

MAEVE CONNOLLY

Cinematic space, televisual time and contemporary art

Introduction: the cinematic and the televisual in contemporary art

The 1990s witnessed a resurgence of interest in cinema and the cinematic on the part of artists and curators alike, evidenced by the prevalence of moving image installations within the gallery. Some of these works directly reference the history of film, but others could be described as cinematic simply because they display notably high production values, involve the use of large-scale projection, recall the physical spaces of cinema through installation design, or involve scripted or directed action in front of the camera.¹ If the 'cinematic' has now acquired a degree of currency within art discourse, then the same cannot yet be said of the 'televisual'. To date, there have been few attempts to theorise the recent televisual turn within contemporary art, or to compare the ways in which cinema and television have been imagined by artists and curators.² In addition, television itself has become increasingly difficult to define, not least because it too aspires towards the cinematic – particularly in the case of HBO and other forms of 'Quality TV'.³ Also, while television can still be defined through reference to familiar genres of programming, the concept of 'flow' so central to the understanding of the televisual has been substantially reconfigured in the light of new practices of production and reception. Television is now routinely experienced via screens of many different sizes, from the very small to the very large, and, as Anna McCarthy's work demonstrates,⁴ it is experienced within a variety of non-domestic contexts and situations. Perhaps because of these developments, television is now a focus of renewed attention amongst artists and curators.

There are many facets to the recent 'televisual turn' in contemporary art, but one of its most prominent expressions is the staging of large-scale exhibitions exploring the historical relationship between art and television. Recent European examples include 'Are You Ready for TV?' (MACBA, Barcelona, 2010–11); 'Changing Channels: Art and Television 1963–1987' (MUMOK, Vienna, 2010); 'Channel TV' – a collaboration between Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof (Hamburg), cneai= (Chatou, Paris), and the Halle für Kunst (Lüneburg, 2010–11); and 'Broadcast

Yourself', curated by Sarah Cook and Kathy Rae Huffmann at several UK venues (2008). The trend also extends to the US, with examples that include 'Television Delivers People' at the Whitney Museum (2008), and a touring exhibition entitled 'Broadcast', co-organised by the Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, and Independent Curators International (2007–10).

These curatorial initiatives do not assert the end of artists' interest in television any more than earlier anxieties about the death of cinema, which shaped a wave of exhibitions marking its centenary towards the close of the 1990s,⁵ signalled the end of artists' interest in film and/or cinema. Rather, they highlight the continued importance of television as a point of reference for artists. For example, 'Television Delivers People' and 'Broadcast Yourself' propose important linkages between the history of artists' television and contemporary uses of the web as a site of performative self-presentation, and also identify continuities between collective forms of video activism in the 1970s and newer participatory art practices involving social media.

Many of these exhibitions emphasise the importance of broadcasting as a focal point and platform for artists seeking to engage critically with popular culture during the sixties, seventies and early eighties. The recent works I explore in this paper, however, are more concerned to explore the cultural and social significance of cinema and television, at the point when both have been supplanted – or at the very least supplemented – by the arrival of newer media. These works also lack an obvious utopian agenda as they do not advocate new models of film or television production, or intervene in the spaces of theatrical exhibition or broadcasting.

By drawing attention to the history of artists' engagement with television, it could be said that the curators of the exhibitions cited above also seek to address the changing form and experience of television itself in the post-broadcast era, often echoing scholarly and popular discourses concerning the 'end of television'.⁶ On the subject of discourse, the display strategies used in these exhibitions, sometimes involving a mix of physical and virtual gallery spaces, questioned the routine alignment of television with privatised domestic space, drawing attention instead to aspects of production and reception that are both distinctly social and implicitly public. Thus, several shows, including 'Broadcast Yourself', featured stage-like recreations of domestic viewing environments, while others, such as 'Are You Ready for TV?', included viewing environments designed to resemble television studios or sets, such as those found in news programmes or chat shows. In the latter exhibition, these environments functioned as quasi-social viewing spaces, drawing attention to those aspects of television that are experi-

enced collectively rather than individually. 'Are You Ready for TV?' also emphasised pedagogical modes of television discourse, by including programmes on philosophy and the arts produced for French and UK television and by utilising classroom-style seating in certain areas. Consequently, it can be argued that the recent televisual turn in exhibition-making encompasses several facets, extending from an engagement with the forms of television produced by artists, to an exploration of television's own function as site of critical discourse (in relation to philosophy, art and media) and a consideration of scholarly debates concerning television's changing form and position in public life.

Informed by an analysis of these exhibitions (and by previous research on the cinematic turn), this article develops a comparative approach to 'cinematic' and 'televisual' currents in contemporary art. It focuses on six moving-image installations produced since the late 1990s, all of which make reference either to cinema history or to television history. The first section deals with three projected-video installations – *L'Ellipse*, 1998, by Pierre Huyghe; *Baltimore*, 2003, by Isaac Julien; *It's a Dream*, 2007, by Tsai Ming-Liang – all of which involve the spatial reconfiguration of cinematic narratives. They are linked by a 'referential' approach to cinema that is echoed in the televisual works discussed below. In the three projected video installations cinema is understood as a distinctly urban cultural form, which plays a role in the organisation of public space and experience. Meanwhile, the second group of works considered – *15:1*, 2001 by Michelle Deignan; *Untitled (The Remake)*, 2007, by Stefanos Tsivopoulos; *Subject*, 2009, by Gerard Byrne – all make reference to histories and forms of television. They are less overtly concerned with specifically urban experience, and instead explore the ways in which television has functioned to organise and circumscribe the relationship between public and private realms.⁷

In diverse ways, the works by Deignan, Tsivopoulos and Byrne all focus on the television studio as a quasi-private space in which conventions and codes of behaviour are followed and in which representations of social life – generally involving 'ordinary people' rather than professional performers – are produced and mediated. In each instance, television is envisaged as a mediating cultural technology rather than securely aligned with the imagining (or imaging) of public space. In addition to noting differences between the ways in which experiences and histories of cinema and television are conceived in these works, my discussion also highlights important continuities. All of these works are devised to be experienced spatially as well as temporally, and several take the form of multi-screen or multi-channel installations, sometimes incorporating textual or architectonic elements. In addition, the works by Huyghe, Julien, Tsivopoulos and Byrne all situate cinema or

television in relation to social formations and institutions charged with the production, or preservation, of cultural history – including libraries, universities, museums, monuments or festivals.

The most significant continuity, however, involves the deployment of diverse strategies of re-enactment and reconstruction. These strategies have become relatively commonplace within contemporary art in recent years, both in moving image practices and in works involving performance. One of the most celebrated examples is Jeremy Deller's Artangel project *The Battle of Orgreave*, 2001, in which the artist worked with a battle re-enactment society to recreate a clash between striking miners and police during the miners' strike in 1984. Mark Godfrey has argued that by resurrecting this 'repressed memory' and by involving protagonists from the clash, Deller 'triggered personal confrontations'⁸ with the past. While Godfrey does not develop this analysis of confrontation, it is worth noting that Deller also reflects – in the documentary film of the event directed by Mike Figgis for Channel 4 – upon his memory of viewing TV coverage of the miners' strike in 1984. So the decision to re-enact the event is framed partly through reference to the artist's analysis of his own experience as a viewer.

Only one of the works that I discuss – *Untitled (The Remake)* by Tsivopoulos – actually features a public re-enactment of a historical event. Yet others involve reconstructions or restagings of more mundane events based upon textual or other material sources, or borrow aspects of their form from cinema or television in ways that draw attention to the artist's own position as viewer or reader. In each instance, the use of re-enactment, reconstruction or citation opens up a gap between the source material and the artist's treatment of it, in terms of scripting, casting, cinematography, editing and so on. In many of the works, this temporal gap between source and treatment is integral to a larger project of critical reflection concerning the role played by cinema, television and other cultural technologies in the shaping and production of social experience and history.⁹ These works acquire a further historical dimension through their engagement with artistic, scholarly or journalistic discourses concerning the 'death of cinema' or 'end of television', even though they may allude to the ways in which cultural technologies such as cinema and television are in fact continually reconfigured and remediated.

Cinematic installations and urban spaces

L'Ellipse is a three-channel installation by Pierre Huyghe, which explores the 'gap' (or narrative ellipsis) between two scenes that are joined, or separated, by a cut in Wim Wenders's *The American Friend*

(1977). These scenes are drawn from a section of Wenders's film in which the lead character, played by Bruno Ganz, makes a decision that may affect the course of his life. In Huyghe's work the two original scenes are presented on either side of a new sequence, filmed more than twenty years later, in which Ganz (now twenty years older and no longer wearing a moustache) walks from the location of the first scene, in an office block, to the location of the second, on the other side of the river. These three scenes are projected side by side, sequenced in accordance with the narrative logic of the original film. This assertion of narrative continuity is profoundly jarring because it highlights the material changes wrought not only upon Ganz but also on the location, in the 'gap' between 1977 and 1998.

Crucially, this work does not oppose cinematic time to historical time; instead it seeks to extend the exploration of urban space initiated in *The American Friend*. As Thomas Elsaesser has noted, Wenders's film is marked both by the persistent use of real (as distinct from studio) locations for both interior and exterior shots. This approach to location is integral to the film's critique of the relationship between Europe and Hollywood, and to its exploration of economic and cultural exploitation and imperialism, through themes of doubling and substitution.¹⁰ *L'Ellipse* was first presented at Hamburg Kunstverein, in the same city where Ganz's character lives and works (as a picture framer). But the section that Huyghe highlights takes place in Paris, and the Eiffel Tower is clearly visible in the background in the new scene. Through this insertion, which echoes and reinforces strategies used by Wenders elsewhere in *The American Friend*, *L'Ellipse* highlights the importance of urban landmarks in producing recognisable and bankable images of a city.¹¹ In addition, by drawing attention to Ganz's mobility within the scene, Huyghe seems to mirror the (imagined) mobility of the exhibition visitor, perhaps alluding to a distinction between the gallery and the cinema as viewing spaces.

An even more direct focus on the relationship between cinematic space and urban space can be found in another three-screen installation: Isaac Julien's *Baltimore*. This work is explicitly concerned with the architecture and culture of the city, explored through the interiors of three specific buildings: the National Great Blacks on Wax Museum (established in 1983), the Walters Art Museum (the core of which is a nineteenth-century collection begun by a wealthy industrialist) and the Peabody Library at Johns Hopkins University. Rather than citing a specific film, Julien references an entire genre (and economy of production) by casting Melvin Van Peebles, one of the most celebrated figures in blaxploitation cinema, in the role of a detective moving through the city.¹² Accompanied by a young woman, Van Peebles is engaged in a

kind of cartographical process, scanning and surveying the spaces of the museum and library – apparently moving fluidly between them. The boundaries between the roles of observer and observed, and between the actual and imaginary spaces of the city, become especially blurred in a sequence that involves a series of close-ups of a Quattrocento painting entitled 'View of an Ideal City', culminating in Van Peebles's confrontation with his own wax 'double', transposed from one museum to another. Through this exploration of physical and virtual cities, Julien emphasises the role of representation – whether painterly, filmic or photographic – in the ongoing production of the city as a civic space.

Significantly, in both *L'Ellipse* and *Baltimore*, cinema is understood in distinctly cultural (rather than technological) terms and strongly aligned with *social* history rather than individual memory. Tsai Ming-Liang's video installation *It's a Dream* also communicates an attachment to cinema as a social space, highlighting its relationship to various forms of 'imagined community'. Tsai's work was presented as part of a group exhibition entitled 'Atopia' exploring themes of place, presented by the Taipei Museum of Fine Art at the Venice Biennale in 2007 within a programme of 'collateral' events, distinct from official national presentations. Set and shot in a Taipei movie theatre, *It's a Dream* offers a playful exploration of spectatorship, identification and desire, complete with references to aspects of psychoanalytic film theory. The dream-like narrative is, however, less relevant to my discussion than the mode of installation and its relationship to the material and physical environment depicted on screen.

At Venice, Tsai incorporated 'relics' of this movie theatre into the exhibition of *It's a Dream*, in the form of rows of shabby seating, creating a small cinema curtained off from the main exhibition space, which visitors could only enter when the screening was about to begin. This assertion of a material link to an actual Taiwanese cinema might be read as a response to the biennale context, vaguely recalling earlier forms of national cultural exhibition involving the display of folk artefacts. But Tsai's installation also demonstrates his interest in the movie theatre as an actual physical space in which it is possible to explore and even to transgress the conventional boundaries between public and private realms.¹³

It's a Dream was shot in the same decaying cinema that serves as the sole location for Tsai's earlier feature *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (2003). The minimal action in this earlier work also unfolds almost entirely in the theatre, during a screening of the 1967 sword-fighting film *Dragon Inn*. The characters include a Japanese tourist sheltering from the rain while also hoping for some kind of erotic encounter, and a woman working in the box office, who seems to be in love with the projectionist. As already

suggested, *Baltimore* and *L'Ellipse* draw upon histories and memories of cinema in order to explore the historical and contemporary processes through which cities are conceived, staged and reconfigured as civic (and implicitly public) spaces. In contrast, *It's A Dream* proposes the movie theatre as a space in which a 'counterpublic' might be manifested, characterised by forms of sociability and gathering that have often been marginalised in the bourgeois public sphere.¹⁴ Tsai's work is important both because it problematises definitions of publicness and because it uses remnants of the material culture of cinema exhibition to explore and reconceptualise publicness and sociability.

Televsual time and the material culture of the TV studio

The three 'televsual' works that I discuss in the remainder of this article also incorporate fragments of material culture in their production, and tend to align television with the past, by depicting old-fashioned procedures or antiquated equipment. All three televsual works are usually exhibited with seating, whether in the form of simple benches or a more complex arrangement, and this address towards a (temporarily) static viewer contrasts with the orientation toward a mobile spectator implicit in works such as *L'Ellipse* and *Baltimore*. While *It's a Dream* is explicitly concerned with practices of reception (explored within the installation, on-screen and through the interplay between these elements) the works by Deignan, Tsivopoulos and Byrne focus instead on activities of producing and framing the television image. Significantly, all three are concerned with forms of television production that are directly or indirectly linked to the state, through processes of regulation and governance, even if this link is somewhat ambiguous in Deignan's work. This focus on the form of state-funded or public television differentiates these works from a tradition of artistic practice (theorised by David Joselit, among others) that is explicitly focused upon the critique of commercial broadcasting.¹⁵

Turning to the first of the 'televsual' works, Michelle Deignan's *15:1* is a single-channel digital video with a running time of 24 minutes 38 seconds (mirroring that of the daytime television quiz show *Fifteen to One*). Broadcast on Channel 4 from 1988 to 2003, *Fifteen to One* featured fifteen contestants all standing at lecterns in a semicircular arrangement facing the quiz-master, who posed general-knowledge questions in a serious, purposeful manner. It was characterised by a relatively fast pace, reflected in the camerawork, often consisting of rapid, short pans from one contestant to the next, generally moving left to right. Deignan's reconstruction of the show adheres closely to the camera script,¹⁶ which dictates the framing and type of shot (pan, mid-shot etc.). She re-enacts

the movements of camera operators but removes all immediately recognisable elements – such as the set, contestants, quiz-master, lighting design, graphics and music – and replaces the titles with a grid of white lines on black.

This grid could be interpreted as an oblique reference to Dara Birnbaum's well-known video work *Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry* (1979) which manipulates imagery from the US game show *Hollywood Squares*, known for a distinctive grid-like set in which each box houses a 'celebrity'. Yet *Fifteen to One* differs in many important respects from Birnbaum's televisual object of analysis, not least because the contestants are ordinary members of the public rather than celebrities, and the programme is designed as a test of knowledge and skill rather than as a game of chance. Combining information, education and entertainment in a format that could be readily exported, *Fifteen to One* exemplifies many of the characteristics of public service broadcasting in the era of deregulation and increased competition. Alison Green has suggested that Deignan's grid is vaguely reminiscent of a modernist artwork, and in sync with her use of abstraction as a critical strategy, but she emphasises that television is already 'very abstract' and 'highly formulaic'. She proposes that Deignan's strategies of removal do not function to *simplify* their object of analysis but instead 'add depth [. . .] to a medium slipping easily into its surface'.¹⁷ The ascetic rigour of *15:1* was especially apparent when it was shown within a pseudo-domestic setting in 2002, on a monitor in the semi-furnished living room of a suburban home as part of an exhibition exploring 'the everyday environments of television, the domestic and the social'.¹⁸

Deignan's work can also be read as an attempt to preserve aspects of television that, precisely because of their ubiquity, are likely to be forgotten. *Fifteen to One* was cancelled in the UK in 2003 and, when viewed with the benefit of hindsight, *15:1* seems to anticipate this event through the preservation of material traces of the production process. Deignan shot her reconstruction in the same London TV studios (at Teddington) used for the quiz show, and the soundtrack is constructed from audio recordings made in this location. While the studio initially appears to be empty, there are many material traces of the production, most obviously in the form of blue drapes covering the studio walls and white markers on the floor, where the lecterns would presumably be placed. The lighting rig still hangs from the ceiling and two television cameras, covered with protective cloth hoods, stand idle. Voices of studio workers can also be heard at times and midway through the work two men suddenly pass by Deignan's camera, deep in conversation and presumably unaware that the show's fifteen-year run was coming to an end.

While Deignan's project acquires its 'archival' character retrospectively and somewhat accidentally, Tsivopoulos's fourteen-minute single-channel video projection *Untitled (The Remake)* directly addresses the role of television in the representation of history by focusing, in part, on broadcast coverage of nationalistic spectacles involving historical re-enactment. A variety of archival and documentary sources are used, and some form the basis for a reconstruction exploring the professional conventions of broadcasting in the 1960s and 1970s. The video opens with a short rapidly edited black-and-white sequence featuring the title (*The Remake*), a glimpse of film leader, a graphic sequence incorporating fragments of classical columns and a montage of ceremonial military events with the Acropolis visible in the background, ending with scenes of a huge crowded stadium. The transition to the reconstruction begins with a series of highly formal close-ups in muted colour, slowly tracking from left to right, past an array of antiquated lights and cameras, filmed against a background of dark grey drapes. Wider shots reveal an initially empty television studio equipped with black-and-white monitors displaying more archival fragments – this time a montage that seems to be *about* television, incorporating shots of male and female presenters preparing for a broadcasting, camera operators and also monitors displaying what appear to be images of the first moon landing, providing an orientation in time but also generating a kind of televisual *mise-en-abyme*.

The camera then begins a reverse movement, tracking back from right to left and revealing a studio now populated by living camera operators and two young newscasters, costumed in accordance with the fashions of the 1960s, going through the same rituals of preparation – applying make-up, shuffling papers. Although the 'newscasters' in the reconstruction can be seen to speak, there is no diegetic sound, only slow abstract electronic music punctuated from time to time by a tone that suggests a synchronisation signal used in film or television production. The flickering images of the moon landing, now more visible on the studio monitors, pass unnoticed in the background – offering a contrast to the countless dramatic narratives where they serve as the focus of attention for large groups (families, strangers, co-workers), shorthand for shared cultural memory, mediated and structured by television. Gradually a different televisual memory, associated with the classical past rather than the technological future, emerges as the focus of Tsivopoulos's attention.

The remainder of the video oscillates between shots of the newscasters and a further montage of archive footage depicting a series of military festivities. The parades include young men and women costumed to evoke Greece's classical past, with the men bearing shields and spears. While these 're-enactments' are superficially similar to out-takes

from a Hollywood 'sword and sandal' epic from the 1960s, the presence of floodlights and the serious expressions of the participants reveal these scenes to be propaganda. They formed part of the regular parades of 'Polemiki Areti' (translated as Arm's Virtue) that were presented as Theamata (spectacles) for mass consumption at the Panathinaiko Stadium in Athens. For Tsivopoulos, these spectacles serve as a point of connection between the dictatorship established in Greece in 1936 (which made extensive propagandistic use of radio and theatre) and the later military regime that took hold following a coup d'état in 1967. This latter event occurred only months after the establishment of two Greek television stations – one run by the national broadcaster (ERT) and the other run by the military (YENED).

The cameras, lights and studio set-ups used as props in the reconstruction all form part of the collection of the Museum of Television in Athens, and during the preparation of his reconstruction Tsivopoulos consulted professionals who had worked for these broadcasters, as he was specifically interested in the role played by television in the political events of the late 1960s.¹⁹ *Untitled (The Remake)* was commissioned for the inaugural Athens Biennale in 2007, so was initially presented within an exhibition context where at least some viewers would be familiar with Greek political history. Those less familiar may struggle to identify the precise source and significance of the archive clips, but Tsivopoulos uses the iconic scenes of the moon landing to communicate the importance of television as a link between public and private realms. The neutral expressions and mechanical gestures of the 'newscasters' also provide a stark contrast to the emotive imagery of mass spectacle, hinting at the complicity of broadcasters in the perpetuation of nationalistic fictions.

The subject of television

Gerard Byrne's *Subject*, rather than focusing explicitly on the history of television, deploys televisual language and form to explore (amongst other issues) the social and physical architecture of the university. Originally commissioned for the 2009 exhibition 'The New Monumentality' at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, *Subject* was shot (in black and white) entirely on the brutalist campus of Leeds University, designed in the 1960s by the firm of Chamberlin, Powell and Bon (also responsible for the Barbican Centre in London during the same period). It consists of a three-channel video installation and a wall text. The videos are displayed on TV monitors with headphones attached, and composed of sequences that are ordered differently on each DVD, so that viewers must move around the installation and view some sequences several times to experience the work in full.

In addition to its mode of display, *Subject* incorporates many references to the formal conventions of television, particularly low-budget arts and educational programming from the 1960s or early 1970s. Several sequences were shot in the university's TV studio, featuring antiquated sets, lighting, microphones and camera equipment and actors in dress of the period. The same performers reappear in multiple roles, as students, TV presenters, reporters or guests, in a variety of scenarios extending from studio talk shows and news reports to more self-consciously experimental productions. Byrne also makes use of interior and exterior locations around the campus for various 'vox-pop' interviews and reports to camera (usually focusing on student life and concerns, particularly regarding drugs and sex). Even though *Subject* is shot in black and white there is no possibility of mistaking Byrne's reconstructions for archival footage as there is a strong emphasis on artifice and, at various points, the camera operators and radio engineers are visible in the shot. In addition, the 'scripts' performed by the actors are derived from published transcripts that, because they have been edited, no longer resemble natural speech.²⁰

Many of Byrne's previous reconstructions have been based on texts from magazines such as *National Geographic*, *Nouvelle Observateur* and *Playboy* in the 1960s or 1970s, and he is drawn to self-consciously discursive publication formats such as interviews, round-table discussions and advertorials, because of an interest in the processes through which these publications constitute their publics. In *Subject*, however, he departs from his previous practice by working with *multiple* textual sources, all linked to Leeds University. They include student publications such as *Union News* (1967–70), the student poetry journal *Poetry and Audience* (from the mid 1960s), another poetry journal, *Strand* (1963), published by university staff, and the poetry collections *Wodwo* (1967) and *Crow* (1970) by Ted Hughes. Byrne also lists as sources 'academic reports on the vernacular use of language amongst the English working class', such as *A Questionnaire for a Linguistic Atlas of England* (dated 1952, 1964, 1983). In addition, a quotation from the preface to E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) is presented as a wall text within the installation:

The question of course is how the individual got to be in this 'social role', and how the particular social organisation (with its property-rights and structure of authority) got to be there. And these are historical questions. If we stop history at a given point, then there are no classes but simply a multitude of individuals with a multitude of experiences. But if we watch these men over an adequate period of social change, we observe patterns in their relationships, their ideas and their institutions. Class is defined by

men as they live their own history, and, in the end, this is its only definition.

This text frames *Subject* as an exploration of class and social hierarchies, and as an inquiry into the university's role in shaping the analysis of the social.

These concerns are most readily apparent in sequences where interviewees are not asked about their views or values (as in the reconstructions based on student publications) but rather are invited to complete statements that refer to social practices and customs such as traditional village trades and occupations, rituals associated with death, and patterns of school attendance. The true object of inquiry in these interactions appears to be speech itself – the language and vocabulary used by the participants to communicate their knowledge and experience. By subjecting such a diverse array of archival materials to a process of 'televisual' reconstruction, Byrne both draws attention to the pedagogical aspects of television programming and suggests new ways of thinking about parallels between the university and broadcasting as civilising institutions, historically implicated in the (re)production as well as the contestation of social hierarchies.

Conclusion: contemporary art and histories of cinema and television

There is nothing particularly new about artists' engagement with television or cinema, yet the works discussed here can perhaps be differentiated from earlier intersections between art, film and television because they anticipate, and to some extent address, broader cultural, curatorial and scholarly discourses concerning the 'end of cinema' and, more recently, the 'end of television'. Engaging with very diverse genres and economies (European and Asian 'art cinema', US blaxploitation film, a daytime TV quiz show; national news coverage of propagandistic spectacles, low-budget educational and arts programming) these artists are not exclusively – or even primarily – concerned with the critique of cinematic or televisual conventions. Instead, by returning to the scenes of production and reception, through the revisiting of urban film locations and television studios, they articulate a sensitivity to material, social and cultural histories.

In this respect these works should be situated in relation to a broader engagement with history in recent art practice, which encompasses (but is not defined by) the use of strategies of re-enactment and reconstruction. Commenting upon the figure of the 'artist as historian', and focusing primarily on the films and photographic works of Matthew

Buckingham, Mark Godfrey suggests that one of the factors shaping artists' renewed interest in history might be an awareness of technological change:

One cannot attribute the emergence of these various practices to film and photography's technological nature, always showing moments of past time. This feature was surely noticed by the generation of artists who began to use photography and film in the 1960s without making historical representation so integral to their practices. But perhaps it is the approaching digitalization of all photographic mediums that sensitizes artists to the way in which such mediums used to serve as records of the past – and this sensitivity provokes artists to make work *about* the past.²¹

Many of the works I have discussed are certainly informed by an awareness of technological change, even if this issue is not always addressed explicitly. More specifically, they seem to highlight the difficulty of fully engaging with television and cinema as social and cultural forms, in light of this rapid and ongoing change. It also seems significant that several of these works make reference not only to isolated moments (or material fragments) of cinema and television but also to a variety of institutions, including universities and museums, charged with the responsibility to interrogate, represent and mediate these histories.

Through discussion of these six installations, I have argued that the cinematic and televisual turns in contemporary art are connected, both through the use of formal strategies of reconstruction and citation and through the prevalence of framing discourses that draw attention to processes of cultural change and potential loss. But even though these works may articulate a fascination with remnants of the material and social cultures of cinema and television, they do not communicate nostalgia for forms of publicness or sociality that are imagined to exist in an earlier moment. Instead, they seek to engage critically with the complex processes through which the past, present and possible futures of cinema and television are experienced and imagined.

Notes

- 1 For a more expansive discussion of the cinematic turn in contemporary art, see Maeve Connolly, *The Place of Artists' Cinema: Space, Site and Screen* (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect and University of Chicago Press, 2009). See also David Campany, *The Cinematic: Documents of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge MA and London: MIT Press and Whitechapel, 2007) and Tanya Leighton, Introduction, in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tanya Leighton (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2008), 7–40.
- 2 This article incorporates elements of a paper entitled 'Exhibiting Cinematic Space and Television Time in the Contemporary Art Museum', presented at

the conference 'Moving Image and Institution: Cinema and the Museum in the 21st Century', Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), University of Cambridge, 7 July 2011, and includes significantly revised material on *L'Ellipse*, Baltimore and *It's A Dream*, from my book *The Place of Artists' Cinema*.

- 3 See various contributions to *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*, ed. Janet McCabe and Kim Akass (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007) and *It's Not TV: Watching HBO in the Post-Television Era*, ed. Marc Leverette, Brian L. Ott and Cara Louise Buckley (New York: Routledge, 2008).
- 4 Anna McCarthy examines a range of non-domestic and public contexts for the reception of television in *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
- 5 Examples include 'Spellbound: Art and Film' at the Hayward Gallery (1996); 'Art and Film Since 1945: Hall of Mirrors' at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (1996), an exhibition that attempted to place the relationship between film and visual art in a historical context; 'Scream and Scream Again: Film in Art', curated by the Museum of Modern Art Oxford (1996), which toured to various venues; and 'Cinéma Cinéma: Contemporary Art and the Cinematic Experience' at the Van Abbemuseum in the Netherlands (1999). For a review of 'Spellbound' in the context of other exhibitions responding to the centenary of cinema, see Douglas Fogle, 'Cinema is Dead, Long Live the Cinema', *Frieze*, 29 (June–August 1996), 32.
- 6 See *Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2004) and *Television Studies After TV: Understanding Television in the Post-Broadcast Era*, ed. Graeme Turner and Jinna Tay (London and New York: Routledge, 2009). See also Amy Holdsworth's discussion of television and nostalgia in 'Television Memory', *Screen*, 51:2 (Summer 2010), 129–49.
- 7 Although historically more closely aligned with the realm of the private than cinema, broadcasting has played an important role in structuring the relationship between public and private realms, through its (often highly normative) marking of both natural and symbolic temporal cycles, including seasons and commemorations, as evidenced by the work of Paddy Scannell, *Radio, Television and Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach* (Cambridge MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). See also Anna McCarthy's analysis of US television, citizenship and governmentality in *The Citizen Machine: Governing by Television in 1950s America* (New York: New Press, 2011).
- 8 Mark Godfrey, 'The Artist as Historian', *October*, 120 (Spring 2007), 145. For a more extensive discussion of reconstruction and re-enactment in contemporary art, see Connolly, *The Place of Artists' Cinema*, 130–43. See also Bettina Funcke, 'You See? Gerard Byrne's Reconstructions', *Afterall*, 17 (Spring 2008), 73–9.
- 9 I am indebted to Jonida Gashi for insightful comments on earlier versions of the text, particularly regarding the exploration of temporality and history in these works.

- 10 Thomas Elsaesser, 'Wenders and the US: "The American Friend"', in *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945–95*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Steven Ricci (London: BFI, 1998), 142–55.
- 11 For an exploration of Pierre Huyghe's exploration of contemporary forms of capital in *L'Ellipse* and other works, see Tom McDonough, 'Production/Projection: Notes on the Capitalist Fairy Tale', in *Art of Projection*, ed. Stan Douglas and Christopher Eamon (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantze, 2009), 124–40.
- 12 Julien had previously explored this topic in his documentary *BaadAsssss Cinema* (2002).
- 13 I discuss a number of other works that explore boundaries between public and private space through the construction of (usually temporary) cinemas in 'Temporality, Sociality, Publicness: Cinema as Art Project', *Afterall*, 29 (Spring 2012), 4–15.
- 14 For an exploration of the concept of the 'counterpublic' sphere, see Michael Warner, 'Publics and Counterpublics', *Public Culture*, 14:1 (2002), 49–90.
- 15 David Joselit has theorised this tradition in terms of a critique of television's role in the privatisation of US public life, in *Feedback: Television Against Democracy*, (Cambridge MA and London: MIT, 2007).
- 16 This script was not based upon a document provided by the producers and was instead assembled via multiple viewings of the show, informed by Deignan's professional knowledge and experience of editing for television.
- 17 Alison Green, 'This Space is Unstable', 2002; <http://www.michelledeignan.info/> (accessed 15 December 2010).
- 18 'The Captain's Road' was curated by TV Project, a collaboration between Orla Ryan, Maeve Connolly and Valerie Connor, in two venues – a suburban home in Dublin and the City of Dublin Working Men's Club, April 2002. Deignan also contributed an artists' project to the publication that preceded the exhibition, *The Glass Eye: Artists and Television*, ed. Maeve Connolly and Orla Ryan (Dublin: Project Press, 2000).
- 19 Email exchange with Tsivopoulos, October 2011. See also Katerina Gregos, 'Past Imperfect', in *Stefanos Tsivopoulos – The Real The Story The Storyteller* (Belgrade: Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, 2008), also published at <http://www.stefanostsivopoulos.com/index.php?id=368> (accessed 15 December 2010).
- 20 Byrne's interest in artifice and theatricality has been widely theorised, most extensively by George Baker in 'The Storyteller: Notes on the Work of Gerard Byrne', in *Gerard Byrne: Books, Magazines, and Newspapers* (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2003), 7–96. Informed by John Caughie's *Television Drama: Realism, Modernism, and British Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), I discuss some possible connections between *Subject*, Brecht and the drama-documentary in 'Architecture, Television, Archaeology: Gerard Byrne's *Subject*, 2009', in *Images or Shadows: Gerard Byrne*, ed. Pablo Lafuente (Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2011), 71–90.
- 21 Godfrey, 'The Artist as Historian', 146.