

INT. UEL MATRIX LAB, TUES. APRIL 29TH, 2014

15 Screens are mounted across the long wall of the black box theater in a low arch. From blackness, they suddenly come to life: 5, 4, 3, 2--BEEP. Then a dramatic black-and-white '1', sampled from Man With A Movie Camera, fills all screens.

The screens separate out into different opening montage shots from MWAMC: the theater coming to life... curtains rise, seats come down, the orchestra prepares, the projectionist loads... expectation. In general, the center five screens stay black most of the time until the human appears later and occupies them.

HUMAN

(O.S.)

Let's talk about time...

Black. The horizontal line of 13 screens show separate panels of Timecodes: frames stopping and starting.

HUMAN

(OS)

It is strange that the photograph came before the movie, because the photo is, in a way, more revolutionary. We are surrounded every day by moving images-- swimming in time, everything in motion, living and dying, mixing and breaking apart... what is truly rare is for something to stop... A past that endures to the present.

A photo of Roland Barthes' mother from Camera Lucida. Then BattleShip Potempkin stopping and starting.

HUMAN

(os)

Roland Barthes said something like that... the strange difference between the film and the film still... once the image starts moving we cannot take it all in... it's thundering denotation constantly demands our attention. The movie shot has its own time. Its own durée, as Henri Bergson terms it. If we close our eyes, we might just miss it.

Muybridge horses go to BLACK. Then La Jetée opens its eyes.

(CONTINUED)

HUMAN

(os)

The movie is so... life
like. Spooky.

Old Muybridge animation of girl dancing.

HUMAN

(os)

Looking at the oldest movies, from
over a century ago, I cannot
resolve the aliveness of the image
with the fact that all involved,
including the subject, are long
long dead.

Back to MWAMC. The little animated camera comes on stage
and the audience gawks.

HUMAN

(os)

There was a lot of excitement when
movies came out. Filmmakers
thought it would be a new universal
language, replacing national
languages, libraries, museums... a
new way to communicate
thought. Sergei Eisenstein
predicted, in 1929, that it would
bring about "the realization of
revolution in the general history
of culture."

Odessa steps sequence, montage pulled apart across
screens. This transitions to selections of avant garde
films... Meekus, Brakhage, Sharits...

HUMAN

(os)

They were mainly excited about
montage-- that crashing together of
moving images into one another. It
was a revolution of
perception. Though the film editor
Walter Murch compares it to the
blinking of our eyes, there's
really nothing like it in
life. One moment you are
perceiving a certain place and time
and a 24th-of-a-second later you're
somewhere else... If it's like
anything, it's like thinking. And
that was part of the excitement.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HUMAN (cont'd)
Thought communicated right there on
the screen.

A crash cut to Hitchcock-like suspense cut (climbing the
stairs... the knife flashes...)

HUMAN
(os)
And the same thing can be said
about the sound film-- this
dragging of an entire orchestra
along with you everywhere to emote
all over everything you see...
juxtaposing and communicating
emotion without language.

Rambo dramatically turns his head along with an orchestra
swell.

HUMAN
But what about multichannel? What
about this?

The HUMAN dramatically walks out from behind a black
curtain... we realize the BLACK was, in fact, a curtain
behind which he was standing. The HUMAN fills the central 5
screens-- the left and right show his hands while gesturing,
the central three, stacked vertically, show his body.

HUMAN
(waving his hands)
This is more of a cubist
gibberish...

Henri Bergson writes about the
'multiplicity peculiar to time'...
the way we are surrounded in life
by durations and experience them
all within our own... sitting by a
river, the sun shines, the birds
sing, we while away our thoughts,
each in their own time but
enveloping the others'

Some kind of spatial montage of durations... birds, etc.

HUMAN
Time isn't a clock, but more like
sugar dissolving in water and us
waiting for it to happen-- if you
like that sort of thing.

My own multichannel films cut up: Double 8 turned sideways, Scopophilia, Distance Observer, Figgis' Timecode, all leading to Muybridge animations from Tesseract.

HUMAN

(shaking his hands, looking around)

Multiple videos endure next to eachother... if Roland Barthes thought just one screen was overwhelming, this is multiply so-- more denotation and connotation than we can perceive or predict, an overflowing constantly changing, contagious and erotic, never fully seen, never resting or stopping for us to take it all in.

All the frames stop. BLACK, all screens. The Human re-appears, his face broken up amongst many screens. Some are replaced with examples in line.

HUMAN

It is something we are used to... our contemporary multi-tasking, multi-screen, multi-device network living. The overflowing of juxtaposition and durations has become a normal part of our lives.

Two King Kongs, train leaving station, man of the moon, magician, Godzilla and Other, transitioning to Campus' Three Transitions, Mirror Series, Tango, Zbig's Odessa Steps, transitioning to MIT Jumbotron, Million Dollar Homepage, Instagram, Tumblr.

HUMAN

This mechanical juxtaposition of time really got going when the image was electrified. For about half a century, we've had windows of time piped in to our lives via an electric image. And that image has become more complicated with effects. Live and planned replacements and juxtapositions of media, 'real' and 'virtual', Melies tugging against Lumiere. And for the past 20 years these screens and cameras have been networked to talk with eachother.

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Multiple AR examples: 52Card Psycho and Good Bad Ugly cubes, AR museum/moma, Pappagiannis book, Levelhead... AR presentations, Minority Report, Museum screens, Google Glass. The HUMAN re-appears in the center 4 screens.

HUMAN

These are examples of Augmented Reality projects-- a newish medium which can loosely be described as live video in which the border between effects and mediation, between a 'real' and a 'virtual', is exploited and exposed... GPS located virtual objects, image recognition books, toys and installations.

You could say that AR is the first truly electric image medium-- not just movies broadcast over electric wires, or enhanced through effects, but a medium that looks at itself, that takes live manipulation as its essence and material, and pulls apart the vectors of mediation and effects that have been with us since Lumiere vs Melies. And it is a medium caught up in contemporary life-- a touchstone for imaginations of what image media will become: multi-media publications, mediated museum commentary, propositional design for mediated lifestyle, thought police...

In all of these iterations, what is exemplified in AR is the borders between real and virtual, live and effects. The space between one screen of perception and another. A new type of montage.

Some kind of summing up of examples... they play backwards ending with Muybridge's horses running across the screen... the human is slowly replaced, piece by piece, and finally his top-monitor head.

HUMAN

My point is that there's a vector here. We've been trying to wrest some type of communication from the moving image for more than a

(MORE)

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HUMAN (cont'd)

century, through montage, through screens, through effects, networking and juxtaposition. We are now living in an age of mechanical juxtaposition-- information streams and images colliding based on architectures, algorithms, random placements and indexes-- a multiplicity of durations and frames within frames, and AR is like a portrait of contemporary multiplicity. Not the river and the birds, but the computer and us, uncomfortably juxtaposed together...

I don't know if this is an affirmation, or a disappointment. There was a dream that montage would bring about new thought, but an expectation that the new thoughts would be somehow controlled by us, and not the medium. Instead we seem to have sunk deeper in to the movie, inhabiting the cut. Our lives have become the movies themselves, disparate times and places networked together inside our own perceptions, durations, lives. We now live in the space between the screens, between the shots. Inside the cut.