

Press Release

After All, Everything Is Different In The End

Sep 25 - Oct 18, 2009

HISK / Higher Institute for Fine Arts

Opening: 25 september 18.00

Mike Carremans / Brandon LaBelle / Gent Clapping Group /
Nate Harrison / Jeuno JE Kim / Raimundas Malašauskas /
Joris van de Moortel / Tisha Mukarji / Sarah Pierce /
Thus & Hence / Ultra-red / Katarina Zdjelar /
plus Jean-Luc Godard, Len Lye and Norman McLaren

Curated by Jens Maier-Rothe

THIS ONE AND THAT ONE

Synchronisation can be defined as a contemporaneous meeting of two intrinsic independent events in a common time frame. Because these incidents could be independent from each other and because they have the ability to create a new sense during their encounter, synchronisation occurs in various nuances. Different stories can be created when two sounds meet, when a tune flirts with an image or noise bedazzles space.

One nuance is the occurred togetherness, a relation in which two join in serendipity but don't morph into one inextricable unity.

Synchronicity in its classical meaning describes a simultaneous and time-shared analogy that can even occur in several spaces. It describes promptly sequent events, which are not bound to cause-and-effect but nevertheless are perceived as rationally associated.

In 1938, one day before Halloween, Orson Welles broadcasted his play „War of the Worlds“ and made fiction mingle with reality. Listeners heard their evening music programme interrupted by a news bulletin reporting a „huge flaming object“ which had dropped on earth. The news report was supported by interviews with eyewitnesses and scientists, who described the landing of an invasion force from Mars. With these effective voices, which were accompanied by sound effects and theatrical sound staging, Welles created a nation-wide mass panic. The fictional game overwrote reality; it associated and synchronized in people's minds with their growing fear of invasion during this time. It was a sign for the power of media, which can create deceptive simulations by playing with parallel worlds, expectations and synchrony.

Although it might not have been meant to cause such harm, it was a viciously harmonized arrangement of happenings in one time flow.

Beside the synchronicity of fiction and reality another synchronism exists: the post-production synchronisation of image and sound, which is set up to make sense. It is a match making, an arranged togetherness which is supposed to morph and not to resist against each other.

„Singing in the Rain“ is one of the most well-known films that plays with synchronisation and its technique. When the much-celebrated silent movie couple had to transform its performance to sound, the silent diva revealed her awful voice. She could neither hold a note while singing nor talk without chewing the words or handle the microphone as a steady new object. By moving her head in her expressionist way of acting she lets the words flutter the microphone. Image and sound are finally unified in Kathy, as a cheerful dancer, a beautiful face, a soft voice with whom Don finally falls in love.

Mickey Mouse even lent his name to a film technique, which describes a synchronized, mirrored or parallel scoring – the Mickey-Mousing. The accompanying music is almost completely linked to the actions. Movements and expressions have a jingling partner.

When Mickey is fleeing from a thunderstorm into a haunted house where he is asked to amuse a ghost and his bony friends by playing the organ, the skeletons start to use their bodies (or what is left of them) as instruments. They play on their ribs and drum on their ribcages. Without their tintinnabulary spines and the clipping and clapping skulls there would be no music; without their tap dancing there would be no beat. It is a total synchronisation of image and sound, a kiss between music and dance.

Even in synchronized moments it can happen that only one event makes sense or is predominant over the other.

This happens when Alice is lost in the woods of Wonderland. She is looking for the white rabbit or at least for sense in the turbulent and mad events. Standing on a crossroad she hears a singing voice. What seems to be the voice of the smiling moon floating over a branch is the Cheshire Cat which comes to a fore. Although synchronized with its movements it is independent from its appearance. It is always the voice or marks of the catty footprint in the sand that shows his presence, but not necessarily his physical appearance. It can puzzle around its body and disappear, liberating itself from his visual appearance.

But sometimes sound and vision, as a concept, don't want to be synchronized. A warlike event between the senses is recorded about a battle evoked by goddess Hera's jealousy. She created Panoptes, an all-seeing giant covered with eyes to monitor the flirtatiousness of her spouse Zeus. The king of gods disapproved this surveillance and ordered the musician Hermes to kill the giant. The messenger of gods tried to find the blind spot of the watcher to kill him in surprise. But the closing of one eye meant the opening of another, there was no back of the head, no moment of opacity. But as Panoptes is the ruler of the visual sense to locate and define the surrounding, Hermes is the ruler of sounds, the touching and space-filling tunes. Moved by the sound of the flute Panoptes' eyes filled with tears before the told stories put him to his deadly sleep. The sound prevailed over the sight as he bewitched it.

Filmic synchronisation is dependent on the perception that sound and image are truly bound together and accord with each other. Although film music, in order to affect or contaminate moving images, does not need the punctuality of the foley follies, it unconditionally comes with its ability to synchronize our emotions to the narrative. In „Une femme est une femme“ Jean-Luc Godard prevents the viewer from falling into such profits of “synchronisation” by suddenly shifting formats. A parallel film emerges within the film when the actors start to behave as such when supported by theatrical music. Before playing their act they bow to the audience, represented by the mirror. Relentlessly jumping from classical to suspense music to pathetic sounds, the score plants the seed for a series of usual synchronisation rewards. But then, before reaping the benefits Godard shifts format to tease the audience's expectations. Even Belmondo wonders if it is a tragedy or a comedy.

Text by Clara Meister ©, September 2009

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