

ABSTRACT IN INGLESE

'Fiction is an Instrument of Access to Truth'. A Conversation with Olivier Assayas

edited by Luca Bandirali and Pietro Masciullo

The perception of the world is first and foremost a matter of gaze and from this derives the criticality of the notion of documentary truth. From the very beginning, Olivier Assayas's cinema has gravitated around the zone of indiscernibility between the real and the fictive, often starting from an autobiographical experiment that opens up to a highly imaginative dimension. The profound historical and cultural changes between the 20th and 21st Centuries are thus subjected to a process of dramatic transformation and reinvention, so that the universal questions of modernity find a new way of being formulated and narrated.

The Writing of the Real. Documentary and Fiction

Daniele Dottorini

One of the most recurring dichotomies in the categorization of cinematographic forms is that between documentary and fiction which is, in fact, an unsustainable opposition. If documentary is a form of creation, it is so because it has to invent a "writing" of reality that is different from time to time, as it is intrinsically stimulated by the lack of a pre-existent form. But, in this well-ordered structure, the real suddenly bursts; a real that can emerge from the folds of the form. Writing is the form of presentation of world's chaos, a set of narrative and compositional rules that ensures a form to the film. The writing of reality witnesses the choice of a subjectivity that organizes the available material, while revealing itself as the necessary framework from which the creative process starts. Thus, there can be found a fruitful dimension of interchange between writing practices, aimed not at unifying literary writing and cinematic editing, but at revealing it as a necessary act of fiction.

‘Comment vis tu?’. On the Forms and Fictions of Time-Cinema
Carmelo Marabello

What happens to the bodies in front of the camera, in front of the filmed life, during the life of the film, the life-form of a film like *Chronicle of a Summer*? Facing the opacity of the real, Rouch and Morin discovered an unprecedented capacity of the cinematographic language that allowed them to depict such ambiguity, soliciting it as a formal and visual project, out of the binary logic of classical editing. Filming and thinking, for both of them, means giving rise to the events, provoking some possible states of truth in relationships: producing life in order to reproduce it, in the conviviality of the word, in the hinted form of a testimony.

‘Gazing through Lens of Cinema’. The Dissemblance in Painting
Alessandro Rossi

“*Kinematographisch scheinwerfen*”, or gazing through lens of cinema, is an expression used by Aby Warburg in the famous conference of 1912 on the frescoes of Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara held during the 10th International Congress of Art History at the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome. After contextualizing the expression and deepening its possible theoretical scope within the Warburgian method, the essay applies this mode of “gazing cinematically” to a pair of mythological-literary canvases painted by Paolo De Matteis, most likely commissioned by the English philosopher Lord Shaftesbury around 1712, and a fresco painted by Ercole Procaccini the Younger between 1652 and 1674, commissioned by the magistrate Bartolomeo III Arese for his palazzo in Cesano Maderno. A semiotic-iconographic interpretation of these paintings reveals their programmatically *fictional* character, centred on sophisticated flashbacks and flash forwards symbolically placed under a theatrical mask displayed by a winged putto hovering over the scene in the first example, and by similar pictorial devices in the second. The theme of “fiction” is thus developed from the point of view of pictorial *simulation* and the beholder’s *experience*, comparing ways of seeing and thinking about images, both in motion (film) and still (painting).

Costume in Cinema, Fiction of a Fiction

Sara Martin

Starting from the Latin etymology of *fiction* (model, give shape to materials) the essay offers a reflection on the role of clothing inside and outside the filmic universe.

Why does man not show his natural body, not clothed, to reveal himself to his own fellow man? Perhaps because he discovered that modeling a dress on oneself opens up a space for transmissible simulation in the collective memory. The dress is a kind of primordial media. To ask ourselves what it means to wear – to have to wear – clothes means to ask ourselves about what and how we communicate ourselves and what and how the fictional characters we observe on the screen communicate.

Deceptive Gaze. Subversion, Rupture and Destitution in Michael Haneke

Vincenzo Altobelli

Layered and complex, Michael Haneke's cinema images swing between form and meaning, visible and hidden, imposed questions and denied solutions. Through an expressly mediological prospective and some moments of the director's filmography, the purpose of this essay is to examine the codes of realism, the practice of dispersion of reality in fiction, the destitution work of image and the language through which the hanekian filmic text makes explicit its own deceptive nature.

Purpose and Ways of Repetition in the Sixties by Jacques Demy

Luca Venzi

When trying to define the notion of fiction in theoretical terms, with regard to analogue cinema, it is difficult not to refer to the dual nature of the cinematographic image, which Bazin, in his great reflection on the relationship between reality and image, framed in all its density. In the case of Jacques Demy, whose cinema was born within the framework of the Nouvelle Vague, this critical, theoretical and practical awareness of the dual nature of the image is always present. Unlike directors who move from the documentary pole of the image, who seek what they want while filming it, directors such as Demy make films similar to circles, moving from fiction and finding reality. Characterizing his work is thus a studied modality of

repetition that underlines the novelistic identity of the Demyan fiction: not a simple ambition for some kind of total cinema, but one which exists due to its relation with life.

The Fictions of Borges that are disseminated

Marcello Walter Bruno

If modern cinema seeks hybridization with modern literature, with Borges' "fictions" (and his unofficial cinematographic derivatives) does it already reach postmodernism? Accepting the Bazinian idea of "impure cinema", in which the film opens to the influences of the cinematographic canon but also of other Western and non-Western canons (literary, pictorial, musical, etc.) through hybridization procedures, one could then conclude that the meaning of a film is its intersemiotic and intertextual web, that is, its structure as fiction. In the same way, it can be said that the video archive of Babel is to cinema what the library of Babel is to literature; and contemporary cinema continues, to use the expression coined by Umberto Eco, to fall for the discreet charm of the "Borgesie".

Ingmar Bergman's *Ansiktet* (*The Face*): Fiction as Destruction

Fabio Pezzetti Tonion

Ingmar Bergman's cinema has made reflection on the fictional dimension one of its thematic poles, shifting the analytical lens from time to time, now on the process inherent in the cinematographic medium intended as the elaborator of an illusion, now on the tension towards the creation of a "personal" simulacrum. In *Ansiktet* (*The Face*) Bergman thematizes the question of fiction, staging a model of reality in which the antithetical boundaries of the true-false dissolve into each other. Authenticity is not opposed to fiction: the latter is the hermeneutic tool that allows us to affirm the possibility of the authentic, in a painful process of destruction of the individual.

Legendary Fictions. About Welles' *Une histoire immortelle*

Bruno Roberti

In *Une histoire immortelle* Mister Clay's will to omnipotence pushes him to dare making what is fictive to happen in the real world: a story of sailors that passes from mouth to mouth, but which never happened. Clay,

like a *metteur en scene*, wants that story to be embodied by real beings. The circulation of the narrative twists around itself, as if fiction is narrating itself. The story proceeds as if everything had already happened and is happening in the same moment in which it is told. Fiction generates the image. It is a continuous and paradoxical relaunch of what is believed to be true and turns out to be false to reaffirm itself again as a single spiral that wraps without end true and false, as in a Borgesian labyrinth in which the two poles, fiction and its repercussion on reality, chase each other without ever catching up.

The Transparency of Fiction: Hong Sang-soo's *Woman on the Beach* Pietro Renda

Starting from the analysis of Hong Sang-soo's *Woman on the Beach*, the essay is focused on cinema's need to resort to the maximum level of mediation – that of fiction – in order to adhere to a realistic narrative form. Is it possible to bring a story to life on the screen without “killing the event” first in its fragrance and then in its memory? Hence, fiction is the preferable tool through which to apply thought to life. Once the limitations of fiction are acknowledged and accepted the reason emerges: since if on the one hand any possibility of artistically “mirroring” reality is precluded, on the other it is not possible to access some form of knowledge without its intercession.

The Whispering Star. The Shadow of the Catastrophe Alessandro Calefati

This paper aims to review Sono Sion's movie *The Whispering Star* (2015), by focusing on the role the shadows play as surviving images. It will examine the topic of the shadow as fiction, starting from the connection to the image of the Plato's Cave (*Plat. Rep. VII*) and using the surviving image of Patroclus' shadow (*Hom. Il. XXIII*) as a counterpoint. The shadows, in this way, could be places in which a traumatic and ambiguous *Real* will show itself.

Watching Redeem: *The Capture* Massimiliano Pistonesi

This essay analyses the BBC TV series *The Capture* (2019) by Ben Chanan, which has its narrative focus on the concept of surveillance. *The*

Capture exposes “surveillance” both as a tool of social and political control and as a cultural attitude defined by digital technology, actualized as a practice of individual and collective media involvement. The linchpin of surveillance is the *image*: the fragmented visible; the piece of daily reality reproduced in unprecedented, functional and fictional forms, for unknown purposes we can barely hypothesize as well as for institutional purposes – used for ours, “they” say, own safety.

The TV series *The Capture* in fact addresses conspiracy theories and counterculture paranoid biases; and it does so by drawing on the American cinematic heritage of the 70s, contextualizing these themes within our contemporaneity.

Truth Gaps between Screen and Display. On two Sequences of Cuarón's *Roma*

Pietro Masciullo

The essay presents an iconological analysis of two sequences from *Roma* (Cuarón, 2018). The film establishes a fertile dialectic between the original functions of the big screen and three fictional regimes experienced throughout the history of cinema. The analysis focuses on the vast semantic field of the word “screen” and then on the three metaphors used by film theory to define its characteristics. Finally, the essay makes reflections on the re-functionalization of the screen in the media environments of the 21st Century.