

## Beyond the Cinematic Frontier: Mapping the Uncharted Sensorial Territories of Blockbuster Cinema

Building upon Agnes Petho's analysis of intermediality in cinema (*Cinema and Intermediality*, 2011), this paper explores the ways in which cinematic intermediality conditions and fosters the expansion of visual and sensorial experience in big budget, action-driven cinema. Cinematic intermediality here is understood in two senses that speak to the nature of film as an inter-medium: film as an intersensual medium and the positioning of film as a mediation of reality. Intersensuality in film – film's reliance on combined visual and aural modes of expression – is the primary intermedial dimension of cinema, where different art forms and medialities participate in shaping the filmic flow. The second dimension of cinematic intermediality mobilized here is the positioning of film as mediation between reality and its representation. Film is not a representation of reality but rather a medium constructing an experience of reality for the viewer. Such construction is achieved through artificial devices, prominent among which are digital effects in big budget productions. Both intersensuality and the mediation of reality are brought into critical relief in the action sequences of blockbuster cinema, where the conflation of immersive visual and sound effects with the use of digital imaging blurs the border of reality and representation and opens up an uncharted territory of sensorial experience for the viewer's enjoyment. If the primary thrill of action sequences relies on a sense of empowerment offered by pushing back the limits of experience (Lisa Purse, *Contemporary Action Cinema*, 2011), then cinematic intermediality is the condition *sine qua non* of such empowerment. The experience of exploration and mastery provided by action sequences relies essentially on cinema's propensity as an inter-medium relying on intersensuality and mediated reality. Drawing from various examples of action sequences in blockbuster cinema, this paper argues that cinematic intermediality is the basis of film's power as an exploratory medium expanding the realm of viewing experience.

### Filmography (tentative)

*Avengers (The)*, Joss Whedon, 2012

*Dark Knight (The)*, Christopher Nolan, 2008

*Iron Man 3*, Shane Black, 2013

*Logan*, James Mangold, 2017

*Man of Steel*, Zack Snyder, 2013

*Star Trek Into Darkness*, J. J. Abrams, 2013

*Transformers 1*, Michael Bay, 2007

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