

“EACH SINGLE GESTURE BECOMES A DESTINY”:
GESTURALITY BETWEEN CINEMA AND PAINTING IN RAÚL
RUIZ’S *L’HYPOTHÈSE DU TABLEAU VOLÉ*

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Paintings do not show, they allude. Paintings, staged through the technical method of the *tableau vivant*, do not allude, they *show*!¹

— The Collectionneur, *L’Hypothèse du tableau volé* (1978)

With a chiastic flourish, the Collectionneur of Raúl Ruiz’s 1978 film essay *L’Hypothèse du tableau volé* rises to his feet, points definitively towards the frame and, with rising intonation, signals that unlike a painting, the *tableau vivant* reveals in its motility what a static painting cannot. The self-reflexive delivery, and the grandiosity of his gesture indicate that this same gift has been bestowed upon cinema. While the ensuing narrative may portray him as an isolated eccentric, his words and actions speak to a long-held fascination with the relative capacities of painting and cinema when it comes to capturing gestures. Both arts can lay claim to an indexical intimacy with gesture: when we look at a painting we can discern the individual gestures and imperceptible movements of the artist’s hand which brought it into being. The allure of a painting such as Vermeer’s *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1665) consists at least partly in the awareness that the titular earring has been created by just two brushstrokes. At the same time, cinematographic arts allow the gestures themselves to be displayed onscreen, although the apparatus which captures them is mechanical. Virginia Woolf’s now infamous lament that “words are an impure medium; better far to have been born into the silent kingdom of paint” has endured manifold literary interpretations, each new derivation and deviation of her words testifying to the force of her aphorism.² This desire for purity leads towards a realm of proto-communication, a “silent kingdom”, a domain which is not a “medium” because it is mediality itself. If it were possible for the two aforementioned indexical gesturalities to coalesce, it would be in the intermedial encounters between the filmic and plastic arts. Common uses of the noun “gesture” refer to bodily movements which complement the spoken word or obviate the need for it, or designate actions which are aesthetically grand but ethically or materi-

ally meaningless: a “political gesture”. Gesture as it is to be understood here encompasses both of these vernacular definitions. It refers to methods of communication which rise out of language but are incommensurable with it, and in so doing reaches beyond questions of meaning and meaninglessness. Gestural encounters between painted and cinematographic artworks reveal the significance of gesture not only to the media themselves, but also to the way in which the individual works are produced and received.

It is in these terms that Giorgio Agamben defines gesture in his foundational 1992 essay “Notes on Gesture”. Agamben pathologises a world in which gestures “lose their ease” and are no longer produced unconsciously or instinctively.³ In the late Victorian period, moments where the communicability of gesture broke down, such as Tourette’s syndrome, were monitored and researched as abnormal phenomena, whereas now behavioural tics are commonplace as gestures become more and more inscrutable. When gestures are transfigured as images, they are more than mummified. While it does hold that photographic images abstract the original gesture and constitute “the reification and obliteration of a gesture”, the indexicality of such images allows them to “preserve the *dynamis* intact”.⁴ Agamben explicitly cites painting as a medium which is gesturally inferior to cinema: “Even the *Mona Lisa*, even *Las Meninas* could be seen not as immovable and eternal forms, but as fragments of a gesture or as stills of a lost film wherein only they would regain their true meaning.”⁵ The following study will show that it is not singularly in cinema or in painting that pure gesturality might be found, but rather in intermedial spaces such as those opened up by the interactions between cinema and painting.

Despite, or perhaps as a result of, its extraordinary brevity, Agamben’s essay has reinvigorated the field of gesture studies and inspired a broad sweep of writings which apply his ideas to film more concretely. In particular, an essay in *Cinema and Agamben* by Libby Saxton underlines the gestural significance of the series of *tableaux vivants* within Jean-Luc Godard’s *Passion* (1982) and the gestural quality of the paintings which inspire it. The paintings which form the film’s archive “evoke movement that might come to be” within their own stillness, a phrasing which argues together with Agamben that the *tableau* is a “fragment” compared to something more like a “whole” offered by the cinematic *tableau vivant*.⁶ As Alain Masson argues, “gesture does not allow itself to be reduced to an immediate and simple signification, value or function. Quite often it is an enigma as

much as an index.”⁷ There is an uneasy relationship between what the gesture shows and that to which the gesture alludes.

Early ontological film theory uses painting as a fulcrum to establish medium specificity, and dares not acknowledge the profound connections between the media lest this endanger the establishment of a theory of film. When André Bazin claims that “in achieving the aims of baroque art, photography has freed the plastic arts from their obsession with likeness”, he cleaves painting and photography somewhat crudely.⁸ Painted and photographic or cinematographic images continue to obsess over movements and gestures, to represent the stillness behind the movement depicted in a realism which transcends “photorealism”. Roland Barthes designates these suspended moments the *numen* of painting when they transcend the empirical and portray “a gesture apprehended at the point in its course where the normal eye cannot arrest it”, a distinction not granted to the vast majority of “shock” photographs.⁹ More recent works have explored the relationship between cinema and painting, including Andrew’s *Film in the Aura of Art* (1984), which views the interactions through a Benjaminian optic, and Dalla Vache’s *Cinema and Painting* (1996), which mostly seeks to marry individual artistic movements to individual films and filmic techniques. Several monographs have sought to identify ‘painterly’ approaches in the oeuvre of various auteurs, including Mactaggert’s *The Film Paintings of David Lynch* (2010). Emma Wilson’s subtle reading of Otero’s *Histoire d’un secret* (2003) in her monograph *Love, Mortality and the Moving Image* (2012) is centred around the scene in which the filmmaker runs her hands along works painted by her late mother: an intermingling of painting and cinema allows for a haptic, affective bond between generations. While the hapticity of oil paintings is crucial within this and other films, the analysis which follows will focus on the moments in which filmed paintings are not affective in their hapticity but gestural in their tactility and motility. Overall, previous entries in scholarship on the topic of gesture have considered it as subsidiary to another discipline or concern, whereas the hyper-mediated nature of gesture means that it cannot be fully subsumed by another branch of theory.

Questions of gesturality, cinema and painting coalesce in *L’Hypothèse du tableau volé*. It may predate Agamben’s work by over a decade but the way in which it animates a series of paintings by the controversial (and fictional) artist Tonnerre seems to anticipate and respond to questions of gesture and intermediality. The debates between the two protagonists, which recall a Diderotian dialogue, encourage the observer to lurk in the spaces between the

plastic and cinematographic arts. Close readings of the film reveal a multiplicity of gestures between painting, cinema and the written word. Through its sequencing of linked paintings and *tableaux vivants*, *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* reconstructs not only a lost painting but also a lost pre-language of gestures which the most hierophantic spectator struggles to decipher.



Figures 1-2: The painting of the crusaders playing chess (top) and its recreation as a *tableau vivant* (bottom).

Screenshots from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (© INA).

For much of *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*'s gestation, there was no stolen painting at all. Planned as a collaboration between Ruiz and Pierre Klossowski, the film would have seen the latter occupy a dual role as both art collector and fictive artist. Klossowski's unexpected departure shortly before production was due to begin left Ruiz in a position similar to that of his protagonists: he had acquired a set of paintings and hired actors to play the 'Personnages des Tableaux' but had to piece a narrative together on his own.¹⁰ Thus a film intended

to animate academic discourse became a parody of it. In borrowing the structure and conventions of detective stories, Ruiz lures the viewer into searching for clues to solve the conspiracy around the paintings by scanning for the smallest movements onscreen. If the fourth painting in Tonnerre's scandalous septych can be discerned or derived from the six which remain, it can only be situated in relation to the others through the analysis of the minute gestures hidden in the compositions. 'For the painter it sufficed to interpret in his sober and magisterial style the energy of the figures, expressions, attitudes and gestures'.¹¹ The reconstruction of the paintings as *tableaux vivants* allows the gestures to be interpolated between stillness and movement, between fiction and reality, between painting and the moving image. Elsaesser argues that the 'enigma resides [...] in the surreal match between voice and image'.¹² This is, however, just one of the intermedial interactions which resonates from a wide variety of perspectives throughout the film. The reconstruction of paintings through the medium of the *tableau vivant* constitutes an attempt to halt gesturality between two media, to interrupt its ceaseless mediation and discern some deeper meaning through an enhanced sense of perspective and by perceiving the movements of both the figures in the painting and the actors, who cannot help but tremble as they hold their poses.

A dialogue between two Parisian narrators on art criticism and the language of gesture, Ruiz's film enjoys an intertextuality with the diverse works of Diderot even though he is not cited explicitly. Long before Agamben, Diderot suggests that a painting might be a fragment of some larger whole: "He who walks through a gallery of paintings creates without realising the role of a deaf person who enjoys watching mutes who are communicating on subjects they know."¹³ The spectator in the gallery is forced to examine paintings in their stillness, which fosters a hyper-awareness of the gestures between the figures depicted in a tableau. Diderot even posits a method for transforming a theatrical production into a gestural *tableau vivant* when he describes a series of visits to the theatre. As the curtain rose he would put his fingers in his ears and rely on his sight alone to understand the play. Even though he could not hear a word spoken, "I was seen shedding tears in the sad parts, always with my ears plugged."¹⁴ When asked why he was performing such a counterintuitive gesture, he replied that he listened by "blocking my ears to hear better".¹⁵ A similar effect is attempted cinematically in presenting a series of mute players in black and white. Without colour or dialogues (on the part of the extras), the figures onscreen become figurations whose every corporeal movement can be charted and analysed. Ruiz

shares Diderot's fascination with the hermeneutics of gesture, but is more ambivalent about its universality. From the beginning, the way in which he chooses to film the paintings questions the divisions between painting and performance.

From the first sequence, Ruiz calls into question the notions surrounding gesture which underpin the ontological distinctions between media, most notably the idea that painted images are by their very nature static and cinematic ones motile. The opening shot is of a narrow, iconically Parisian street lined with parked cars. Forked branches spindle out of a barren tree in the far distance. The length of the shot, and the rigidity of the camerawork, bring to mind a landscape painting before the title card has appeared. The sky is an incandescent glow of white light which imparts an almost beatific radiance to the street below. This would not be a mistaken overexposure from a Director of Photography as noted as Sacha Vierny, whose legendary collaborations with Alain Resnais before *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (*Nuit et brouillard* [1956], *Hiroshima mon amour* [1959], *L'année dernière à Marienbad* [1961]) and afterwards with Peter Greenaway (*A Zed & Two Noughts* [1985] and *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* [1989]), speak to the same fascination with modern urban architecture and the navigation of bodies through interior spaces as his work here. The urban "still life" is framed so as to allude to an oil painting. Conversely, when the camera interacts with the *tableaux* themselves, it manages to animate those gestures which were always already discernible within the painted artworks.

The first glimpse of the titular paintings of *L'Hypothèse* approaches one of the scandalous tableaux, step by step. The shot seems to suggest that approaching the frozen gestures within a painting with a surgical, empiricist eye might allow a hidden meaning to reveal itself. However, before any telling details can be discerned, the camera sweeps around the painting and the static figures appear to shift as the viewer's perspective is radically realigned. Just for a moment the portrait becomes anamorphic and seems to be at once still and mobile. While paintings as they are traditionally displayed must remain still, they are able to alter their form depending on the point from which they are being observed, luring their spectators into moving instead. This technique which animates a painting by moving the beholder is known as anamorphosis (literally "re-shaping"). Lacan's notorious lecture on the simultaneous presence of two contrasting signifiers in Holbein's *The Ambassadors* (1533) is filled with remarks on the individual movements required when we look at a painting. He tells his audience that he hopes that the copy of the painting he has brought along "has circulated enough to have passed between everyone's



Figures 3-5: Ruiz traces an arc around one of the scandalous paintings in a single shot.

Screenshots from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (© INA).

hands".¹⁶ Paintings are not merely consumed visually: approaching and analysing a painting requires an endless series of shifting movements. The form of the skull appears

to a viewer of Holbein's image only at the moment when "you turn away"—only by moving to the outer edge of the painting and genuflecting at its foot can the *memento mori* be discerned.¹⁷ The painting remains still, while it is the spectator who performs the gesture necessary to unlock another point of view. The French language is particularly porous to dialogues which embrace the congruence of knowledge and perspective. An individual layer of perspectival space and a tabulated set of ideas can both be designated with the same noun: *plan*. Theorising about a work of art and gesturing about one emerge as inherently complementary ways to approach hermeneutics.



Figure 6: Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (1656) (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid).

One of the strategies employed by the two narrators is the dismantling of the composition by imagining the appearance of the tableau from each of the characters' perspectives in turn. Most thrillingly, the sixth painting is performed through a web of *tableaux vivants* in which the actors point out of their individual tableaux into the next. The gestures within and between the paintings are as significant as the Collectionneur's narration from the *roman à clef*. The leaps between different perspectives and performances echo the hierophantic incandescence enjoyed by Foucault in the opening chapter of *The Order of Things* (1966). Large sections of Foucault's analysis of Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (see Figure 6) could have been delivered by the Collectionneur or his unseen interlocutor. Even the concept of marginal anamorphism is evoked by Foucault, who describes how the painter



Figure 7: The *tableau vivant* of Diana and Actaeon from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*.

Screenshots from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (© INA).

the canvas has oriented himself in relation to his work: “by keeping his distance, the painter has placed himself aside the piece on which he is working”—exactly as a spectator of *The Ambassadors* would.¹⁸ The *telos* of his imagined spectators is not the discovery of a hidden cult or conspiracy, as in the case of the *Collectionneur*, but the revelation of the painter’s image of the spectators themselves “transcribed by his hand as if in a mirror”.¹⁹ Foucault leads the spectator’s gaze from the painter to his unknowable canvas, to the window which spills light out of the painting itself, to the mirror (a dialectical dead end) and beyond. Ruiz’s film contains even more deceptions and “false paths”, as the characters follow the trail through not one but several interlinked paintings. The rays reflected in the mirrors (see Figure 7) appear to connect the paintings, but fail to shed an interpretative light on what might hold them together. Similarly, Foucault unveils Velázquez’s composition as a representation of representation. “[Classical representation] undertakes to represent itself here in all its elements, with its images, the eyes to which it is offered, the faces it makes visible, the gestures that call it into being.”²⁰ *Las Meninas* orchestrates perspectival deceptions to lead the spectator’s interpretative gaze through reflections, shadows, mirrors and pools of light. The turning point in Foucault’s reading occurs when he refuses to allow himself to be misled by these diversions and scrutinises the movements of the figure at the threshold at the back of the composition. Like the smile of the page facing out of the painting of the crusaders and looking outside the frame in Ruiz’s film, his actions are only visible to someone who beholds the painting as he resides out of

the line of sight of all characters within the composition. Not only is he pulling on a curtain (an act which recalls the gesture performed by Toto in *The Wizard of Oz* which unmasks the “man behind the curtain”), he is also mid-step, halfway down a staircase and, most significantly of all, positioned at an open doorway, a figuration which is particularly relevant to the manner in which the characters of Ruiz’s film travel between the paintings.



Figures 8-9: The Collectionneur awkwardly avoids opening doors before the reveal of the first *tableau vivant* (top) and after the examination of the third (bottom). Screenshots from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (© INA).

In a film so intensely preoccupied with dialogues of gesture, it is worth following how the Collectionneur careens through his rambling mansion. During his opening monologue, he opens a drawer, empties it of a vast number of articulated mannequins and sits two of them down facing each other before depositing the rest in an adjacent drawer lined with an anatomical drawing. Much as he attempts to perform a re-articula-

tions of others' gestures, he is the walking proof of Agamben's claim that people are forgetting how to gesture. The sequence immediately following his confident assertion that the *tableaux vivants* are able to show that to which paintings only allude sees him retreat into a tenebrous corner of the room (see Figure 8). A few seconds later, the door leading out to the first *tableau vivant* creaks open. Conventions of the haunted house movie are adopted and reconfigured to demonstrate the Collectionneur's own impotence when it comes to the autonomy of his gestures. The Collectionneur appears to have activated some unseen mechanism to open the door rather than committing himself to the gesture of opening it of his own accord. Each time he uses such surgically precise mechanisms to move through space, he unlearns some of the subtlety that consists in physically opening a door. After finding the mask in the third *tableau*, there is a protracted sequence in which the Collectionneur displays great hesitation in his interaction with a door (Figure 9). He looks at it quizzically before prising it open just a fraction and sliding backwards across the threshold. The Collectionneur may re-orient himself in paintings and use mirrors to put himself at impossible vantage points, but his gestures reveal him to be a man losing his grasp on his own sense of personal space as mediated between interior and exterior. Adorno speaks to this exact fear in *Minima Moralia*: "Technification is making gestures in the meantime precise and rough—and thereby human beings."²¹ Gesture is a realm of pure mediativity, and the act of opening a door enhances an understanding of how interior and exterior space mediate each other. Over- or undetermined actions such as the creaking door "drive all hesitation out of gestures, all consideration, all propriety."²² If the techniques used to decipher the paintings are applied to the movements undertaken by the characters within the film, the slow discovery that the protagonists do not know how to mediate their own gestures threatens to negate their findings within the *tableaux* and *tableaux vivants*.

The dialogic duel between the two narrators is a carefully choreographed sequence of gestures and fanfares. Beneath the illusion of dialectical progress lies a chain of feints and argumentative loops. Gesture is not an entirely "silent kingdom": Agamben takes care in specifying that gesture can be expressed with noises, that the essential "silence" of cinema does not stem from the presence or absence of sound.²³ In another moment of intertextuality with Diderot, the relationship between the two protagonists is strongly reminiscent of the rapport between Moi and Lui in the "satire second", *Le Neveu de Rameau*: the former

is the first to speak and, despite his role as a “point of view” for the reader, does not concede any details about his appearance or movements. In Ruiz’s film, the corresponding character is known to the viewer only as an acousmatic voice. As we cannot see his gestures, he can maintain an enigmatic distance from an observer, yet this allows him to be outperformed by the Collectionneur. As Ropars argues, “according to Ruiz [...] one must rule the system through an absent narrator, who integrated with the viewer but finds himself interrupted by the character in his story, a chatty and very visible collector”.²⁴ The voice-off is just as spatial as it is acoustic: it functions as a deictic gesture that points to the space beyond the frame. Like the Collectionneur, Diderot’s Lui is a wild tangle of gestures and gesticulations. He waxes lyrical around a vast web of topics with such rhetorical prowess that it takes a degree of concentration to realise how little of any import is being said. The two narrators elaborate their theories and deliver readings of the paintings in a manner which is highly gestural. The dialogue’s gestural turn is suggested by a series of phatic words such as *Hélas* (alas). Loops within sentences leave the viewer with a sense that different perspectives illuminate different meanings. Even when the Collectionneur is seated in the background, positioned and lit in such a way that he resembles a motionless bust, he still mediates his expression seemingly to cause confusion. “Two remarks... two remarks concerning the paintings... and two further remarks... two more remarks... but those of a more general character.”²⁵ The pauses which punctuate his speech obfuscate the meaning of what could have been a simple sentence: at its close it is unclear whether four, six or eight “remarks” will follow. The various steps in the argument surrounding Tonnere’s painting acquire a kind of gestural shorthand: for example, when the Collectionneur repeats “paintings do not show, they allude”, he makes an almost involuntary circular motion with his right hand which mirrors the spiralling nature of his argumentation. The unravelling argument is irreducible from the hand movements and shuffling footsteps which accompany it. Both give the illusion of progress while often only serving to bewilder the spectator even further. The dialogue has no particular end or goal, as one conspiracy always seems to give in to another. It also denies an audience the complete satisfaction which would allow it to be an end in itself. Each struggle within the dialogue to wrestle gesture back into the realm of communicability only ends up producing more gesture. The dialogue becomes a vast sequence of imperceptible shifts and configurations

mediated by art which transcend meaninglessness and seek to represent the pure mediality behind communication.

The rhythms and dialectical fugue of the dialogue are complemented by Jorge Arriagada's score. Far from operatically omnipresent, the piercing, short bursts of staccato strings cannot help recall the gestures of the orchestral conductor and the precisely coordinated movements of the violinist. The isolated percussion instruments, particularly the drums, underlay the gestures enumerated onscreen with an eerie, acousmatic echo. Even more uniquely unsettling is the soprano whose voice bookends the film. The soprano's song initially appears to be a chant in some unknown, indecipherable language, before it emerges that the lyrics are in fact the poem "Napoleon" by Walter de la Mare. "What is the world, O soldiers? / It is I: / I, this incessant snow, / This northern sky; / Soldiers, this solitude / Through which we go / Is I." In its full textual form, the poem inverts its meaning as a reader progresses from the first verse to the last. From the evidence of the first half, the listener has the impression that Napoleon is an entirely self-centred individual who thinks he has inherited the world. In the second half this confidence is shown to have crumbled to an Ozymandian expression of a destroyed ego. As the song begins, the volume fades up reticently such that most viewers would only hear the second half of the poem. Just as there is a missing painting, there is a missing verse which haunts the film. Through the combination of these various techniques, the score punctuates and complements the visual and dialogic exploration of gesture which is occurring within the diegesis.

CONCLUSION

We would dearly like to know what was going on in Rimbaud's head while he was writing *Le bateau ivre*, in Mozart's head while he was composing his symphony *Jupiter*, to understand the secret mechanism which guides the creator on their perilous adventure. Thank God, what is impossible for poetry and music, is achievable in painting! To know what is going on inside the head of a painter, you just need to follow their hand.²⁶

— Henri-Georges Clouzot, *Le mystère Picasso* (1956)

In the first movements of his art film *Le mystère Picasso* of 1956, Clouzot proclaims *ex cathedra* to have solved the titular mystery, the "secret mechanism" which animates artistic

creation.²⁷ Paintings, he claims, are composed of a vast number of human gestures, and the act of deciphering them reveals the essence of both painting subject and painted object. As Clouzot's film unspools, the opportunity to observe the artist at work is foreclosed: while the individual brush strokes are visible on the screen, for the bulk of the film the artist's hand itself is elided, the painted glass becoming coterminous and coexistent with the frame. The opening monologue emerges as something of an empty gesture. Ruiz's preoccupation with capturing the brushstrokes of the painter would later find expression in *Miotte vu par Raúl Ruiz* (2001) which approaches that lofty goal towards which Clouzot gestures through techniques including hand points-of-view (POV) shots of the paintbrush, canted angles and a translucent mesh of superimpositions. In *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*, the second narrator believes he is close to the truth when he claims that "every movement made by a human being leaves an imaginary outline comparable to a curve".²⁸ The temptation to bypass language, social codes and media to connect with a deeper significance is irresistible for the two interlocutors. Ruiz's protagonists struggle to interpret gesture out of and between artworks in a way which leads to a ceaseless proliferation of gesturality across media. Hermeneutics produces more gestures, which produce more medium and elaborate a vast web of intermediality. *Las meninas* as read by Foucault is a representation of representation; Ruiz's film conveys the communication of (in)communicability, especially as the actors start to blink and lose their long-held postures at the film's conclusion.

Futile as it may appear to speculate around the silent kingdom of gesture with the cacophony of terminology and theory, *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* offers a glimpse of what might happen if gestures were left unscrutinised and degenerated into empty gestures. An authoritarian regime would seek to establish itself first in the subliminal domain of gesture: "Such a cult is practically equivalent to military discipline [...] the military manoeuvres, the grandiose parades, are only one aspect of the ceremony."²⁹ The figure of Baphomet who is at the epicentre of the occult themes within the paintings, "an immaculate body without a soul", is so disquieting precisely because it has no features, no independent movement, no *gestus*.³⁰ Hanging from the ceiling and revolving with metronomic regularity, this figure manifests what would occur if the "imaginary outline" of gesture were to become the solid border of conformity and of totality.

"So, let's forget, let the paintings fade, disappear, disappear, so that all that remains are the lone, isolated gestures: the gestures of the ceremony."³¹ The final words of the *Collectionneur* express that heady dream that gesture might be extricated from painting, or indeed from a *tableau vivant*. The character tries, and fails, to catch gesturality in the interstices of painting and theatre. Through the framing device of the film, Ruiz clashes these two media not only with cinematographic images but also acousmatic and charismatic voices alongside a knot of literary references. Gesture begets gesture, and can be glimpsed only in those moments at which it crosses from medium to medium. Ruiz's film would find itself at the centre of a canon of a gestural film theory, were such a branch of theory possible. Antithetical to medium specificity, pure mediality cannot be captured within one single discipline or medium. Each single gesture becomes destined to repeat itself. Gesturality beckons, but as we approach it we cannot help but re-enact its ceremony and gesture towards or beyond ourselves.

1. *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*: "Les tableaux ne montrent pas, ils font allusion. Les tableaux, mis en scène par le moyen technique des tableaux vivants, ne font pas allusion, ils montrent !"

2. Virginia Woolf, "Walter Sickert", in *Collected Essays II* (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), 236f, also cited in Sharon Maus, "Words are an Impure Medium": *Virginia Woolf's Appropriation of Visual Art* (San Marcos, TX: Texas State University, 2005), Frédéric Regard, *Mapping the Self: Space, Identity, Discourse in British Auto/biography* (Saint-Étienne: Université de Saint-Étienne, 2003), 199, and Jack Stewart, *Color, Space and Creativity: Art and Ontology in Five British Writers* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008), 26.

3. Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2000), 52.

4. *Ibid.*, 54

5. *Ibid.*, 54f.

6. Libby Saxton, "Passion, Agamben and the Gestures of Work", in *Cinema and Agamben: Ethics, Biopolitics and the Moving Image*, ed. Henrik Gustafsson and Asbjørn Grønstad (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 61.

7. Alain Masson, "D'où vient le geste?", in *L'acteur de cinéma: approches plurielles* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007), 87: "Le geste ne se laisse réduire ni à une signification ni à une valeur ou une fonction immédiates et simples. Bien souvent, c'est une énigme en même temps qu'un indice."

8. André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1981), 12: "La photographie, en achevant le baroque, a libéré les arts plastiques de leur obsession de la ressemblance."

9. Roland Barthes, *La Chambre claire* (Paris: Editions de l'Etoile, 1980), 32f: "Un geste saisi au point de sa course où l'œil normal ne peut l'immobiliser."

10. Michael Goddard, "Impossible Cartographies: Approaching Raúl Ruiz's Cinema," *em questão* 19, no.1 (2013): 27.

11. *L'Hypothèse*: "Il a suffi au peintre d'interpréter dans son style sobre et magistral l'énergie des figures, des expressions, des attitudes et des gestes."

12. Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face With Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 253.

13. Denis Diderot, *Lettre sur les aveugles. Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, ed. Marian Hobson and Simon Harvey (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), 100: "Celui qui se promène dans une galerie de peintures fait, sans y penser, le rôle d'un sourd qui s'amuserait à examiner les muets qui s'entretiennent sur des sujets qui lui sont connus."

14. *Ibid.*, 101: "on me voyait répandre des larmes dans les endroits pathétiques, et toujours les oreilles bouchées."

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15. Ibid., 101: "me boucher les oreilles pour mieux entendre".
 16. Jacques Lacan, *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1973), 82: "a circulé assez pour qu'il ait passé maintenant entre toutes les mains".
 17. Ibid., 83: "vous vous détournez".
 18. Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 19: "en prenant un peu de distance, le peintre s'est placé à côté de l'ouvrage auquel il travaille".
 19. Ibid., 22: "transcrits par sa main comme dans un miroir".
 20. Ibid., 31: "[La représentation classique] entreprend en effet de s'y représenter en tous ses éléments, avec ses images, les regards auxquels elle s'offre, les visages qu'elle rend visibles, les gestes qui la font naître."
 21. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (London: Verso, 2005), I.19.
 22. Ibid., *Minima Moralia*, I.19.
 23. Agamben, *Means Without End*, 58f.
 24. Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, *Écraniques: le film du texte* (Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1990), 102: "il faut régir le système par un narrateur absent, qui s'assimile au spectateur mais se trouve interpellé par le personnage de son récit, un collectionneur bavard et bien visible".
 25. *L'Hypothèse tableau*: "Deux remarques... deux remarques concernant les tableaux... et deux remarques encore... deux remarques de plus... mais celles-là de caractère générale."
 26. *Le mystère Picasso*: "On donnerait cher pour savoir ce qui s'est passé dans la tête de Rimbaud pendant qu'il écrivait *Le bateau ivre*, dans la tête de Mozart pendant qu'il composait la symphonie *Jupiter*, pour connaître le mécanisme secret qui guide le créateur dans son aventure périlleuse. Grace à Dieu, ce qui est impossible pour la poésie et la musique, est réalisable en peinture ! Pour savoir ce qui se passe dans la tête d'un peintre, il suffit de suivre sa main."
 27. *Le mystère Picasso*: "mécanisme secret".
 28. *L'Hypothèse*: "tout mouvement effectué par un être humain laisse un tracé imaginaire assimilable à une courbe".
 29. *L'Hypothèse*: "Un tel culte est pratiquement équivalent de la discipline militaire [...] les manoeuvres militaires, les défilés grandioses, ne sont qu'un aspect de la cérémonie."
 30. *L'Hypothèse*: "un corps immaculé sans âme".
 31. *L'Hypothèse*: "Alors, oublions, laissons les tableaux s'effacer, s'évanouir, s'évanouir, afin qu'il ne reste plus que les gestes seuls, isolés: les gestes de la cérémonie."