

Spectatorship and Presence in Remediation of Performance Art through the Technical Medium of Film

In this work I am going to describe examples of remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) of performance art through the technical medium of film. 'Technical medium', here, refers to 'tangible devices' that materialize some medium (Elleström, 2010). In the case of film, I am referring here to screen, video recordings, film cameras, projections and so on, but not to the notion cinema, which is better characterized as 'qualified medium'.

This description is focused on Performance art as site-specific and time-specific in contrast to the technical media of film, which allow for replayability under control of the viewer, in a variety of situations. Performance in general includes works where a body is present (in the sense of actual physical presence) and incorporated in the work, such as in dance, theater, music concerts and others. Performance Art as a term is more specifically connected to body art, happenings, endurance art. Performance art is spatiotemporally anchored, and the presence of the performer is vital. However, in the case of remediation through the technical medium of film, only a mediated presence is at work. This difference changes the status of spectatorship in relation to the performance and the way the spectators engage with the piece.

I am going to describe two works by artists active in the anglo-saxon environment: *D.A.V.E.* by Klaus Obermaier and *Cut Piece* by Yoko Ono. *D.A.V.E. (Digital Amplified Video Engine)* is a dance performance in which layers of video displaying colors and moving images of body parts are projected on the body of the dancer, in order to deconstruct the human body and remake it into a hybrid being. *Cut Piece* is an interactive and participatory performance, in which Ono uses her own body, kneeling on stage with several scissors in front of her and inviting and instructing the audience to cut pieces of her clothes. Remediations of these works include photographs, texts, video recordings etc. I will refer to the last one by choosing two specific film remediations. Both art performances, as well as their remediations, are intermedial products which require different ways of viewing. Both *D.A.V.E.* – a choreographed dance – and its remediation are 'to be looked at'. Differently, *Cut Piece* is a performance 'to be interacted with', while its remediation require a non-interactive viewer. The characteristic of film as a technical medium allows the viewers to see the actual occurrence of the performance, but from a remediated and restrictive view of the camera recording.

Elleström, Lars. *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

Bolter, Jay David and Grusin, Richard. *Remediation: understanding new media*. Cambridge, Mass; London MIT Press, 1999

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Short Biography

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