

INTRODUCTION :

LIVE CINEMA- Realtime audiovisual creation

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This A-minima special issue is dedicated to LIVE CINEMA, a recently coined term for realtime audiovisual creation. As new as the term may seem, there is in fact, a long trajectory for realtime audiovisual creation. Even before the invention of *Cinematographé*, Magic Lantern showmen developed state-of-the-art, optical, realtime special effects for *Phantasmagoria* and Color Music pioneers explored the synaesthetic connections between audio and colors.

Today, Live Cinema artists continue the traditions of audiovisual experimentation, and are now aided by digital technologies. Realtime montage, drawing, painting, mixing, re-mixing, processing and generating visuals are some examples of contemporary practises. There are many approaches to this multidisciplinary art form, which makes it hard to pin down, define and categorize. Nevertheless, the *raison d'être* of Live Cinema has remained constant throughout the century: to offer alternative experiences for traditional cinematic narration and set-up, in realtime and for audience in various contexts, ranging from underground warehouses, to museums of contemporary art or on the internet.

Recently, an increasing number of artists and theorists have turned their attention to realtime cinematic practises and have written articles and theses on various concepts, including projections, precursors, painterly interfaces, realtime, remixing, generative programming and the trajectories of Live Cinema. This A-minima issue is a collection of contemporary reflections on the genre. The question "What is live cinema ?" has been answered various times, in order to map out a general definition of the term, as it has remained quite abstract until now. The term "Live cinema" still sounds artificial to many ears, as it seems natural to replace it with "live video" or something more up to date with the mediums used. However, many creators generate their visuals with software and don't use video at all, thus their practise is actually closer to "live painting" than video or cinema.. Until someone invents a more coherent term, "Live Cinema" will probably hold its position as a common denominator for a wide range of realtime practises.

The focus of this issue is on special aspects of Live Cinema, such as projections and space, **so** mediatacture is included, as working with architecture and site-specific set-ups is one of the biggest interests for contemporary Live Cinema practitioners. Klaus Obermeier, one of the showcased artists, collaborates with dance theatres, using the dancers' bodies as moving targets for his projections, which ends up visually transforming the physical reality of the bodies. Web Jockeys use internet as space for creating realtime AV-performances and sharing the experience of surfing online with the public.

Another important issue is software development: DIY mentality and collective development of tools are essential aspects of the Live Cinema scene. This is particularly relevant because the digital tools that enable us to manipulate, process and generate visuals in realtime, have only existed for a couple of years, and with the growth in processing power of the computers, the range of possibilities grows ever wider. Therefore it is no surprise that over 100 softwares for realtime visual manipulation already exist and that the number keeps increasing.

Live Cinema is often considered to be another branch of VJng (Video Jockeying). However, although VJs and Live Cinema practitioners share the same softwares and similar methods of working, their contexts are different, as VJs are predominantly related to the club culture and DJs. As such, many Live Cinema creators feel the need to separate themselves from the VJ scene altogether, in order to establish their own artistic goals, which would rarely find an appreciative audience in a club environment. In fact, Audiovisual events and festivals like Sonic Acts or Mapping are the main meeting points for the creators and the public. Many Live Cinema artists work in close collaboration with musicians and form AV-groups (Rechenzentrum, Telcosystems, Pink Twins, etc), symbolizing that their approach has gone far beyond creating visual wallpapers to accompany the DJ. To sum it up, the driving force behind the Live Cinema movement might well be the endless discoveries within the mysterious language of AudioVisuals that has kept so many creators fascinated with this art form from the beginning, and against all the odds.