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Abstract

Paper Title: “Re-distributing the Cinematic in the Spaces of Art: Archival Encounters in the Gallery”

The ideology of the gallery space as described by Brian O’Doherty in the 70s already established the gallery space as a site with transforming potential. It also highlighted its excluding character. However, even though moving image art of various kinds is by now a standard feature in the gallery room and represents a growing field within Cinema Studies, the institutional framing of the exhibition space in these instances and how it affects the viewing experience has generated less attention. Furthermore, while there have been several attempts to account for the realm of the spectator in these contexts, there is a general tendency to disregard the disruptive qualities of the gallery space that interact with the work and condition its reception. The gallery has a spatial and temporal logic of its own that interacts with our own preconceptions of art exhibitions and the ideological forces at work behind those practices. Therefore, in order to determine how the moving image is re-distributed and finds its way within the spaces of art, we need to consider the aesthetic experience in tandem with the material site of exhibition and consider how we can read it not in isolation from, but rather in interaction with external factors that are specific to this particular context.

This paper will address this gap by discussing how the characteristics of the gallery space intervene with the cinematic in a number of contemporary examples that continue the archival impulse as identified by Hal Foster in 2004, with special attention devoted to the work of Fiona Tan. These archival art practices bring these issues to the fore as they make use of archival footage that raises questions concerning selection, agency and ownership, while the institutional critique that governed archival artworks in the 70s is largely absent. In these instances it is therefore of central importance to consider how the audiovisual material is integrated within a museum discourse, both in terms of how the archival material has been selected to fulfill a certain function within the exhibition as a whole and how it is presented within the gallery, but also how it circulates in textual material surrounding the exhibition. In addition, because these artists regularly make use of the installation format, the paper will also consider how the audiovisual material is presented in direct exchange with its spatial surroundings and reflect on how the

spectator is called upon to interact with the images and, ultimately, participate in shaping the outcome of the work.

Key words

Gallery film, archival art, institutional critique, participation, film installation

Short bio

Olivia Eriksson is a PhD candidate in Cinema Studies at the Department of Media Studies at Stockholm University. Her dissertation focuses on moving image art and contemporary film installation in a gallery setting and explores the notion of embodied spectatorship in relation to the specificities of the gallery space. Research interests include the construction of space and questions of migration and displacement in contemporary art and film installation, haptic cinemas and archival art practices.