13th International Seminar on the Origins and History of Cinema

ON LINE

Virtual worlds in early cinema: devices, aesthetics and audiences

DAY :	Wednesday 20th, Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd October, 2021
FORMAT:	**On line**
SCHEDULE:	From 15.00 h to 19.00 h
ORGANIZERS:	Museum of Cinema, Geography, History and Art History Department of Universitat de Girona, and Economy and Competitiveness' Ministry Project "Virtual worlds in early cinema: devices, aesthetics and audiences." Code: PGC2018-096633-B-I00

Call for papers

The seminar Virtual worlds in early cinema: devices, aesthetics and audiences comes from an obvious desire for articulating a clear relationship among cinema's past and contemporary audiovisual's present. The nodal point of the project is the concept of virtual worlds. As Pierre Lévy states, we assist nowadays before a "general movement of virtualization has begun to affect not only the fields of information and communication but also our physical presence and economic activities, as well as the collective framework of sensibility and the exercise of intelligence. The process of virtualization has even affected our modalities of being together, the constitution of a collective "we" in the form of virtual communities, virtual corporations, virtual democracy...".[1]

At the present time, an essential debate in the study of early cinema consists in the possibility of thinking in which way cultural series pre-exist. If the goal of early cinema studies was no other than trying to analyze the cultural, aesthetics, economical and social conditions which had accompanied the birth of a new way of expression, currently the debate has been moving into the possibility of creating and establishing bonds among past and present. In order to understand the emergency of virtual worlds, we have to consider why dioramas or panoramas proposed to 19th century audiences ways of immersion in a universe built by images. In order to understand how new depth of field three-dimensional forms are generated it is necessary to know how from the beginning of photography stereoscopic images arose and how these were already present under the model of relief cinema in 1910. It is also necessary to know that despite sound film

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[1] Pierre Lévy, *Becoming Virtual. Reality in the Digital Age*. New York: Plenum Press, 1998, p. 15.

official institutionalization in 1927, a series of tests oriented to the search of systems for sound synchronization were already carried between 1907 and 1908. Cinema was born to expand itself beyond cinema itself because, ultimately, the notion or idea of virtuality was already present in many of the visual devices which were created between the ending of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century. It is for this reason that in order to study how the virtual universes of early cinema were generated, it is necessary to know the devices that originated them and the places where they were produced. At the same time it is also key to know which were the aesthetic challenges that cinema undertook beyond the moving images' projection onto a screen. From the beginning there were created spectacles such as the Hale's Tours that simulated the movement in a mean of transportation while the images were being projected or Mareoramas that recreated boat travels, with the purpose of creating immersive type experiences. All these elements proposed aesthetic proposals for which cinema was not unrelated and that went through a desire of the virtualization of the experience, but also produced certain audience models which seek to find a correlate between virtual experience offered by the spectacles, with the new perceptive experiences originated in real life in a changing moment caused by the modernity.

As in the last editions, the Seminar will be split into two parts that will be alternating. The first part will be committed to theoretical reflection on the main subject with several lectures by prominent experts.

In the second half, the goal is that different researchers expose and debate with the attendants the results of the studies they are developing in the field of pre-cinema and / or early cinema. From the 13th International Seminar on the Origins and History of Cinema's organization we encourage you to participate, and we offer you the possibility of disseminating your research works through the tribune of this Seminar.

On line Seminar

Due to the situation generated by the COVID-19 crisis, this Seminar's Edition will take place "online" or virtual. All interventions and public attendees will be carried out through a streaming platform.

This platform will enable simultaneous translation of interventions (English, Catalan and Spanish), it will show all the attendees audiovisual material accompanying them, as well as a system of discussion and exchange of views among the attendees.

Before the Seminar, attendees and speakers will be given detailed instructions for operating the platform.

Communications proposal

1. **DELIVERY OF A SUMMARY FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS SELECTION**

■ THEMATIC:

Topic A: Virtual worlds in early cinema: devices, aesthetics and audiences

- *Media archeology.* The archeological study of the devices previous or contemporary to the cinematograph might be helpful to introduce the History of cinema inside a much broader process, focused on the evolution of visual devices, screens and projection/audition systems.

- *The viewer experience in the face of the visual spectacles.* In order to comprehend the devices' impact. It is fundamental to know which was the audience experience in front of the images.

- *Virtual experiences on early films.* Another research path might draw from the period existing films, in order to check how new sensorial ways are glimpsed in them. The idea of considering early cinema films as spaces to the visual attraction can lead us to consider the realist simulation effects that they gather.

- *Immersive spectacles and virtualization.* The study of leisure spaces from the past reflects the existence of hybrid spectacle systems, between cinema, theater, magic lantern which proposed specific forms of exhibition and enhanced the viewer immersion in possible worlds.

- *Bridges between the past and the development of virtual technology in the present.* It is possible to establish a thinking that carries out a revision of the past through a double logic based on the analysis of the re-use by the new technologies of preexisting techniques and other based on the aesthetic reflection around virtuality modes in the present and its connection with other aesthetic achievements that were developed in a moment of transformation and reuse of the means of communication.

Topic B: pre-cinema and early cinema

- Presentation of works in progress on pre-cinema or cinema until 1915.

■ EXTENSION: Abstract of the communication in 60 lines maximum where it appears the state of the question that is posed, bibliographical references, primary, secondary or unpublished research documentary references and the novelty of the contribution.

■ DEADLINE: **May 5th 2021**

■ AUTHOR'S ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Name, address, telephone, e-mail

■ DELIVER TO: E-mail to:

institutestudis@museudelcinema.cat

- **SEMINAR'S SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**:

  Àngel Quintana (UdG), J.E. Monterde (UB), Sandro Machetti (UdL), Luis Alonso (U. Rey Juan Carlos), Bernardo Riego (U. de Cantabria), Mariona Bruzzo (Filmoteca de Catalunya), F. Javier Frutos (U. de Salamanca), María Tortajada (U. de Lausanne), Pietsie Feenstra (U. Paul Valéry de Montpellier), Nancy Berthier (Université Paris IV. Sorbonne), M.Magdalena Brotons (UIB), Ramon Girona (UdG) I Jordi Pons (Museu del Cinema)- will evaluate the communications and will announce individually each admission or exclusion, before, before **June 4th, 2021.**

2. FORMAL REQUIREMENTS OF ACCEPTED COMMUNICATIONS

- **MAXIMUM LENGTH**. 10 pages (18.000 characters including spaces)
- **LANGUAGES**: Catalan, Spanish or English
- **ILLUSTRATIONS**: Digital support, 6 images maximum.
- **DEADLINE**: **October 1st, 2021**
- **DELIVERY METHOD**: conveniently corrected, by e-mail to:

  institutestudis@museudelcinema.cat

- **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**:
  - Name, address, telephone, e-mail
  - Brief CV of the author (5 lines) and brief abstract of the text content (5 lines).

- PUBLICATION. The communications presented during the thirteenth edition of the seminar will be published in paper, together with the presentations, during the year 2022, as long as they have been defended by its author during the seminar. The volume, edited by the Museum of Cinema - Ajuntament de Girona and the Universitat de Girona, will complete a collection of thirteen research volumes on early cinema. Some selected works will be the object of publication in a dossier in the journal Secuencias of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

For any enquiry related to the Seminar, you may address to:

Montse Puigdevall
Institut d'Estudis del Museu del Cinema
c/ Sèquia, 1 17001 Girona
Tel: 972 412 777
A/e: institutestudis@museudelcinema.cat

Girona, February 5th, 2021