Time Against Me, My Cinema Against Time
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# Time Against Me,
# My Cinema Against Time

Artavazd Pelechian

*Montage that destroys montage.*
*Montage to absent images.*

Many people erroneously think that my films are *montage films*. This is not true. My films are not *montage films*.

Up until now, in world cinema, montage has been considered a regrouping of images placed alongside one another. The relation between nearby images always attracts the most attention.

The working experience I have with my films has persuaded me that something else interests me, that for me, the principal and essential accent of the work of montage is not collage, but rather decollage (*décollage*); not "junction," but "disjunction."

For me, the most interesting thing doesn't begin at the moment when I edit together two pieces, but when I separate them and put between them the third, the fifth, the tenth piece. In taking two base images, which bear a charge of meaning, I don't try to bring them together, to confront them, but to create a distance between them.

And I call this montage a *montage at a distance*. At base this is a *dismantling* (*démontage*), or a montage that demolishes montage, in the strict sense of the term. Montage here has no meaning. What's most important is that the base elements, like charged particles, act reciprocally at a distance, *creating an emotional field around the film.*

By enlarging the dimensions of a particle, the other particle at a distance becomes so small and compact that it is nearly or even completely eliminated (*supprimée*). In practical terms, certain

images disappear. This elimination does not mean that they don't exist. They exist, but they are in a situation of absence, and, physically speaking, have no place on the screen. Thus we have a *montage to absent images.*

*Sound is transformed into image. Image is transformed into sound. It turns out that what I see—I hear, and what I hear—I see.*

In the time of the method at a distance, the reciprocal actions between the particles happen so quickly—instantaneously, practically simultaneously—that the magnitude of the speed no longer depends on the magnitude of the distance between them.

Here, not only is distance ignored, but, more importantly, *time is burned out and destroyed.*

*It is a cinema against time.*

Fixed time and the time of fixing are different notions.

Postscript. They say that the twenty-first century will be the end of cinema. This is a mistake. It will be the end of a certain cinematographic technique. As for the cinematograph, that is to say the images that stir, it will no longer have an end.

Louis Lumière, in creating the cinematograph, was the first to flee the cinema. He probably fled it because of attraction. From my point of view, he must have understood intuitively that a monster clings to the side of the miracle.

The approaching twenty-first century is only a step away. What was really missing in cinema was to use painting, the art of painting strictly speaking, the deformation of the image and not the reproduction of the image, as in photography.

On the one hand, cinema will integrate equally all the "isms" used in the history of painting: surrealism, existentialism, realism, classicism. . . . This new manner of transforming, of disfiguring the imaginary of the image, will be able to reintegrate all these "isms," revive them, thanks to the computer. Because, in a certain manner, cinema will set out to do what Botticelli, Bosch, Leonardo da Vinci and others have done. At that very moment, perhaps they will remember Sergei Paradjanov. He obviously didn't have the technical means of which I'm speaking and which the cinema will have at its disposal, but in his own way he was one of the first to try to convey pictorial art in the cinema.

On the other hand, cinema will begin to use the absence of the image. In this fashion it will enter into the territory of absence, rendering it present. This is why I said that a monster clings to the side of the miracle.

Translated from the French by Timothy S. Murphy
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