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Ingmar Bergman in the museum? Thresholds, limits, conditions of possibility

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Cinema is part of contemporary life; there is no barrier between them.
But this dialogue between visual forms of representation,
this new relationship between the cinema and the museum, this is a problem for me.
(Victor Erice)

'THE CINEMA IS DEAD—LONG LIVE THE CINEMA (IN THE MUSEUM)'

For several decades now, the cinema's demise has been presented as a fact: at first, television took away the family audience, then the video recorder killed off the neighbourhood cinemas, and now digitisation has broken the indexicality of the photographic image, undermining its "documentary" value by replacing the optico-chemical link to physical reality with numerical code. News of the cinema's death is thus no longer new, and some will say that it is greatly exaggerated: the hegemonic might of Hollywood movies reigns unabated, but young *auteurs* continue to emerge in Asian countries, Latin America and the Middle-East, and a myriad of festivals show new films from all over the world—even from "old" Europe—to crowded venues.

Yet clearly, a certain cinema is no more: the great masters of the European art cinema of the post-war period are either dead or fell silent long ago: Rossellini, Visconti, Fellini; Hitchcock, Welles, Bunuel; Fassbinder, Pasolini, Kieslowski, and now Antonioni and Bergman have passed away. Only in France do Alain Resnais, Eric Rohmer, Jacques Rivette, Jean-Marie Straub and Jean-Luc Godard still occasionally make films, yet they are among the ones most eloquently melancholy about the "death" of cinema.

Should one revive this heroic past, not just at retrospectives in cinematheques and with university film courses? Open the fine arts museums? No contemporary exhibition can do without the moving image, either in the form of video and installation art, or serving as educational-informative support; so why not make museums the permanent home of cinema? Some cinephiles will say that this is how it should be. The cinema, finally come of age as *the* art form of the 20th century, has earned the right to enter into the traditional temple of the arts. The "death of cinema" actually makes it easier. We now know who are the masters and which are the canonical masterpieces. We can begin to study them afresh, with the eyes of art historians or "image-anthropologists". The archive and the museum can and must take over from the film studio, the distributor and the exhibitor, to save, restore, preserve and *valorise*: as artworks as well as heritage and cultural patrimony. Not unlike in previous periods of civilisation, when the (primary economic) use-value of an object is exhausted, a film, after its commercial run has ended, can enter into different cycles of the value chain, moving from "commerce" to "culture" and "art". It can

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become part of a collection, acquire aesthetic status as a unique artefact, or attain the aura of a personal work, thanks to the *auteur*'s stylistic signature. Others will argue that these very moves constitute an act of betrayal, or even "theft". The cinema was made for the people, and belongs to the people; films are products of an industry and their commodity-status is an essential part of their historical meaning. As "public memory, privatised" and as "designs for living", they advertise if not always the moral life, then the "good life", for everyone: cinema the democratic art. The afterlife of films and filmmakers, if it cannot be the big screen, should be television, the Internet, every medium and on any platform, including the ever more readily available DVDs, with their "bonuses", extras and other enticements to consumption. Cynics (or realists) will conclude that the musealisation of the cinema suits both parties. It adds cultural capital to the cinematic heritage and redeems its lowly origins in popular entertainment, but it also adds new audiences to the museum, where the video monitor and the moving image—market-research prove it—retain the visitors' attention several seconds longer than the framed painting or the free-standing, static sculpture. And it puts the intellectual and financial resources of a century-old institution (usually supported by the State) behind something as fragile and perishable as celluloid, when "the industry" is at best prepared to digitally re-master the cult classics, and thus falsifies not only the historic record, but in the rush for returns, obliterates the material traces of an otherwise irrecoverable "time past, stored" more than ever in urgent need to be "re-stored", rather than re-packaged.

So, when the cinema enters the museum, matters are not straightforward. Different actor-agents, power-relations and policy agendas, different competences, egos and sensibilities, different elements of the complex puzzle that is the contemporary art world and its commercial counterpart come into play. Other considerations are also pertinent: for today's practicing artists, photography, film, video, the digital media are the paint, pencil clay or bronze of their predecessors—in other words, their primary materials and natural tools of the trade. And like artists before them, they consider these predecessors fair game: to appropriate, re-use, parody, plunder, plagiarise or pay homage to. Such is especially the case for the cinematic heritage, which belongs to everyone. If Surrealism, Dada, Pop art and Fluxus have demonstrated how to recycle the materials and commodities of the first industrial age as found objects, ready-mades and "junk", to be displaced and re-coded as both art and anti-art, then moving images of the first 100 years of cinema, as they enter the museum, are necessarily also "found footage", whatever their provenance: anonymous or authored, from a well-known classic or a home movie.

This in itself can be the cause of several dilemmas. Installation artists are now often trained as filmmakers, bringing to their work an extensive knowledge of cinema history, as well as of avant-garde film or "expanded cinema" practices. What relation do they entertain with the works of such acknowledged *auteurs* as listed above? Is Douglas Gordon's *24-Hour Psycho* a homage, an auto-pilot remake or a late-night tv-stupor-induced pastiche of Hitchcock's film, which itself migrated from "schlock" (in 1960) to "masterpiece" (since the 1980)? Or how does *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) feature in Pierre Huyghe's *The Third Memory* (1999): as an authored work by Sidney Lumet, famously starring Al Pacino, or as the "first memory/first reality" that has substituted itself for John Wojtowicz's own recollection of his attempted bank-robbery and hostage-taking? At one and the same time "found footage" and "authored texts", "works" and "worlds", such films are "fragments", even if shown in the museum in their entirety: the museum is no cinema and the cinema no museum, not least because of the different time economies, obliging the viewer in the museum to "sample" a film, rather than make it the occasion for "a night at the movies"; but also because the institutions and discourses of which each is a part, has its cultural matrix located elsewhere, in distinct "public spheres", with different constituencies.

The dilemma of contending public spheres is equally acute for the avant-garde filmmakers from the 1960s and 1970s (often politically committed to fusing art and life), whose films suddenly could no longer count on screenings either in *art-et-essai* cinemas or on late-night television programmes. A "happy few" found a second life as installation artists, commissioned to create new work by

curators of international art shows like the Kassel documenta. Especially since Catherine David in 1997 invited filmmakers from France, Germany, Belgium and Britain to documenta X—among them Harun Farocki, Ulrike Ottinger, Sally Potter, Chantal Akerman, Johan Grimonprez, as well as H.J. Syberberg and J.L. Godard—the crossover has continued at the Venice Biennale, the Whitney Biannial, at Carnegie Mellon and many other venues. These filmmakers-turned-installation artists are now usually named side by side with artists-turned-filmmakers like Fischli and Weiss, Johan Grimonprez, William Kentridge, Matthew Barney, Tacita Dean, Pipilotti Rist, or Sam Taylor-Wood.

THE FILM AUTEUR AS MUSEUM ARTIST

Bearing these challenges in mind, how then can one imagine Ingmar Bergman "enter" the museum, a director whose "faithful wife"—in his own words—was the theatre, and whose "mistress" was the cinema, who "lived" music, loved and staged opera, but claimed rarely if ever to have set foot in a museum? Can it be done, should it be done? While he was still alive, he might well have tried to sabotage such an enterprise, seeing neither special urgency nor purpose to it. Were one to persist, however, and consider the venture a long overdue homage to one of the "great artists" of the 20th century (occasioned by what would have been his 90th birthday on 14 July 2008), the precedent would be Alfred Hitchcock. Hitchcock was the first—mainstream, popular, albeit still "European"—director to receive a major museum's accolade, the exhibition "Hitchcock et l' Art: Coincidences fatales", shown in 2000/2001 in Montreal and at the Centre Pompidou Paris. While not without stirring controversy, it set a new standard of how to present the work of a film director in the museum. But Hitchcock had already been the "subject" of another exhibition, "Notorious—Alfred Hitchcock and Contemporary Art", at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, in 1999, where some 14 artists were assembled, with (in some cases, specially commissioned) work based on Hitchcock's films. Since then, Hitchcock-inspired art has itself become something of a genre, in turn ripe for pastiche, as in Johan Grimonprez' "Looking for Alfred" (2007).

With Bergman, however, one can also take one's cue from another (more conventional, if still exceptionally rich) exhibition, devoted to Stanley Kubrick in Frankfurt in 2004 (and subsequently touring Berlin, Melbourne, Zurich and Rome): photos both personal and from studio locations, film fragments, home movies, cameras, special effects devices, props from the sets, scripts, letters, director's sketches, drafts, as well as documentation of all the many unfinished and abandoned projects. Given the existence of an archive at the Ingmar Bergman Foundation, and in light of Bergman's 60-odd feature films (not counting television productions, plays, scripts, books and notebooks) produced during a career spanning almost as many years as he made films, the material objects, photographs and written documents amassed in the course of such a "life-work" can easily fill a major exhibition space.

It is also possible *not* to take Bergman at his word about his indifference to the visual arts, and go through his films, on the lookout for paintings, sculptures, *objets d'art*. Very soon it becomes evident how precise an eye he (and his art-directors or set designers) had for the dramatic or ironic uses of sculpture, as well as for staging scenes that are clearly meant to invoke pictorial traditions, ranging from Nordic masters of sea and landscapes, French impressionists, to directly citing compositions from the German Caspar David Friedrich and the Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershoi (of whom Bergman owned two works). A film like *The Passion of Anna* (1969), not normally regarded as one of his masterpieces, reveals itself to be a particular rich source for studying Bergman's affinity with landscape painting, with the Dutch still-life tradition and the Danish school of interiors (besides Hammershoi, it is Carl Vilhelm Holsoe who comes to mind).

Is this enough to make Bergman a museum artist, in the sense of placing him in the mainstream of modern art-movements, like Luis Bunuel or Jean Cocteau? Does it shift aesthetic coordinates and moral perspectives, allowing one to see his work afresh, as Dominique Paini and Guy Cogeval did for Hitchcock (supported, it should be said, by two decades of a veritable "Hitchcock industry" of critical commentary, scholarly publications and academic conferences)? Or, returning to the comparison with Kubrick, who for most of his life had been the great recluse,

making—few and far between—"Hollywood" films out of a country estate in England, and leaving a correspondingly large number of aborted projects: does Bergman hold the same mystery and leave similarly unrealised projects? He had been such a promoter of his own "family secrets", had been so flamboyantly autobiographical throughout his life, had had so many (television) films devoted to himself, and so many artist-friends to turn his late scripts into films, that it is hard to see how the need (or desire) for an exhibition could be born from the lack of primary information.

More promising, therefore, would seem the other initiative associated with Hitchcock: bring together artists inspired by his work, or under the director's spell, or who might feel provoked into wrestling with his (at times, especially in his native Sweden, oppressive) influence. Such a dialogue may take the form of parody, to shake off with a laugh the pessimism and gloom that pervaded some of his most famous films, or it may want to engage with the raw emotional violence, the physicality, the sheer presence of bodies in his films. It is also worthwhile once more to listen to Bergman's soundtracks and "see" them as palpably as his images. And audiences who enjoy David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* will surely be drawn into the "mind-games" a film like *Persona* plays with his characters and audiences alike. After fellow directors have had their say (Bergman is amply present not just in Woody Allen and David Lynch, but also in Andrej Tarkowsky, Eric Rohmer, Robert Altman, Paul Schrader and Atom Egoyan), many of whom have paid tribute in print as well (special journal issues on his 80th birthday, obituaries in 2007), it is now up to a new generation of filmmaker-artists or artist-filmmakers, to re-discover Bergman, praise him—or to bury him.

EVENT AND ENCOUNTER: THE DISPOSITIFS

But there may be another way: to try and make Bergman's films themselves speak the language of the museum, but in the idiom of the contemporary practice par excellence, that of the "installation", combining object with process, place with temporal duration, and engendering a different relation between viewer and artefact, thanks to the "event".

This then, is the challenge: not to find a home for a homeless artist, nor to make the museum take over the task of a cinematheque, but to bring about a different kind of event and encounter. It necessitates, however, a brief reminder of the very real difficulties and inherent contradictions that confront the moving image inside the museum. The cinema and the gallery space are, both institutionally and philosophically, two distinct, if not antagonistic visual arrangements and spatio-temporal dispositifs, their differences commonly expressed in the juxtaposition of "black box" and "white cube". Each space is culturally predetermined, has its own historically grown, but deeply ingrained traditions, following particular architectonic ordering principles or "logics", which amount to distinct ontologies. Especially the cinematic dispositif requires a unique layout and geometry, in the way screen, auditorium space and projector are aligned in relation to each other, in order for the "cinema-effect" to occur. Often compared to Plato's parable of the Cave, this cinematic apparatus—many times theorised and deconstructed in the way it is predicated on projection, requiring fixity of spectatorial position and implying a particular distribution of darkness, light and illuminated surface—has long been a key element (along with "montage") in any thinking about the cinema's specificity. The apparatus is said to affect the cinema's psychoanalytic efficacy (the "subject effect" of identification), as well as its ontological consistency (the "realism effect" of ocular evidence and the illusion of physical presence).

The museum or gallery, too, is a specific dispositif. With its white walls, preference for "natural" light, and emphasis on smooth surfaces, it organises space in such a way that the objects visible to the spectator are both brought close and maintain their distance. The placing and hanging of pictures subtly privileges the upright, forward, eye-level orientation of our gaze, directed at the formation of an "image", distinctly framed and positioned. Even after Cubism and Surrealism, still paying tribute to the rules of Renaissance perspective, the white wall into which the image is "cut", allows for generous margins and empty surfaces to surround each picture, while the heavily gilded frames are a reminder of the

fundamental difference between the picture, what it contains, the look it retains, and the space that surrounds it. In the museum, there is never any space off-screen, to speak in the language of cinema: the classical oil painting is wholly contained, indeed self-contained within the frame, while much of cinema lives from the tension between off-screen and on-screen, of what the frame delimits, but also creates a passage to, and a desire for: the invisible, but imagined. The film-critic André Bazin famously distinguished the "centripetal" painting frame from the "centrifugal" cinema frame.

Yet the salient argument to make here is that these apparent incompatibilities, and the many contradictory relations that can be itemised or "problematised' between these respective dispositifs, are precisely among the theoretically most fruitful and in practice most productive factors about the fine arts and visual culture today, not only enabling but necessitating the new kinds of encounter alluded to, as moving images and museums enter into sustained and no doubt permanent contact with each other. Each institution is "on the move" and in flux, each discourse is undergoing internal transformation, and this for reasons not at first glance interconnected or mutually dependent. Take as one example, the upright forward orientation, the prevalence of the wall, the rectangle cut out like a window: modern art, at least since the 1950s, has often subverted or ignored this arrangement, when one thinks of the practices of Jackson Pollock, Carl André, Andy Warhol, Joseph Beuys and many others. In very different ways, these artists have made the floor, and no longer the wall, the site of display, of bodily perceptual orientation, and of the "moment" of art.

More drastic, but also more banal in their everyday self-evidence, are the changes that the cinematic apparatus has undergone: television long ago subverted it, merely by substituting the small screen for the movie theatre, and phosphoric glow for projection, provoking in turn different kinds of re-assertions of the power of the projected image, whether thanks to cinemascope (in the 1950s) or the Dolby surround-sound design (in the 1970s). Since then, screens have become both bigger and smaller, but above all, they have become more "mobile": in their proliferation as monitors on virtually every table-top (at home as well as at work), in their locations (as urban screens, electronic notice-boards, in airplanes, in motor-cars or on public transport) but also embedded in the hand-held devices we carry on our bodies, as music players or mobile phones. It means that the opposition "collective reception" in ranked and regimented seating (cinema) versus "individual absorption" in a state of solitary contemplation (museum) is also no longer valid, at least not in any absolute way, while the most common experience in museums, notably for the blockbuster shows international museums now habitually organise, the throng of massed visitors (with audio-devices slung round their necks) makes the solitary study of individual works a thing of the past, of another generation (and of another technology).

THE FILM HISTORIAN AS CURATOR?

It is with these questions in mind that I want to introduce the initiatives that a group of scholars and students in Stockholm, Yale and Amsterdam undertook, in order to bring Bergman to the attention of the art world in a new kind of encounter and event. First of all, the teams I assembled, whatever their background or ambitions as filmmakers or installation artists, are working on this project as film historians and media theorists, and despite the fact that both cinema and museum are in flux, the protocols to be observed in each case are no less strict. Thus, one of the important features of the museum today is not so much what it lets in, as the thresholds, limits and conditions of possibility it—visibly and invisibly—(im)poses. Such an assertion may seem paradoxical, since from Duchamp's urinal, Warhol's soup cans and Carl André's bricks, to Damian Hirst's shark, Tracy Emmin's unmade bed and Chris Ofili's elephant dung, it seems that nothing is being excluded from the museum. But this would be to overlook the extent to which the fine arts in the 20th century, and the institutions that serve them, have been relentlessly meta-discursive and self-referential. Faced with the "anti-art" onslaught of successive avant-gardes, the modern museum has reinvented itself, by marking—in a myriad of subtle ways—its spaces as deceptively open and fiercely bounded, which is to say, as both liminal and territorial: to be crossed and entered only by guarded acts of

negotiation and agreed terms of mutual interference. This liminality and what it implies is a valuable gift the museum can make the cinema, in the sense that it forces it to double itself, and in the process, also divest, divide or subtract itself. As a "natural" space of reflexivity and recursiveness, the museum obliges everything that enters, however, banal or precious, to be perceived against a double horizon: that of its unique physical presence, and the special significance attached to its placement (in the here-and-now) also being a displacement. Every act and every object is both itself and its own statement, and thus the museum, as it were, by this fact alone, 'knows' the cinema better than the cinema knows itself, or rather: the museum forces the cinema to be itself, by becoming more like itself.

One can summarise these turns or acts of displacement under a more general heading, by claiming that the museum "arrests" and "suspends" the moving image—in both senses of these words: with respect to motion and stillness, the moment and motility, and in the legal sense of suspending a licence, an agreement, of suspend someone in his functions or even of giving someone a suspended sentence. If the museum rescues the cinema, it does so at the price of taking it, as it were, into protective custody. In short, it is a holding operation and an ambiguous one at that.

What, then, in the case of Bergman's cinema, would be the particular forms of arrest, suspension, and displacement—understood, in a preliminary sense, as synonyms for stripping of context, for abstracting from the commodity-form, and for subtracting from "film culture"? The move to the museum would, for instance, subtract from Bergman's cinema "narrative", anecdote, but also psychology (and thus "drama'): the very life-blood of his films, one might say. Put differently, Bergman's cinema enters the museum not as a story-telling medium, nor as a collection of personal themes and obsessions (such as childhood and family, the marital couple, religion or "art"), but as its own double, arresting the medium, its history and specificity, in an extended "moment" or enduring snapshot, and thereby exposing, once more, the cinema's own "archaeology" and "ontology". Respecting the liminality and conditions of possibility discussed above, the different thresholds to be negotiated could be grouped under the following categories: ready-mades and fragments, reflexivity as archaeology and reflexivity as ontology, minimalist relationality and the dispositifs of mutual interference.

FOUND OBJECT: INGMAR BERGMAN, THE GREAT ARTIST

Feature films, I argued, no less than "found footage" enter the museum as ready-mades, carrying with them the cultural use-values or junk-status of "cinema". Once we decided that Bergman should not (yet) be given the Hitchcock-Pompidou treatment, there still remained the fact that he was and is a "great artist". So in what sense can the great artist be a "ready-made"? Major tributes to Bergman's fame are the parodies his films have inspired, especially *The Seventh Seal* (by Woody Allen, French and Saunders), *Wild Strawberries* (The Düve/The Dove), but also *Persona* and *The Silence*. Bergman was hyperconscious of the danger of falling into self-parody, and chided both Bunuel and Welles for succumbing to the vice. At the same time, his films are replete with artists: would-be artists and con-artists, tormented artists and sensitive souls, artists as recluses and artists as priapic satyrs, artists as humiliated clowns and pitiful buffoons, artists as prostitutes and artists as pimps, pompous artists and heartless cynics: self-portraits or self-parodies, products of self-loathing or self-idealisation? Both, of course, and neither, and, therefore, constituting the clichés of the post-romantic repertoire of "art". And yet: a compilation across some 20 films tracing the artist—from introvert boy or "liar" (*The Silence, Fanny and Alexander*) to the sarcastic, but worldly wise church painter Albertus Pictor (in *The Seventh Seal*) via the aspiring young dramatist and his burnt-out writer-father (in *Through A Glass Darkly*), the homicidal–suicidal Johan (in *Hour of the Wolf*) and the serene actress Emilie Ekdahl (*Fanny and Alexander*), playing her role as mother and grandmother just as professionally as she once did Hedda Gabler or Ophelia—would both confound any sense of Bergman's artists journeying to eventual "maturity", and confirms that the director's view of the artist never changed. As the ready-mades of bourgeois anti-bourgeois revolt, these "portraits of the artist" hold in suspense and arrest for instance, the common trope of Bergman baring

his soul, and Bergman as he bares his soul, sharply observing everyone's reaction.

THE WORK: FRAGMENT AND TOTALITY

Bergman has left an oeuvre of such extraordinary depth and epic proportions, so consistent in its recurring motifs and repeated deployment of key actors, yet so diverse in mood, tone, as well as setting, that any ambition other than a complete retrospective would seem a strangely perverse act of homage. Indeed, rather than showing individual films, according to period or genre, preference or popularity, *24-hour Bergman* might be the best way to use the museum's modulated but not strictly segmented time regime, in order to test the fine line between homage and sacrilege. Rethinking the technical processes of montage, assemblage and collage, we tried to their different meanings in the cinema and in modern art. Surprisingly enough, as we looked for extracts and scenes, our renewed attention to moment and instant, to interval and intermittence, to seriality and succession, to random distraction and free association, became of immense value in *looking closer at the films* and appreciating their many levels of interlacing internal architectures. Yet the experience of selecting and putting together these extracts has proved another point, and produced another surprise. Bergman is like an earthworm: wherever you cut him, and into however many pieces he is chopped, each fragments is viable, and in the end, makes itself whole again.

REFLEXIVITY AS ONTOLOGY

What cinema shares with the fine arts, and in particular with painting, is a common conception of vision, inherited from Renaissance perspective: that a rectangle of colour and light, framed against a wall, can connote an "open window on the world". In the face of such an inherently improbable, but deeply held idea (and the sweeping changes that the digital media are rapidly bringing to such assumptions), some of the differences often noted between cinema and museum, such as mobile spectator/fixed image, versus fixed spectator/moving image, diminish in consequence. A compilation that concentrates on Bergman's use of windows—especially when combined with mirrors, frames and doorways—can bring out the painterly composition of many of his scenes, and lead to productive comparisons between theatrical staging in depth, pictorial conventions of multiple planes of action, and cinematic "deep space". But it also shows how restrictive and "conventional" the window as master trope of human vision actually is, and how adversely it can affect human interchange and communication. More generally, the idea of the cinema as a window on the world is also known as the "realist ontology", itself one of the key definitions of "what is cinema", and thus an affirmation of its specificity as an art-form. That Bergman cites the window so often is sign of his classicism, and yet—as a montage of similar scenes readily proves—much more happens when one focuses on his half-open or half-closed doors, his full-length or hand-held mirrors, the moments of a character crossing the threshold from one space into another, or when peering into one space through the doorway of another. Repetition here creates a degree of reflexivity, also with regards to spectatorship: it re-asserts the cinema's unique architecture of looks, in rooms that often simulate the domestic interiors of bourgeois life, while threatening at any moment to collapse into a claustrophobic hall of mirrors, doubling up on themselves, and giving the spectator no place from which to retain a firm footing, nor to sustain the illusion that s/he might be safely on the "outside", merely looking in.

REFLEXIVITY AS ARCHAEOLOGY

Bending to the time-constraints and spatial arrangements of the museum as "white cube" rather than "black box" also produces another kind of reflexivity. The invention of "new forms", such as short films, montage-sequences, and above all loops and Moebius strips, allowing for repetition within duration, turns out to be the *re-invention*, as meta-cinema, of early film-forms from the time of cinema's "origins": museum reflexivity becomes media archaeology. Signalled clearly in the title of his autobiography *The Magic Lantern*, Bergman makes frequent allusions in his films to pre and proto-cinematic devices (*The Magician, Persona, Fanny and Alexander*). They serve several functions: they inscribe him into a genealogy of pioneers and entrepreneurs of spectacle and vision

machines, and they want to emphasise the element of craft, the practical skills and sheer technical know-how that goes with being a filmmaker. But they also emphasise what the museum tends to exclude: the white (and occasionally black) magic of entertainment and showmanship, professing Bergman's affinity with the "low arts" practiced by the performers, strolling players, manipulators and tricksters who people his films and whose lives of hard work—despite the ironic or sarcastic tone—he seems to salute for their popular touch, as much as recognise their bodily appetites (*The Seventh Seal, Sawdust and Tinsel, The Rite*).

Perhaps the most important function of these magic lanterns, puppet-theatres, mechanical toys and illusionist contraptions, for our present project at least, is that they are a useful reminder of an alternative genealogy for the cinema itself, not dependent on (bourgeois, museum-friendly) Renaissance perspective and conceit of the window on the world. Instead—while also deriving from the *camera obscura*—they lead via 18th century phantasmagorias, "Pepper's Ghost", fog pictures, stereoscopy, apparition photographs and spiritist séances, to the wilder shores of "special effects" of today, to 3D graphics and the immersive spectacles, promised by the new media, and not bounded by the picture frame, nor predicated on the calibrated parameters of distance and proximity, typical of painting and museum display, and instead envelop us in the permanent, ambient "ether" of fantasy.

MINIMALISM AS RELATIONAL AESTHETICS

There would seem to be little that is "minimalist"' about Bergman's work, all on the side of baroque exuberance, or haunted by an equally baroque melancholia and sense of *memento-mori*. Here, too, the limits and constraints of the museum can lead to new discoveries and a re-appraisal. As part of the "subtractive" turn, the compilation format divests the cinema of narrative *telos*, and generates instead a different kind of linearity, based on repetition, where a concatenation of moments, taken from their context, can be re-inserted into a different scheme: the more obvious and simple the rules, the more enigmatic the content can become. But also: the more minimal the perceptual perturbations, the more demands are made on the spectator to experience a "work", in the productive act of giving meaning to perception itself. As gallery artists increasingly rely on works in series, mimetically or intuitively reproducing the *defilé* of cinema, they also impose the severest of self-restrictions: minute variations, almost imperceptible to the untrained eye, challenge the notion of the discrete image, while nonetheless eschewing "movement", thereby focussing attention on the rule for generating the work, while highlighting the rule's inability by itself to structure the viewer's experience. What would it mean, we wondered, to have Bergman restrict himself to one tonality, one face, one gesture—the way, say, Jasper Johns in the late 1950s painted only in shades of grey—but to do so, ad infinitum? Ten minutes of Liv Ullmann's face, for instance, from all the films she made with Bergman, or Max von Sydow, looking straight at the camera, from film to film, with minimal variation, but becoming ever more intense. A thought to make one dream, but one that needs a screen as big as a Tintoretto altarpiece, or Holbein's *The Ambassadors*.

DISPOSITIFS OF MUTUAL INTERFERENCE

Perhaps the most challenging assumption to come under scrutiny, when a filmmaker like Bergman enters the museum, is the cinema's relation to the body, and especially its engagement with the senses other than vision. Traditionally, the cinema has been regarded as the triumph of the disembodied gaze. It arose, a little over a 100 years ago, when there was no aerial transport via planes, no private motorcars, and the only available mechanised means of transportation was the railway. Well into the 20th century, then, cinema was a mobile eye: an organ to see and to explore the world with, an eye no longer tied to the body. It could roam freely, make itself invisible, and penetrate into places that were either forbidden, barred or physically out of reach. The disembodied eye was celebrated as a potent intimation of power and omniscience. Voyeurism, that primary motive of assisted vision, is also intimately connected with a form of disembodiment: who could resist the idea of not having to take responsibility for one's bodily presence in a given space or at a given time, while still enjoying its intimacy? By contrast,

visiting the museum, we are inescapably present with our bodies, indeed this is the special pleasure and privilege of being in a museum: sharing the same space with a unique work of art, experiencing the tactility and vibrancy of paint, feeling the urge to touch the curves or surfaces of a sculpture.

Framed within these expectations, Bergman's films are especially responsive. Not only was he a master in teasing out tactile sensations from black-and-white photography, and able to flood the screen with saturated colour—one thinks of the almost unbearably intense reds in *Cries and Whispers*. One of the paradoxical effects of the digital image having become the norm is that film scholars, too, have been paying more attention to "embodied" forms of vision, they have spoken of the "skin" of the film (the way that Roland Barthes spoke of the "grain" of the voice), noting a new materiality in video and digital media, which leads to a more "haptic" mode of perception and reception on the side of the viewer. If compared to the cinema's disembodied look, the gallery's default value is embodied perception), then all manner of aesthetic parameters—I am thinking of relations of size, scale, and detail—call for re-investigation and a deeper understanding.

A further negotiated disruption or transgression is implied by the entry of sound, and of sound-spaces into the museum, traditionally a site of silence and stillness in both senses of the word. Here, too, Bergman can be seen at the forefront of developments he may not have intended or even condoned. His carefully composed sound, usually integrated into narrative and fictional space, can—isolated in the museum and concatenated in the form of a compilation-montage—be appreciated for the special way it affect the spectator bodily, touch the skin, grate on one's (mental) epidermis, or bring on a shiver of pleasure, anticipating the richly musical cadences with which his actors (de)live(r) their lines, to give illusions of familiarity and intimacy, possibly more to non-Swedish ears.

We have chosen "Skin and Stone", "Cries and Whispers" (Bergman himself obliges) and "Mind and Brain" to highlight ways in which that heightened awareness of the body in the museum might benefit attentiveness to Bergman's special genius as a *filmmaker*.

THRESHOLD, TRANSGRESSION, POTENTIAL PRESENCE

We do not want to minimise the transgressive nature of what we are proposing. A filmmaker has the right to the integrity of his oeuvre, this being usually defined by the autonomy of his individual films as coherent and complete works, to be shown exactly as intended. We have no disagreement with such a position. Our argument is as simple as might appear simple-minded. We do believe that there lie hidden in Bergman's films certain layers of potential (not meaning, but) *presence* that can be actualised and literally brought to the films' sensory surface, when making the dispositifs of cinema and museum less converge with each other, than mutually interfere with each other, as they do in the form of installations and compilations. The encounter becomes an event, precisely to the degree that the tensions can still be felt, and the seemingly incompatible properties of each "medium" oblige curators to make choices rather than to compromise. Without wishing to claim that somehow this reveals, say, the "optical unconscious" of a director's work, or even assume that we have been able to distil Bergman's *ars poetica*, it does, we believe, teach us something about the cinema—after the "death of cinema". For besides giving a new generation the opportunity to learn to look at films closely (that is, with all their senses) by doing the kind of patient, labour-intensive and time-consuming work that such compilations and installations require, this—in every sense, labour of love—constitutes both a new form of cinephilia and a new hermeneutics of close reading.

Finally, beyond these pedagogical uses, important though they may be for museums as much as for film scholars, the exercise does allow new questions to emerge and thus helps us ask afresh the question of "what is cinema", as it enters/if it enters that public space of reflexivity, by which I have defined the museum. Our hope for Ingmar Bergman's 90th birthday is that around his work, the avant-garde, the archive and the academy might collectively and in mutual interdependence and even mutual interference, preserve and present what we still have every reason to call—with-without historical qualifications or technical specifications—'cinema'.