an overtonal resonance between intimacy and separation. (Fig. 110)



Figure 110 *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991, Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski)



Figure 111 *Cremator* (1969, Directed by Juraj Herz)

In *Cremator* (1969), extreme wide-angle shots are intercut with a ‘natural’ focal length in a shot-reverse-shot exchange, leading to a sense of tension between intimacy and separation. (Fig. 111) Although the editing in this film engages in certain surrealist formal play, this particular sequence is a good example where the change in focal length on the cut is neither seamless (consonant) nor entirely dissonant.



Figure 112 *Miss Julie* (1999, Directed by Mike Figgis)

Miss Julie (1999) uses split-screen in the key moment of the film in order to give two simultaneous views of the scene, creating a sense of overtone resonance between intimacy and separation of the two distinct close-up views of the same scene. (Fig. 112) *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* (1968) employs the same effect throughout the film, sometimes even splitting the screen three ways, and including the process of production itself in the montage, in order to rupture the sense of representation of both coherent space and fictional reality, while initiating overtone resonance between intimacy and separation. (Fig. 113)

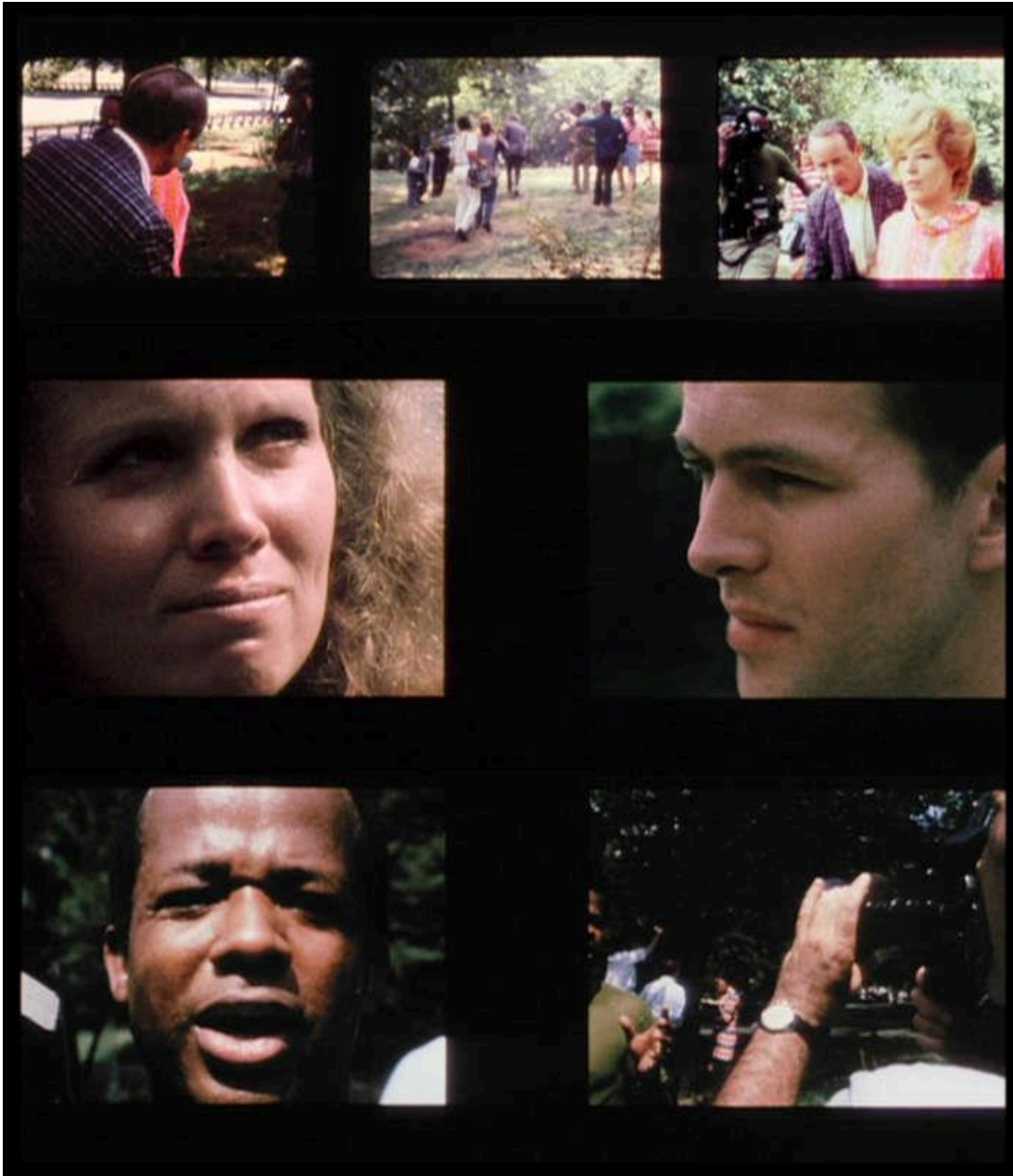


Figure 113 *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* (1968, Directed by William Greaves)

In the Affective Cinema practice, my aim was to maximise the potential of editing for giving rise to overtone resonance between intimacy and separation. I rarely considered the aspect of editing prior or during production. Rather, my approach prioritised my participation in the becoming of the moment, responding with practitioner intuition and immediate reflection in action to the potential of specific situations and locations, using the camera/lighting tools available to me. The structure of the films only emerged in post-production. Rather than selecting and delimiting shots from the raw material based

on narrative needs of the film (as would be essential for a story-driven film), the starting point of the editing process always was the identification of moments that I considered as having the potential for affective significance. I was not trying to adhere to any dramatic consistency of an edited sequence, or to achieve a seamless impression of reality, but, likewise, I was not trying to create formal dissonance through editing. Through trial and error, I would instead order the individual shots in such a way as to amplify affective significance through their interrelation: to give rise to overtone resonance through the affective tension between intimacy and separation. This doesn't mean that every cut in the films achieves this, or that I tried and tested all possible combinations. Rather, the heuristic approach was supported by my practitioner intuition and (embodied) knowledge, where two shots would inspire me to pursue a certain editing approach. Nevertheless, where the singular potential for affective significance was revealed through a particular cut, I would strive to amplify this effect further through sound design choices, by explaining the potential of the moment to the sound/music composer working on the particular film, and allowing them to respond with *their* practitioner knowledge and intuition to this creative challenge and opportunity (I discuss sound design more in 3.2.7). I illustrate this approach to editing through the following examples from my practice.

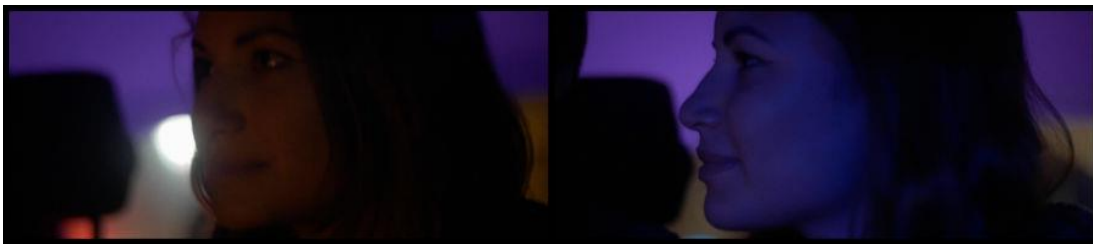


Figure 114 Affective Sign 6 (7min10sec)

In Affective Sign 6, I used a flash of blue light (presumably originating from a passing ambulance or a police car) as a cutting point (similarly to the *Double Life of Veronique* example discussed above), creating a jump cut between the two close-up frames that simultaneously enhances and disrupts the intimacy of the close-up shot. (Fig. 114) A sudden and temporary shift in sound design – coinciding with the cut – contributes to the overtone resonance between intimacy and separation: it is as if the shot illuminated by the flashing blue light belonged to another (aesthetic) reality.

At the end of Affective Sign 3, I brought together two shots filmed in different locations, which are linked by the intimacy of the close-ups, and by the look into the camera in the first one that forges a shot-reverse-shot connection to the second. At the same time, a sense of separation was created by the use of disparate focal lengths, and also the fact that the first shot plays at normal speed while the second is in slow motion. Additionally, the shots differ slightly in their aspect ratio, with the first being cropped to 2:1 ratio (like the rest of the film), whereas the second – and the final shot of the film – fills the entire 1:78:1 digital-screen frame. This brings attention to the final shot carrying a subtle difference to the rest of the film, but it is nevertheless an attention of *significance* rather than signification, forming an affective rather than meaningful context. (Fig. 115) As this is the very final shot of the film, the enlarged frame coincides with an emphatic ‘closure’ of both of the soundtracks composed for the film, each in a different way contributing to the overtone resonance emerging from this cut.

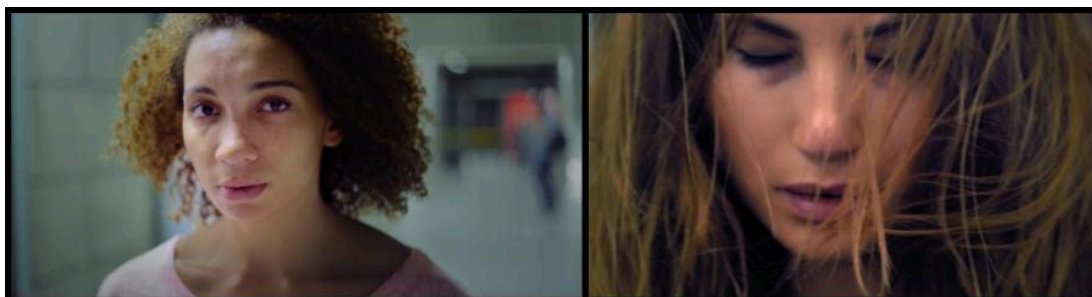


Figure 115 Affective Sign 3 (5min20sec)

In Affective Sign 9, I cut a single-take scene framing the two performers in a dialogue (cropped to 2:35:1 aspect ratio) to a moment when the performers were waiting for me to adjust the frame while continuously filming. This second shot is dominated by the contingent jitters of readjusting the camera, and the performers – while still immersed in the affective atmosphere – are nevertheless not directly engaging with each other. This second shot fills the entire 1.78:1 frame, giving the impression of a ‘behind-the-scenes production shot’ outside of the (presumed) fiction/diegesis of the film, which is enhanced by post-production sound design that complements the camera jitters with corresponding noises of microphone tampering. The jump between the shots simultaneously increases and decreases intimacy of the scene, by creating a sense of

heightened, yet ‘unconscious’ or unintentional intimacy in the second, close-up shot that centres on the performer’s teary eye, while forging overtone resonance between her performance and the random camera movements. (Fig. 116)

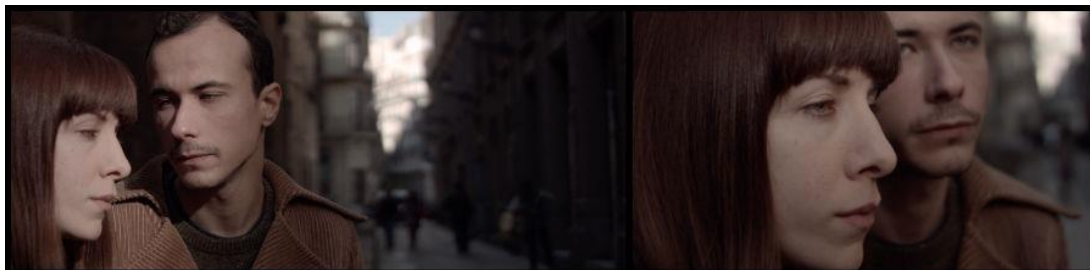


Figure 116 Affective Sign 9 (14min10sec)

In other parts of the film, cuts appear between digital format and film stock. In the first instance, these are two very different views of the same scene, where the tension between intimacy and separation is enhanced by disparate aspect ratios (cropping the digital film to 2:35:1 and the Super8 film to fill the entire 1:78:1 digital frame) and a change in sound design (distancing the sound as if plunging the scene under water). (Fig. 117)



Figure 117 Affective Sign 9 (8min4sec)

In the second instance, the cut between a digital shot and a piece of expired, monochrome footage (with considerable age and chemical-development damage) forms a sense of intimate, shot-reverse-shot connection due to the matching eye-line of the performers, while simultaneously separating the shots due to their (radical) incompatibility: not only a different location in time and space but also a radically different ‘surface’ of the image leads to the formation of two very different affective spaces. The native aspect ratio of the Super8 film is here preserved, creating an even more pronounced difference between the respective frames. (Fig. 118)

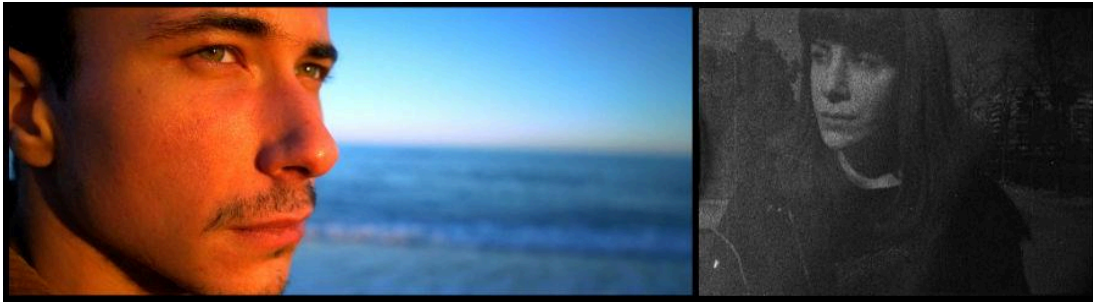


Figure 118 Affective Sign 9 (15min18sec)



Figure 119 Affective Sign 8 (4min15sec – 4min21sec)

In Affective Sign 8, I employ the split-screen throughout the film, usually suggesting a shot-reverse-shot connection between the left and the right portion of the image, or showing two simultaneous angles of the same performer. In one moment of the film, this pattern is reversed – motivated by the performer's look into the camera, which was filming her in profile through the plastic glass (with water dripping down it). (Fig. 119) This camera angle usually features in the right portion of the frame (mirror-flipped in order to face the image in the left portion of the frame), as a simultaneous view of the performer on the left. In this moment, instead, I used the image with the red background (usually occupying the left portion of the split-screen image) on the right side (mirror-

flipped), which leads to the performer simultaneously looking at the camera and at *herself*. This split-screen edit therefore displays the sense of separation between the two intimate views of the same moment, while enhancing this separation by breaking with the pattern of the rest of the film. Furthermore, the nonhuman intimacy of the close-up shots throughout the film is here intensified by the look into the camera. However, this doubling up of the look – as look into the camera and look onto self – leads to tension between intimacy and separation. Or rather, the split-screen format embodies – through this particular editing decision – this very tension: the feedback loop of vision and visibility of the look into the camera is broken up *and* refracted in this image.

3.2.7 Sound Design and Music

As I allude to in the previous subsection, sound design and music have the potential to contribute to the tension between intimacy and separation, while enhancing the abstraction or defamiliarisation of affective space, thus amplifying affective significance. In certain moments in cinema (such as in *Blade Runner* or *Run Lola Run*), this is achieved by the music working against the expected or obvious emotion of the scene.²² In other films, realistic sound design adding to the coherence of the represented space is replaced by very abstract or minimal sound work (this can be observed, for example, in *Stalker*, *Come and See* [1985, Directed by Elem Klimov] or *8½* [1963, Directed by Federico Fellini]).²³ In other examples, only (dubbed) dialogue without any naturally occurring sound is included in the sound design (*Lost Highway* [1997, Directed by David Lynch], *Cremator*). In *Face*, a scene occurs in which all sound is absent, bringing close attention to the image, and amplifying its affective significance,

²² Deleuze and Guattari use the example of literature to illustrate the nature of affect that makes it contradictory/indifferent to the expected or established hierarchy of emotions: ‘When Proust seems to be describing jealousy in such minute detail, he is inventing an affect, because he constantly reverses the order in affections presupposed by opinion, according to which jealousy would be an unhappy consequence of love’ (1994: 175).

²³ Tarkovsky (2003), when considering sound and music, comments on the value of this kind of sound treatment: ‘In itself, accurately recorded sound adds nothing to the image system of cinema, for it still has no aesthetic content. As soon as the sounds of the visible world, reflected by the screen, are removed from it, or that world is filled, for the sake of the image, with extraneous sounds that don’t exist literally, or if the real sounds are distorted so that they no longer correspond with the image – then the film acquires a resonance’ (162).

because of the contrast with the rest of the film (which has sound in it) and also due to the unpredictable suitability of this scene to this silent treatment – giving rise to singularity, and to significance that is neither logical nor random.

As I explain in 1.2.7, in *Affective Cinema*, I generally implemented music and sound design to respond or connect to the molecular, nuanced elements of visual movement in the image, rather than aiming to illustrate or enhance emotion, or to support the coherence of a situation or its narrative specificity. This is especially apparent in Affective Signs 4 and 10. In Affective Sign 9, sound design is often motivated by the specific location of the represented space, but this sound is abstracted from a mere realistic representation in order to amplify the nonhuman affects in the image. Some films employ an overall musical theme that nevertheless attaches to and amplifies (co-constitutes) affects in the image that are contrary to a more obvious, predictable, or expected emotion. This is apparent in Affective Sign 6, which uses a repetitive, melancholy theme,²⁴ comparable to the music in *Contempt* (1963, Directed by Jean-Luc Godard): both films transcend any dramatic/narrative development of the diegesis to a timeless, aesthetic level of the moving image *as image* rather than as representation of (fictional) reality. For Affective Signs 1, 3 and 8, two sound/music versions were produced, and the comparison between the two versions illustrates well the possible affective difference (and singularity): the version composed by Jan Sikel connects to the established abstraction of the images, enhancing and amplifying the affects emanating from the images. (**Affective Sign 1**, **Affective Sign 3**, **Affective Sign 8**, music by Jan Sikel) Whereas the version composed by Rob Szeliga opens up new, unexpected affects – within the more pronounced overtone resonance between the image and sound – which would not exist (or be perceptible) if it were not for this particular, singular audio-visual combination. (**Affective Sign 1**, **Affective Sign 3**, **Affective Sign 8**, sound by Rob Szeliga)

²⁴ Tarkovsky (2003) also comments on this repetitive function of music in film as a kind of *refrain*; such use of music ‘opens up the possibility of a *new*, transfigured impression of the same material: something different in kind’ (158, emphasis in the original).

My approach to sound on this project was initially driven by my theoretical understanding of affective significance and the defamiliarisation of affective space in relation to the particular effect of sound design and music I observed in cinema (as referenced above). Gradually, however, as I completed and then reflected on the individual films of the series, as part of each stage of practice, the approach to sound design and music became gradually more specific to the project – as Affective Cinema continued on its own path of creative discovery. This was reflected in the continuous collaboration with three distinct composers throughout the majority of the project. As I mention in 1.2.7, I selected these composers based on their particular artistic style and approach that I found consistent with the aims of Affective Cinema. However, these collaborations themselves had a chance to evolve through the hermeneutic spiral: through my continuous discussions with the composers (during the development of each particular soundtrack for a film, in reflection on a completed film or in preparation for the next stage), their understanding of the project evolved as much as mine, and, likewise, their practitioner intuition became ever more attuned to the needs of the project. Unfortunately, a more detailed discussion of these particular collaborations is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Dubbing is another post-production method, explored in my practice, of defamiliarising the ordinary context in (fictional) reality while increasing overtone resonance between image and sound, and contributing to the sense of nonhuman intimacy in the shot. Dubbing allows for an unnatural, intimate proximity of the performer to the microphone when re-recording the voice, which is (subliminally or overtly) at odds with the ‘reality effect’ of the image.²⁵ As I mention in 3.2.2, in Affective Sign 5, the abstraction of the scene is enhanced by gradually stripping down the appropriate ambience of a busy road, so that only the intimate, close sound of the lip-synced dialogue (and music abstracting the narrative/dramatic context of the scene) remains, while all the complex visual movements within the frame are left without any corresponding sound. In Affective Sign 6, an additional layer of overtone resonance was stirred by re-dubbing the scene with a pair of different performers. This approach created a sense of disconnect or

²⁵ Barthes (1998) also comments on the potential of film for ‘shifting the signified’ of speech by ‘close-up’ recording, and thus ‘make us hear in their materiality, their sensuality, the breath, the gutturals, the fleshiness of the lips, a whole presence of the human muzzle’ (67).

abstraction within the performance itself by effectively assembling *a new, singular performer* within the aesthetic field of affective space (a combination of the image of one and sound of the other performer). I identified the potential of dubbing to defamiliarise representation of space and narrative early on in the project, when observing the effect in cinema (as I mention above); however, I gradually developed the dubbing technique in line with the wider experimentation with directing performers. In this way, apart from its potential to defamiliarise, it was used to shape the performance further – to inscribe a new layer of becoming into the fixed structure of the image while connecting mimetically to the singular nonhuman becoming of the human body already captured in it. I return to this in the following chapter (4.2 and 4.3.5), in relation to directorial methods that strive to achieve a sense of *affective film performance*.

4. The Moving Body: Affective Film Performance

In the previous chapter, I forge a link between the concept of affective space and the filmmaking processes, decisions and methods that I implemented in this research to create instances of it – and shape it further through post-production manipulation. Affective space, as a concept, rests on the assertion – rooted in a creative synthesis of various theoretical sources – that on the level of the image, the attributes of the camera and the medium, and attributes of the filmed space cannot be separated. Instead, a new reality of the image is forged, and to the extent that stylistic/formal choices defamiliarise representation of (geometric and diegetic) space, the nature of the new, emancipated, aesthetic reality of the image *as image* can be revealed – and affective space is thus constituted. While the concept was originally identified in a variety of audio-visual structures in cinema, the research built creatively on these examples, following its own path of discovery – developing new, innovative filmmaking methods. These methods, in turn, carry value for film practice beyond the specific needs of this research, since Affective Cinema is at its core concerned with the nature and the aesthetic potential of film as such. Therefore, these methods have application to both non-narrative, experimental modes of filmmaking where the aesthetic element dominates (such as music videos, for example), but also to narrative cinema where the considerations of style and form play a significant part. The same can also be said of the methods of directing performers discussed in this present chapter, which too have wider applicability to filmmaking. These methods concern the notion of *affective film performance* – a mode of performance that focuses on the *nonhuman becoming of the body*; it focuses on the expressive power and the nuanced complexity (and singularity) of movement of the performer that film has the capacity to reveal. As I argue throughout this chapter, in order to achieve this effect, affective film performance has to minimise or offset coherent representation of story and fictional character, so that, beyond recognisable gesture and emotion, the body's true nature as the real can be revealed through its unrepeatable singularity – as an echo of real movement. In this way, performance combines with affective space and wider aspects of chance to create the conditions for affective significance to arise.

In this chapter, I first elaborate on the notion of affective film performance, and root it in an existing theoretical context. Subsequently, I provide examples from the history of cinema in order to illustrate the concept, drawing loose parallels with instances of affective film performance emerging from this research. Then I outline the methods of directing performers that were experimentally developed for (and *through*) my practice to give rise to affective film performance. Finally, I discuss an overarching method that emerged from the research – affective atmosphere – which concerns a prolonged, uninterrupted, meditative approach to performance focused on (and attuned to) *affective becoming with reality*. I ground the concept thoroughly in a theoretical context and reflect on the way it gradually evolved through the hermeneutic spiral approach.

4.1 What is (Affective) Film Performance?

In ‘The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility’, Walter Benjamin (2008) states:

Let us assume that an actor is supposed to be startled by a knock at the door. If his reaction is not satisfactory, the director can resort to an expedient: he could have a shot fired without warning behind the actor’s back on some other occasion when he happens to be in the studio. The actor’s frightened reaction at that moment could be recorded and then edited into the film. Nothing shows more graphically that art has escaped the realm of ‘beautiful semblance,’ which for so long was regarded as the only sphere in which it could thrive (32).

Benjamin is making the point that, ‘in the case of film, the fact that the actor represents someone else before the audience matters much less than the fact that he represents himself before the apparatus’ (31). This is essentially because in film, the element of *semblance* – the primary aspect of mimesis – has been ‘entirely displaced for the element of play’ (49). The direct automatism of photography renders the aspect of semblance secondary to the element of play – the unique possibility for experimentation the medium of film gives rise to. And this, as Benjamin’s opening statement testifies, has a profound impact on performance in film. Mersch (2012) expands on this notion by claiming that the film performer is ‘caught between being and seeming, the role and reality, figuration and embodiment or presence and re-presentation’ (448). This is because ‘the body marks the real as surplus that cannot be removed from the playing

field' (450). In *Deleuze and the Cinemas of Performance*, Del Río (2008) goes even further and identifies the cinema as a 'privileged medium for the exhibition of bodies' (10). In film, as Del Río specifies, 'whatever happens to a body becomes instantly available to perception. Thus, the performing body presents itself as a shock wave of affect, the expression-event that makes affect a visible and palpable materiality' (10). She considers performance to be the source of the real (movement) in cinema, the element that defies and disrupts film's narrative and formal structuring principles: 'as an event, performance is cut off from any preconceived, anterior scenario or reality. In its fundamental ontological sense, performance gives rise to the real' (4). She sees affect as an intrusion of the new into the repetitive and familiar structures in film, and the moving (performing) body – which is quite distinct from the subjectivity of the performer – as being the very source of this disruption, and in this manner offsetting the 'totalizing imposition of generic meaning' (15).

Therefore, the (photographic) presence of the human body in film (the 'enhanced visibility, concurrent with a never-before-seen manifestation of the human body' [Mersh 2012: 448]) makes film performance a radically different proposition to stage acting, which is defined by actual, though fleeting, presence, but also by *semblance* – the marked absence of what is being represented. Essentially, *theatre is because it represents, while film represents because it is*. Traditional theatre differentiates itself from actuality by representing something *outside* of the actual reality that it is a part of; film, on the other hand, *is a phenomenological reality* – absent and apart from the actual reality in which it is experienced – which has the *potential to represent* through the recognition of what is familiar or communicable in it.²⁶

It is true, as Baron and Carnicke (2008) point out in their discussion of the Prague Linguistic Circle, that all dramatic arts represent 'things just like themselves' (96), and as a result often rely on specific, individual 'gesture-expressions' (forming connotative instead of denotative meaning) rather than 'gesture-signs' (representing preconceived

²⁶ This also resonates with Cavell's (1979) distinction between stage actor and screen performer: 'On the stage there are two beings, and the being of the character assaults the being of the actor; the actor survives only by yielding ... but the screen performer is essentially not an actor at all: he *is* the subject of study, and a study not his own ... on a screen the study is projected; on a stage the actor is the projector' (28, emphasis in the original).

meaning based on habit and cultural context) (89-90). Indeed, this explains the usual compatibility and interchangeability of concepts, techniques and interpretations of screen and stage acting, as well as the oscillation of many actors between the stage and the screen. Although ‘the typical dramatic film regards acting as an artful imitation of unmediated behaviour’, as Naremore (1990: 18) points out, the same could also be true of theatre, in the realist tradition. Instead, the essential difference between stage and screen performance must lie elsewhere: in the potential of film to capture and preserve the ‘enhanced visibility’, the ‘never-before-seen manifestation of the human body’.

Film performance rooted in the dramatic/narrative tradition (that strives to use acting as a vehicle for delivering specific, coherent meaning and emotional structure) can minimise or suppress this potential, but it cannot deny it entirely. As a consequence, film performance is as much about *film* as it is about *performance*, for the two are impossible to separate. While ‘framing and editing choices in the cinema do not mute the expressive power of performance but instead concentrate attention on the connotatively rich features of actors’ performances’ (Baron and Carnicke 2008: 58), those choices nevertheless also co-constitute that very performance: arguably, it is the aspect of play defined by Benjamin – the compatibility and radical selectivity of individual shots and performance takes – that defines film performance in both production and post-production. The expressive power *is* in the performance – similarly to any dramatic form – but it also *is* in the camera’s ability to reveal and capture the ‘nonhuman becoming’ of the performer, offering it to selection and subsequent reconstruction through the editing process. Furthermore, this duality of film performance means that any human presence on film can possess expressive power, and perhaps the very notion of ‘expressive power’ is radically shifted by the ontological situation of film performance, and must mean something else, something inherently bound up with the (absolute, incorporeal) presence of the human body on the screen, even where the performance coincides with acting techniques, dramatic achievement or narrative meaning that could be delivered by equal means on the stage. The affective approach to (directing) film performance, consistent with the understanding of affective significance, then has to be to maximise the potential of *this* ‘expressive power’, by minimising or offsetting the traditional production of dramatic meaning, focusing

instead on Benjamin's aspect of 'play', and *enhancing the visibility of the never-before-seen manifestation of the human body*.

Bresson's ponderings on the nature of cinema and his filmmaking practice, in *Notes on Cinematography* (1977), resonate with this understanding of film performance, and are therefore worth discussing in this context. Bresson speaks of a 'cinematographic film, where expression is obtained by relations of images and of sounds, and not by a mimicry done with gestures and intonations of voice (whether actors' or non-actors')'. One that does not analyze or explain. That *re-composes*' (5, emphasis in the original). For Bresson, the 'cinematography film' is 'emotional, not representational' (49); it is 'the art, with images, of *representing* nothing' (59, emphasis in the original). This he compares to the mainstream mode of cinema rooted in the dramatic tradition: 'Actor. The to-and-fro of the character in front of his nature forces the public to look for talent on his face, instead of the enigma peculiar to each living creature' (18). Bresson therefore strives for the performer in his film to 'reduce to the minimum the share his consciousness has' (26). This contributes to his underlying ambition in filmmaking: 'From the beings and things of nature, washed clean of all art and especially of the art of drama, you will make an art' (34). He continues to stress that 'the real is not dramatic ... drama will be born of a certain march of non-dramatic elements' (46), in the 'agony of making sure not to let slip any part of what I merely glimpse, of what I perhaps do not yet see and shall only later be able to see' (45). Bresson advises (to himself) to 'be as ignorant of what you are going to catch as is a fisherman of what is at the end of his fishing rod. (*The fish that arises from nowhere*)' (59, emphases in the original).

In a simple and elegant way, Bresson manages to explicate a powerful connection between the real, film and performance, and the creative, artistic value this connection has for cinema. His work – typically featuring non-dramatic performances of non-actors (who Bresson refers to as 'models') – then demonstrates one possible implementation of this philosophical attitude to film in practice.²⁷ However, his understanding of film

²⁷ Rather than foregrounding performance as rich and significant (yet non-representational), as is the objective for the creation of conditions for affective significance, performances in Bresson's films often rely on tightly orchestrated choreography, and forge an 'aesthetic of denial', a form of 'asceticism', as Tomlinson (2004) puts it: 'In his films, [Bresson] attempts to defocalize performance by removing the immediacy of its effect' (91). As Tomlinson states, Bresson wanted to 'reveal authentic character' (76)

performance also offers a much broader inspiration for working with performance in this project – focusing, like Bresson, on the non-representational, reducing the share of the performer’s consciousness, and searching for unexpected results – yet arriving at a very different style of non-representational performance and film aesthetic, due to the specific, underlying preoccupations of the research, but also due to my own practitioner intervention and artistic intuition.

Corresponding with Bresson’s approach, ‘affective film performance’, which is essential for the understanding of performance contributing to affective significance of film, can be thought of as the removal, as much as possible, of the traits of the performer’s habitual character (their social masks, so to speak) through participating directly in the moment of performance: rather than consciously acting, representing a character, identifying with the self, or being self-aware, the performer simply *is* in the moment by allowing him or herself to be affected by everything that enters through their senses – being open and sensitive to their environment. By trying to bypass reason or habitual behaviour through focusing *only* on their senses, the performer’s mind becomes more involved with the *movement* of the situation, rather than with the *symbolic* stillness of thought and habit: he or she becomes closer to their own nonhuman becoming, their own basis and context in the real. In that sense, affective film performance is about ‘unmasking’ – removing all habitual masks and thus revealing affect, the nonhuman nature of the body – rather than putting on a mask, whether in a fictional or real-life context (embodying a habitual concept of a fictional character, or embodying the habitual self).

The methods of working with performers, as they evolved through the hermeneutic spiral approach to this project, therefore strove to create this focused or emptied state of mind, while using other established and experimental methods to give rise to unpredictable or random results. These methods help performance contribute to the contingency of the image, or to abstract performance further beyond any coherent

and ‘recover the automatism of everyday life’ (76) by the ‘flattening of both external elements of performance’ (76) and ‘by denying the intentionality of these exterior aspects’ (91).

dramatic or narrative context by revealing *its true nature as the real* through the creative means of cinema.

4.2 *Affective Performance in Film and in the Affective Cinema Practice*

Every moment of affective film performance is singular and unique, and can only be identified in hindsight, rather than predicted or anticipated based on previous instances of such performance. No two examples are the same, since it is precisely the non-representational, contingent aspect that makes it impossible to create any sense of pattern. In Affective Cinema, performance is primarily defined by the methods implemented and experimented with, in order to create suitable conditions for affective significance to arise. These methods are outlined in the following section (4.3), while the overarching method, the *affective atmosphere* – which emerged through the hermeneutic spiral (and which synthesises many of the preceding methods) – is explored in the final section of this chapter (4.4). The Affective Sign films employed directorial techniques that focus on maximising the non-representational nature of performance, and these techniques were supported by cinematographic choices, and ultimately by editing and post-production choices (by selecting and delimiting particular moments, and defamiliarising them further through sound-design, music and dubbing). However, in the history of cinema, where performance usually represents a more specific emotion or meaning through the use of gestures or structural/narrative context of the film, certain moments can be identified that transcend or rupture the coherent and intended meaning of the film. Such moments of performance can give rise to affective significance that is independent of (and in contrast to) the sense of consistent characters constructed by the narrative. These moments served as an initial inspiration for defining affective performance in relation to this project, but they are also useful in illuminating its possible forms. In this section, I provide my reading of such instances of affective film performance in cinema, and describe in what way I consider them to dislocate narrative or emotional coherence in order to reveal the nonhuman nature of the body *as* echoes of real movement. While my description and argument have to suffice for the purposes of this thesis, I provide corresponding video examples from my practice in support of these specific examples. However, this correspondence does not play any

function in categorising affective film performance, as all instances of it are unique, and the way in which they produce affective significance is singular rather than rooted in any sort of pattern. Furthermore, most instances of performance in the Affective Cinema films can be identified as *affective film performance* (based on the theoretical framework in 4.1), to the extent that the tested and implemented methods succeeded in giving rise to it. I believe they did succeed (especially in combination with editing and post-production choices), but ultimately, I want to make the case in the following two sections for the methods themselves – as these form a vital part of this project’s original contribution to knowledge (see 5.4.3) – rather than for the results, which can only ever be read subjectively.



Figure 120 *Black Peter* (1964, Directed by Milos Forman)

In *Black Peter*, the brief moment of affective performance is at odds with the comedic, offbeat tone of the rest of the film. The performance consists of the performer’s persistent eye fixation on the lens whilst smiling (opening and then closing her mouth), which is on the border between simple performance *as* a character and awkward ‘quotidian behaviour’ reflecting *a* personality *under* this film character: the whole film

operates on this ‘awkward level’, but in this instance, the performance takes on a fleeting, affective insistence that is completely unique to this moment alone. It is as if the camera provided a direct connection to something simultaneously familiar and strange in the character/performer that *transcends* this duality. (Fig. 120) Similar, yet completely unique and singular, moments can be identified in Affective Cinema, where the look into the camera becomes the dominant feature of the performance. (**Video 1**)



Figure 121 *On the Waterfront* (1954, Directed by Elia Kazan)

In *On the Waterfront*, the moment of affective performance occurs in a dialogue scene between the two leading characters. They sit opposite each other at a bar table, drinking spirit, and the scene is covered in shot-reverse-shot middle close-ups. The moment of rupture starts with a close-up on the female performer, as she tastes the spirit. The film then cuts to the reverse angle on her scene partner, who downs his glass of spirit and encourages her to do the same; then a cut back to her – she also downs her drink. The performance and a certain physical reaction in both shots on the female performer create a unique sense of intimacy, presence and significance, quite beyond and outside of what is (merely) an accomplished (realistic, strong, genuine) performance of her scene partner. The unique affective value of the performance is impossible to describe in words: it is like a sudden electric current that sparks through the resonance of nuanced and complex interactions of her eye movements, facial expressions, re-positioning of her head, inconsistent breathing, and erotically-charged sighs. (Fig. 121) Comparable singular moments of performance can be identified in Affective Cinema, for example in

Affective Sign 9. (**Video 2**) Here the performance resulted entirely from the affective atmosphere process and based on the rhizomatic script (see 4.4).



Figure 122 *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995, Directed by Mike Figgis)

In *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995) the affective moment is rooted in a complex performance, which is physical, visceral and intense. The protagonist is an alcoholic who, in this scene, wakes up in the middle of the night with a painful withdrawal syndrome, and rushes to the kitchen to get his fix. Crouching on the floor next to the fridge, his body in tremor, he hurries to mix vodka into a bottle of orange juice, before gulping it all up. He finishes the drink standing over the sink, into which he also attempts to vomit, seemingly in excruciating pain, although nothing is coming out; at the peak of intensity of the visceral performance, his cheek muscle starts twitching spasmodically. The (empty) vomiting gesture perhaps points to this being a spontaneous, improvised behaviour rather than a pre-planned, realistic representation of vomiting. Either way, the performer's behaviour echoes the real movement, as there is no sense of structure or premeditated action in his performance, and although his performance is intense and unpredictable throughout the film, this specific moment – and the way it is stylistically enhanced by slow-motion and music – represents a subtle, fleeting rupture in the wider narrative/dramatic structure of the film. (Fig. 122) A comparable sense of unstructured intensity can be identified in a scene that emerged from an experimental session during the Stage 1 workshop (resulting from 'as if' direction discussed in 4.3.1), but also in

Affective Sign 10 (resulting from affective atmosphere of Stage 5 discussed in 4.4).

(Video 3)



Figure 123 *I am Cuba* (1964, Directed by Mikhail Kalatozov)

In *I am Cuba* (1964) the affective moment takes place within a nightclub scene, in contrast – as a rupture to – the signification of the performances (and the context) in the scene. A party of wealthy Americans invite two Cuban prostitutes to sit with them at their table. The women behave timidly and submissively, whilst the men are confident and exuberant. However, there is also a different form of separation between these two ‘kinds’ of characters in the scene: because this was a Soviet-Cuban co-production taking place in Cuba in the 1960s, there clearly was a lack of suitable American actors to be cast in the film. Instead, the American parts are re-dubbed in post-production in a rather crass, theatrical way by exaggerated American voices, without a successful lip-synchronisation to the image. This contrasts with the few spoken lines of one of the Cuban women, whose voice sounds surprisingly natural and intimate, perfectly synchronised to her lips. (Fig. 123)

A close-up shot on the Cuban woman becomes a privileged section of this scene, because of the sudden intimacy the close-up creates, and because of the nuanced, fragile performance of this apparently talented-yet-inexperienced, one-time actress (whose name is not publicly known). The affect in the performance seems to emanate precisely from this simultaneous coincidence and tension between the portrayed personality of the character and the actual personality of the actress: she seems to be simultaneously ‘playing her natural self’ (not fully transforming as a character), whilst putting on a clear act – as a seductive, submissive prostitute. This act is nevertheless entirely transparent, and her ‘truer self’ – which is both in harmony and discord with the character – is constantly present on the screen under this fictional surface; but this duality adds credibility (real-ness) to her performance, rather than undermining it. The real movement echoed in her performance, and enhanced by expressive lighting of her face, is in stark contrast with the extremely contrived dubbing of the chatty American, which simultaneously emphasises and displaces the new real of the close-up. There is an intentional contrast between the characters (the power-relationship between the rich American and the Cuban prostitute, forming the overt meaning of the scene), and then there is the *affective contrast* forged by the non-representational aspect of performance, to which the strange dubbing rupture contributes.

In Affective Sign 5, such opportunity for defamiliarisation in performance was created by re-dubbing the scene on a busy street, the result of which seems unnatural in its proximity/intimacy, and slightly off the natural, inherent expression of the performers captured in the image. This is enhanced by the sound of the busy street being entirely removed at times, amplifying the overtone resonance between intimate proximity of sound and the artificial, constructed connection of the sound to the reality of the scene. (**Video 4** shows a comparison between the originally captured sound and the subsequent dubbing without any additional sound.) In Affective Sign 6, the performers are re-dubbed by a different pair of performers, which constructs a similar effect of nonhuman intimacy. (**Video 5** shows a comparison between the originally captured sound and the subsequent dubbing by a pair of different performers.)



Figure 124 *Under the Skin* (2013, Directed by Jonathan Glazer)

In a night car scene in *Under the Skin* (2013), Jonathan Glazer creates a moment of affective performance by bringing together an experienced, famous (and glamorous) actress (Scarlett Johansson) and a first-time performer (Adam Pearson), who has a severely disfigured face due to neurofibromatosis. His performance is on the level of basic non-acting, and the impression of a character and acting is in his case forged by the context of the film: his performance does not convey representation of a character, and he does not express any particular emotion or offer a skilled line-delivery. If anything, he seems to be genuinely nervous and uncertain, especially as the confident scene partner (confident both as a performer and as character) sexually dominates him, while being fully immersed in the representation of her character; in this way, arguably the power imbalance of the narrative is amplified into the real situation between the performers in the scene. Furthermore, the sparse atmospheric lighting and ominous-yet-abstract, minimal score charge the scene with ambivalent emotion: *affect*. (Fig. 124) This scene bears resemblance with the performances in Affective Sign 6, but also in

Affective Sign 10, in terms of emotional ambivalence and power imbalance between characters, but also in terms of overall atmosphere driven by the non-representational aspect of performance. (**Video 6**)

4.3 Established and New Methods of Directing Performers Implemented and Explored through the Practice

The methods employed in this research stem from my previous practitioner experience of directing performers for the screen, which is in turn informed by long-established acting theory, especially as linked to the widely-applied actor training developed by Konstantin Stanislavski (and its many permutations), but also related to approaches applied by highly regarded film directors. However, established methods, particularly when focused on maximising the potential of performance to support narrative and dramatic meaning, are driven by the needs of the story; they are rooted in script structure and interpretation, being *secondary* to the meaning of the (literary) script. In order to give rise to *affective* film performance, on the other hand, established methods have to be used either as a departure point for the development of more experimental approaches, or used in a way that gives rise to random, unpredictable results.

Throughout the course of the research I therefore modified and developed existing methods (through intuition, and reflection in/on action) but also followed a more experimental, research-specific path. This path was based on an initial set of ideas and objectives (such as trying to find new ways of distracting the mind of the performer by putting emphasis on their body), but it gradually solidified into a specific method through the experience of (and reflection on) the practice. In the following subsections, I present these individual methods used throughout the project and account for their development and origin in existing methods or concepts. Furthermore, I provide video examples, which serve as evidence of how these methods were used and applied but also demonstrate the resulting instances of affective film performance.

4.3.1 Images, Physical Actions, ‘As If’ Directions

Providing suggestive, evocative images to performers is a method inspired by ‘emotion memory’ – a key concept of the actor training developed by Stanislavski (and later adapted by Judith Weston [1996; 2003] into methods of directing actors for the screen).²⁸ Other methods I employed in my practice stemming from Stanislavski also include giving performers ‘physical actions’ (small achievable tasks) and ‘as if adjustments’ (imagining the action is taking place in a different, but completely relatable and recognisable context, e.g. ‘engaging in a flirting dialogue *as if* it were a formal job interview’). However, rather than using these methods to achieve a specific emotion or narrative meaning at a particular moment of the scene, I used them to forge random results, and often in combination with other more experimental techniques (discussed later on), in order to create the conditions for affective significance to emerge. The methods derived from Stanislavski aim at producing ‘believable’ performance – creating a sense of authentic behaviour and emotions, as opposed to consciously and overtly *representing* emotions and intentions. However, the way I combined them with the more experimental approaches developed for the project utilised this aspect of authenticity, without locking it into a meaningful narrative and/or emotional context.

Video 7 shows a moment of providing a suggestive image to a performer during the Stage 1 workshop. **Video 8** is a result of a particular ‘as if’ direction (‘you are parents who recently lost a child’), which singularly offsets the vagueness of the script by a sudden, emotional urgency within a single-take scene. (The specifics of each ‘as if’ adjustment emerged intuitively from the affective atmosphere between takes, and

²⁸ Stanislavsky founded the origins of a psycho-technical method of actor training: the working from ‘inside out’. He ‘believed that feeling and truth were strategic to opening the door of creative intuition. He also believed that the pathway to the command of truthful performing lay through the subconscious’ (Bartow 2009: xvi). Therefore, ‘Stanislavsky wished to find a pathway from the conscious to the subconscious and back, to reinstate an imaginary belief that would summon lifelike behaviour’ (xvi). The key to achieve this lifelike behaviour is what is widely known as ‘affective memory’, which Stanislavsky himself refers to as ‘emotion memory’ (a term that is more consistent with the distinction between affect and emotion that I point out in the introduction). Stanislavsky encouraged the actor to create an inner repertoire of memories, which represent sensual impressions condensed into a form of emotional blocks. The actor can subsequently apply this emotion memory in specific moments of the scene in order to structure his performance by believable, authentic emotions.

therefore it can be said it responded to the intuitively felt potential of an ‘energy field’ – the shared becoming through affective atmosphere – on the set.) The affective significance resulting from the performance in combination with the non-specific affective space is here enhanced further by a musical composition.

4.3.2 Action Verbs

Defining the objective of the performance in a given moment by the use of an ‘action verb’ (a verb that represents a specific action towards the other performer) is another method stemming from Stanislavski. When working with action verbs – and in response to the needs of affective film performance – I realised that as long as the performer naturally understands the basic meaning of the word (as a user of the given language), then there is no reason to connect to the word rationally. Rather, the sound of the word already conveys the action: it *inspires it*. The word *is* the action in a way: it responds to the action *mimetically* rather than as a randomly assigned signifier. However, rather than being onomatopoeic (mimetic in relation to a specific referent in the world), the action verb reflects a ‘non-sensuous similarity’, as Benjamin (1979) describes it.²⁹ Furthermore, this technique gives rise to random results in respect to a meaningful dramatic structure when a verb is given to the actor that doesn’t bear a logical connection to the intention or attitude that would seem appropriate in the moment. Or, when an action verb is given to the performer for the entire take of the dialogue, one can observe an ‘oscillation’ of the verb in relation to the scene: in certain moments the verb corresponds logically with a line of dialogue, in other moments it goes against the logic of the line in a significant (affective) way; and in some moments it seems to give rise to a ‘false’ intention – an instance of performance that appears forced, self-conscious. And sometimes, when directing performers using action verbs, I would sense that the actor lost the connection to the word and forgot the direction (the action verb) altogether. As, after all, my basic, underlying direction to performers that I periodically repeated is: ‘try

²⁹ ‘Language is the highest application of the mimetic faculty: a medium into which the earlier perceptive capabilities for recognising the similar had entered without residue, so that it is now language which represents the medium in which objects meet and enter into relationships with each other, no longer directly, as once in the mind of the augur or priest, but in their essences, in their most volatile and delicate substances, even in their aromata. In other words: it is to writing and language that clairvoyance has, over the course of history, yielded its old powers’ (Benjamin 1979: 68).

not to think about anything during the scene; just listen and absorb the words of the other performer, absorb their physical presence to you, whilst feeling your own physical presence in the moment, feeling your sensitivity to light and sound all around you; do not worry about your performance and don't try to control it – we will do the scene many times and there is no such thing as “right or wrong”; if something doesn't work we'll just do it again'. **Video 9** provides an example of an action-verb direction and demonstrates the unpredictable results (affective performance) that it can give rise to – dispelling dramatic meaning and coherence.

4.3.3 Repetition (utilised through the editing process)

One of the methods used on the project, linked to producing a large quantity of footage is repetition (doing many takes). Repetition as a method can be observed most notably in the work of Stanley Kubrick. Although he employed meticulous planning and precise execution of his vision for each film, his approach to performance was often more exploratory, taking into account the unpredictability – the real movement performance can give rise to. This was especially apparent in the excessive number of takes he would do of each shot, not only for the purpose of ‘perfecting the intention’, but rather to discover something in the performance, which is impossible to foresee. As Nicole Kidman comments on her work with Kubrick in *Eyes Wide Shut*, ‘Stanley was always waiting for something to happen. He was not as interested in naturalistic acting as he was in something that for whatever reason surprised him, or piqued his interest. That's when he would go “ah, ok, now we're onto something”’ (*The Last Movie* 1999). Or, as Sydney Pollack testifies about his experience on the same production, Kubrick's basic attitude to performance was that ‘you don't know what's going to happen if you tried three or four or five more [takes]’. The other effect of the great number of takes, as Kidman brings it to light, is that the actor gradually becomes tired, and his mind gets to a place, which is beyond the notion of concentration that would conventionally be required of an actor to perform a scene ‘well’. Rather, being tired means that ‘you are not trying to produce emotions, or trying to be this, or thinking this is how it should be; it just happens, it just comes out of you’. Therefore, the repetition of the same action itself is a valuable method to work with, where the unplanned difference caused by the

repetition alone (without any actual direction) can lead to further evolution and shaping of the performance or the scene. However, rather than shaping a performance toward the best or the most unique expression of predefined, narrative meaning (as would be its logical application in a narrative film, even that of Kubrick), my use of the method prioritised *the new* for its own sake – attempting to transcend, by implementing the method, the boundaries of habit, plan or expectation. In this way, the focus was entirely on the becoming of the real, and any direction to the performers flowed naturally from it, rather than being prepared in advance, or originating in isolation in my mind. The direction merely stemmed the flow of real movement of the performance, rather than trying to shape it in any predefined way or according to an idea. The direction (and my presence as the director) was an inherent part of real movement of performance, and the defining structuring principle of the scene was the production of the new, the encounter with the real.

This method formed the basis of the work on Stage 1 and Stage 3 workshops (Affective Signs 2 and 8), and the making of Affective Sign 5 and 6 during stage 2. (**Video 10** compares varied delivery of the same lines of dialogue across multiple takes.) However, it did not apply at all during the making of the ‘flow through reality’ visual films (Affective Signs 3 and 4), or the affective atmosphere films produced during Stage 4 and Stage 5 (the trips to Barcelona and Wales; Signs 9 and 10). Although repetition is a good way to achieve unpredictable results in performance, the method of affective atmosphere (see below in 4.4) ultimately led away from it, as it adopted the ‘flow through reality’ approach.

While the use of repetition relies on producing multiple, interchangeable takes of the same/similar action, the ‘flow through reality’ work instead generates a large quantity of structurally unique footage. In both cases, however, the Affective Cinema films are subsequently constructed out of the most interesting, singular (affectively significant) moments, rather than choosing best performance takes to fit – like a puzzle piece – into a pre-defined narrative structure (as is usually the case with conventional drama). In a conventional film, the editing process is a construction process of a *third order*, after the film is initially constructed as a story/script, and subsequently re-constructed during the

filming process. Affective Cinema, on the other hand – and most pertinently through the implementation of the affective atmosphere method – creates only *one* clear stage of construction. Instead of the writing stage, there is merely a conceptual pre-production stage, which generates certain boundaries for the production, without directly contributing to (or prejudging) its structure.³⁰ The production stage is thus a process primarily driven by unexpected emergence of reality and an organic flow of events, from which the quantity of material emerges. It is only during the editing process that the film first emerges as a structure, based on identified moments (shots) expressing, or having the potential for, affective significance. In a sense, the overall process is similar to making a documentary film; except that here the work results in a clear sense of a deliberate ‘fictional construct’, and most documentaries ultimately strive to construct a narrative structure and communicate coherent meaning.

Through my approach to Affective Cinema of prioritising chance over predefined structure, both methods (producing multiple takes and filming as part of unrepeatable flow of reality) can lead to unexpected results contributing to affective significance. Although the repetition method requires a kind of plan or a script to be repeated – or it simply produces such pattern by the repetition process itself – the editing stage ultimately takes precedence as the defining point of constructing a film out of the material.

4.3.4 Breathing Direction

The most common directorial experiment applied throughout this project, in order to forge a sense of affective performance, was asking performers to breathe out completely before each line, so that they don’t have enough air left to deliver the line comfortably. Another variation on this was to ask the performer to make several deep breaths through the nose before each line, or to fill up his or her lungs completely and then deliver the line with discharging as little of the held-up air as possible. I had discovered this method when observing (and self-observing) that an interesting affective tension is

³⁰ While some of the films – especially in the earlier stages – were based in scripts, these did not define the structure emerging from the editing process, and in any case, the development of the project led gradually away from conventional script writing. I will discuss this more in 4.4.

created when one is nervous while speaking, and as a result doesn't pace his or her breathing appropriately and runs out of air mid-sentence. As a method, therefore, it is the exact opposite of what an 'accomplished', conventional performance would require – a confident unison of breathing and speech – but that is precisely why this method offsets a conventional dramatic approach and leads to affectively significant results. The breathing technique, especially breathing out before each line, is very effective in establishing a certain tension in the line delivery – a subtle, fleeting, unqualified emotion that does not connect to the meaning of the line in a logical way, but is nevertheless *affectively significant*. Furthermore, the method aims to redirect the performer's attention to their body, and away from their conscious control of the dramatic situation. The tension in the performance this method can give rise to is likewise rooted in the (nonhuman) body, rather than in meaning communicated by gesture or facial expression; however, it can give rise to nuanced, singular complexity of movement in the performer (apparent in their facial expression and the sound of their voice), which can contribute to affective significance. After first testing the method during the Stage 1 workshop, I identified its potential for giving rise to unpredictable, singular results (offsetting emotional coherence of performance), and therefore used it throughout the project – including the dubbing process (I return to this in the following subsection). The method gradually became absorbed in the affective atmosphere approach. **Video 11** gives examples of the breathing method and I provide further example of its function within the affective atmosphere in 4.4.

4.3.5 Mimicry/Shadow Performance

One of the new methods I experimented with in this practice research project – and that later became absorbed into the affective atmosphere method – is mimicry/shadow performance of the scene partner's immediate body language, movement and intonation, which helps to shift the attention of the actor to his immediate environment, rather than consciously creating a performance. When performers are facing each other and filmed in shot-reverse-shot, only one of them is clearly visible at any given time, and shots could be combined from various takes with different directing objectives; therefore, there is no risk of this method leading to an apparent instance of mimicry.

Furthermore, the imitated behaviour and intonation are rarely recognisably similar to the original delivery by the other performer, as any such behaviour has to be absorbed and processed instantly by the actor, in order to be mimicked, while still having to deliver his or her own line. Instead it gives rise to a unique body language or a strange sense of intention in the line delivery, that seems unnatural or illogical, and yet captivating for its idiosyncrasy – affectively significant. **Video 12** provides examples of mimicry direction.

This method could be related to Meisner's (1987) 'repetition exercise', where a pair of actors are standing opposite each other, listening (being in the moment), and repeating the lines they hear from each other, with gradually evolving intonation and emotional subtext (that spring from their intentionality to each other, rather than the mirroring of these states as such). Meisner's aim with this technique, as he explains, was to 'eliminate all that "head" work ... if I repeat what I hear you saying, my head is not working. I'm listening, and there is an absolute elimination of the brain' (36). In the Meisner technique, the focus is on the other actor, in order to bypass a conscious internal process. While this coincides with my general aim for working with performance (similar to Bresson's approach), the contrast to Meisner also illustrates the difference between stage and screen acting (as described by Benjamin and Cavell in the opening section of this chapter): Meisner's technique focuses on building the instincts and spontaneity of the performer *as agency*, which is reflected in the primacy of the spoken word as the focus of the repetition between the two characters (the inter-subjective alternation of action and reaction); whereas my 'mimicry technique' aspires to create *unpredictable, random results for the camera*, which could be selected, combined and amplified as affective significance through editing. Therefore, rather than an inter-subjective encounter of two agencies, two 'objective-subjects', the mimicry technique can be thought of as an 'inter-objective', embodied encounter of two 'subjective-objects', as Sobchack (2004) describes it in relation to Merleau-Ponty's *flesh* (for more see 3.1).

During Stage 2, I also experimented with giving the performer earphones with an emotional song playing, and let her be affected by the singing voice – let it *vibrate*

through her, in a process of affective mimicry. I wanted to choose a song where the emotion in the voice is so apparent that it is likely to affect most people irrespective of their taste in music – so that the effect of this might be visible on the surface of the performer’s body (especially the face, but also in her body language and other subtle movements). I therefore selected a song from a solo album of Lisa Gerrard, the singer of the Australian musical project *Dead Can Dance*, for the tonal range and quality of her voice is powerful and so could be easily ‘felt as vibration’ in the body. This results in what could be termed ‘affective mimicry’, for the emotion of the music inscribes itself on the surface (face, body-language) of the performer, but this inscription can then be combined with music or sound-design of a different, or perhaps even contradictory affect, which offsets the specificity of the emotion and gives rise to affective significance. During the Stage 3 workshop, I expanded on this method by preparing in advance about 30 music and sound compositions of varied affects and emotional intensities, including sound segments recorded from films, and then played random or emotionally-contradicting sound to each performer separately before a dialogue scene. I only selected the two tracks in the particular moment of the affective atmosphere, and so the selection itself was partially influenced *by* the affective atmosphere. **Video 13** shows the shot from Affective Sign 3 where this technique was used – comparing the two sound versions of the finished film with the actual song of Lisa Gerrard (which the performer listens to through earphones) playing over the shot.

When dubbing a scene, affective significance may be amplified by the resonance of two planes of real movement within the still structure of the film, where the second plane – the voice – is nevertheless a mimetic response to the voice originally obtained as part of the performance contained in the image. The mimetic aspect provides a further opportunity to shape the performance, and to offset the original whole of image and voice – to forge artificially a new unity within the affective space. Furthermore, the distancing effect of the new filmic real is emphasised by the atomisation of the (narrative/logical) whole of the scene into disconnected singularities, as the re-recording session is not concerned with the whole but rather with short detached segments: parts of sentences or even single words or utterances that are recorded separately. The first method of altering nuances of performance when dubbing a scene was to obtain about

10 to 20 takes of each vocal segment. This allowed for very minute differences between the individual versions – a mimetic contingency stemming from the atomised repetition of each utterance. The second method was the breathing technique (see 4.3.4) applied again during the re-recording: breathing out completely before uttering each segment. **Video 14** gives an example of the subtle differences arising during the mimetic process of dubbing (I discuss dubbing previously in 3.2.7.).

As the video examples above illustrate, the mimetic method proved to be a versatile technique producing unpredictable results charged with singular, indistinct emotion (affect) and a sense of significance outside coherent communication of meaning. The act of mimicry removes the performer's attention away from cerebral structuring and delivery of performance, while engaging them in an *inter-objective feedback loop of becoming* with another performer (or with their own pre-recorded voice in case of dubbing, or, in the case of 'affective mimicry', with the pre-recorded voice of the singer). Far from automatic reproduction, the feedback loop of mimicry between two performers gives rise to radical, yet nuanced novelty and variation, which the automatic reproduction of film has the ability to reveal and capture as affective significance.

4.3.6 Direct Participation in the Acting Process and Meditative/Hypnotic Direction

In the first year of my research I completed a short acting course at Drama Studio London. This gave me a first-hand experience of being in the position of the actor while receiving direction from a director. This experience was valuable in terms of appreciating the efficacy of established acting and directing methods (for example the use of action verbs) and understanding the effect particular direction is likely to have on the mindset of the performer. The Drama Studio experience also prepared me for a more direct involvement in the acting process, which eventually emerged as a potent directorial technique, especially in relation to the overall affective atmosphere approach. The acting training influenced the initial workshop with performers during Stage 1 to the extent that my direction to performers became, intuitively, embedded in a performance – in a sense that I was delivering the direction in the affected and affective tone of voice that defined the performers' affective/dramatic attitude. This kind of

participation therefore had a certain mimetic effect, but also gave origin to the affective atmosphere method, which subsequently evolved throughout the upcoming stages of practice, and which I discuss in detail in the following section.

Through reflection on the Stage 1 workshop, the understanding emerged that this sensitive, affective and present acting-directing mind-set is meditative or hypnotic in nature. On the basis of that, I decided to take a short course in Cognitive Behavioural Hypnotherapy, since this gave me a specific experience and a set of skills in relation to helping someone achieve a meditative state of mind (rather than merely *experience* such state through meditation, for example). This training then allowed me to develop further the method of affective atmosphere for the Stage 3 workshop (I return to this in the following section). **Video 15** and **Video 16** show an example of meditative direction influenced by the training in hypnotherapy. The differences between the two sessions demonstrate how my direction was improvised in the moment as part of affective atmosphere. During the Stage 5 casting, I became more directly involved as a performer, engaging applicants in improvisation. (**Video 17** shows an example of my direct participation as a performer during the Stage 5 casting.) I continued with this approach during the subsequent filming of Affective Sign 10, where the technique of direct participation as a performer (rather than mere *direction embedded in performance* applied during previous stages) became assimilated into the affective atmosphere approach. (**Video 18** gives an example of my direct participation as performer during the filming of Affective Sign 10.)

Both the meditative approach and my direct participation as a performer are methods more intimately linked with the overall approach to performance as part of affective atmosphere. While the other methods outlined in this section, such as mimicry, breathing direction and action verbs, were absorbed into affective atmosphere in order to give rise to unpredictable results – forging affectively significant nuances of expression and behaviour – the meditative direction and my direct participation are rather outcomes (or inherent aspects) of affective atmosphere as such. These methods are intrinsically linked to the joint becoming with reality, where there is not a clear separation between fiction and the event as experienced by all participants, or a clear

separation between the process and the object of filming. Or rather, in affective atmosphere, as I explain in the following section, there is not a clear separation between the filmmaker, the performer and the camera.

4.4 Affective Atmosphere, and its Development through the Hermeneutic Spiral

Affective atmosphere is an original approach to filming and performance – developed through this research – that focuses on the becoming of the event, and aims to close the gap between the experienced present moment and the process of filming, thus blurring the line between reality and fiction, and, ultimately, blurring the line between the filmed/experienced reality and the resulting moving image. The method is about maximising atmospheric conditions within and without – within the mind of the participants and in the space surrounding them – and then making these two ‘atmospheric layers’ influence, amplify and resonate with each other. The process of filming defines both the fiction and the reality of the event, while the event defines what and how it is being filmed. The distinction between reality and fiction becomes hard to pin down, since the reality of the present moment – which includes the process of filming – defines and constitutes the fiction. The fiction emerges from the pure becoming of the moment – produced and shared by all participating individuals – rather than from ordinary being constituted by (logical) actions in relation to the context of one’s individual life. As explored and evidenced through practice, this approach to production can give rise to a sense of affective film performance, since it can lead to affects in the performance, while preventing coherent emotional expression and the formation of narrative/dramatic meaning. The affects emanating from the performance are sustained and amplified by the continuous, intense participation in the moment, and allowing oneself to be affected by the sensual impression of the other participants and of the immediate environment. This continuous participation is supported (and renewed) by my direct involvement as performer and by my meditative direction, while unpredictable results in performance can be achieved by implementing many of the methods discussed in 4.3. Furthermore, the spontaneous intuitive presence in the moment – with most of the choices and decisions emerging directly from it – can give rise to wider chance and unpredictability captured in the film, especially since the

method of producing excessive amount of film material remains in place. The aesthetic, practitioner choices emerging from my meditative, intense participation in the moment – in combination with the unpredictability of the filmed situations – can give rise to affective space (such as in the case of Affective Signs 9 and 10 – I return to this later). In situations where I constructed affective space ahead of time (Affective Signs 1 and 8), affective space became a part of affective atmosphere in the process of filming, to the extent that all participants were affected by the attributes of the filmed space (and light) that later became affective space of the image. However, let me first provide some theoretical context for the concept, before discussing the production processes (and their evolution) in more detail.

Established theories of atmosphere are very useful in framing the concept of affective atmosphere, especially to the extent that they relate to some of the key concepts pertinent to this research, such as Deleuzian affect, becoming (as opposed to being) and Merleau-Ponty's flesh. The concept of atmosphere reflects the sense of a pre-rational, undifferentiated *in-between*, in the *here and now*, the merging of, or the blurring of lines between perception, space and event into a becoming that is aesthetically experienced (and shared) during production, and captured as an echo of real movement in the moving image. For Bohme (2017),

perception is basically the manner in which one is bodily present for something or someone or one's bodily state in an environment. The primary 'object' of perception is atmospheres. What is first and immediately perceived is neither sensation nor shapes or objects or their constellations, as Gestalt psychology thought, but atmospheres against whose background the analytic regard distinguishes such things as objects, forms, colours, etc. (23)

For Anderson (2009), 'the atmosphere has long been associated with the uncertain, disordered, shifting and contingent – that which never quite achieves the stability of form' (78). Atmospheres reflect an expressed world rather than a represented world (79); they 'radiate from an individual to another' in a 'dyadic space of resonance' (80). For Griffero (2016), atmosphere is an excess resisting representational attitude; it is a resonance of the felt space – a vibration in which 'the perceived and the perceiver meet and even merge isomorphically and predualistically' (6). For Schmitz et al. (2011), atmosphere reflects a life in the 'primitive present', fusing the 'here', 'now', 'being',

and 'I' in space, which is a 'predimensional, surfaceless realm manifest to each of us in undistorted corporeal experience' (245). Furthermore, for them 'emotions are atmospheres poured out spatially. An atmosphere ... is the complete occupation of a surfaceless space in the region of experienced presence' (255).

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the Body without Organs also bears a useful resonance with the approach to performance within the affective atmosphere. The Body without Organs represents precisely the kind of (nonhuman) becoming removed from subjectivity constituted by language, reason and culture (the 'self-interested passion of the cogito', to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari).

It is a question of making a body without organs upon which intensities pass, self and other – not in the name of a higher level of generality or a broader extension, but by virtue of singularities that can no longer be said to be personal, and intestines that can no longer be said to be extensive. The field of immanence is not internal to the self, but neither does it come from an external self or a nonself. Rather, it is like the absolute Outside that knows no Selves because interior and exterior are equally a part of the immanence in which they have fused. (156)

This field of immanence in which the outside and inside fuse, and the personal dissipates, is a very good description of affective atmosphere. While the theories of atmosphere outlined above align with my understanding of affective atmosphere as the shifting 'resonance of the felt space' in the contingent, 'primitive present', the Body without Organs fundamentally reflects the experience of participation as a performer in affective atmosphere.

The method of affective atmosphere emerged gradually through the development of the hermeneutic spiral, in alternation between practice and reflection. The method started to take shape during the first workshop stage of production, from a combination of practitioner intuition, and the method of continuous filming employed in order to capture unexpected moments. Rather than cutting between conventional takes or distinguishing between periods of filming and not filming, I aimed for a period of focused attention, in which everyone on the set participated for an extended period of time (usually for around an hour). My style of directing between takes adjusted to this requirement by assuming a hypnotic, relaxed tone of voice – in a sense becoming an

affective performer myself, or rather, removing myself from the diction and tone of voice associated with my own ‘habitual character’. This shift in voice had an influence on the mood of the performers, especially when I described evocative images to them. Actors changed places in front of the camera during this extended period, without slipping out of the focused, relaxed state of mind. Rather than ‘being in character’, which would imply a conventional representation of a character, both myself and all the performers were in a joint state of ‘affective character’: a state of being sensitive to the environment – the non-representational energetic field permeating the entire set – rather than belonging to an individual state of mind, or any specific dramatic/narrative meaning or logic.

The affective atmosphere approach lent itself particularly well to one of the mimetic methods of affective performance that I had discovered and developed through the project, in response to the aim of achieving unpredictable results, and giving rise to affective rather than emotional expression – and establishing an encounter between performers that is more *inter-objective* than *inter-subjective* (see 3.1). In this case the pair of actors in shot were instructed to repeat the lines read out by another pair of actors off screen, whose line delivery was in turn influenced by the overall meditative vibe of the affective atmosphere. The result of this contributes to the sense of affective atmosphere and leads to unpredictable outcomes, as the performer can be in the moment and connect intuitively to the lines as he or she hears them, rather than consciously creating a performance – which in turn helps them to relax and connect more into the affective atmosphere. Furthermore, the pressure is also taken away from the performer of having to remember the line of dialogue. **Video 19** demonstrates a result of this process, and reflects the overall affective atmosphere, including the mimetic repetition. The editing process further offset any dramatic or narrative logic, and increased the focus on the affective atmosphere itself, by intuitively combining two of the workshop scripts – focusing on the rhythmical/melodic aspect of the spoken words, rather than their meaning.³¹

³¹ As Steven Shaviro (1993) points out, ‘far from reducing sound to the condition of language, cinema tends to “deterritorialize” and disarticulate linguistic utterance, to pull it in the direction of nonsignifying sound’ (33). Affective Cinema, through the affective atmosphere method, strives to maximise the affective potential of this tendency.

When filming the visual films (Affective Signs 3 and 4) in complex, real-world locations during Stage 2, the affective atmosphere approach remained, although here it could not permeate the entire set, and was rather located on the axis between the performer and the camera. The performers were instructed to be aware of the camera as an entity looking at them, and to be affected *by* this presence. But I also emphasized that this is not a *human presence*: ‘it is rather a mirror in which you see yourself but can’t recognise yourself – what you see is both more and less than *you*, but it is also more and less than the *other*’. In this sense the notion of affective atmosphere coincides with the earlier discussion of intimacy, and namely the look into the camera (see 3.1 and 3.2.5). However, my approach aimed at making sure that the look into the camera is more than an empty gesture, more than a random look, but rather a potent source of affective significance – a fleeting encounter of two sources of vision.

The editing and the reflection process following the Stage 1 workshop led me to expand significantly on the concept of affective atmosphere during the Stage 3 workshop. I had decided not to share the dialogue scripts with performers in advance, so that they came into contact with the words in the very moment of filming, by being fed the lines by the pair of performers off screen. This means that there is no work of memory involved on the side of the performer, and he or she can be immersed fully in the present moment, in the affective atmosphere. Any dramatic development of the scene also emerges from the affective atmosphere, and, what is more, this entire development is captured in the continuous recording of the camera. Furthermore, I wrote ten different dialogue scripts for Stage 3, and the lines from individual scenes were subsequently combined through the editing process to forge completely new, unpredictable connections: molecular, rather than molar narrative structures, resulting in Affective Sign 8. The meditative, being-in-the-moment-together of the affective atmosphere was also enhanced by undertaking a seven-day course in hypnotherapy ahead of the workshop (see 4.3.6), which I attended in an intuitive response to discovering and articulating the concept of affective atmosphere during Stage 1. Rather than trying to hypnotise, or offer therapy to the performers in the Stage 3 workshop, the training allowed me to practice a meditative, suggestive way of speech, which can help the performers to relax and stay in the moment – increasing their sensual connection to their immediate environment.

The training was particularly useful as it gave me *first-hand* experience of the effect of such meditative, suggestive speech during relaxation sessions used in certain aspects of hypnotherapy, and I was subsequently able to not only understand, through experience, the kind of state of mind induced in the performers, but to participate *directly* in the process with my own state of mind – thus maximising my participation in and co-constitution of affective atmosphere as the director.

The aspect of lighting also became more complex in comparison to Stage 1, since the first workshop established the atmospheric potential of lighting, contributing not only to the atmosphere captured in the image, but also to the atmosphere on the set, thus deepening the participation in the affective atmosphere for the performers. Therefore, during Stage 3, I employed lighting in equal measure to aesthetically enhance the image (as affective space; see 3.2.1) but also to affect the performers (as part of affective atmosphere). In this way, the concept of affective space became an integral part of the overarching affective atmosphere approach. Similarly, the directorial methods described in the section above became an integral part of the process, becoming assimilated into the broader meditative event. In this way, the methods (such as action verbs, mimicry and breathing direction) aimed for random results, but within a more consistent sense of affect produced by the meditative state induced by the affective atmosphere (in which both the performers and myself as the director participated).

The following videos illustrate the implementation of the directorial methods discussed in 4.3 into affective atmosphere of the Stage 3 workshop. **Video 20** shows a result of the action verb direction in the enhanced context of affective atmosphere (for more on the action verb direction method see 4.3.2). **Video 21** shows a result of the breathing direction in the enhanced context of affective atmosphere (for more on the breathing direction method see 4.3.4). **Video 22** shows the result of the mimicry/shadow performance direction in combination with an additional physical task (for more on the mimicry/shadow performance method see 4.3.5). **Video 23** gives another result of the mimicry/shadow performance direction, and **Video 24** is an improvised take of the same scene later in the affective atmosphere session (also applying the mimicry/shadow performance direction). The comparison between these two sessions shows how the

improvised conversation emerged from the scripted dialogue, with the pair of performers off screen contributing as part of the affective atmosphere.

The reflection on Stage 3 led to significant developments of the affective atmosphere for Stage 4. The continuous, meditative production approach was radically extended to a whole period of filming in real (outside) locations, so that the affective atmosphere method could not only influence the performance, but also the very nature of the resulting film, since most production choices emerged from it, in the face of the significant unpredictability of wider reality. It seemed meaningful for there to be a journey at the heart of the production process, since this would increase the encounter with new environments and create regular ‘pitchfork’ path splits, which could then lead to path choices based on the affective atmosphere – emerging from intuition, affect, and chance – rather than being made logically or based on an intention or a plan. At the same time, the basic trajectory with a few specific destinations along the way would anchor the idea of a journey, allowing for certain linearity from which non-linear choices could emerge (for example, we knew that we were going to spend the night in a specific hotel in Barcelona, but that said nothing about how exactly we would get there).

The unpredictability of this journey was increased by deliberately selecting a destination to which neither myself, nor the performers had ever been. In fact, I didn’t want the performers to know where we were going until the very day of travel, so that they could not formulate any ideas or biases about the trip in relation to the destination, as they only learned where they were going when already entering the affective atmosphere on the day. I provided them with a sealed envelope with their boarding pass and all the journey details and instructed them to only open this on their way to the train station, after they tried to clear their mind and become immersed in their immediate environment. The envelope also contained a photograph of the other performer, who they had never met. While both performers emerged from the Stage 3 workshop, I deliberately selected two performers who hadn’t met on that occasion, so that there was no layer of ‘acting as strangers’ necessary to perform within the affective atmosphere. Since affective atmosphere relies on removing both the representation of fictional

characters and the presentation of one's habitual personality, it would not be desirable if the performers knew each other, and then had to suppress this knowledge – this would clearly be a distraction to the affective atmosphere. However, since we all were not supposed to interact in an ordinary, habitual way, it was important for them to recognise each other upon first encounter, hence the provision of the photograph. **Video 25** shows moments of flowing through reality – while continuously recording – during the Stage 4 journey to Barcelona.

The adaptation of affective atmosphere to the 'flow through reality' for Stage 4 also created a split between two kinds of affective space constituted by the filming process (and forming the resulting films). During the Stage 1 and Stage 3 workshops, an abstract, non-specific space was constructed by lighting, which in turn affected the performers, and contributed to affective atmosphere. During the subsequent stages, however, artificial light was not used at all, and all the environments were specific and clearly recognisable, since we were simply passing through reality, rather than constructing or manipulating space. Similarly to Affective Signs 3 and 4 produced during Stage 2 – where no additional/artificial lights had been involved – here reality supplemented the role of lighting in affecting the performers and creating atmosphere in the image. Nevertheless, since it cannot be said that the (urban) reality through which we passed was part of affective atmosphere (where the lighting of Stage 3 clearly had been), it is the element of the journey that defined the sense of affective atmosphere for Stage 4 – having an effect on the performers during the filming, but also constructing affective space of the resulting film.

During Stage 3 I didn't provide the performers with any scripts or instructions ahead of the filming, and instead controlled and directed the entire affective atmosphere during the event itself. As part of the experimental development of the project, I wanted to reverse this process entirely for the Stage 4 filming. The main motivation for this was to try to capture the entire affective atmosphere directorial process of the Stage 3 workshop *in writing*, to see if the performers could internalise the affective atmosphere direction in advance of the filming on their own. I would then be free to engage more as a performer during the filming itself, rather than as a director, providing lines of

dialogue for the performers to respond to or to repeat (when my own performer's intuition would urge me to utter such line in the moment, and under the influence of the affective atmosphere). I compiled all the previously applied layers of direction (including meditative instructions, action verbs, images, 'as if' suggestions, and gestures/physical actions) and random lines of dialogue (taken from the Stage 3 scripts, from the resulting film *Affective Sign 8* – which included improvised lines – or based on writing new disjointed lines of dialogue). Rather than a conventional, linear, narrative script, this resulted in what I refer to as a *rhizomatic script*, a term inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's *Thousand Plateaus* (1987). They compare the multiplicity of the rhizome to the linear, bifurcating structure of the tree and the root, which reflects the semiotic structure of rational thought, but it can also be understood as reflective of the internal logic of a linear narrative script. Deleuze and Guattari contrast the rhizome to the tree and the root, which 'inspire a sad image of thought that is forever imitating the multiple on the basis of a centered or segmented higher unity' (16). They explain that 'a multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions... there are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines' (8). The rhizomatic script aims precisely to create a sense of non-linear multiplicity that can inspire yet more multiplicity – inspire the production of the new – rather than simply provide instructions to be followed, repeated or represented. Deleuze and Guattari liken the rhizome to a map (as opposed to a tracing), which is a notion that elucidates my concept of the rhizomatic script (as opposed to an ordinary, linear script, as a sort of blueprint for a film) even more clearly:

What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation (12).

The rhizomatic script is not a tracing, it is not a blueprint or a set of instructions for a film to be made based on it. Rather it is a map 'oriented toward an experimentation in

contact with the real'. The rhizomatic script also represents a final point in the evolution of scriptwriting on this project, as it developed through the hermeneutic spiral. The earlier stages were dominated by either removing narrative specificities from the script (such as character details, specific situation or context in reality), or by trying to offset the narrative/dramatic coherence of the script through the editing process. The rhizomatic script instead creates a dissociated, non-linear structure that emancipates itself entirely from narrative or dramatic conventions, and thus engenders an opening rather than a limitation; it removes the symbolic connections between a script and a film, and instead inspires new, *rhizomatic connections* that are non-linear and qualitative, rather than linear and quantitative. In a sense, the rhizomatic script gives rise to a *plateau*: 'a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 22). **Text 1** contains the rhizomatic script. **Text 2** contains a selection of scripts from Stage 1 to Stage 3, showing the development in this aspect of the practice.

I provided the rhizomatic script to the performers a couple of weeks before the filming and instructed them to read it slowly and attentively many times, without trying to rationalise it or form logical connections between its elements (indeed, this instruction itself appears in the script). This process led to interesting results, many of which are apparent in Affective Sign 9. Similarly to the improvised section of the Stage 3 workshop, lines from the script often spontaneously emerged, or were paraphrased, and the meditative instructions as well as the physical gestures and movements described in the script found their way overtly into the performance. Equally, as the performers told me afterwards when reflecting jointly on the process, they often felt a little lost or self-conscious, and some direction and guidance would have helped. Certainly, providing all direction in writing and in advance created a conflict with the pure becoming in the present moment: while the performers knew that they should simply be in the moment, and let anything from the script spontaneously emerge (rather than trying to remember and consciously activate anything from the script), the affective atmosphere still requires points of renewal or guidance, so that the relaxed, meditative state can be sustained.

The reflection on Stage 4 allowed for further developments of the affective atmosphere method for the final stage of practice. Approaching the filming as a journey proved to be very productive in Affective Sign 9: it gave the film a structure that delivers the possibility for a kind of narrative engagement while emerging organically from the process of filming. However, I now wanted to reverse the approach to the script/plan yet again, while testing the method under different circumstances. I decided to abandon a script altogether, and not provide the performers with any instructions ahead of the filming. Instead, I would be the only source of direction, and of any lines of dialogue (to be mimetically repeated) other than the lines that the performers improvise themselves in the moment. However, in the process, I would increase my participation as a performer, and emphasise to the (other) performers that any line I speak can be repeated, but also *responded to* – with the response directed to me, to the camera or to the other performer in front of the camera (i.e., even if I speak the line, the response does not need to be directed toward me). As part of my basic explanation of the concept ahead of the filming, I stressed to the performers that with the affective atmosphere, there is no clear separation between ‘I’ and ‘the other’, between ‘I’ and ‘the camera’, or between ‘the other’ and the ‘camera’, as well as there is no clear separation between the other performer, me as the director/performer and the camera. Basically, any action or response can be directed toward the other performer, me the director (while speaking to the camera) or the camera (as if it were a mirror), irrespective of any logical or coherent development of the situation.

Another development of the method from the previous stages was to only use performers with no previous acting experience (as I mention in 1.2.5, but the benefits of this development also become apparent in the following paragraphs). The participants for this stage were selected through a casting process at FACT in Liverpool, which had been advertised to the public. Each casting interview consisted of an improvised conversation between me and the candidate, in which we were neither our ordinary selves nor fictional characters. This process therefore tested the suitability of each candidate for this kind of spontaneous, improvised filming, while also allowing me to practice my participation as a performer. Ultimately, all the sessions were filmed, and decisions were made based on the potential of each candidate to reveal, on camera,

something of their nonhuman becoming, a non-representational quality that has the potential to amplify affective significance when captured on film. When reviewing the footage, I was inspired by the emotional openness of some candidates – despite being filmed and under considerable pressure of experiencing an audition for the first time. These performers seemed particularly suitable for the affective atmosphere method, for allowing themselves to be affected by their environment, by the other performer and by the filming process.

Additionally to this emotional openness, one of the chosen candidates had a quality, which I thought would be very suitable in order to experiment with the developing methods of the project. The candidate, a student from China, had a considerable difficulty speaking and understanding English. It took her a lot of effort to express herself, and the statements she made were often grammatically incorrect and quite basic and simplistic, almost childlike. This, when combined with her emotional openness, created a sense of overtone resonance: a mixture of complexity and simplicity that transcended both reason and emotion to the point where affective significance could be constituted. Furthermore, the difficulty she had with understanding exactly what was being explained to her had the potential to add another layer of contingency to the filming process, while offsetting the element of control stemming from my participation in the process as a director. I nevertheless engaged a second Chinese student, whose English was much more advanced, to join us for the entire production, in order to help as an interpreter where necessary (and to make sure the Chinese performer was comfortable), while assisting with the filming. Although I had instructed this other Chinese student to also adhere to the focused and present mindset of the affective atmosphere, her involvement in the process turned out to be a considerable distraction, for the two students had the tendency to speak (light-heartedly) in their mother tongue and thus undermine the continuation of the affective atmosphere. This distraction was nevertheless worth making sure that the Chinese performer was comfortable during the entire filming process and that she always understood my direction, while providing her with a rest from the continuous participation in the affective atmosphere. (Such continuous participation was embraced by the other performers with unambiguous enthusiasm and sense of creative collaboration, so that even during breaks they were

happy to spend their time alone and in silence.) Furthermore, as the editing process (and the subsequent reflection) revealed, the distractions hadn't had an impact on the affective significance of the resulting film, since ultimately the film reality (the new real) is quite indifferent to human intention. While affective atmosphere is an effective way in which to stir and channel the element of contingency, it is by no means solely determining the qualities of the filmed material. In any case, the distractions to the affective atmosphere posed by the camaraderie of the two students added a layer of contingency to the production. For the affective atmosphere approach can combine with other unintentional, contingent aspects of the filming process (even such that feel counterproductive or distracting in the moment of filming), in order to create a sense of affective significance, which transcends any human plan or intention, and which can only be discovered, identified or fully appreciated during editing.

The decision to drive to a remote cottage in Wales for this filming was motivated by the intention to test the potential of countryside for affective significance, since most of the previous films relied on the aesthetic/compositional quality of manmade city structures, and the complexity of movements in a busy city that gave rise to unpredictability. Furthermore, in the secluded, countryside setting, there was the potential for exploring the aspect of intimacy (both in the image and in the performance): the understanding of intimacy in relation to affective space (as discussed in 3.1 and 3.2.5) was here altered by a more literal sense of intimacy as an absence of people external to the filming process. During the Stage 4 trip to Barcelona, a sense of affective tension was created by the contrast of, on the one hand, the intimacy between the camera and the performers, and on the other hand, the indifference of the busy public spaces that facilitated this intimacy. For Stage 5, this aspect of the public space was absent (or reversed), and instead the affective space was shaped more dominantly by the use of Super8 film stock. The combination of the raw, imperfect film grain and the countryside seemed like a potent basis to constitute affective space, resulting in images inspired by the amateur photography of *Found Affective Sign*, yet also very different from all previous footage shot for the project. Therefore, the countryside setting defined the affective atmosphere to the extent that it influenced (affected) the performance and motivated the camera work and framing. The decision to return to Liverpool after the first night to swap one

of the performers altered the linear journey of the previous trip to Barcelona, while providing the opportunity to compare the two filming days of Stage 5, and the way affective atmosphere (and the related filming process) transformed based on the change between performers.

Video 26 and **Video 27** illustrate the contrast between the two filming days, and the distinct energy between the two pairs of performers. These videos also demonstrate the role Super8 film played in the affective atmosphere, and how it constituted affective space of the image (in contrast to the continuous digital iPhone footage in which it is embedded). **Video 28** shows the spontaneous development of dialogue in the moment, as part of the affective atmosphere, as the two performers met for the first time inside the car, during the second trip to Wales.

Throughout the five stages of the project, affective atmosphere evolved from a directorial method relying on shared, affective participation in the becoming of the moment – for a continuous, prolonged period of time – to an underlying principle that defined and gave rise to a narrative and dramatic structure of the film. The affective atmosphere method complemented the element of journey during the final two stages of practice to constitute a unique basis for a film – a role conventionally served by a script. During Stage 4, any sense of a conventional script was replaced by the rhizomatic script, which distilled the affective atmosphere method and preserved it as something transferable and repeatable (so that other films could potentially be made on this basis). Stage 5 absorbed the written form of the rhizomatic script into an even looser and less defined structure, emerging from the becoming of the moment, but held together by a few basic logistical decisions on the level of the (real) journey itself. Through my presence and direction, the rhizomatic script was implemented, but merely to the extent that it had been implemented during Stage 4 through the performers who had previously internalised it. I too was intuitively connected to the becoming of the moment rather than being attached to a conscious memory of the elements of the script.

The final reflection on practice illuminated an additional facet of the affective atmosphere: despite not deliberately constructing fictional characters through

scriptwriting or directing, *a sense* of fictional characters seems to have emerged from the films made on the basis of affective atmosphere. As much as the viewer is, arguably, hardwired to read for meaning and story, the sense of a character is also likely to emerge from this process of spontaneous viewer interpretation, especially as the bodily presence of the performer is precisely the element that links the chain of events together – and which *embodies* the narrative. However, the sense of character is shaped further by the editing process, which, by focusing on selecting the most captivating (affectively significant) moments of performance, gives a certain level of *consistency* to the performance, which would not be apparent from the raw, unprocessed quantity of film material. Even if not consistent on the level of narrative (or communication of coherent meaning), the moments of performance that stand out are unique and singular, yet also consistent with each other *for their affective significance*, to the extent that they forge a thread of affective relations and affinities of behaviour throughout the film – and that constitutes the sense of a character. Furthermore, it is precisely the indeterminacy of signification of the human body (a signification which in film relies so heavily on the narrative context constructed through editing)³² that primarily constitutes film performance – especially such performance where a specific narrative or dramatic intention is missing to start with. Therefore, even if the editing process does not aim to construct a narrative or dramatic context, it is *bound to be read* in that way to a certain extent. And while this does not quite amount to a coherently communicated story, it nevertheless seems that a sense of fictional character *emerges* from the film structure as *a source* of narrative.

³² This indeterminacy was theorised by Lev Kuleshov (in what is known as the ‘Kuleshov Effect’), who experimented with combining close-up shots of an emotional reaction to something (revealed through a subsequent reverse angle point-of-view shot). The sense of emotion in the close-up shot changed depending on what point-of-view shot was used, all the way from ‘dismal’ to ‘cheerful’ (Kuleshov 1974: 192). However, Kuleshov himself later recognised that such manipulation is not always possible, for the ‘film material is so varied, so complex, that the quality of films never depends entirely on montage’ (195). Deleuze subsequently took this notion of ‘complexity’ even further when he claimed that ‘the famous Koulechov [sic] effect is explained less by association of the face with a variable object than by the ambiguity of its expressions which always suit different affects’ (1986: 110). What Deleuze means is that the expressions of the face are governed by such affective variety and ambiguity (real movement) that – rather than representing some basic, unambiguously defined emotion, which, when viewed in the context of another shot, can be transformed into a different clear-cut emotion – it can *contribute to meaning* in many different contexts.

The journey (especially the trip to Barcelona during Stage 4 resulting in Affective Sign 9) gives the film a narrative unity, but that is not quite a *fictional* unity, and in fact, the journey, as filmed, is a real, documentary aspect of the film, since the trip has really taken place. However, the sense of character that emerges from it is inherently read *as fictional*, and holds a promise of a story – a subtext, a context, or a back-story that are not quite revealed in the film, but which nevertheless *seem* to be there. It is a layer of fiction – a product of affective atmosphere – that constitutes the impression of a fictional character through the process of editing. It is the becoming in the present moment, which is inherently aesthetic – as if already an image, as vision and visibility intertwined – that constitutes the sense of performance (and fictional character) through the affective atmosphere method. Perhaps it is in the relationship between the performance and the process of production (the camera) where the performance resulting from the affective atmosphere fundamentally differs from both the conventional categories of fiction and documentary. In this sense, the documentary method can be understood as knowing you are being filmed or not knowing you are being filmed, as your *ordinary self*; the making of fiction instead relies on pretending (acting) you don't know you are being filmed, while representing a *fictional character*. The affective atmosphere, meanwhile, rests in being *affected by the act of being filmed* – giving rise to an *impression* (without representation) of a fictional character, while also giving rise to a sense of overtone resonance between reality and fiction, between the *true self* and the *other* – being both and neither at the same time. As the reflection on practice suggests, it is through this overtone resonance between becoming *with* the real and conceptual stillness *as* fiction that the sense of fictional character produced by affective atmosphere contributes to affective significance of the film.

5. Conclusion

The preceding three chapters reveal the constitutive elements of film that can lead to production of affective significance: chance, style and the moving body (performance). As I explain on multiple occasions throughout this thesis, there is not a clear separation between these aspects of film structure: chance, to the extent that it reflects the ability of film to capture something of the movement of the real, is fundamentally related to both performance and the constitution of style. However, dealing with these three aspects in separation has resulted in distinct (and productive) fields of knowledge, which required particular kinds of theoretical research and development of specific (although overlapping and integrated) methods. This, in turn, has generated particular fields of original research and knowledge, reflected in the three main chapters of this thesis, that relate to both film theory/philosophy and practical methods. Some of the new concepts emerging from the repeated alternation between practice and reflection, such as affective space and affective atmosphere, are rooted equally in conceptual research and in practice, producing results and findings that can inform film theory as much as practical filmmaking. On the other hand, by attending in equal measure to all three identified constitutive aspects of affective significance, the project covers and draws on an extensive and diverse field of knowledge, opening many more doors than it is able to fully close again. As a result, a few potent avenues are left unexplored (or were partially explored), and in some cases, the practice led to results, which exceeded the scope of this thesis (although the film work itself contributes with *non-verbal* insights that extend the boundaries of the written component).

In any case, the productive oscillation between practice and reflection of the hermeneutic spiral could have continued indefinitely, and while the research has reached a point of fullness and completion after the five discreet stages, it has certainly opened up new creative and research opportunities (some of which I have already embarked on to this date). In this conclusion, I therefore present an overview of the new findings of the research as they pertain to the key research questions (see 5.4) but also discuss the already explored practical application of Affective Cinema beyond the boundaries of the 12 main films presented throughout this thesis (see 5.2). Expanding

on this discussion, I then provide a sense of future possibilities emerging from the research as well as identify potential gaps yet to be closed (see 5.3). Nevertheless, I wish to start by giving an overview of a presentation of the work to the public at FACT in Liverpool in August 2018, and explain why these specific exhibition conditions were ideally suited to the film work, and to the aims of the research.

5.1 FACT Exhibition and Audience Response



Figure 125 Affective Cinema FACT Exhibition

The FACT exhibition was one of the key outcomes of my residency at the arts organisation (as a form of extension to the funded period of my research). The aim of the exhibition was to create the most suitable presentation mode for the work, in line with the nature of the research. Ever since I conceived of the project, at the start of my research, as a non-narrative series of short films, I considered a multi-screen installation to be the ideal presentation of the work. This is because the agency of the viewer, who can in this way freely move through the space of the exhibition, and switch between the individual films in a sequence (and duration) of their choice, dispels a sense of narrative that would be forced upon the work if viewed from a standard ‘locked-in’ perspective. While each individual film, as a fixed sequence of images, is ultimately a sort of narrative, even if not communicating (or trying to communicate) coherent narrative meaning, the work as a whole presented at FACT was an open, non-linear structure, experienced by each visitor in a singular way. The individual films playing on separate

screens combined with the way the visitor chose to navigate the space (and divide their attention in time) to make the becoming of the screening event an inherent part of the work itself.

The given exhibition space – a square-shaped cinema room, called ‘the Box’, containing multiple repositionable sofa-chairs – was the (creative) limitation from which I had to work. This limitation therefore informed my decision to place the individual flat screens around the room, and position the sofa-chairs accordingly, so that each screen could be comfortably viewed from close distance, using headphones attached to it. (Fig. 125) Where two sound options exist for the films, two pairs of headphones were provided, each playing a different version, so that the visitor could compare the two and consider how the particular soundtrack alters the affective impression of the film, while exercising his or her agency. (This was explained on a card attached to the screen but also in a free booklet accompanying the exhibition, which additionally described the individual films as well as the underlying aims of the project [**Text 3**].) I also wanted to take advantage of the large cinema screen, which was an ideal platform for the Affective Cinema collage, as a sort of digest or introduction, framing the entire work – *atmospherically* rather than explicitly – in the underlying philosophical context. The voice-over of the collage played out loud in the room (without music), providing a constant backdrop to the individual soundtracks playing through headphones, while producing a kind of meditative atmosphere in the room (comparable to the affective atmosphere during Stage 1 and Stage 3 workshops). The collage included partial transcription of the voice-over, which supported the clarity of the key words, without necessarily increasing the coherence and meaning of the text as a whole. I wanted the poetic, abstract impression of the voice-over to remain, while making sure that insufficient audibility of the words didn’t lead to unwanted ambiguity. The sofa-chairs that were not facing the individual flat screens placed around the room were instead facing the full-size cinema projection. **Video 29** gives a sense of the atmosphere inside the room. **Video 30** provides the full Affective Cinema collage without music and with partial transcription as it was presented during the exhibition.

While I had the opportunity to show the work on multiple occasions before and after the FACT exhibition (especially during academic conferences), this was a good opportunity to present the work directly to the public. The event was advertised on the FACT website, but a portion of visitors were people passing by (usually on their way from or to another FACT exhibition). While around 100 of the exhibition booklets were handed out, many visitors entered the exhibition space without much prior knowledge of what it was about other than what could be understood from a large banner standing by the door, and the enticement by an usher who had been briefed on the day. (Fig. 126)

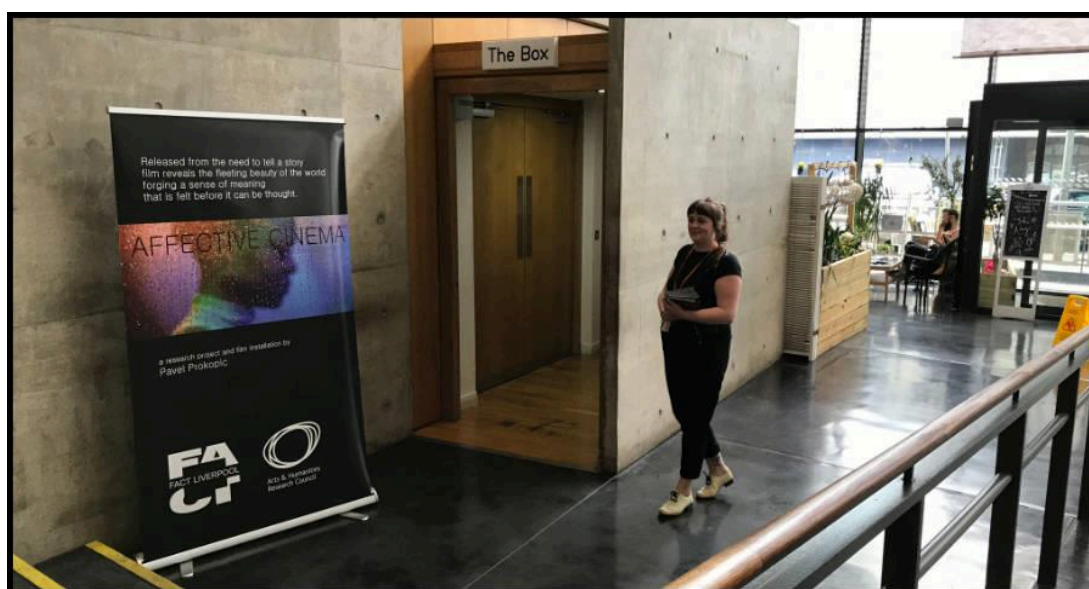


Figure 126 Affective Cinema FACT Exhibition, 'The Box' Entrance

I was present for the entire four-day duration of the exhibition and tried to talk to as many of the people who came to see the exhibition as I could. My aim was not to gather any structured, formal feedback (for reasons I explain in 5.3); however, getting a sense of the visitors' reactions informally was useful and valuable. The feedback was diverse, but it nevertheless broadly coalesced around three main categories. Those in the first category were visitors (particularly those who didn't come specifically to see the exhibition) who suggested they hadn't understood the meaning of the work. I definitely got the sense that some people had been frustrated by the dense opaqueness of the voice-over, and their cerebral engagement with it had overshadowed any possible affective engagement. (In any case, most visitors would start the exhibition by sitting on a sofa-chair facing the large cinema projection, and only then orient themselves in the

darkened space toward the individual films placed around the room, or they would simply leave the exhibition altogether at that point.) Those in the second category were people (perhaps the largest group) who discovered meaning (and interest) in the work either by forming a personal association with some of the films or by trying to decode a kind of encrypted message in it. The personal meaning was usually associated with a particular film that had ‘spoken’ to the visitor, a film that they had liked the most (on more than one occasion I learned this to be Affective Signs 1, 8 or 9); while the ‘encrypted message’ related to a sense of loose narrative connections emerging from the individual films *combined*. Finally, the third category was formed by visitors who commented (positively) on the atmosphere of the exhibition and the audio-visual appeal of the films.

On the whole, the reception of the work was very positive, and I definitely got a sense that the majority of people had been engaged and intrigued by the work. As for their specific responses, I believe that when it comes to the ‘multifaceted vagueness and indeterminacy’ of Affective Cinema, it is impossible to control or predict audience reaction, and there would not be a specific benefit in such control in the first place. If communication of a narrative, dramatic or emotional meaning is intended in a film, then the ‘success’ of this communication can be measured by the degree to which this message has been successfully delivered and received (and particular, established techniques of film construction can be mastered that maximise the chances of this success). If the intention, on the other hand, is the production of affective significance – in the way I define it throughout this thesis, and with its fundamental link to the new and unforeseeable – then such notions of success and techniques of achieving specific psychological response in the audience do not (and should not) apply. *There is no desirable or ideal audience response to Affective Cinema*. This does not mean however that the work does not signify anything: even if the filmmaker is not trying to communicate coherent meaning, he or she cannot control the *reading process* on the side of the viewer. It is inevitable that the work is going to be read *for* meaning, as well as interpreted based on prevailing intellectual/cultural schema (especially by cinema-literate or film-criticism-literate viewers); however, a specific positioning of the viewer can be *encouraged*, such as I attempted through the FACT-exhibition (fluid, non-linear)

layout and through the provision of a framing booklet. Ultimately, however, it would be very difficult to anticipate or to measure how the work enters the becoming of an individual's mind (and in which way it stirs the unique conceptual stillness accumulated through this becoming over their lifetime), and in any case, this was not the aim of this research. Beyond the grounding in Deleuze's affect (as something contained within the work itself), my primary position vis-à-vis affective significance was on the inside rather than the outside; it was the perspective of a *practitioner*, not a viewer. For me the key was to provide unique practitioner insights rooted in reflection, argument, and conceptual research, rather than to achieve (and account for) specific emotional/cognitive response in the viewer (I outline the specific results of this research process in 5.4).

5.2 *The Wider Application of Affective Cinema*

As I explain in the previous section, the primary – and ideal – presentation of Affective Cinema to the public is in the form of a multi-screen installation, where the viewer is free to move in relation to the work, whilst under the influence of the (poetic) voice-over description of the underlying concerns of the research. As suggested above, the presentation of Affective Signs on individual screens offers the option of playing the two sound versions of (some of) the films simultaneously from two pairs of headphones, so that the viewer can compare and experience the distinct activation of affects in the image by the respective music/sound-design compositions. This dual-audio presentation also contributes to the agency of the viewer in relation to the work, and it was successfully implemented during the exhibition at FACT, and later replicated on a single screen during the long-running Sound-Image exhibition at the University of Greenwich. Another successfully tested presentation format was an iPad interface attached to one of the screens at FACT, which allowed attendees to select any of the Affective Sign films – thus contributing to their experience of agency during the exhibition. This foreshadows a potential format of Affective Cinema as an online app, but also gives the option to present the entire work on a single screen with headphones at a public venue, such as during an academic conference.

Through the hermeneutic spiral, the methods of the project gravitated toward a uniquely formed sense of narrative – due to the structure of the unplanned, intuitive filming process as a journey – as Affective Signs 9 and 10 demonstrate. As I explain in 4.4, this process also gave rise to an impression of fictional characters, which can foster further narrative engagement. Therefore, through these films, Affective Cinema – and more specifically the affective atmosphere method – signals a possible wider application for the kind of art cinema practice that had inspired the aesthetic experimentation.

However, the affective nature of the project lent itself to another kind of film structure, as Affective Signs 3 and 4 were incorporated into a split-screen film presented as part of the Living Room of the Future installation at FACT (and later at the V&A museum in London), in which I had become involved as part of my residency/research extension at the art centre. The aim of this research collaboration was to explore the future of home consumption of audio-visual content, where the media on the screen dynamically alter their structure based on the viewer's behaviour and based on gathering their biometric (meta)data. This technology has clear application for a conventional narrative, but using elements of Affective Cinema for this experience – in combination with other visual work – gave the installation the desired sense of a slightly outlandish, future-oriented audio-visual artwork. The poetic voice-over narration for this film was adapted from the Affective Cinema voice-over (with additional elements recorded by the same pair of performers), which demonstrates the modularity of both the visual and audio content produced as part of the research: due to its affective nature, the work always has the potential to be recombined in new ways, and implemented in unforeseen contexts. (**Video 31** contains the film presented as part of the Living Room of the Future experience.)

This potential to engage the work in new affective structures is also demonstrated in recombining elements of Affective Sign 7 with Super 8 footage filmed during Stages 4 and 5 into a music video for Zabelov Group. (**Video 32**) Here the marked contrast between digital and analogue footage is emphasised by the contrast between slow motion and the 18-frames-per-second jittery movement of Super8, mirroring the inherent contrast between fast and slow sections of the music. The expired footage developed in Caffenol (see 1.2.5) then particularly matches the frenetic tempo of the

closing section of the piece. Furthermore, improvised moments of dialogue from the Stage 3 workshop were used as ‘affective monologue’ in another track by Zabelov Group (**Video 33**); the workshop session from which this monologue was reedited can be found in **Video 24**. This implementation of the workshop sound extends the method applied in the editing of Affective Sign 8, but also shows how the words can be completely removed from the context of the workshop and give rise to different affective wholes.

As I physically edited Found Affective Sign onto a 400ft reel of film, it has the potential to engage in new becomings by animating the strip of film during projection. This material projection act exposes the film to the contingency of the event: the film becomes slightly more worn out during each projection (see 2.3), but it can also get torn, damaged, or burned by the projection lamp. The projector makes incidental noises as the disparate sources of film – of varied age and degrees of damage – struggle at great pace through the anachronistic mechanism; such noises are especially obvious at edit points, which are materially marked by the thicker profile of the splicing tape, but also by the ‘temporal bumps’ due to improper alignment of sprockets (at that point, also, the projected field misaligns with the illuminated frame on the film strip). All this makes the projection event *a performance*: a fragile, transitory, contingent, singular event in direct, immediate contact with the audience. This nature of the screening can be emphasised and extended by complementing the projection with live music performance. This kind of presentation of Found Affective Sign was explored during an exhibition concluding the Sidney Nolan Trust residency I took part in in 2018.



Figure 127 Super8 Installation, Sidney Nolan Trust Residency

The process of physically editing film also inspired another installation piece for this exhibition: I put the Super8 film editor-viewer device on a tall stump, and placed a small guitar amplifier/speaker behind it next to a tractor (the tractor as well as the stump simply happened to be in the barn where the exhibition was taking place). A selection of obscure dramas and cartoons edited from the eclectic film reels (collected for the making of *Found Affective Sign*) could be played back and forth on the editing device, with the exhibition visitors being able to control the speed and direction of playback. (As some of the commercially available Super8 films contain a magnetic sound strip, I could utilise this low-fi, damaged source of sound by plugging the editor-viewer output into the speaker.) The box containing all the film reels acquired for the project was integrated into the installation, along with loose footage forging an umbilical link between the editor-viewer, the box of films, and the speaker/tractor. (Fig. 127) This installation therefore fully extended the material nature of the Super8 medium, incorporating it intuitively into the immediate environment, while decisively crossing the line between film and fine art.

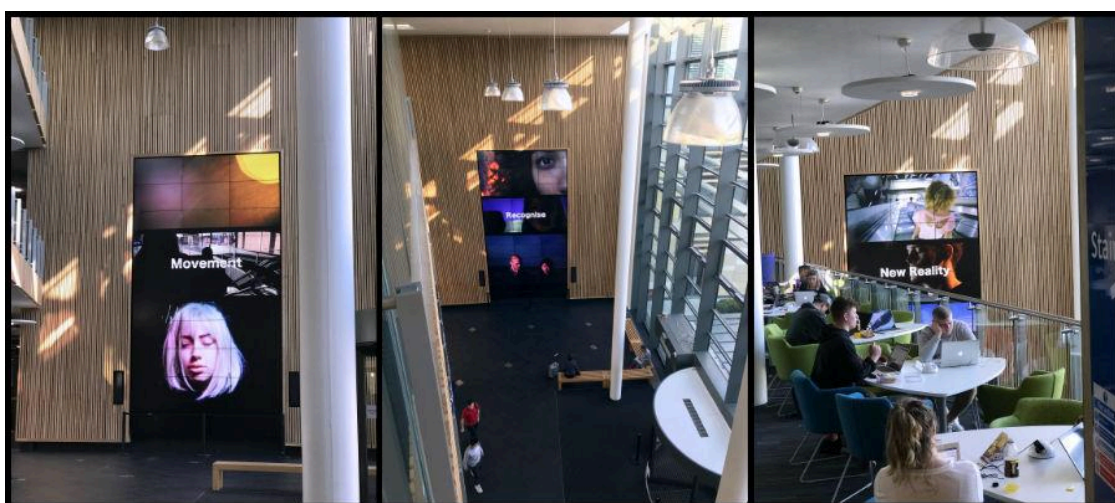


Figure 128 Affective Cinema MediaWall Installation, Bath Spa University

Finally, I adapted the Affective Cinema collage – with the addition of Super8 material filmed during Stage 5 – to a vertical split-screen format for a two-week screening on the MediaWall at Bath Spa University, where it was presented by the International Journal of Creative Media Research. The media wall consists of 27 individual flat screens (three vertical rows of nine screens) forming a grid. (Fig. 128) Adapting the work to these

dimensions was a great opportunity to experiment with the editing of the piece. The way shots can coincide simultaneously in this three-way vertical split-screen increases the complexity of the structure, introducing an additional layer of overtone resonance between intimacy and separation (see 3.1) – giving rise to a new singularity *as* affective significance. Furthermore, the vertical split-screen is ideally suited to preserve the aspect ratio of the individual Affective Signs, since the disparate aspect ratios can be unified and aligned along the vertical axis. In fact, this became the main compositional principle of the work, as I had organised the shots in the cut based on their aspect ratios, with the 1:33:1 Super8 shots at the bottom, 2:35:1 cropped shots in the middle, and the partial 2:1 cropped shots of Affective Signs 3 and 4 at the top. (**Video 34**)

As all the examples above indicate, the Affective Cinema research opens up a wide and malleable, creative space into which the research can grow. This includes narrative cinema, interactive media, music video, experimental music, live performance and fine art installation. All of these formats have the potential to reach diverse audiences in a variety of screening and exhibition contexts, generating impact far beyond academia. What is more, the exploration of these additional avenues extends the research in order to inform and inspire further inquiry and to contribute to unforeseen, innovatory artistic pursuits. In the following section, I address some of the additional possibilities stemming from the research for the future, as well as point to the areas where I haven't been able to explore its full potential given the limitations of this project.

5.3 Research Limitations and Future Potential

While the Affective Cinema practice is a direct, *defining* aspect of the research, in some ways the practice got ahead of the verbal, cognitive component of the research model. As I suggest at the outset of this conclusion, I was not always able to fully explore the research potential of the practice, whether through comprehensive reflection on all its aspects or through exhaustive contextualisation of the new insights in all possible fields of knowledge they touch upon. Paradoxically, this is because the research basis – and particularly the hermeneutic spiral methodological approach – has turned out to be a very potent inspiration for artistic/experimental film practice. While the artistic, creative

output is an essential and relevant result of practice research (giving rise to a specific kind of knowledge I discuss in 5.4.4), I was at times too curious as a practitioner not to follow the path revealed by the hermeneutic spiral further and further – wanting to catch a glimpse of the ‘new’ awaiting around the corner. This was not counterproductive in terms of ‘research’, quite the contrary; however, it perhaps was not always ‘realistic’ in terms of the time available for this specific project. Although a six-month extension was afforded by my residency at FACT, the final research period ended up being filled with many exciting practical developments (not only what I account for in my reflection on Stage 5 throughout the thesis, but also all of the outputs discussed above in 5.2). For this reason, and with the contribution of the six-month extension, the body of film work I produced exceeded the possibility to thoroughly account for everything in writing in this thesis. What is more, the ‘creative plateau’ reached through Stage 5 revealed a yet new research horizon – Stage 6, maybe Stage 7, and so on – but the line had to be drawn somewhere. Equally, many aspects of the project that I discuss in this thesis could be vastly extended and embedded in fresh conceptual and aesthetic research. Therefore, there is a lot in here that will undoubtedly inform my future researcher/practitioner pursuits; but I hope it can likewise inspire other researchers and practitioners, contributing to their specific enquiries.

One of the sides of the practice research that I could not fully contextualise and reflect upon in writing is the aspect of sound. Music and sound-design are significant parts of the project that I could merely skim over; and I am certain that I will write more on this specific aspect of Affective Cinema, perhaps in the form of journal publications. The ontological problem of digital versus celluloid film is also a subject worthy of more extended pursuit, and represents a point where the research produced more outcomes than I could justify in this thesis. The work with found footage in Found Affective Sign would likewise deserve more discussion in relation to existing research on this kind of film, especially in relation to the notion of appropriation, and this is something I will most certainly return to. Considering and reflecting on the aspect of authorship, and how the practitioner know-how, intuition and reflection-in-action combine with chance to construct a specific kind of author in Affective Cinema (including Found Affective Sign), is likewise something worthy of considerable attention, which I was not able to

allocate in this thesis. The new cinematographic methods (1.2, 3.2) and methods of working with film performance (4.3, 4.4) could be contextualised more in established practical approaches, as well as providing specific and detailed step-by-step guidance for the new methods developed through my research. While this has definitely been beyond the scope of this thesis, it is something I will most certainly return to. When it comes to further practice, and practice research resulting from this project, there is a lot of yet unexplored potential in my experimentation with film stock (following up from Stage 5), and I am particularly interested in working more with the 16mm format (as it has a distinct analogue texture while revealing more detail in the captured image of reality than Super8). Likewise, the methods of working with performance could lead to further workshops and broadening the techniques explored thus far. Ultimately, as hinted at in 5.2, the research in Affective Cinema can inform a more *overtly narrative* mode of filmmaking: exploring how the concept of affective significance (and all the related methods) can lead to novel and original modes of storytelling is definitely a logical and meaningful step that intrigues me as a filmmaker/researcher, and which I will explore at some future point.

Another avenue emerging from this research that would definitely be worth pursuing is the gathering of structured viewer feedback, perhaps by using questionnaires. As I suggest earlier, because of the way the research methodology for my project was designed in relation to its aims – as an oscillation between conceptual research and practitioner reflection, from which a hermeneutic argument could emerge – measuring audience feedback didn't play any role in this model. As part of this specific research model, I devised methods for producing affective significance, and subsequently accounted for this affective significance in writing and explained how it relates to the conceptual research in film philosophy. The research was therefore a combination of conceptual and practice/artistic inquiry, and did not aim to gather empirical data. Nevertheless, a structured audience feedback (or other scientific measurement of audience response) would be valuable in terms of establishing the connection between the methods employed in practice and specific cognitive effects in the audience. Perhaps a research project rooted in the social (or hard) sciences – rather than creative practice and philosophy – would be better positioned to conduct such gathering (or

measurement) of data, and I hope to be able to contribute with the film work, and with the rationale for affective significance, to such scientific research in the future.

Nevertheless, the specific new knowledge generated through the particular methodology that I employed on this project is justified and accounted for in the following section.

5.4 Original Contribution to Knowledge

New knowledge was generated by this practice research project in four distinct categories (outlined in the following subsections), which mirror the four research questions framing the key research aims:

- 1) What are the hermeneutic/theoretical, aesthetic/formal, and methodological conditions that lead to the production of affective significance?
- 2) In what ways can the theoretical understanding of affective significance be deepened through practice?
- 3) In what ways can the methods developed for making Affective Cinema, and shaped by this process, be applicable to experimental/art film practice?
- 4) How can the concept of affective significance be implemented as a structuring principle of a unique film work in the tradition of art/experimental cinema?

5.4.1 The Outcomes of the Hermeneutic Spiral

As Henk Borgdorff (2011) explains, in practice research (or ‘artistic research’ as he more generally refers to it), ‘the creative process forms the pathway (or part of it) through which new insights, understandings and products come into being’ (46). This has certainly been the case in Affective Cinema through the implementation of the hermeneutic spiral methodological structure (explained and outlined in the first chapter, but elaborated on in each subsequent chapter, especially in 2.3 and 4.4). The research was set up on the basis of a theoretical framework (rooted in established film theory and philosophy) combined with filmmaking methods (informed by art/experimental cinema practice, prior practitioner knowledge, as well as the specific concerns of the research related to the theoretical framework). However, through the five discrete stages of

alternating practice and reflection, in which the individual Affective Sign films were gradually produced and completed, both the theoretical framework and the practical methods have expanded, reaching more lucid insights into and understanding of affective significance. Not only were these findings uniquely obtained through practice; it was the specific – and repeated – alternation between practice and reflection, which has led to knowledge that could not have possibly been foreseen at the beginning. This is because the conclusion of each stage of the hermeneutic spiral served as the departure point for the upcoming stages of practice, and so the specific avenues embarked on in the given stage only appeared – only came into existence – from the perspective of the most recent stage. This has also had a significant influence on the main practical outcomes, through which the concerns of the research became gradually distilled. As a result, while some of the early films (Affective Signs 1-6) represent a certain exploratory phase (a kind of ‘reaching out in the dark’) of the first two stages, the later portion of the films (Signs 7-10, Found Affective Sign and the Affective Cinema collage) are the result of a more lucid understanding of affective significance – benefiting from the previously completed practice – but also a product of more *emancipated* methods of production, themselves uniquely emerging through the gradual research process.

While I elaborate on the specific new findings in relation to theory and practice in the following subsections, it is important to emphasise here that not only did the hermeneutic spiral radically condition these final outcomes; *it in itself represents a form of new knowledge*. The account of the five stages of practice and reflection – as it emerges through all the thesis chapters in relation to the research methods, contingency, cinema aesthetics and film performance – forms a unique insight into a particular practice research process in film, which can be valuable to further research (and practice research) inquiries, but also be valuable to art/experimental film practice as such. If the research was informed by the combination of established filmmaking methods, the specific philosophical framework (rooted in affect and film ontology), and the particular practice-research methodological approaches (especially the hermeneutic spiral), then one of the key outcomes of conducting research on this basis is *a novel and coherent, practice research methodology* that has relevance and validity beyond the specific

conditions of this project. The working with an event in reality by the means of intuition and reflection-in-action, maximising contingency, employing diverse, experimental filmmaking techniques (and technologies), reflecting on practice through the prism of Deleuzian philosophy *and* applying the hermeneutic spiral model represents a multifaceted, relevant practice research methodology. The individual methods are uniquely and specifically combined in this research, but knowledge and understanding can also be derived from them individually – while benefiting from their passing through the particular ‘sieve’ of this project – in order to inform other, distinct iterations of (practice) research and film/artistic practice.

5.4.2 The Theoretical Framework

The initial synthesis of (the conceptual fields surrounding) Bergson, Deleuze and Barthes (see 2.1) emerged from trying to understand the peculiar sense of affective significance in singular moments from the history of cinema, as well as the particular elements of form and style that support this effect of film. This synthesis in itself represents a form of original scholarship in film theory (rooted in the established context of literature surrounding film aesthetics and performance, contingency, affect theory and film’s ontological stillness and indexicality), resulting in the original concept of *affective significance*. Affective significance, as this thesis argues, is a particular audio-visual effect of film produced by an overtone resonance between movement and film’s ontological stillness: between contingency and (defamiliarised) elements of film style and performance. Overtone resonance, a term borrowed from Eisenstein, is essentially a complex, *unpredictable* resonance that transcends the distinction between dissonance (formal, avant-garde play) and consonance (seamless impression of reality and/or narrative engagement). The specific notion of movement (as opposed to film’s ontological stillness) is derived from Bergson’s philosophy and relates to the incessant emergence and becoming of reality (the real), which the human intellect can only perceive conceptually as stillness. The consideration of the tension between this kind of movement and how it registers on film (due to its nonhuman, mechanical vision) informed another original concept – *the echo of real movement* – which is the key constitutive element of affective significance: it represents the point where the

contingent movement of the real becomes imprinted within the still structure of film, carrying with it a surplus of meaning, a potential for rupture to the coherent, meaningful, communicative strand of the film. This encounter of real movement and stillness can lead to overtone resonance between movement and stillness – generating nonhuman affects (indeterminate, impersonal, singular feelings self-contained in the image) that can be amplified by production and post-production considerations and manipulation that enhance the non-representational nature of the image. Another original concept related to the non-representational nature of the image – and which emerged from the initial, theoretical research – is *affective film performance* (see 4.1). It is a kind of performance that – both in its effect (on the basis of post-production selection) or through the production methods leading to its conception – takes full advantage of film’s ability to capture and frame singular or contingent spatiotemporal arrangements *as significance* and to amplify affective nuances of the human body: to reveal *its nonhuman nature as the real*.

Through the alternating process of practice and reflection – as initiated by the hermeneutic spiral approach – an increased understanding of the concepts that determine Affective Cinema has been formed. The non-representational style in cinema has developed into the original concept of *affective space* and the related concepts of *intimacy and separation* (see 3.1). Affective space – fundamentally related to Merleau-Ponty’s *flesh* but also Deleuze’s *any-space-whatever* and Marks’ *haptic visuality* – is based in the idea, gradually solidified through practical exploration, that on the two-dimensional level of the (moving) image, the attributes of the original filmed space and attributes of the image merge into an emancipated, *single surface world: the new real*. Affective space makes the new real visible and apparent *as a new aesthetic reality* by dislocating coherent representation of three-dimensional (and diegetic) space, while reducing iconic and symbolic representation and exposing instead the film’s fundamental, indexical bond with the contingent real. The concept of nonhuman intimacy describes the particular *amplification and revelation of nonhuman affects* film has the ability to produce – particularly in relation to the movement of the human body – through aesthetic and technological means such as the close-up, slow motion, but also the performer’s direct look into the camera. Separation enters into overtone

resonance with intimacy by revealing, through editing, *the simultaneous affective affinity and ontological incompatibility of separate shots*, which would conventionally be linked into coherent representation of three-dimensional space and/or narrative.

All of these concepts were formulated on the basis of the continuous cross-fertilisation between practice and theory, where the conducted practice expanded upon the theoretical base – through the process of reflection – and the newly digested theory subsequently inspired and informed following stages of practice. While all the concepts are firmly rooted in existing theories and debates surrounding film ontology, aesthetics and affect, their synthesis and expansion through practice – as well as the creation of new conceptual vocabulary specific to the project – are the results of a *fundamentally creative process* inherent to the design of this research. Furthermore, as demonstrated in 2.2 and 3.2, the completed practice also *illustrates* these concepts, entering into a renewed dialogue with the research into cinema style and aesthetics. Ultimately, Found Affective Sign brings the research into form and style directly into practice by sourcing and editing various commercially available (yet obscure) film productions, and contrasting those to amateur home movies. In this way, the initially recognised effect of affective significance in film – and the possible instances of affective space, intimacy and separation – are pushed further, through practice, beyond critically recognised and widely distributed works of cinema.

The insight into the indexical relation between film and reality has been expanded by employing both digital and photochemical processes, and by combining and contrasting these processes during production. The decision to use Super8 in the later stages of the project (in order to compare the related processes and results to the digital format solely used until that point) was informed by theoretical debates in film ontology surrounding the problem of indexicality of digital and celluloid media (discussed in 2.3). The resulting practice represents an original contribution to this debate by generating new insights into film/digital indexicality through the reflection on practice, while using the newly produced visual material as evidence and illustration. Furthermore, the use of film stock expanded the understanding of contingency *beyond* the filmed reality and into the medium itself, producing findings through reflection on the embodied

encounter with the physical medium (through physical editing, chemical development, projection, but also during production). The application of Super8 film has also altered the understanding of affective space (see 3.2.4), where the material texture of the image can be seen as contributing to aesthetic defamiliarisation from an ordinary impression of reality, while adding to nonhuman intimacy through a sense of direct physical encounter between the photochemical, sensitive surface of the film and the filmed reality/performer. These findings would be impossible to obtain merely through theoretical considerations; or at least, they simply hadn't emerged until film stock became employed on the project – an emergence that was *a direct result* of practical experimentation and reflection on practice.

The **Affective Cinema** collage – as the final outcome of the hermeneutic spiral – represents an embodiment of the gradually evolved theoretical framework directly in practice. The film juxtaposes affectively significant pieces of film from across the project with a voice-over that summarises the philosophical basis of the research. Through intimate, close voice recording (employed elsewhere as dialogue dubbing; see 3.2.7 and 4.3.5), and in creating points of resonance between the male and female voices by doubling up and synchronising the separately recorded speech (split between the two stereo channels), a balance is struck between the signifying nature (and the meaning) of the words and their affective impact *as sound*. In this way, the voice-over becomes an inherent part of the aesthetic/affective film structure – akin to music – rather than a mere rational account or explication of the theoretical basis of the project. At the same time, the singular unity between the affectively significant moving images, the affective/intimate sound of the voices and the meaning of the words creates *a new kind of non-rational insight* into the philosophical basis of the project that simply could not be expressed through language alone.

5.4.3 New Practitioner Knowledge

The practical filmmaking methods I employed on the project represent a realm of new knowledge relevant to film practice (experimental practice, but also more conventional, narrative drama production) and practice research in film. My approach to practice was

informed by established methods of film production (primarily shaped by my practitioner knowledge, experience and education), but also by the specific aims of the project. These aims nevertheless relate to fundamental, ontological aspects of film, such as film's distinctive potential to capture and reveal contingency (and the nuances of the movement of the human body), and to shape the imprint of reality through temporal and stylistic means. The project-specific aims and considerations therefore have objective validity and applicability to broader filmmaking, since all film production has the inherent opportunity to utilise tools unique to the medium: to communicate, produce meaning – or to transcend meaning and communication – in a way only film is able to do. The employed methods gradually evolved and crystallised, through repeated experimentation, testing and reflection – extending and re-shaping established production rationales in the process; leading to the formulation of novel directorial and film production techniques.

The objective to maximise the opportunities for contingency to register on film led to a variety of productive experiments. During Stage 3, I employed complex lighting techniques to create unpredictable luminous structures (such as the feedback loop of light between camera and its image output projected in the background – discussed in 2.2.3 and 3.2.1, and demonstrated in Affective Sign 8). I combined this approach to lighting with multiple cameras filming simultaneously to produce disparate iterations of affective space formed primarily by light. During Stage 2, I designed a two-camera rig to obtain two views of the scene simultaneously (see 1.2.2 and 3.2.2), giving rise to two instances of affective space (differing in focal length, camera type and frame rate), while increasing contingency through 'unconscious' operation of one of the cameras (which is not attended to by the operator but instead frames its image based on the incidental path set by the other camera). During Stage 5, the two-camera rig transformed into a set-up with the iPhone attached to the Super8 camera, obtaining two (ontologically) different images, but also embedding the scarce Super8 footage within a non-discriminating, continuous digital capture (see 3.2.4, and [Video 26](#) or [Video 27](#)). This experimentation helped to expand the theoretical/ontological understanding of film, but it also revealed particular aesthetic possibilities of film that can inform further practice.

The editing of the resulting films diverged from the conventional motivation to focalise communication or symbolic meaning, or to support narrative and increase spatial coherence, by using affective significance as the structuring principle (see 1.2.6 and 3.2.6). Affective significance gives the films a molecular rather than molar structure – a structure in which individual parts (shots) constitute immediate affective connections without adding up to a *coherent whole*. Affective significance, as a structuring principle, preserves the sense of singularity and becoming in the images rather than submitting them to habitual order. This editing method was also applied to Found Affective Sign (see 1.2.5), combining non-linear digital and linear-material editing processes to shape the film in a unique way: the film's structure was decided digitally, but implemented physically; the final digital scan of the film therefore bears *physical marks of the editing process*, such as the visibility of the splicing tape and the misalignment of frames between the disparate sources of footage (see 2.2.5 and 2.3). Furthermore, the 'uninformed' camerawork aesthetic observed in the *specific* amateur home movies (later edited into Found Affective Sign) inspired the approach to Affective Sign 10 – leading to a unique inspiration and origination of a camera technique, which is nevertheless well documented (as suggested in 3.2.2; Figs. 78 and 79) and can therefore influence broader filmmaking practice.

The work with post-production sound likewise forms new practitioner insights (see 1.2.7 and 3.2.7). Collaboration with four music composers/sound designers was established to produce distinct and diverse soundtracks for the films, inspired by the immediate affects in the images, rather than aiming to enhance meaning, coherence or emotion. In many cases two sound versions were produced of the same film, which gives rise to a unique contrast between the potential for activation of singular affects in the moving images. This contrast has been fully exposed by presenting these films to the public with two pairs of headphones, providing the sound versions simultaneously (see 5.1 and 5.2). Post-production dubbing was also implemented experimentally, which added a layer of overtone resonance to the films (by combining the indexical image of the performer with re-synchronised voice recorded at an unnatural, close proximity) and thus amplified affective significance. The dubbing method, which set up a *mimetic*

relationship between production and post-production performance is well documented (as suggested in 4.3.5) and forms practitioner know-how applicable to wider filmmaking practice.

The *affective atmosphere* method (see 4.4) represents the most significant, original outcome of the research in relation to film practice. As it gradually evolved through the hermeneutic spiral, affective atmosphere framed and reframed the novel approaches to working with performers employed on the project, absorbed the relationship between cinematography and reality of affective space, and ultimately defined the temporal/narrative structure of the resulting films. The method of directing performers, intrinsic in affective atmosphere, is the focused and present becoming with reality that is not interrupted by separation between periods of filming and not filming. This approach instead transcends the separation between actuality and pro-filmic reality, and it equally transcends the separation between the habitual effect of the self and the representation of a fictional character. *The borders between subjects, and between reality, the filming process and the aesthetic world of the image, become blurred as part of the affective atmosphere.* This unique approach was enhanced and supported by my training in acting and hypnotherapy (acquired as part of the research), which allowed me to help performers remove their self-consciousness and become immersed in and affected by their environment, but also to participate directly in the affective atmosphere as a performer.

Affective atmosphere increased the insight into established acting/directing methods (such as the use of ‘action verbs’), whilst incorporating novel methods tested throughout the research (mimicry/shadow performance and breathing techniques; see 4.3). The ‘flow through reality’ approach to production became integral to the affective atmosphere in the final two stages of practice (as opposed to schematic execution of a script through filming multiple takes of the same action, as is the case in conventional fiction film production), leading to the original conception of a *rhizomatic script*. It is a kind of film script – inspired by Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy – that radically opens up the production to the becoming of reality, rather than delimiting or effacing the real by filtering it through a preconceived blueprint. Ultimately, the affective

atmosphere approach has defined the original structure of Affective Signs 9 and 10 *beyond affective significance*, to produce a kind of narrative that is neither fiction nor documentary: it is a narrative of the *affective cinema*.

5.4.4 The Resulting Work of Film Art

Borgdorff (2011) makes the claim that ‘the experiences and insights that artistic research delivers are embodied in the resulting art practices and products. In part, these material outcomes are non-conceptual and non-discursive, and their persuasive quality lies in the performative power through which they broaden our aesthetic experience, invite us to fundamentally unfinished thinking, and prompt us towards a critical perspective on what there is’ (47). This resonates with Nelson’s (2006) view that ‘what might be termed “insider” practitioner perspectives have been developed in some practice-as-research work, if only as one mode of symbolic articulation (not necessarily in words) of evidence of process. But there is a case for saying such perspectives constitute a form of “know-how”, knowledge in its own right’ (107). These statements hold true in the case of Affective Cinema, where the non-linear structure made out of 12 short films encapsulates and embodies the research in a non-verbal, artistic form – preserving the sense of gradual development of the work through the hermeneutic spiral, while allowing (and encouraging) access to it out of sequence. In this way, the viewer can formulate a personal narrative link between the 12 films, finding both meaningful and affective connections – perhaps recognising patterns and flows of rhythm and intensity *across the whole work*, which were not intentionally inscribed into it but which are nevertheless a possible (or perhaps a likely) outcome, in light of the overall research approach.

Affective Cinema presents original works of film art structured on the basis of affective significance, emerging from the art and experimental filmmaking traditions accounted for in the principal chapters of this thesis. Even without the explicit, rational framework of this thesis, the work carries with it and produces original, tacit, *affective* knowledge in its own right. It is a kind of knowledge that emerges from – and is contained within – the direct contact with the work: a momentary embodied knowledge sparked through

the *becoming with the work*. The rigorous, rational arguments of this thesis and the affective significance of the films mutually support, complement and illuminate each other. Ultimately, however, the self-contained audio-visual structures have the full capacity to exist independently of their explanation and justification, while reaching diverse (non-academic) audiences, and being subject to unforeseen critical appraisal. Affective Cinema carries with it (or it can give rise to) an unfinished, dynamic feeling of significance that emerges from the contact between the nonhuman real and the nonhuman vision of the camera – a contact initiated and controlled by a set of research-specific methods and theoretical/aesthetic concerns, but also by the practitioner knowledge and intuition, the authorial choices and creativity, and the subjective limitations and investments of the filmmaker.

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Filmography

- 8 1/2* (1963) Directed by Federico Fellini, Italy, France.
- Andrei Rublev* (1966) Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, Soviet Union.
- Antichrist* (2009) Directed by Lars von Trier, International coproduction.
- As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2000) Directed by Jonas Mekas, USA.
- Barry Lyndon* (1975) Directed by Stanley Kubrick, USA.
- Beijing* (2009) Directed by Sarah Morris, USA.
- Bitter Lake* (2015) Directed by Adam Curtis, UK.
- Blade Runner* (1982) Directed by Ridley Scott, USA.
- Black Peter (Černý Petr)* (1964) Directed by Miloš Forman, Czechoslovakia.
- Blow-Up* (1966) Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, UK, Italy, USA.
- Body Song* (2003) Directed by Simon Pummell, UK.
- Boulder Blues and Pears and...* (1992) Directed by Stan Brakage, USA.
- Co/Ma* (2004) Directed by Mike Figgis, Slovenia.
- Come and See (Idi i smotri)* (1985) Directed by Elem Klimov, Soviet Union.
- Contempt (Le Mépris)* (1963) Directed by Jean-Luc Godard, France, Italy.
- Cremator (Spalovač Mrtvol)* (1969) Directed by Juraj Herz, Czechoslovakia.
- Daisies (Sedmikrásky)* (1966) Directed by Vera Chytilova, Czechoslovakia.
- Death in Venice (Morte a Venezia)* (1971) Directed by Luchino Visconti, Italy, France, USA.
- Decasia* (2002) Directed by Bill Morrison, USA.
- Diary of a Pregnant Woman (L'opéra-mouffe)* (1958) Directed by Agnès Varda, France.
- Double Life of Veronique, The (La double vie de Véronique)* (1991) Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski, France, Poland.
- Elephant* (2003) Directed by Gus Van Sant, USA.
- Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) Directed by Stanley Kubrick, UK, USA.
- Face (Visage)* (2009) Directed by Ming-liang Tsai, International coproduction.
- Fitzcarraldo* (1982) Directed by Werner Herzog, West Germany, Peru.
- Fuses* (1969) Directed by Carole Schneemann, USA.
- Good Work (Beau Travail)* (1999) Directed by Claire Denis, France.
- Grizzly Man* (2005) Directed by Werner Herzog, USA.
- Gummo* (1997) Directed by Harmony Korine, USA.
- Hapax Legomena III: Critical Mass* (1971) Directed by Hollis Frampton, USA.
- Heart of Glass (Herz aus Glas)* (1976) Directed by Werner Herzog, Germany.
- Hypernormalisation* (2016) Directed by Adam Curtis, UK.
- I am Cuba (Soy Cuba)* (1964) Directed by Mikhail Kalatozov, Cuba, Soviet Union.
- I am Cuba, the Siberian Mammoth (Soy Cuba, O Mamute Siberiano)* (2005) Directed by Vicente Ferraz, Brazil.
- Innocence* (2004) Directed by Lucile Hadzihalilovic, International coproduction.
- Ivan the Terrible (Ivan Groznyy)* (1944) Directed by Sergei Eisenstein, Soviet Union.
- Lacombe Lucien* (1974) Directed by Louis Malle, France.
- Last Movie: Stanley Kubrick & Eyes Wide Shut, The* (1999) Directed by Paul Joyce, USA.
- Leaving Las Vegas* (1995) Directed by Mike Figgis, USA.
- Lost Highway* (1997) Directed by David Lynch, USA, France.

Man and a Woman, A (Un homme et une femme) (1966) Directed by Claude Lelouch, France.

Mirror (Zerkalo) (1975) Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, Soviet Union.

Miss Julie (1999) Directed by Mike Figgis, USA, UK.

Movie, A (1958) Directed by Bruce Conner, USA.

Nostalghia (1982) Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, Italy, Soviet Union.

On the Waterfront (1954) Directed by Elia Kazan, USA.

Our Trip to Africa (Unsere Afrikareise) (1966) Directed by Peter Kubelka, Austria.

Persona (1966) Directed by Ingmar Bergman, Sweden.

Pickpocket (1959) Directed by Robert Bresson, France.

Private Century (Soukromé Století) (2006) Directed by Jan Sikel, Czech Republic.

Raven on the Jetty, The (2014) Directed by Erik Knudsen, UK.

Red Desert (Il deserto rosso) (1964) Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, Italy, France.

Reel Five (1999) Directed by Stan Brakhage, USA.

Run Lola Run (Lola rennt) (1998) Directed by Tom Tykwer, Germany.

Self Made (2011) Directed by Gillian Wearing, UK.

Stalker (1979) Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, Soviet Union.

Station to Station (2015) Directed by Doug Aitken, USA.

Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One (1968) Directed by William Greaves, USA.

Taking Off (1971) Directed by Milos Forman, USA.

Three Colors: Blue (Trois couleurs: Bleu) (1993) Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski, France, Poland.

Tree of Life, The (2011) Directed by Terrence Malick, USA.

Two or Three Things I Know About Her (2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle) (1967) Directed by Jean-Luc Godard, France.

Under the Skin (2013) Directed by Jonathan Glazer, USA, UK, Switzerland.

Visions in Meditation (1990) Directed by Stan Brakhage, USA.

Visions in Meditation #3: Plato's Cave (1990) Directed by Stan Brakhage, USA.

Visions in Meditation #4: D.H. Lawrence (1990) Directed by Stan Brakhage, USA.

Visitors (2013) Directed by Godfrey Reggio, USA.