Blur

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A camera lens, filmed in close-up, fills the screen. Its glass plates rotate as if to adjust the focus. In the series of shot-counter-shots that ensues, alternating between the lens and the object of its gaze, the operator remains excluded from the frame, the camera thus designated as the sole origin of vision, in control of our perception of the profilmic reality.

The counter-shot initially looks like an aggregate of fuzzy white spots – lumps of flour, balls of cotton, clouds ...? The object of the demonstration is revealed after some technical tuning: we see the lenses align and the shutter adjust, while in a gradual transition from blur to definition, the spots become an armful of lilac (or more precisely, as suggested by the black background, its negative image) that oscillates in the wind. That the object of the camera gaze is, in the end, but a simple bunch of flowers takes nothing away from the efficacy of the demonstration that Dziga Vertov offers its spectator with this classic sequence of *The Man with the Camera* (1929): vision as a machine-mediated process, where the lens determines the perceived transformations of reality and, by extension, controls the mechanics of scopophilia – the desire to see and to know.

Yet the implications of Vertov's playful experiment with focus and montage may not be as straightforward as the simple actualization, thanks to optical technology, of the blurred form into the defined, completed figure. Common understanding associates the superiority of machine, lens-based vision with a greater accuracy and definition than that of the human eye. Yet as Vertov's sequence illustrates, if there is one visual effect that the eye of the camera *can* record better than the human eye it is, in fact, blur: except in cases of myopia, or in seeing through, say, patterned glass, the human eye constantly adjusts and filters. As Raymond Bellour stresses in a passage on motion-blur in *L'Entre-Images* (2002, 86), that which the human eye does not normally register *is* blurredness, whether it is the blurredness of bodies in motion, of objects far away, at the margins of the field of vision or in very close proximity (see also Beugnet 2017). Film and photography do. Indeed, further than photography, the film image, as it unfolds in time, not only has the power to *record* blur, but also to capture it as part of the film's flow of photograms and assemblage of sequences, as a visible manifestation of in-betweenness, of the moving image's continuous state of becoming.

As far as film form is concerned, to talk about blur as in-betweenness is to reckon with more than the mere actualization of an indistinct image in its defined, fully legible version. Blur's dominion extends between that of the precise, well contoured figure and abstraction; between identifiable sound and indistinct rumor, in the spatio-temporal interval that extends between stillness and movement, in

the perceptual shift of the visual towards the tactile. In turn, blur's formlessness facilitates the kind of in-betweenness I wish to consider here: in-betweenness as Bellour, and, in turn, Ágnes Pethő (2011) understand and describe it, that is, as a fluctuating zone of exchange between images, across techniques and across mediums. In-betweenness in this sense equally applies to the two intertwined axes that normally frame the definitions of a medium: it may serve to describe the exchanges that take place as a cross-breeding of diverse media-images, or to evoke the reconfigurations of the technology and *dispositif* that condition their production, display and reception (see Bellour 2002 and Pethő 2010).[1]

To approach film-blur within this framework is to shun its reduction to mere accessory to the defined image. In other words, blur is not to be envisaged simply from the point of view of traditional narrative cinema's grammar – as a defect, or as a compositional trope: a momentary lapse into in-definition between two sequences of clear and defined images, or a backdrop against which the intended object of attention stands out in full focus. Nor is it reducible to the kind of transitional effect developed as part of narrative conventions (the fade-in, the fade out, or the dissolve…), or indeed to a stylistic effect aiming to deflect the mechanistic nature of the medium, or to give the image an "authentic" raw feel (as in the "soft style" cinematography or hand-held camera mode, respectively). Although these dimensions of film blur necessarily come into play in what follows, they represent a limited facet of the phenomenon: as underscored by Vertov and Bellour, before and beyond its narrative and artistic uses, blur is intrinsic to the medium's ability to "better" the human eye or go beyond standard perception and extend the frontiers of human vision.

One alternative conceptual model for the particular sense of in-betweenness that blur conjures up might be that of potentiality as defined by Giorgio Agamben (1999, 183–185). In his reworking of Aristotle's concept of potential and actual, Agamben by-passes the process of actualization: potentiality, he proposes, is not reducible to a step towards actuality; indeed, the value of potentiality in itself is derived from the denial of actualization, the capacity to appreciate, in and for itself, a state of non-perceiving or non-being (as in not being complete or fully defined).

Filmic blur as I envisage it here, can therefore be understood in terms of potentiality – not as a visual "defect," nor merely as a transitory state of the image, a step towards greater definition and legibility – but in itself, as an aptitude to

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1   Taking her cues from Bellour, Pethő describes intermediality as "a border zone across which media transgressions take place, or an instable 'place' of 'in-between' ('Zwischenraum'), a passageway from one media towards another" (2010, 60).

exploit the plasticity of the film image and enhance vision, drawing it towards synesthetic perception. In turn, this potentiality or affirmative state of non-being (being vague, unreadable …) also opens the film image to the fluctuations and exchanges that Bellour evokes in *L'entre-images*, where images produced by one specific medium bear witness to its closeness (sometimes, as in film and television or video, a conflictual closeness) with another medium.

To explore blur as the quintessence of in-betweenness therefore, is to approach it, first and foremost, as a manifestation of the plasticity and endless "becomings" of the film image: it is as such that blur opens the film image to the fluctuations and exchanges characteristic of the field of the *entre-images*, where images produced by one specific medium testify to its porosity to and closeness with another medium. In turn, blur may serve as the marker that points to the parallel or combined evolution, across media, of the conditions of production, display and circulation of moving images.

In the first instance, I would like to consider the ways in which in certain occurrences of film blur cinema images appear haunted by images from another medium, one that pre-exists cinema, is emergent, or is yet to be invented. In this context, the in-betweenness of blur bears similarities with Walter Benjamin's notion of an optical unconscious, and George Didi-Huberman's concept of the "image as symptom." Following Benjamin's intuition about the power of machine-produced images to act as more than mere documents, blur may be envisaged as a manifestation of the capacity for technologies to bring to the surface a vision of the world that has remained in the collective unconscious because, so far, it has escaped standard human perception.[2] As such, Benjamin's reflections resonate with George Didi-Huberman's writing on images as symptom, images that attest to the existence of visual representation's "accursed share" (2000, 28).[3] Hovering at the "threshold" of "figurability" (*figurabilité*), they "interrupt the course of representation," and must be approached "from the angle of an *unconscious of representation*" (2000, 114 and 40).[4] For Didi-Huberman, the experience of the image as symptom is fundamentally anachronistic: the way such images draw

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2   Cf. Benjamin (1985a [1931], 243). Although he does not use the expression "optical unconscious," Benjamin addresses the same topic in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1992 [1936], 214).

3   George Bataille is one of the key references underpinning Didi-Huberman's concept of image as symptom as a transgression of art history's established approaches and categories.

4   See also the passage on image as symptom in *Devant l'image* (1990, 306–314). Didi-Huberman uses paintings by Fra Angelico as well as Vermeer as basis for his reflection, looking at instances of tachisme-like techniques in the first one (in *La Madone des Ombres*, 1440), and the paint runs and hazy rendering of the elements of detail in the latter (*La dentelière*, 1665).

on the spectator's memory exceeds art history's established categories and its chronological account of styles and techniques.[5]

I would argue that in the case of a time-based medium, instances of "hauntings" of one medium by another may be described as symptomatic in the sense proposed by Didi-Huberman: as the presence of a visual substrate, the reminder and trace of another regime of imaging, obscured, yet surfacing, even if always in an incomplete state. When they manifest themselves through the liminal zones of the blurred image, such hauntings participate in the deployment of what Jacques Aumont (2014, 88–106) describes as cinema's "power of apparition" (*pouvoir d'apparition*).[6] There are reasons for translating the term literally – apparition rather than appearance –, for Aumont uses the word *apparition* in its dual meaning, evoking, at one and the same time, a spirit or ghost and the process of making visible. For him, cinema draws its unequalled ability to play on both dimensions from its specificity as a time-based medium that does not simply show, but performs the process of visual materialization. As Aumont puts it: "what distinguishes (film) images from all the other images is, of course, that they vary in time, and that they have the generic power to appear in front of my eyes: *to appear* and not simply to make something appear." Or, as he puts it later, the figural, envisaged from the point of view of the power of the film image to appear and make things appear, is the capacity of the image "to *make us see*, and not simply to let us see" (Aumont 2014, 91).

One classic example of apparition orchestrated through blur is the famous scene of Judy's transformation into Madeleine in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. In its dramatization of cinema's power of visualization, the sequence triggers a dual form of haunting: the conjuring up of a dead woman's silhouette that is also a conjuring up of film's origins as a photochemical *medium*.

In its uses of blur, Hitchcock's cinematography often adhered to conventional narrative functions: transparencies, dissolves, myopic or hallucinatory points of view abound in his films. In contrast, what made this sequence famous is the ways in which the progression from blurredness to definition gives form, literally, to the pull of desire, collapsing it with scopic vision: the desire to see and possess through the gaze.

The famous sequence at the hotel is built around an impressive partial blur effect that combines successive refocusing and reframing with a progressive fog filter. The passage from blur to definition allegorizes the power of desire, embodying

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5   See the opening of Didi-Huberman's *Devant le temps* (in particular 2000, 11–14).
6   On the concept of apparition in relation with the image as *symptôme* see also Didi-Huberman (2000, 248–249).

both the hero's and the director's demiurgic fantasy (the transformation of Judy into Madeleine is also, as François Truffaut pointed out, symptomatic of the Kim Novak/Grace Kelly permutation). A few words are sufficient to recall the scene: Judy has isolated herself in the bathroom to perfect her metamorphosis. When she finally re-enters the room, now dressed, made up and styled like Madeleine, she first appears as a vaguely contoured figure, nestled in green light (a de-realizing halo, with deadly connotations, though attributable to the neon light that illuminates the façade of the hotel where the scene is set). Initially a ghostly, blurred form at the centre of a sharp image, the young woman's silhouette gradually emerges and solidifies like a photographic print in a developer's bath. In the series of shots/counter-shots that follow, the progressive reframing of Judy is also accompanied by a reversal of the figure and ground definition values: in medium close-up, then in close-up, the young woman appears more and more defined, while the background becomes more and more blurry.

Through various stages of decreasing blurredness, the spectacular treatment and sequencing of Madeleine's appearance thus allows the trace of the image's photochemical substrate to surface: Madeleine's silhouette materializing like a photographic imprint even though, as we recall, in Hitchcock's *mise en scène* it is a green light that washes over the scene, rather than the darkroom's customary red light. Equally evocative is the halting quality of the shot/counter-shot montage which, acting rather like a series of photographic stop baths, gives the sequence its peculiar rhythm. In the process, the presence of the photogram makes itself felt against the flow of the projected moving image, another point of encounter with still photography, or, as Laura Mulvey (2006) puts it, of the presence, at the heart of film, of "death 24x times a second."

In his discussion of photography in *L'entre-image*, Bellour talks of blurred effects as the "*redevance du fantôme,*" the "ghost's dues" (2002, 85). Rather than making a reference to Derridean spectrality, he points to the persistence of that which presided over photography and cinema's birth: a transitional moment where science, technology and the occult overlapped; where photography and cinema were mediums in more than one meaning: as technologies of audio-vision and as connecting gates to the realm of the spirits.

In the *Vertigo* scene, the last stage of the spectrum of Madeleine's appearance takes the reassuring form of the well-defined, fully materialized face of the beloved woman that the male protagonist can hold between his hands. In the initial stage however, beyond the spectral even, lurks the formless:[7] the vaguely

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7   The formless "resembles nothing" marks the demise of the figure (Bataille 1985, 31). Nicole

contoured, insubstantial form that first emerges as if from the wood of the door. At that point, the moment of the first manifestation, the apparition, seemingly still a part of the inanimate matter from which it seems to emanate, struggles to exist as a figure, a separate entity.

The formless, it seems to me, beckons a particular kind of in-betweenness, one that cannot be fully accounted for by cinema's photochemical lineage but, rather, pulls it towards the electronic image.

A frequent visitor to the realm of television, Hitchcock was also aware of video's specific mode of undoing the figure. In one of his televised cameos, a brief sketch that served as an introduction to the *Alfred Hitchcock presents* show, he made a mischievous display of the lens's power to decompose the human form. Hitchcock's silhouette, a mere blob at the start, progressively emerges on the television screen initially filled with "snow."[8] Commenting on the process, Hitchcock rightly describes himself as a misty bit of ectoplasm: the metamorphosis, here, has less to do with photochemical development (the gradual appearance of a figure caught on analogue film), than with the kind of continuous morphing (the organic looking transformation of a form caught in a field of reorganizing particles) typically associated with the electronic and later digital image of television and video.[9]

Within the contemporary regime of imaging ushered in by television and then digital video, where our reality appears to generate almost instantaneously its own spectral doubles (very different from the ghosts of old, and from the spirits that used to haunt the first photographic and film images),[10] the blurred image arguably

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Brenez (1998, 322–335) has commented on Hitchcock's awareness of blur's formless pull, pointing out the insert of blurry photograms to the sequence of the shower in Psycho, so as to intensify the feeling of chaos.

8   An introduction to the episode *And So Died Riabouchinska*, aired on February 12, 1956.

9   The different natures of blur thus mark the difference of the two media's material basis. Blur is inherent to the moving image in its photogram form: as the 24th of a second extracted from a series of images only visualised in full when in movement, the photogram is never fully defined. With the video (electronic and digital) image, the extraction of a "frame" is arbitrary: the elements that compose the image are not bound to discrete photograms but form a set of infinitely manipulable data. For Serge Daney (1993, 39) for instance, there were no moving-images per se on television, only animated ones. See also Chik (2011, 150).

10   In Vertov's film, sequences such as the lens-based transformation of the flowers are complemented by the effect of montage and the structuring work of the editor: in later episodes of *Man with a Camera*, the filming of the film editor handling and cutting strips of photograms serves as a reminder of the art of film as an art of time (a specific, cinematic time, linear or aberrant, fluid or halting, slow or speeded up). In contrast, many a film theorist has stressed continuity, "immediacy" and "instantaneity" as the main characteristics of the electronic mass media image. Hence, Bellour, for instance, observed how in its mass media treatment, "history finds itself reduced to an inconsistent present, always renewed, but relative, evanescent." For,

offers itself as a locus of perceptual uncertainty that defies immediacy. Eschewing the instantaneous consumption of images rendered possible by a viewing regime of immediate legibility, blur allows for the ambiguousness and in-betweenness of images to manifest themselves instead. At the same time, as the key instance of what Hito Steyerl (2009) coined the "poor image" – the circulating, copied, re-filmed, compressed, reformatted, faded and pixilated image –, blur carries with it the chaotic rumour of an endlessly communicating world.

Writing at the beginning of the 20th century, before the advent of abstraction therefore, historian Wilhelm Worringer (1978 [1907]) suggested that, in representation, the drive to abstract objects from the surrounding matter corresponds to the desire to make sense of, or to deny, the existence and the pull of chaos. Abstraction therefore, in this use of the term, had nothing to do with non-figurative art: Worringer was interested in the meaning of techniques of representation where objects are isolated or extracted from the backdrop, contoured and demarcated so as to be presented in a more stable and legible manner.

As Neil Donahue puts it, Worringer points to the existential grounding of a particular aesthetic inclination. For Worringer, Donahue argues, "the urge for abstraction […] takes root in an awareness of temporality, contingency, and in a state of abject terror: 'the immense dead of space and the contingency of happening'" (Worringer quoted in Donahue 1995, 19). The kind of abstraction Worringer described is arguably still at work today, notably in the search for ever higher definition and 3-D images, which offer the illusion of a greater knowledge and control of the visible. In this view, blurred aesthetics can be envisaged as both a form of resistance to this regime of the hyper-visible, and as the expression of the 'underside' of a field of visual representation regulated by tradition, conventions and the drive for utmost readability. Alongside cinema's "genres of excess"[11] (Williams 1991), experimental and art filmmakers have long sought to exploit the base, less valued dimensions of cinematographic representation. Such filmmaking often draws on the vulnerability of the human figure caught within a fluctuating audio-visual field devoid of a stable, centralizing compositional logic.

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he adds, "the electronic image makes it possible to construct an instantaneous and virtually infinite double of 'reality'" (2002, 56). Of course, the majority of films is now shot digitally, yet the distinction between the televised or webcasting flow of present-tense images, and the circumscribed, yet complex, non-linear cinematic time has remained. See also Steven Shaviro (2016, 362–397).

11   Genre cinema has always been quick to seize the potentiality offered by new regimes of imaging, electronic and digital, in generating the kind of "abject terror" described by Donahue: horror cinema is permeated by "other" images, blurred, glitched, colonized by noise, and generated by increasingly automated and seemingly self-operating technologies of audio-vision.

In his 1995 Dogma film, *Julian Donkey Boy*, Harmony Korine explored the possibilities afforded by the kind of small, handheld digital cameras that were still a novelty at the time. His film is clearly inflected by an acute sensitivity to the diverse effects of the regimes of imaging born out of old and newer technologies. Although we may choose to describe the main character of Korine's film, Julian, as a schizophrenic, it is equally possible to envisage the film itself as schizophrenic, its images doomed to manifest the spectral nature of electronic and digital imaging, the experience of reality as its chaotic double.

Though the digital video footage was later transferred to 35 mm, throughout the filming the image was recorded according to the rules of the Dogma, without the aid of extra light or filters, and its look remained devoid of post-production adjustments. It thus displays an oversensitivity to light changes, strong contrasts and bleeding colours as well as the effects of remanence typical of low-definition video. The film opens with a striking sequence of slowed down images re-filmed from a television screen.[12] The images are heavily degraded and pixilated, the figures rendered as hazy shapes filled with roughly textured blocks of colours in impressionistic painterly style. The sequence has been shot in an ice rink, but under the effect of the low-definition re-filming the backdrop of spectator-filled terraces is a mere mass of blotches. The blurred silhouette of an ice skater[13] appears first in medium, then in medium long shot. With eerie slowness, she rises from the ice and twirls in the dreamlike, suspended time of the decelerated flow of images.

Contrary to the fluid effect of slow motion (based on over-cranking or fast recording), Korine chooses to play the images back at a lower rate than the recording one: hence the irregular pace of the stream of images. This halting effect has less to do with the memory of photography than with the technique of video instant replay favoured in the broadcasting of sports events, just as the ice skater's circling motion arguably gestures less towards analog film and pre-cinematic media than towards electronic and digital short forms or loops. And yet, for all its derivative origin and treatment, Korine does not shy from saturating this enigmatic sequence with a strong sense of pathos, setting its shaky, precarious-looking images to the music of a famous Puccini aria (*Gianni Schicchi*, 1918).

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12   The source of the footage is not immediately identifiable but a later scene shows us the characters watching similar images on TV.

13   Probably Tonya Harding, who was caught in the scandal of the attack on Nancy Kerrigan shortly before the shooting of Korine's film. Harding was one of the first female skaters to perform triple axels in competition.

The opening sequence is abruptly cut to be replaced first by a few abstract images (motion-blur applied to an extreme close-up of reddish, textured streaks) then by images of Julian. He is caught in medium long shot, walking in an undergrowth, breathing heavily. Though shooting him frontally, the camera lens appears unable to hierarchize the information that reaches its digital sensors: contours and colours dissolve, the foreground and the background appear alternately blurred or defined, or they seem to merge, the human figure caught in the turbulence of an unstable visual field. In effect, throughout the film, the character's vision of the world around him, expressed through the low definition digital image – unselective and unstable, oversensitive to light and motion – appears to fuse external and internal perception as through a terrifying process of unfiltered affect.

In *Julian Donkey Boy*, the fusion of different regimes of imaging – television, video, cinema – thus results in the hystericized representation of its main character's paroxysmic sensibility. But it also points toward the spectral logic of a contemporary, over-mediatized reality, where the uninterrupted flow of sound and images captivates the attention, doubling and replacing human perception with an illusory sense of immediacy. At the same time however, Korine's choice of music for the opening sequence of *Julian Donkey Boy* is a reminder that, no matter its format and technical basis (in this case, footage caught with a digital video camera), cinema remains the most operatic of all mediums, able to integrate other forms of expression and representation into its cinematic worlds.

In contrast, installation art, the emblematic art form of the era of the so-called "post-medium condition," operates primarily as a re-staging of existing mediums and of their images. To summarize the expansive literature on the topic since the advent of the digital, one could simply point out that, when it concerns itself with the moving image, whether originating from cinema, television or video, installation art tends to deconstruct and reconfigure both its technical and aesthetic constituents (the *dispositif*). The supporting structure, as well as the expressive conventions thus become explicit or implicit objects of investigation. In doing so, installation art tends to lay bare some of the fundamental conditions of differentiation and manifestation of in-betweenness of moving image media. Within such assemblages and reworkings, video, as Bellour once put it, "is, essentially, a go-between (une *passeuse*)" (2002, 14). In this context, blurred aesthetics often play a key role, opening up spaces of in-betweenness, or, to use Gilbert Simondon's term (1958), producing "*milieux*" where the various media

can develop "associated" forms of imaging and regimes of perception that testify to the embedment of technology in our lives and in our very dreams.[14]

The Chronic Wound (2014), an installation work created by André Parente in collaboration with his son, the video artist Lucas Parente, offers itself as a haunting illustration of such media reconfiguration. The authors describe the work as "a synthesis of video installation and film essay."[15]

The full-size image of a poorly dressed Afro-Brazilian man is projected on a mattress. He lies on his side, then on his back, asleep. The mattress is covered with the kind of patterned fabric that is commonly described as colonial and associated with a history of slavery in which Rio played a prominent part.[16] At the head of the mattress, on a smallish TV-like screen, we see chaotic, blurred, partly obscured images of slums and of demonstrations, interspersed with geological maps and shots of the mountainous land surrounding the city. Alternating with the sound of the slumbering man's deep breathing, the voice-over features a loose dialogue between two voices. A man's voice speaks of the heat and of the oppressive presence of a city that he compares to a decomposing corpse in which he may be swallowed up. A woman's voice – a personification of the city maybe – talks of the predators that circle over her, and evokes, through a litany of facts and figures, Rio's 1904 vaccine revolt.

Two regimes of the blurred image are thus laid out side by side here. There is the softly textured image of the sleeping man that a succession of dissolves endows with an organic feel: his body appears, then gradually vanishes, as if absorbed in the fabric on which it rests – a cycle of rhythmical appearances and disappearances that makes it look as if the image itself was breathing. Next to the projected image of the sleeping man, the small screen is animated by an uninterrupted current of lurid visions, even more threatening that they remain partly illegible, flowing endlessly on the screen without a clear rationale or narrative.

A sense of exhaustion, exploitation and decay imbues the work, surfacing through the soundtrack's recurrent mentions of vultures, and the silhouettes of scavenger birds that also appear on the smaller screen. At the same time, the

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14   Gilbert Simondon's notion of "*milieux associés*" (environments associated to the functioning of particular technologies) is useful in envisaging the way elements of particular *dispositifs*, associated with diverse media, become combined or relocated.

15   See www.andreparente.net. Footage of the videos (presented here as a linear edit) can be seen on https://vimeo.com/109093051. Last accessed 19. 07. 2019.

16   Such fabric usually features vegetal forms and small scenes of colonial life often including slaves. Here it bears the kind of motifs characteristic of the work of the French painter Jean-Baptiste Debret, an artist who travelled to Rio, once Brazil's largest slave market, in the early 19th century.

vacillating form of the prone body evokes an endless sequence of erasure and returns, a resistance to the effect of official histories that tend to erase the bodies that do not fit in their accounts.

Parente's choice of the dissolve, a potent tool in the service of the moving image's power of "apparition," draws on a long tradition of associating blurredness with sleep and dream states. In a neat visual translation of the Cartesian *docta*, in cinema, the clear and distinct image usually indicates a state of awakened awareness, whereas very early on in the history of the cinema, the blurred image signalled a shift into a state of dreaminess or unconsciousness (see Beugnet 2017, 76–88).

The Chronic Wound thus speaks of the difficulty in assigning a source of enunciation to images today, as they flood our screens and impregnate our unconscious. For Vivian Sobchack, writing in *The Scene of the Screen* (2004, 159–162), given the partly automated, mass production and circulation of images today, the loss of the kind of visible *dispositif* and grammar of the cinema gives way to unanchored images, orphan images without a stated point of view, for which no one takes responsibility.

André and Lucas Parente's work however, with its alternation of voices and dual mode of screening – a projection coupled with an LCD screen – presents us with two kinds of images that generate their own, characteristic sense of hapticity. The images' enhanced material presence is either born out of a profusion of details and subtle variations or on the contrary, by a partial obliteration or blotting of contours that draws the figurative content towards formlessness. Passages between the two happen through the gaze of the spectator, going from one to the other, or embracing both at the same time. The capacity to engage with both, and to acknowledge their cohabitation or coexistence – also as the mark of the continuing co-existence of different regimes and technologies of imaging – is key. Characteristic of Parente's investment in self-reflexive approaches, *The Chronic Wound* is thus experienced simultaneously as a profoundly, sensually affecting work, and as an assemblage of forms of visual mediation and circulation that leaves space for images to manifest as symptoms, the traces of other (hi)stories.

Hence, in response to Sobchack's critical assessment of a dis-anchored contemporary gaze, thinking and experiencing media in-betweenness can help us develop our "sense-ability, and, in turn, our response-ability" (Sobchack 2004, 295). It is not necessarily the aesthetic of actualized, fixed and definite form that proves most adequate to the task however, but, often, the vague, blurred, uncertain image that foregrounds its materiality, complexity and historicity.

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