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- 1 The articles in the thematic section “Confluences between Film and Other Media” are, essentially, a selection of essays presented at the conference *Symbiotic Cinema: Confluences between Film and the Other Media*, which took place at the Linnaeus University, in Växjö, Sweden, from the 6th to the 8th September 2018. This event, hosted by the IMS – Linnaeus University Intermediality and Multimodality Research Center, was also the 24th SERCIA Annual Meeting (Société pour l'Enseignement et la Recherche du Cinéma Anglophone), an itinerant event that happens in different institutions and venues every year and is organized by SERCIA members.
- 2 This fruitful international partnership brought together academics with different profiles and research interests: the IMS research center is fully dedicated to intermediality, but not specifically related to film; whereas SERCIA, created and based in France, is “a European academic society that promotes the study and teaching of cinema produced in English-speaking countries, as well as the growing number of English-language films produced elsewhere in the world”.¹ With such a configuration, the conference aimed equally at opening new avenues of intermedial research for Film Studies and heightening the filmic approach within Intermedial Studies.
- 3 The conference stemmed from the organizers’ certainty that cinema has never been truly pure, not even in its inception, let alone nowadays, with post-cinema in full throttle. Despite championing medium-specificity, early avant-garde filmmakers – such as those of the French Impressionist movement (in the 1920s) – and several generations of theorists have used the other art forms as terms of comparison with cinema. Ricciotto Canudo, as early as 1911, introduced cinema in a hierarchy of the arts, thus establishing an indelible relationship between what he would, ultimately, call the Seventh Art (in 1920) and the other art forms. Cinema, Canudo predicted, would “growingly sum up” [the other art forms], achieving a “perfect synthesis” (44). Although positioned as being better, because of its – sometimes unfathomable –

specificity, cinema was never declared pure by Canudo. Nor by Elie Faure (1922) who, while advocating for a “cineplasticity” (“*cinéplastique*”) - the cinematic property par excellence - did so by comparison with the inherent plasticity of the other art forms, which is subsumed in cinema. According to Faure, the “vivid rhythm” exists in painting, music, and dance (9), but also in Shakespeare’s poetry (11). Nor was cinema declared pure by Jean Epstein (1924) who, in explaining his concept of the “photogenic” (“*photogénie*”), declared that “the poetry is cinema’s most powerful medium, the truest medium for the untrue, the unreal, the ‘surreal’ as Apollinaire would have said” (318). Likewise, André Bazin in *What is Cinema?*, in which he accepted adaptation as “a constant feature of art history” (94),² drew a comparison between cinema and photography, based on their mutual ontology,³ and argued in favour of certain theatrical films⁴ as well as cinematic representations of paintings.⁵ His defence of cinema is as keen as his interest in the other arts. This overriding theoretical concern in early cinema and cinephilic times was taken up recently by Lúcia Nagib and Anne Jerslev in their edited collection entitled precisely *Impure Cinema: Intermedial and Intercultural Approaches to Film* (2014), which sums up the earlier commentators’ positions and addresses cinematic impurity as a downright “politics”, which nevertheless does not dismiss the medium; quite the opposite: “[it] is imperative to emphasize that the impure or intermedial approach cannot rule out and indeed depends on the specifics of the medium” (xxi).

- 4 The mixing of media and the crossing of media borders have become part of the theoretical discourse on cinema and other art forms, whether one is for or against it. No longer just cinema (or *never* just cinema), no longer cinema *above* or *with* the other art forms, now it has become essentially a matter of cinema *in-between* the other arts. The confluences are becoming rhizomatic in a Deleuzian sense:⁶ chaotic and heterogenous, destabilizing the traditional territory of all mediums, open to all connections and artistic dimensions, containing multiple entryways, put to strange and adventitious new uses and variations. This seems to point to a state of “intermedia” according to Jürgen Heinrichs and Yvonne Spielmann (2002): “Conceptually, intermedia denotes a fusion rather than an accumulation of media. Thus, the convergence of elements of different media implies the transformation that is more than the sum of its parts” (quoted in Pethő 29). Yet, that is not necessarily so, because cinema has always been impure, as Ágnes Pethő (2011) seems to imply: “Is film (even in its traditional form an ‘intermedium,’ a ‘composite’ medium, in other words, perhaps the ultimate ‘mixed’ or ‘hybrid’ medium that combines all kinds of media in its texture or significance?” (28). We seem to turn in circles, which is why cinema’s assessment needs to (continue to) be made in regard to the other art forms, in whose universe it perforce gravitates, whether the approach is traditional or bold, functional or creative.
- 5 “Intermediality” is the word that defines these junctures and the research field within which these confluences take place. Such a relationship may occur on a one-on-one basis, in which a media form or a media product is transposed to another media form or product. It may occur as a transformation in the characteristics of the medium being transposed, i.e., an adaptation, or a different representation of a medium in another one, such as ekphrasis. Or it may take more complex forms on a multimedial basis, in which a complex transposition involving several media takes place at once, whether involving an artistic fusion or not. The advent of new media opened another field of

inquiry within intermediality, namely digital cinema and its properties, and further enhanced the possibility of rhizomatic confluences.

- 6 A question lurks behind this rationale, which should be answered at this point. Why not call the conference and its thematic section in this issue “Confluences between Cinema and the Other Art Forms”, instead of “Confluences between Cinema and Other Media” as it was entitled— considering that the Seventh Art has always been hybrid? The labeling of cinema as “medium” instead of “art” was a deliberate choice that aimed at possible assessments of more recent phenomena, relating to immersion, interactivity, expanded cinema practices, etc., together with some more classical ones pertaining to the long-established art forms, or relatively new ones, as television or comics. It also engaged more directly with technical and historical aspects of media archeology, ontology, philosophical traditions, and reception (ranging from the apparatuses to the spectatorial behaviour), among others. The approaches could go either way and, in fact, they did, just like in the history of cinema and its related theoretical landscape.
- 7 According to Lars Elleström, cinema is simultaneously a medium and an art form, as is the case with all qualified media, “categories – artistic and non-artistic – that are historically and communicatively situated, indicating that their properties differ depending on parameters such as time, culture, aesthetic preferences, and available technologies” (*Media Transformation*, 19). As a qualified medium, cinema is constituted by a specific cluster of individual media products: films and their derivatives. Cinema may be transmediated by or represented in other media and respective products, a phenomenon that continues to attract artists who wish to reflect on their medium or process of creation through the means of an analogy with other art forms or an analogous object since all this territory is covered by the umbrella term “art”. According to Elleström, simple transmediation occurs when aesthetic properties (such as rhythm) and subjects (having to do with the content proper) are transferred from one qualified medium to another (*Media Transformation*, 21-22). This is what happens when cinema is compared with another art form, for example, television, or maybe music. Needless to say, the reverse process is also true. The comparison becomes more complex when it is performed in regard to several media traits (23), such as when cinema is deemed a *musical* medium, not only based on its rhythm but on multiple other features as well. Media products may also be transmediated, which is necessarily the case when a film script (made of linguistic signs) is adapted for shooting, ultimately resulting in a complete film (an audiovisual product). Simpler than all of this is the representation of other art forms or media within films, a phenomenon that is more common than it may first appear. For example, a song in a musical film, a painting in a gallery visited by fictional characters, among endless possibilities. The world is filled with media, either qualified or not, and it is only befitting that the same should happen in films. Legally, from a copyright perspective, a film is considered a composite work because of these embeddings. Whether they are used semantically or not is quite another matter, depending on the overall intermedial aim behind those circumstances.
- 8 No matter how one looks at cinema – either primarily as an art form or a medium – its appreciation or criticism is entirely dependent upon its physical and technical nature, especially since its technical properties and consumption platforms affect the form and content of specific products (i.e., films). In fact, some films (and television series alike) are self-reflexive and use these confluences as a discursive trait where the linkages may become the subject of the work and/or a shared method for its production. In recent

years, supporters and opponents of emerging computational technologies helped shed some light on matters of relative chronology and media fusion in a more diversified environment. Cinema, from a technical perspective, has undeniably changed. The concept of “post-cinema” addresses the new technological forms and sites of consumption, which, in turn, result in new ways of film viewing, rather immersive; as well as in new types of products, fragmented and pushed towards the museum.

- 9 The three keynote speakers who honoured the conference with their presence offered complementary analyses of the field. Professor Emeritus François Jost (Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3, France) scrutinized the recent evolution of television in order to perceive which traits of cinema still linger on television series. I am happy to say that his talk opens this collection. Professor Lúcia Nagib (University of Reading, Department of Film, Media and Television, UK) delved once more into her main research focus which is realism in intermedial and self-reflexive films. Her talk “Intermedial Passages: Film at Grips with Reality Beyond the Medium” was a cogent analysis of a timeless duality in cinema: that of realism/illusionism. Associate Professor Miriam De Rosa (currently at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy, but in 2018 at Coventry University), a co-leader of the CCVA – Cinema and Contemporary Visual Arts group of NECS specializing in post-cinema, presented the talk “Floating Visions. Moving Images in the Age of Media Configurations”, which opened the debate to new audio-visual possibilities beyond the paradigmatic notion of cinema.
- 10 The encounter of IMS with SERCIA – a confluence in itself – produced interesting material, ranging from expert close readings of films enacting the relationship of the other art forms with cinema to theoretical approaches of intermediality from quite heterogeneous points of view. The subject of the conference was purposefully kept rather broad in order to encompass many forays of cinema into other domains, in as many approaches as possible. The present collection is necessarily a selection that tries to do justice to several avenues of research that were present at the conference, with the exception of adaptation whose texts veered towards a different publication also sponsored by SERCIA and co-edited by Liviu Lutas and I. Interestingly, many of the essays presented at the conference were on sound and music, but there was only one on theatre (and has already been published elsewhere).
- 11 Consequently, this collection is divided into two parts, one of which is entirely dedicated to music and closes the section. Part I – Cinema and the Visual Arts, starts with Alfredo Suppia’s theoretical survey of realism from an updated intermedial perspective, trying to dismiss the preconceived idea that realism and artistic hybridity are antithetical as traditionally they are conceived to be. Next, Sebastien Lefait addresses the confrontation between the fine arts, habitually perceived as high culture, and the digital media of networking (mostly Youtube), the low culture purview, not in terms of intermedial production – a more usual approach – but in relation to intermedial reception in and of the Swedish film *The Square*, winner of Cannes Palme d’Or in 2017. Zsolt Gyenge is well-grounded in the gallery space but turns his attention to multi-screen installations, midway between cinema and fine arts, presenting the phenomenologically-based concept of an “embodied self-reflexivity”, pertaining to the spectators’ experience of a film exhibited in a gallery or museum. Susan Felleman intersects cinema with painting through the friendship between Jay DeFeo, author of *The Rose*, a monumental painting made of concrete that took her eight years to finish and was embedded in her own studio, and Bruce Conner, a contemporary artist and her

friend who documented that process and the removal of the said painting from its original abode.

- 12 Part II – Cinema and Music opens with Marguerite Chabrol’s survey on radio, stage musicals and classical musical films undertaken from a historical perspective. This triangulation evinces the “intensification of the links between media”, as she puts it, and reveals just how much such an intermedial network in general, and the ‘canteen cycle’ of musical films in particular, are indebted to old-time vaudeville. Raphaëlle Costa de Beauregard draws on Lars Elleström’s transfer of media characteristics among dissimilar media – in this case, a transposition from the medium of music to the medium of cinema – using Preston Sturges’s film *Unfaithfully Yours* (from 1948) as a case study. A pivotal film between classical Hollywood cinema and European arthouse works, Orson Welles’s adaptation of William Shakespeare’s play *Othello* is a feast for the senses and an undoubtedly complex transmediation of qualified media. In it, I equate cinema with music, venturing that all films are musicalized in some sense, and then proceed to classify *Othello* as a “cinematic opera”, one step beyond the notion of the ‘operatic’ which deals with style and/or music, but not via the appropriation of opera’s most relevant features through the effects, voice and music tracks of the film’s sound. No longer within classical cinema, Céline Murillo examines the relationship between the genre of punk music and its do-it-yourself cinematic counterpart during the historical period of the Downtown Scene of New York (from 1976 to 1984). To conclude the section, Steen Ledet Christiansen, in the wake of Danijela Kuledzic-Wilson, verses on Harmony Korine’s film *Spring Breakers* (2012) as a musical structure that organises images through the processes of “looping” and “pleating” that give the film a Deleuzian non-chronological flair, heightened by Christiansen’s own concept of the “morph-image”.
- 13 In closing, a few remarks on the proverbial state of intermedial art are in order. One must admit that the confluence between art forms has never been stronger as post-modernism has endowed artists with an aesthetic consciousness their predecessors have not always possessed. That is true for commentators as well. In 2009 Werner Wolf published his General Typology of Intermediality oriented towards the relationship between music and literature. In it, Wolf indicated a narrow sense of intermediality which he called “intracompositional intermediality” formed by two plurimedial systems, one of them using a single semiotic system and the other one displaying signifiers that appear to belong to more than one semiotic system (17). The problem, of course, arises when one contemplates ultra-hybrid forms such as Welles’s *Othello*, a work that seems to defy categories to the point of admitting interpretations that fall far outside its original art form. Wolf’s category “intermedial fusion” (cf. chart, 28) is a very limited phenomenon restricted to one fusion (in the case of opera that of the libretto with the music, which is the very condition of opera’s existence after all) instead of a multiplicity of them, a real melding of multimedia.
- 14 Currently, the theory does not seem to catch up with the practice. This only serves to prove that hybridity is an increasingly fashionable artistic practice and one that evinces just how much art forms are indeed “qualified media”, as Lars Elleström views them. Although originally set in historical, contextual and social circumstances (the “contextual qualifying aspect”), they evolve; despite having certain qualitative aspects (the “operational qualifying aspect”) they transform over time as they are “not eternally inscribed but formed by conventions” (Elleström, “The Modalities of Media”

24-25). That being the case, does it still make sense to number the arts? Does one still know where one art begins and another one ends?

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NOTES

1. As stated in its Facebook page: <http://sercia.net/>.
2. In an essay tellingly baptized "In defense of an impure cinema".
3. Essay "Ontology of the photographic image".
4. "Essay "Theatre and cinema" (originally 1951).

5. “Essay “Painting and cinema”.

6. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London et al: Bloomsbury, 2013). 1-28.

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