Across the Great Divide

Across the Great Divide: Modernism's Intermedialities, from Futurism to Fluxus

Edited by

Christopher Townsend,
Alex Trott and Rhys Davies

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INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the pioneering research, and creative activity, of Claus Clüver, intermediality has established itself as a useful concept for describing the transmission of meaning across the formal, rhetorical boundaries of the artwork, passing sense, if not sign, from one medium to another.[1] This process has commonly been discerned in the ekphrastic relationship of text to image, or text to music, or image to music. That is, intermediality has been understood as a relationship of one medium to another facilitated through semiotic transposition; furthermore, those media are understood as self-contained, and indeed they may be both temporally and spatially distinct, so that a musical composition may, for example, be inspired by and rearticulate a painting or poem produced centuries before in another country. To move beyond this straightforward notion of transmission and relation into the coeval and the contemporaneous, and into those artistic projects where several media may be involved simultaneously, is to court entry to the registers of "multi-media" and "mixed-media" event art. Clüver recently differentiated the intermedial from the mixed-media and the multi-media "text" as follows:

> A multi-media text comprises separable and individually coherent texts in different media, while the complex signs in different media contained in a mixed-media text would not be coherent or self-sufficient outside of that context. (…) The intersemiotic or intermedia text draws on two or more sign systems and/or media in such a way that the visual and/or musical, verbal, kinetic, or performance aspects of its signs are inseparable.[2]

Intermediality as a critical concept seems founded in an urgent need for definition, clarity and indeed separation. Yet it is often deployed in the scrutiny of "texts" and events where such separation and clarity may be far from apparent. What definition is there to be found, for example, in the bedlam of Warhol's 'Exploding Plastic Inevitable' (EPI) or the late stages of a Dada soirée-cum-fracas?[3] How is it possible to discern, retrospectively and often only from the confused accounts of participants, what in those circumstances was multi-media and what ‘intermedia’? Indeed, Jean Wainwright’s analysis of Warhol’s EPI in this collection illustrates the difficulties such categorisation raises, both in terms of participant’s memories and the formal structure of the event. The EPI included films shot by Warhol and his Factory team that were, on occasion then, and almost exclusively since, screened as individual, autonomous works. Similarly, the songs performed within the EPI by the Velvet Underground existed separately, both as performances in other venues without projections, and as recordings. So, the EPI then is surely a ‘multi-media’ event, even when those films and songs are presented alongside dance, and light projection, and other performative interventions – all “texts” being separable and coherent (in a relative manner). Well, er, no, (as Warhol might have put it, along with an extra ‘gee’ or two, and an ‘I don’t know’). As Wainwright shows here, the EPI is at once ‘multi-media’ and ‘intermedial’ because those apparently autonomous “texts” firstly produce new meanings in relation to each other within the context of the EPI, and secondly they are inseparable from a further set of only apparently autonomous texts – Warhol’s writings and recordings which were not part of the event. Furthermore, as is well known, in some cases the form of those autonomous works that make up the EPI was sometimes radically altered within that context, whether in the modified screening arrangement for the films or the extended modal structure introduced by John Cale to the Velvet’s songs. What is true for the EPI applies equally to the events and projects created by Fluxus and its affiliates, and to the Dadaist soirée. Intermediality, in its strictest sense as applied conceptual framework runs the danger of rendering the chaotic choate, or at least attempting to discipline and domesticate the anarchic when the intermedial event is the self-declared enemy of good order, and depends in part upon its disorder to produce its meanings. In the process such pursuit of clarity may destroy the meanings latent within the event – especially the event as lived, historical experience – whilst privileging the discovery of meaning in the component text.

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[1] The history and theorisation of 'intermediality' as a discipline is elegantly laid out by Claus Clüver, 'Interarts Studies: An Introduction' in Stephanie A. Glaser (ed.), *Media Inter Media: Essays in Honor of Claus Clüver*, (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2010) pp. 497-526.

[2] Ibid. p. 505.

Faced with this conceptual difficulty, intermediality may become a useful – or ultimately useless – universal. It may be impotent as analytical category precisely because its demand for accuracy destroys any possibility of historical or textual specificity, whilst remaining as an operating concept only at the highest, most general of levels. Witness, for example, W.J.T. Mitchell's remark that all texts are composites, all media are mixed.[4] Yet mixture was perhaps not uppermost in the artistic mind that reintroduced a notion of 'intermedia' to culture.[5] For the Fluxus artist Dick Higgins 'intermedia' was a *space* between media in which new art might operate, rather than some combination of media or process of transposition between them. Which is not to say that Fluxus artists in particular were not bent upon inserting mixed-media or intermedial events and artworks into those interstices. As Stephanie Glaser points out, what is distinctive about Higgins' recovery of the concept is firstly its spatial connotation, which consciously or not yokes the idea to the emergent practices of late-modernist event art, secondly that it carries an 'ideological tinge', and finally that it describes 'cutting-edge innovations that combined traditional art forms, or media, to create new and exciting works'.[6]

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[3] Of Dada one is tempted to modify the old American joke about hockey games and violence: ‘I went to a fight last night and a Dada soirée broke out’.

Our use of intermedialities as a descriptive term for this volume and the essays it contains, then, is not predicated by the impulse to find a brighter, fresher, newer term than 'multi-media' or 'mixed media' to describe hybrid, performative projects. The last thing such projects need is another category of containment. Rather, it is both an expansion and deliberate occlusion of a term that has already served well to analyse processes of transmission, migration and translation between one medium and another, but which has not so effectively been used as a rubric for the analysis of reciprocal exchanges between several media, and their audience, at once. This collection of essays, which emerged from a panel at the Association of Art Historians Conference in 2012, deliberately stretches conceptions of intermediality. It examines both the relationships of several media to each other, in a broad temporal framework, and the relationships that may take place between the simultaneously competing and complementary media deployed within event art. In this we are, to some extent, following a recent trend: The project moves towards the notions of 'transmediality' developed by Werner Wolf and Walter

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[4] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 94.

[5] As Stephanie Glaser shows, the term 'intermedia' has been used in English at least since the mid seventeenth century to describe a spatial or temporal intermission, and in the natural sciences to describe a conductive, rather than reactive, agency. Stephanie Glaser, 'Dynamics of Intermedial Inquiry', in *Media Inter Media*, op. cit., p. 13.

[6] Ibid. p. 14.

Bernhart.[7] 'Transmediality' is essentially a phenomenon that allows description of an object in more than one medium. The organisation of signs necessary to describe a thing is not limited to a single medium. Different signs may be organized in other media to produce the same result, or those signs may have some relationship to each other, across media, but are not ekphrastic transpositions.

If 'intermediality' was first of all understood as a mode of transmission between a text and another medium, perhaps painting, perhaps music, that transmission was singular, linear, and in one direction, and to some degree privileged the originating text.[8] However, the history of the term is characterised by an increasing degree of qualification and sophistication: intermediality has itself become intermedial. 'Transposition', for Clüver, was a general process of semiotic displacement from one medium to another.[9] Furthermore, it was conditioned by what, in scientific parlance might be described as a 'phase change' – where chemically identical substances may abruptly assume vastly different material properties according to external environmental variations, appearing as solid, liquid or vapour according to temperature and pressure. Clüver put it thus: 'Every case of intersemiotic transposition concerns a change from one sign system into another and usually also from one medium to another'.[10] Stephanie Glaser nominates 'intermedial transfer' as the term that might best describe the movement of an object or theme, rather perhaps than a particular sign, or set of signs, from one medium and another, but also considers this as an activity that might take place between artists[11]. What does not seem to be countenanced here is that an artist might make such moves between media within a single oeuvre – as Warhol does in the 1960s, as Picabia does in the 1910s and 1920s, and as the Catalan painter

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[7] Werner Wolf, 'Description as a Transmedial Mode of Representation', in Werner Wolf & Walter Bernhart (eds.), *Description in Literature and Other Media* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2007), pp. 1-87, and see also Werner Wolf & Walter Bernhart (eds.), *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2006).

[8] See for example the introduction and essays in Peter Wagner (ed.), *Icons-Texts-Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1996).

[9] Claus Clüver, 'On Intersemiotic Transposition', *Poetics Today*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1989), pp. 55-90.

[10] Claus Clüver, 'INTER TEXTUS/INTER ARTES/INTER MEDIA', in Monika Schmitz-Emans & Uwe Lindemann (eds.), *Komparatistik 2000/2001: Jahrbuch der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Allgemeine & Vergleichende Litteraturwissenschaft*, (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001) p. 22.

[11] 'Dynamics of Intermedial Inquiry', p. 23.

Àngel Planells is shown to do in the essay by Jacqueline Rattray in this volume. Such transposition may itself have a rhetorical function, as Eric Vos has made clear in his discussion of Dieter Roth's self-reflexive documentary project, *1 Bericht mit Kommentar*.[12]

This project, then, consciously expands the field of intermediality from the cycle of literature-painting-music, and examines neglected sites of intermedial relation. Firstly, the project includes modes of cultural activity that meld the aesthetic and the social. One of the questions formulated in establishing the conference panel was 'in what ways might architecture function intermedially?' Fernando Quesada's paper here, on the function of architectural space in Fluxus events and other early 1960s performances, goes some way to answering that question. Secondly, the project looks at intermedial relations across media within the single oeuvre. Whilst there were relatively few artists of high modernism who were accomplished practitioners in several media, for those who were the transmission and transformation of meaning across the different forms of activity is rarely considered, yet of profound importance. We have chosen here to pursue the connections between poetry and painting in a single body by studying the Catalan painter and poet Àngel Planells, and the relations between film, performance and autobiographical writing, performance and film in the project of the late-modernist artist Carolee Schneemann. In the case of Planells this provides an added dimension by allowing scrutiny of the way in which intermedial relations may be established through appropriation by another artist – in this case Salvador Dalí.

Concern with, and privileging of, the multiple is typical of contemporary art and its critical propagation – indeed, it is perhaps one of the few areas of contemporary practice where originality is still claimed. One element of this project is to contribute to the historical grounding of these practices in late and high modernism. If one idea of first the panel and then this collection of essays was to unsettle categorical divisions between media, then a second enterprise was to call into question periodicity as it was construed through aesthetic categories. Where one relationship of modernism to post-modernity (if we dare any longer call it that) has been characterised by the crude division between medium specificity and a near-polymorphous diversity, the Greenbergian concept of modernity's obsession with the rhetorical properties of the single medium has increasingly been called into question through the detailed historical study of artists' practices, and of the intermedial relationships between artworks. The narrative of modernist art's rhetorical specificity – the devotion of its artists to one medium and one medium alone, the close attention to the physical and expressive properties of that medium – emerges largely from critical accounts of two generations of late-modernist American painting that sought to legitimise them for institutions and collectors through their enclosure within a longer European tradition. The reality of modernist practices, on either side of the Atlantic, and on either side of the shattering historical break of the Second World War, is somewhat more complex, once we undertake detailed examinations. High-modernist artists engage in hybrid practices: to consider Picasso only as an artist concerned with the surface of the canvas is to elide his radical contributions to sculpture and the influence, indeed the incorporation, of photography within the earliest of cubist paintings, and the more problematic influence of film.[13]

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[12] Eric Vos, ''Intersemiotic' Transposed: Dieter Roth's *1 Bericht mit Kommentar*', in *Media Inter Media*, pp. 193-230.

Throughout modernism, exchanges between, and combinations of, media parallel this diversity of practice. We cannot, for example, fully apprehend the complexity of thought and latent meanings to be found in Francis Picabia's project after 1916, without considering the relationships between painting, poetry and performance. Tropes that figure in one medium will resurface, re-worked, in another. The ballet *Relâche* (1924), commissioned by the Ballets Suédois, and including (and framed by) the film *Entr'acte*, depends in large measure on the reinterpretation of motifs that had already appeared in the poetry collection *Jésus-Christ Rastaquouère* (1920) and in Picabia's magazine polemics, as well as in some of the paintings shown at the Galeries Dalmau in 1922.[14] Furthermore, the collaborative nature of this performance exemplifies a strain of modernist practice that is wholly elided by romantic narratives of the individual consciousness (or unconsciousness in the case of Jackson Pollock) toiling upon the individual canvas. Dada and Futurist performance spawns working practices that call into question the autonomy of the individual artist. Late-modernist performances, especially those staged under the rubric of Fluxus, which similarly depended upon collaboration, combination of media and the migration of symbols, will be theorised as *imminent* critique of the tale of autonomous agency and singularity of medium that is being told elsewhere in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Allan Kaprow whose *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* at the Reuben Gallery in October 1959 was seminal in the development of post-war 'event art', emphasised the roots of his 'crude, lyrical and very spontaneous' performances in 'the advanced American painting of the last decade'.[15] However grounded in the performativity of painting, those performances nonetheless posed a critique of its perceived, essential properties. The Happening made manifest a degree of theatricality latent within late-modernist vanguard painting – in particular the gestural productivity of action painting – which had been repressed by the critical valorisation of that genre as 'pure' painting. The Happening also destabilised both the solipsistic character of such performance, enclosed within the studio, by offering it to an audience, and the theatrical presentation of performance, by implicating that audience within the event. Kaprow mapped out a future for the 'artist' in the wake of what he perceived to be Pollock's failure, his limitation to a single medium.

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[13] See, inter alia, Anne Baldassari, *Picasso and Photography: The Dark Mirror* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997); Natasha Staller, *A Sum of Destructions: Picasso's Cultures and the Creation of Cubism*, (Cambridge, MA: Yale University Press, 2002); Natasha Staller, 'Méliès's Fantastic Cinema and the Origins of Cubism', *Art History*, vol. 12, no. 2, (June 1989); Bernice Rose, *Picasso, Braque and Early Film in Cubism*, (New York: Pace Wildenstein Gallery, 2007).

[14] The relationship between *Entr'acte* and *Jésus Christ Rastaquouère* was recognised at the time by Pierre de Massot, 'Un film « nouveau »', *L'Ere nouvelle*, 2 October 1924. It has been largely ignored since, but see Christopher Townsend's chapter on *Relâche/Entr'acte* in his *Modernism and Death*, forthcoming 2015.

> Young artists of today need no longer say, "I am a painter", or "a poet" or "a dancer." They are simply "artists." All of life will be open to them. They will discover out of ordinary things the meaning of ordinariness. They will not try to make them extraordinary but will only state their real meaning. But out of nothing they will devise the extraordinary and then maybe nothingness as well. People will be delighted or horrified, critics will be confused or amused, but these, I am certain, will be the alchemies of the 1960s.[16]

But whilst Kaprow plots a convulsion of culture to corrupt the piety of Greenbergian modernism, his eschatology of impurity and mundanity is simultaneously a formula that repeats, and indeed claims continuity with, many of the horrifying, delightful, confusing and amusing strategies of Dada. Kurt Schwitters' concept of 'Merz', for example, to him meant 'creating relationships, preferably between all things in the world.'[17] This was a formula not only for the quotidian becoming art, but also for the engagement of a totality of objects in that process. The ‘difference’ – that point at which the post-war avant-gardes would perhaps test and extend the assumptions of their precursors – was located in changing, performed, relationships to the ordinary; it was located in contingency. The ‘Happenings’ of the early 1960s would partially reproduce the Dada practices of cabaret and performance, once again corroding the boundaries between participants and audiences, but within a transformed historical context. Rather than challenging the status of visual art and spectatorship through performance, or indeed the specificity of political and cultural life – as *Relâche*, for example, does – now such events were questioning the nature of spectacle in a culture where the whole of life was fast becoming spectacle.

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[15] Allan Kaprow, (1961) 'Happenings in the New York Scene' in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 16.

[16] Allan Kaprow, (1958) 'The Legacy of Jackson Pollock' in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, p. 9.

[17] Kurt Schwitters, 'Merz', *Der Sturm* 18, no.3 (June 1927), cited in Timothy O. Benson, 'Conventions and Constructions: The Performative Text in Dada' in

This book both pursues the project of close historical and thematic analysis of modernist practice and expands it, through its examination of performance, and scrutinizes the links that bridge the “great divide” of the mid twentieth century, between the projects of high modernism and their re-articulation in late-modernist activity of the 1950s and ’60s. In its emphases on the detail of exchanges and interactions between different media and their rhetoric, however, this work is indebted to the theoretical models of “intermediality” that have emerged in the last twenty years or so to apprehend complex trans-medial relationships. Where ‘intermediality’ was first of all developed as a concept that usefully allowed the study of literature’s transformations and ekphrases, this collection of essays gives equal weight to the translation of one form into another and the simultaneous presentation of related ideas in different media, so that those media permeate, influence and even initiate each others’ activities. To transmission, then, the authors in this volume add interaction, and interactivity: for example, the performative exchange on which Fluxus projects so much depend is not only between audience and artists, with the boundary between them so corroded that distinction becomes difficult, but between forms of space, so that the once bounded edge of the artwork extends into the street and perhaps becomes indistinguishable from daily life, forms of the image, and forms of text.

If Futurism was perhaps that first modernist movement to explicitly conceive of, and propagandise its own modernity, Rhys Davies offers a number of challenges to that conception, and to our understanding of how the movement’s musical manifestos did, and did not, contribute to the development of music within the performative, intermedial environment.

Stephen C. Foster (ed.), *Crisis and the Arts: The History of Dada. Volume 1. Dada: The Coordinates of Cultural Politics* (New York: G.K. Hall & Co, 1996) p. 85.

Davies shows that the instrumentation developed by Luigi Russolo in the wake of his seminal text ‘The Art of Noises’ (1913) was anything but radical, anything but modern. Rather, the conception of those instruments depended upon the evocation of natural sounds and that concept derived from melodramatic theatrical production. Furthermore, what were practically realised as intonarumori were not radically new instruments but rather had their technical bases in the sound effects apparatuses that had served the theatre throughout its history. However, where previous critics have suggested that the intonarumori were a necessary improvisation, conceived and designed within a three-month span, Davies suggests that the devices may have emerged from a longer process of research on Russolo’s part. What intervened in this gestation was the internal politics of the Futurist movement, with Marinetti needing a text that would at once encourage Ballila Pratella – the only recognised composer associated with the movement, indeed one who was perhaps becoming too well known for Marinetti’s liking – and at the same time discipline him, since Pratella wasn’t seemingly quite Futurist enough either thematically or compositionally. Russolo therefore produced a manifesto, at exactly the right time, demonstrating the true path of Futurist composition, and of necessity had to produce examples of Futurist sound-making devices.

What is truly radical about the ‘Art of Noises’, Davies argues, is firstly its reproof to the academically trained composer. Russolo was a painter and dilettante musician, and neither he nor Marinetti possessed the technical competence to challenge Pratella. The document itself thus belongs to that lineage of modernist thought and practice that privileges first of all the artistic concept over the technical means of its achievement. It also belongs to that lineage of avant-garde thought that privileges group coherence and identity over individual imagination. And this, in part, is where “intermediality” is relevant: what matters to Marinetti and his group is not the autonomous performance of Pratella’s work in concerts – indeed, it may be that Pratella’s success in this traditional domain is part of the problem the manifesto is addressing – but rather that appropriately Futurist compositions by Pratella might play a role within the intermedial serate. For Davies the attack upon ‘the conventions of the specialist, technical discipline’ that characterises the ‘Art of Noises’ is essential to this intermediality. It not only reduces the individual artist’s status within the overall rubric of Futurism (group leader Filippo Tomaso Marinetti), it allows for a diversity of performative practices within the intermedial milieu of the serate. Russolo’s ideas and devices are exemplary in this regard. The second truly radical aspect of the ‘Art of Noises’, for Davies, is its convergence of music with poetry, and in particular the graphically expressed sound poetry of ‘Zang Tumb Tuumb’, as both forms of art reject conventional modes of expression in favour of a more direct mimesis of modernity – a mimesis facilitated by the obsolete technology to which Russolo turns.

Christopher Townsend’s essay demonstrates the historical uses of the categorical parameters of intermediality. Such applications may involve a certain archaeological practice: stripping away the assumed and accreted media around and within an artwork in order to demonstrate that the more likely intermedial aspects of the work may lie elsewhere. In his study of the development, and subsequent interpretation, of the British painter Duncan Grant’s *Abstract Kinetic Collage Painting with Sound* (1914) (also known as “the Scroll”), Townsend shows that the widely accepted relation of this work to the ‘musicalist discourses’ prevalent in modernist abstract painting is deeply problematic, both on practical, historical grounds of affinity and association, and in its likely philosophical basis. Furthermore, Townsend shows that the musical and kinetic elements of Grant’s project need to be qualified. The former is perhaps a product of belated historical revision on the artist’s part when the work was rediscovered and exhibited after 1969, whilst the latter far from being ‘proto-cinematic’ appears to be related to conceptions of intimate corporeality and domesticity that are profoundly at odds with the experiences of being and seeing in the cinema. Townsend discerns an enhanced kinetic capacity for “the Scroll” in an intermedial relation not largely previously accounted for, other than on formal grounds by Christopher Reed. This is its relation to the domestic objects made by Grant and Vanessa Bell for the Omega Group, in particular the rugs that they were designing at the same time as “the Scroll” was made.

Townsend also discerns in Grant’s artwork a related set of transpositions and transmediations. There is a clear process of ‘intermedial transfer’ from static rug to moving painting; so close are the two media that a study for the former, rediscovered in ‘the wrong place’, can be understood as a study for the latter. There is an accompanying physical transposition, a matter of the body, and indeed of the body *as* matter, that contradicts the conceptions of static, disembodied reception that characterise the viewing subject of cinema. The “Scroll” may be understood as a rug rotated from horizontal to vertical. But, in its proposed – and never properly enacted – kineticism, the work also transposes human energy, and thus the experience of the artwork. If the Omega carpet is a static, abstract painting that may be walked along by a dynamic human body, “the Scroll” is an abstract painting that may be moved past a static human eye, but only in close proximity to a body, and only through the physical agency of a body in activating the device. If this is a paradigm of the cinematic, it is a profoundly subversive one – indeed, Townsend playfully suggests that as ‘the box in the corner’, the intimacy and domesticity of experience renders “the Scroll” a prototypical form of television, typically Bloomburyesque in its inadequate craftsmanship, its wilful ineptitude. As a model for this playful, haptic “cinema”, Townsend examines the affinities between Grant’s artwork as object of play within a room and Walter Benjamin’s utopian imagination of the cinema as a *Spiel-Raum* in which technology and the body converge in a way that counters modernity’s instrumentalising of human agency.

The productions of the Ballets Suédois in Paris in the 1920s offer rich grounds for the exploration of intermediality within modernism. The company employed artists who were especially fond of combining media, or indeed transferring figures between media. Thus the expatriate Italian poet Ricciotto Canudo, who in 1920 had written a poem, *Skating-Ring à Tabarin. Ballet,* from the narrative and imagery of Charlie Chaplin’s film *The Rink* (1916) went on to develop it as the ballet *Skating Rink* (1922). Working with composer Erik Satie and filmmaker René Clair, the artist Francis Picabia used a film within and around a ballet, *Entr’acte,* which was suffused with motifs drawn from his painting, poetry and polemical writings. Had the Ballets Suédois not folded in early 1925, had Erik Satie lived, and – probably the most improbable and pressing “what if” – had Satie begun speaking to Cocteau again, the company would even have staged a production designed to include filmic back-projection within the performance itself, in the opera *Paul et Virginie: Supercinéma*. Alex Trott’s essay here attends to one of the Ballets Suédois’s lesser-known productions, the one act ballet *L’Homme et son désir* (1921), and hers is a cautionary tale of intermedial aspiration. Unusually, for a poet working with the company, Paul Claudel does not seem to have drawn upon an existing text for the ballet’s scenario. The ‘intermediality’ of *L’Homme et son désir* lies in its relationship to contemporary abstract painting, and in particular to theories of dynamism in the plastic arts rather than to specific styles or motifs. Trott argues that while the ballet has been understood already as working within those terms, what becomes clear on analysis is the degree to which it ‘fails’ in using them – deploying the latest thing in abstraction more as fashionable style than as a thought-through development of painterly practice within performance.

Trott traces this failure through the way in which Audrey Parr and Claudel deployed the corps de ballet as near static figures, principally acting as supports for abstract forms, into a treatment of space which deliberately disrupted perspectival viewing. The limitations on movement that arose from the costumes were compounded by the structure of the stage in the Théâtre des Champs Élysées: its separation into high tiers meant that the dancers could only move horizontally, rather than between front and back. Some critics have claimed that a clear adherence to notions of the dynamic potential of art, deriving from abstract painting, is manifest in these corporeal limitations. Trott, however, shows that the limitation of movement negates the inherently plastic elements of dance. At much the same time as *L'Homme et son désir* took the stage, artists across Europe were experimenting with dynamic abstract forms in other media – and experimenting with greater success, whether that be Walther Ruttmann with the first surviving abstract films or El Lissitzky with the *Proun Room* (1923). Trott argues that the ballet's failure to develop a theory of dynamic theatre emerged not simply from the restricted movement enforced upon the dancers by the rigid costumes and stage direction, but from the restricted movement enforced upon them by the stage. The dancers' incapacity meant that the space could not be defined by the same laws of elastic movement that operated within abstract film or architectural space.

Trott ascribes the failure in part to Parr and Claudel's inability to fully understand and faithfully apply the radical concepts to which they apparently subscribed. A further cause may have been the artistic policy that was the distinguishing mark of the Ballets Suédois, its recruitment of artists and writers – working in collaboration – as the principal figures behind its productions, and its seemingly wilful derogation of the dancers' roles. This shift in creative emphasis was a deliberate policy on the part of Rolf de Maré, the director of the company. In many ways it is what allows for the striking combination of media, and slippage between sign systems, that characterises ballets such as *Skating Rink* and *Relâche*. However, in *L'Homme et son désir*, this combination comes at the expense of the medium into which those signs are meant to slip. The limitations imposed on the dancer's movement by Audrey Parr's costumes accidentally symbolise the larger constraint on their professional contribution that is laid down by de Maré. That the only dancer free from constraint in *L'Homme et son désir* was Jean Börlin, the principal dancer, the choreographer and de Maré's lover, was telling: he was the only member of the company in a position to argue with the artists brought in by the impresario. By the time the Ballets Suédois folded in early 1925 most of the dancers would have gone elsewhere, dissatisfied with the opportunities available to practise their art.

Ruth Hemus' essay on the Dada poet Céline Arnauld explores the relationships in her writing to the visual image, in particular film, and exemplifies the wider need to understand Dada's writing practices in relation to the still and moving image. If art historians cannot ignore Dada writing, literary scholars cannot ignore the myriad modes of the movement's visual production. The essay traces the trajectory of Arnauld's engagements with the visual from a now lost pre-Dada text of 1914, *La Lanterne magique*, written under the poet's original name of Carolina Goldstein. The autobiographical association with the pre-filmic technology of projection and the poet's childhood – which is the sole evidence for the book's content – leads Hemus to suggest a parallel between it and Proust's use of the figure of the magic lantern in *Du Côté chez Swann*. The transformative power of the ephemeral, projected image on which Proust dwells will prove to be formative aspects of Arnauld's oeuvre as a Dada poet. Her first choice of title establishes connections between verbal and visual narratives, between readers and viewers and between poets and projectionists – or filmmakers. Furthermore, the sequence of images offered by the slide projector provides a structuring device for the sequence of poems: as Hemus puts it, there is both an accumulation and an invocation of materiality in the revelation of ideas.

This interest is reinforced by Arnauld's first published Dadaist work, the prose piece '*Dangereux*' in Picabia's short-lived journal *Cannibale* in April 1920. This is a vehement, loosely political attack on the culture industry of the *rappel à l'ordre* (call-to-order), that reining in of avant-garde excess which began in World War I and still prevailed in its aftermath. Arnauld announces, mockingly, both her own cinema – the radical artist controlling the means of distribution – and a radical innovation within it that has the power to destroy existing culture, 'a filmed song, a song that kills, a song that strangles and that disinfects …' Arnauld here has moved from the proto-cinematic technology of the late nineteenth century into an imagination of cinematic technology – the "talkie" – that was not yet realised by the industry. (Synchronised sound recording onto the film strip was possible, but not yet the amplification of it within public theatres that would eventually transform the medium's capacity for entertainment and profit.) Only a month later Arnauld would publish the first – and only – issue of her own journal, *Projecteur*. As Hemus rightly points out, Arnauld's invocation of the cinema was far from being stale in 1920: both the ironic, and angry, notion of the journal as 'a lantern for the blind' ('une lanterne pour aveugles') and its assault upon those elements that make the magazine world, and capital, go round – money, glory, advertising – anticipate Picabia's assaults on conventional cinema and its systems of production and promotion by four years; Arnauld's poetic projector also anticipates by several years the better-known model of the Anglo-American poet H.D., published in *Close-Up*.[18] Furthermore, the material format of the magazine itself is understood by Hemus as drawing on cinematic forms: rather than experiment typographically with the paracinematic text – as Moholoy-Nagy would a few years later in *Malerei Fotographie Film* in 1927 or as Hans Richter had in his journal *G* – Arnauld appropriates the landscape format of the cinema screen. The journal's texts are thus presented almost as a series of frames, building one upon the other, and – Hemus argues – the very process of reading is thus made legible. Indeed, the link between seeing and writing is perhaps at the very heart of Arnauld's poetic project: she responds to the challenge to cognition and to established culture that the cinema presents by imagining, ultimately, a human subject that is itself a kind of projective device.

Jacqueline Rattray's study of the work of Àngel Planells is in some respects a study that concerns itself with the most conventional of intermedial projects – the migration of figures between poetry and painting. However, Rattray concentrates on the way in which this exchange happens within the unitary oeuvre – Planells was both a poet and a painter. Like Arnauld, Planells is an unjustly neglected figure of high modernism, overshadowed amongst Catalan artists by the success of Dalí and Miró. Although circumstances were against him, Planells managed to secure a solo exhibition at the prestigious Galeries Dalmau in Barcelona in 1930. Two of the collectors who bought work there were the poets Emilio Prados and José María Hinojosa: Planells's introduction to them would lead to the development of his own poetic oeuvre, and through his reading, and eventual illustration of one of Hinojosa's books, a greater affinity with Spanish surrealism. But if Planells's four text-based collages were a significant contribution to Spanish modernism, his textual intervention on a work by Salvador Dalí was to prove fateful. Rattray points out that the plinth bearing a statue on the left side of Dalí's *The Lugubrious Game* bears three words – 'gramme', 'centigramme' and 'miligramme' – that were perhaps added by Planells. The immediate consequence of his association with Dalí was that Planells was introduced to a number of important Parisian surrealists, including René Magritte, with whom he struck up a friendship, despite the two having no common language. Their correspondence led to Planells' work appearing in a number of important Francophone surrealist journals, including *Cahiers de Belgique* and *Documents*. Unusually, the normally self-obsessed Dalí also introduced Planells' work to André Breton, and facilitated his acceptance for the 1936 International Surrealist Exhibition in London. If Planells's relationship with Dalí was ultimately to prove problematic – not least in questions of authorship – it was, to begin with, of profound significance for him.

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[18] On H.D. and projection see inter alia, Susan Edmunds, *Out of Line: History, Psychoanalysis and Montage in H.D.'s Long Poems*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), Adalaide Morris, *How to Live, What to Do: H.D.'s Cultural Poetics*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), pp. 89-119, Charlotte Mandel, 'The Redirected Image: Cinematic Dynamics in the Style of H.D.', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, Vol. 11, no. 1, (1983), pp. 36-45, Jonathan Foltz, 'The Laws of Comparison: H.D. and Cinematic Formalism', *Modernism/ Modernity*, Vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 1-26, and the essays of Anne Friedberg in James Donald, Anne Friedberg & Laura Marcus (eds.), *Close-Up 1927-1933: Cinema and Modernism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Rattray traces the beginnings of Planells' writing to 1929 – before he showed at Galeries Dalmau, or met Prados and Hinojosa – when he published surrealist-style texts in *Sol Ixent*. Rattray points out that poetry was a useful, practical means of expression for Planells – since, given his poor background he found it expensive to purchase art materials – and that surrealism was an especially suitable style, since it did not require a formal understanding of technique, but only the ability to articulate fantastical concepts. Furthermore, and importantly, since Planells was often working in his father's bakery, poetry, and his critical writing, took less time than painting. However Rattray establishes clear links between the two media, not least in Planells's use of colour in the early poem 'Sombras de inquietud', and in its typically surrealist displacement of signification through transposition – in this case the metamorphosis of seven necklaces into seven women. One of the most important parallels between painting and poetry is in Planells's concern with violence, which manifests itself in dream-like atmospheres where scenes of bourgeois convention are overwhelmed by abject or unsettling imagery, for example in the prose-poem 'Dijous' ('Thursday'). A particular trope, exchanged between poems like 'En la playa' and paintings such as *Crimen perfecto* (1930) and *La señora impúdica* (1933), is the mutilation and fragmentation of the female body, accompanied by the common surrealist motif of blinding.

If the relationship of poetry to painting is a fairly familiar intermedial transposition, that between architecture and the event has gone largely unexplored. Fernando Quesada remedies this in a study of the way in which modernist architectural thought and practice influenced the conception and construction of the event space within Neo-Dada and Fluxus performance works. In examining the writings of Allan Kaprow, Quesada sees the shift in attention from the frame as boundary to the artwork to the architectural space as site for the event as representing, in itself, a yearning for the reunification of nature and culture. Kaprow posits an originary space, the cave, and mode of representation, the wall drawing, in which representation and architecture are co-terminal. The autonomy of painting that develops from this point on in human culture is, effectively, a denial of reality that is only, and only partially, remedied by cubism and Dada's use of collaged elements drawn from everyday life. For Kaprow, the notion of a single, architectural, space inhabited by the canvas on terms exactly equal to those in which it is inhabited by the viewer, both destroys representation as pictorial category and achieves the supremely modernist goal of reunifying art and life. Using Kaprow's seminal event, *18 Happenings in 6 parts* (1959) as example, Quesada shows that the architectural space in which the event took place cannot be regarded as a neutral, empty, domain. The implication of this is that architecture is no longer the frame of all other frames of representation, but rather the only support of the artwork, in which that artwork ceases to represent objects but becomes object. Furthermore Quesada argues that the critiques made of Happenings of the late 1950s and 1960s, whether by theatre critics or art historians such as Michael Fried, rest upon the assumption that the event space is, *precisely*, neutral, no more than a frame for the performance.

Quesada contrasts Kaprow's emphasis on space as support with Yves Klein's use of space in his performative exhibitions, where architecture is assigned its own symbolic function. Klein effectively quantifies his spectators' perceptive intensity as 'pure merchandise' within an architectural framework. Effectively beginning with the same architectural mechanisms as Kaprow, the spatialisation of the processes and effects of monochrome painting, Klein is shown to produce a diametrically opposite mode of spectatorship in which the viewer/consumer is passively located, unreflexively, within a theatrical spectacle. The spectator does not create spaces through volitional performance, as in the Happening, but rather is performed, even scripted, by space through the matrix of signs that constitutes its architecture. The contrast is most apparent between a work such as Kaprow's *Penny Arcade* (1956) which inverted the interior/exterior relation of gallery space to street, and Klein's *Le Vide* (1958) which rendered the interior space of the gallery invisible from the outside. These differing treatments of space produce for Kaprow the goal of turning art into life, whilst with Klein life is made into art.

Carolee Schneemann's life and art were also inextricably linked. Alison Green traces the intricate relationship between the autobiographical reflexivity of the artist, who spent much of the 1960s in exile from the USA, and the dazzling variety of projects with which she was engaged. As Green shows, Schneemann used structural innovations in filmmaking, in particular, to project questions of personal experience. ‘Intermediality’ and ‘exile’ are shown to be mutually constructive terms that allow us to better understand the heterogeneity, physicality and sometimes aggressive intractability that characterises Schneemann’s project. Yet when she began her ‘autobiographical trilogy’, Schneemann was a tyro by whom male filmmakers were clearly unsettled, and who they were often unwilling to help. Green argues that Schneemann’s confrontation with misogyny is productive; furthermore, that is only one example of the way in which the artist’s somewhat fractious and tendentious engagements with uncooperative agencies or individuals led to the production of significant art. A refusal to back down characterises Schneeman’s political stance against a state engaged in an immoral war and increasingly engaged in repressing its domestic opposition – indeed, it is this brave response that leads her into exile in first Paris and then London. And, Green argues, it is the very ‘multi-dimensionality’ of exile, its social, geographical and psychological dislocations, that contributes to the creative ‘multi-dimensionality’ of Schneemann’s work at this point.

Crucially, Green returns us to the origins of ‘intermedia’ in Fluxus, with Dick Higgins, and the term’s conception as much as enabling verb as classifying noun. Furthermore, the mapping of an indeterminate, interstitial space between media that it both signified and facilitated was also the signal for art’s engagement, through new technologies and practises, with radical politics. Fluxus is Schneemann’s point of entry to the New York art world, and her media are, from the very beginning, both mixed and innovative. Performance and film combine in her ‘kinetic theatre’, conceived as an extension of the Happening; in Vostell and Higgins’ *Fantastic Architecture* she uses text to test the boundaries of relation between the body and architectural space. Separating herself from the New York scene lent Schneemann a new creative edge. In an examination of her autobiographical film *Plumb Line* and the performance work *Thames Crawling* (1970), Green demonstrates the productive alliance and interaction of intermediality with exile. In the film, Schneemann’s innovative use of an optical printer to generate a split frame, transferring the image from one gauge to another, creates multiple, mirroring images that establish novel temporal effects and new perceptions on the world, which Green sees as paralleling the dislocated experience of the exile. It was, not incidentally, these original characteristics, coupled to Schneemann’s ‘neglect’ of the medium’s properties whilst privileging the expression of human experience that led British structural filmmakers to reject her work. *Thames Crawling*, by contrast, built on and perhaps responded to Schneemann’s earlier experiences with group performance in Britain: essentially a multi-media work, the piece anticipated and pre-empted the aggression with which much of her work had been received. Where much ‘expanded cinema’ of the late 1960s and early ’70s sought to inculcate a reflexive consciousness for the audience in an essentially arid and solipsistic relationship with the rhetorical structures of the single medium – paradoxically negating the very expansion the experiment promised – *Thames Crawling* made the audience physically aware of both space and artwork, ultimately by pushing it out of that space.

Gentler, if more distanced, forms of connection are to be found in the work of the Japanese Fluxus artist Mieko Shiomi. *Spatial Poem* was an extended project, spread over the decade 1965-1975, in which textual performance “scores” were mailed around the world and transformed into performances by their recipients. That, however, was only the first stage in a complex chain: the performers documented their actions and sent these documents back to Shiomi. She then collated them, and redistributed the gathered materials to all the participants in the form of a single publication. What began as words sent from individual to individuals became transient actions enacted by individuals, documented in image and text, and then became fixed publication for a community of performers. *Spatial Poem*, as Jessica Santone observes, challenged the singularity of the event and the artist, and it did so by shifting the event between media. Shiomi’s project thus sits firmly within the intermedial framework of the Fluxus project: indeed, Kristine Stiles – one of only a few commentators to have previously considered Shiomi’s work – goes so far as to argue that the spatial dimension of her project maps the terrain of the general enterprise.[19] That global mail network which connected Fluxus participants however owed much to the foundational work of George Maciunas and Ben Vautier – indeed, Shiomi’s involvement came at Maciunas’ invitation. As Santone writes, ‘By the mid-1960s Fluxus had shifted from what was primarily a performance troupe to a more mixed ensemble of intermedial, conceptual, poetic, and performance artists who most frequently came together only in “anthological” publications’.

As Santone shows, analysing Robert Whitman’s use of *Spatial Poem No. 1: Word Event* (March-May 1965), where the artist instructed ‘write a word and place it somewhere’, Shiomi’s project could work on a call and response basis. Rather than *posting* his text, Whitman did indeed place it, and then wrote giving Shiomi the directions to find where that placement was – that is, Whitman's reply then created its own performative act in a feedback loop with the person who had initiated the process. 'Call and response' was also, as Santone illustrates, a way of creating community, one that transcended the conventional boundaries of space and time. However, there were times when, at least in ideal, Shiomi's project united that extended group: for although *Spatial Poem* foregrounds the spatial dispersion of participation, temporality is vital to its understanding. One such activity was *Spatial Poem No. 2: Direction Event* (October 15, 1965, 10:00 pm Greenwich time) in which Shiomi asked for answers to: 'around the time listed – simultaneous – what kind of direction were you facing or moving towards?' The intention, then, was to create a simultaneous event amongst geographically dispersed participants, regardless of time zone. Santone here uses Jean-Luc Nancy's notion of 'the inoperative community' to elucidate our understanding of how Fluxus worked. The response of Danish artist Eric Andersen is used to demonstrate that the 'simultaneous event' is 'full of holes, ruptures, and fragments', whilst 'prompting participants to consider their orientation relative to each other'. Certainly Fluxus is a community, but it is not uniform or cohesive in its behaviour. Simultaneity is compromised by delay and interruption. What *Spatial Poem* tells us here, as Santone writes, is that 'community does not exist as something that accumulates over time, but functions as a point of disruption in time and space caused by an exchange of communication between individuals'. That exchange is, itself, predicated upon a disruption, the displacement back and forth between media that mirrors exchanges between group members.

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[19] Kristine Stiles, ‘Between Water and Stone: Fluxus Performance: A Metaphysics of Acts’, in Janet Jenkins, (ed.), *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993), pp. 93-94.

Andy Warhol's performances, staged under the rubric of the 'Exploding Plastic Inevitable', for all their engagement with, and parody of, the commercial, popular culture of the 1960s – whether Hollywood or pop music – owe a substantial debt to Fluxus. Warhol's perverse contribution to the emergent 'society of the spectacle' (to borrow Guy Debord's telling phrase) is often understood as a multi-media project, perhaps simply because of the number of different elements deployed and the complexity of their enmeshment. Jean Wainwright carefully adumbrates those components, from film, through the near-noise music of the Velvet Underground, to dance, and poetry, to show that the relationships between them are intermedial. However, she further discerns in the immersive milieu that Warhol and his collaborators create a relationship to a separate medium, text, notably the memoir *POPism* and *A: a novel*, that is not actually part of the performances. Furthermore, there is an important biographical vector within that relationship: what looks like a collective activity – albeit one driven by Warhol – is also intensely personal and individual. Warhol could use the at times brutal sensory assault of the EPI upon its audience, and performers, and elements of its content, to reflect upon his ‘otherwise internalised interest in pain’. (And not incidentally, the EPI allowed Warhol to reflect that interest upon others.) The EPI was often described by contemporary journalists in terms of its painful, even sado-masochistic, effects. Wainwright shows that Warhol did not want simply to inflict this on others; his experience of it, at once immersive and withdrawn, was crucial.

Wainwright shows that Warhol’s choice of films within the EPI was sometimes determined not by aesthetic considerations, but rather emerged from Factory politics. Typical of this is the use of *Lupe* (1965) in performances at the Film Makers Cinematheque in February 1966, as an ameliorative gesture to its star, Edie Sedgwick. Intermediality thus relates, here, to the politics of friendship – if friendship is an apt term for relationships sustained under Warhol’s roof. Elsewhere the choice, and simultaneous projection, of films can be seen to have clear affinities with Warhol’s painting, both in themes and the repetition and displacement of aesthetic forms. At other times this displacement and simultaneity can be found in the inaccurate replication of the Velvet Underground, playing live on stage with film of the band rehearsing and improvising, projected over them. Each of these media has a separate, autonomous meaning: the Velvets played the same songs outside of the milieu of the EPI; the films were shown independently; both are added to by Warhol in the commentaries he makes on either the events themselves – in *POPism* – or the general effects that they deployed, such as noise, in *A: a novel*, where he talks, for example, about the relationship of sound and corporeal ecstasy. Wainwright argues that Warhol both desires for himself this sense of subjective abandonment, and a corresponding possession from outside that fills the void, and yet he fears it: the staging of pain within the EPI allows him to experience it vicariously. Here an additional textual influence comes into play as commentary on this activity, and it is provided from within the collective in the form of Gerard Malanga’s poetry and diaries, read in the film *Bufferin*. Here, Malanga substitutes everyone’s name used in the original text, including Warhol’s, with the brand-name of a proprietary pain-killer. Malanga’s text provides a critical response, from within the Factory, to Warhol’s fascination with pain, and his corresponding desire for its dulling, its negation.

Taken together, these essays trace a lineage of intermedial activity within modernism that bridges the historical divides of World War II, the emergence of late-capitalism, and the supposed loss of modernism’s utopian innocence after the catastrophes of mid-century. They offer evidence of continuities of practice, lineages of influence, and sustained aspiration that run counter to general models of contingency and aesthetics and to ideas of a great divide between high and late modernism. If an intermedial investigation understands sign systems as being at once definite and transcendent, it also necessarily pertains to the ability of adopting those systems to reconfigure them in a manner that is specific to its age. It thus at once acknowledges the locus specific of a medium, while imploring the necessary convergence that is most at home throughout the history of modernism. The trajectory of art history is no longer understood by a linear or chronological progression, so that temporal specificity is linked, if not by aesthetics, then in aesthetic interrogation, that emerges implicitly, or explicitly in modernist creation in all its diversity. The broad historical scope then, in this collection, from Italian futurism to a world of American postmodernity, implies a reach not only between media, but also between ages, ideas and philosophies, that influences the development of visual aesthetics. If we then imagine intermedial practices as a plain upon which the boundaries of art can be re-envisaged, then the study of such practices seeks to do the same for art history. This collection offers a small contribution to this plain, with the aspiration to inspire growth in this unequivocally fertile landscape.