



## Jean-Luc Godard's Passages from the Photo-Graphic to the Post-Cinematic. Images in between Intermediality and Convergence<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** The article begins with an attempt to trace the various domains of Godard's widespread influence that reaches beyond contemporary cinema in our post-media culture (installation art, literature, music, graphic design, commercial videos, the current vogue of the "Godardesque" retro look promoted on the scene of fashion world, and finally, photography). The advertising strategies used by the Band of Outsiders fashion label using Polaroid photos that reconstruct or imitate Godard images are analysed in more detail, their connection with a "photo-op" culture and the emergence of the "photo-filmic" image is emphasised. The article then connects all these "Godardesque" features that survive in the post-cinematic world to the intermedial use of photography in Godard's films that may have pre-figured their post-filmic appropriation. Some of the relevant junctures are pointed out between "the cinematic" and the "photographic" revealing how photography in Godard's films seems to offer a centre stage for inter-medial tensions but it can also facilitate the assimilation by other media. His latest film, *Film Socialisme* is analysed in this sense as an allegoric passage of the photographic image from intermediality to media convergence.

*"The photographic exists somewhere in-between;  
it is a state of 'in-between-ness.'"*

Raymond Bellour (2008, 253.)

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## 1. Jean-Luc Post-Cinema Godard

In the credit sequence of the *Band of Outsiders* (*Bande à part*, 1964), one of the iconic films of the French New Wave, Godard “modestly” listed himself among the creators of the film as “Jean-Luc Cinema Godard.” With the playful insertion of the word “cinema” between his first and last names he forged a signature revealing a strong sense of authorship in cinema that could be defined not only by leaving an indelible mark over every aspect of a film, but also by being interested (besides being the director/author of a film in the conventional sense) in experimenting with the totality of what moving images can offer, a kind of authorship that he practised throughout his long and prosperous career and that eventually propelled him to the position of being perhaps the most influential artist of his generation. Today modern (or post-modern) cinema is inconceivable without Godard with influences ranging from Quentin Tarantino, Martin Scorsese to Wong Kar Wai, Takeshi Kitano, Aki Kaurismäki or Hal Hartley, Wes Anderson, Jim Jarmusch, and many others.<sup>2</sup> What is more, his extraordinary sensitivity for addressing within his films key issues of the changes in technology, mediality and context of moving images also makes him a major figure within those cinéastes who exploit the possibilities of cinema’s intermedial status to bring into focus the changing cultures of sight and sound within the twentieth century and beyond.

A decade after the turn of the millennium Godard celebrated his eightieth birthday while his films have already moved on to be embedded within and to be reflecting upon the so called “post-medium condition” of cinema. His grandiose *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (*The Histories of Cinema*, 1988–1998) mourned the end of the cinematic era, and his 2001 *In Praise of Love* (*Éloge de l’amour*) was considered by David N. Rodowick (2007, 90) also as an “elegy for film” itself, a narrative allegory of cinema’s passing from the analogue to the digital age. His short film, *The Old Place* (2000) as well as his 2006 exhibition combining film projections and collage works presented at the Centre Georges Pompidou<sup>3</sup> in Paris experimented with moving images introduced into and confronted with the traditions of the museum space. *Notre musique* (*Our Music*, 2004) reflected on the visual constructions of classical cinema facing the challenges raised by the appearance of small handheld cameras. At the same time, Godard is not only an author who has had a notable

2 In the world of cinema Godard’s influence reaches even as far as the bizarre universe of Japanese anime director Mamoru Oshii (e.g: *The Red Spectacles*, 1987; *Talking Head*, 1992).

3 See a good description and evaluation of the project in Alex Munt’s (2006) article in *Senses of Cinema*.

influence on filmmakers of different genres, but in this age of the ever expanding field of moving images somehow he also succeeds in having an impact within the most diverse artistic areas and sub-cultures that breed post-cinematic imagery emulating decontextualised visual elements from his films.

A brief survey directed at the mapping of the main areas that register Godard's influence beyond cinema (i.e. beyond the obvious impact made upon younger generations of film directors) may lead us to unexpected territories and convergences. The rhizomatic connections that can be unearthed in pursuing Godardian traces also shape another image of Godard beyond the archetype of the modernist author, and even beyond the master in intermedial cinema, revealing "Godard" as a unique brand name at the juncture where the "cinematic" and the "photographic" converge.

Without the ambition to present a comprehensive listing of Godardian associations leading outside cinema (and back) here are some of the fields that have emerged in the last decade feeding on diverse aspects of his art and artistic persona.

Perhaps the most obvious terrain is the avant-garde and experimental scene where Godard's inter-art influence is traceable in several domains. There have understandably been several installation art projects that drew inspiration from Godard in creating their own vision. One of these is the work of the New York-based conceptual artist Adam Pendleton who refashioned elements from Godard's 1968 film, *Sympathy for the Devil*, in his own 2010 video installation, titled *Band*, substituting the experimental rock band named Deerhoof for Godard's original use of the Rolling Stones.<sup>4</sup> A similar musical re-interpretation of Godard was done by the William Parker Double Quartet who composed and performed a suite of experimental jazz music based on one of his films (the *Alphaville Suite, Music Inspired by the Jean Luc Godard Film*, the music was released as a CD album by Rogueart in 2007).

In addition to a general influence of Godard's cinematic style over modern prose writing there are also cases in poetry in which we see more direct appropriations of his techniques or themes. Jan Baetens, a Flemish poet and literary critic writing in French composed a volume of verses "translating" Godard's cinematic vision into poetic imagery and called this a "novelization," a reverse adaptation of film into literature (*Vivre sa vie, une novellisation en vers du film de Jean-Luc Godard*/

<sup>4</sup> See a description of the project here: <http://www.ifc.com/news/2010/10/jean-luc-godard-inspired-band.php> (The last date of access for all websites referred to in the article henceforth is 7.09.2011.)

*Her Life to Live, a Novelization of the film by Jean-Luc Godard*, published by Les Impressions Nouvelles, Collection Traverses, 2005).<sup>5</sup> Brigitte Byrd's 2010 volume of poetry published by Ahsahta, *Song of a Living Room*, is not a novelization of a particular film like Baetens's, but has also been characterised by reviewers as Godard-esque due to the dense inter-art references, disconnected elements of narration and the presence of a characteristic "voice-over" in the poems that is reminiscent of Godard.<sup>6</sup> What is interesting in these examples is that although Godard has sometimes been accused of being more of a writer than a filmmaker, preferring long, rambling dialogues and quotations from literature, these literary texts connect to his films not through his emphatic use of poetry or language but through his powerful cinematic imagery and subversive narrative devices. These works do not simply "extract" some of the literary qualities of the films, but create more complex intermedial passages: an unusual type of ekphrasis in the case of the novelization or the resemblance to a "cinematic" voice (reinforced with movie references) in the case of Byrd's poetry.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, apparently Godard, the man of letters (or the "lettrist" author of cinema), has been able to round up fans outside cinema even through such relatively minor elements of his films like the characteristic graphic design of his credit sequences and intertitles. The typeface used by Godard in several of his 1960s films (written in his characteristic style of tricolour letters) has been reproduced by a group of designers in a celebration of the eightieth birthday of the cult director, and can now be obtained via the internet as the "Jean-Luc fonts typeface" that is sent free of charge to fans' e-mail addresses on request. [Fig. 1.] The designers argue that the lettering is a kind of "found object" in Godard's cinema that originates in the "vernacular typography of the street."<sup>8</sup>

5 Jan Baetens who is a Professor at the University of Leuven is also a scholar who has done researches in intermediality, especially the phenomenon of novelization (see: *La novellisation. Du film au roman*, 2008).

6 Robert Olen Butler writes in the online presentation of the book: "the poems of Brigitte Byrd's third book ask the reader to follow a ribbon threaded among music, movies, poetics, and an unlinear sense of time." See: <http://ahsahtapress.boisestate.edu/books/byrd2/byrd2.htm>.

7 The American poet John Allman, who often resorts to movie references in his works, has also recently published a trans-genre story titled "Godardesque" in the literary journal *Hotel Amerika* according to a short online biography (see: <http://www.futurecycle.org/FutureCyclePoetry/JohnAllmanBio.aspx>)

8 According to information posted on the website of the designers, Jean-Luc typeface "is an uppercase-only display grotesque in two styles: one with normal bold accents and punctuation, and one with hairline accents and punctuation, as seen in the title cards for *2 ou 3 choses*." They confess: "It is so interesting to us because it is such a clear renunciation of the 'pretty,' classical title screens that were common in that time's more conservative films. It has a more vernacular and brutishly low-brow character;



Godard's obsession with the "spectacle" of writing, with coloured letters and words decontextualised from neon advertisements or street signs, is carried on not only in various areas of visual design, but in music videos as well. Outside regular institutional channels, in the "brave new self-publishing world" of *vimeo* there is a video clip created by Chateau Bezerra<sup>9</sup> that has produced much favourable reverberation in the blogosphere. The video accompanies "Melancholy Hill" by The Gorillaz with a "visual cut-up poem" using only the neon signs of New York reminiscent of Godard's similar images from *Pierrot le fou* (1965), *A Woman is a Woman* (*Une femme est une femme*, 1961) or *Alphaville* (1965). [Fig. 2.]

Music videos produced by established labels have not been shy either to convert the Godard legacy to small change. Just to name two examples that used the same film, *Alphaville*, as a "source template" for their imagery: Chris Applebaum's video for Kelly Osborne's single, *One Word*<sup>10</sup> [Figs. 3–4.], and Hype Williams's *All of the Lights* video for Kanye West featuring Rihanna and Kid Cudi,<sup>11</sup> also including the neon light lettering reminiscent of *Une femme est une femme* and refashioning the famous coloured headlights car sequence from *Pierrot le fou* (1965) that was used by Quentin Tarantino too in his pastiche of Godard within Robert Rodriguez's *Sin City* (2005). The case of this latter video can be regarded in this way as highly symptomatic for Godard's rhizomatic influence. Even more so, as the release of the video was accompanied by an argument over copyright issues, Hype Williams was accused of copying Gaspar Noé's stroboscopic credit sequence of his film, *Enter the Void* (2009). Actually what the copyright dispute ignored was the fact that Gaspar Noé designed the intro to his film as a tribute to Godard, so actually both sequences were following in the footsteps of the author of *A Woman is a Woman*. The irony is that Godard – who has often voiced his scepticism regarding intellectual property – even included at the end of his recent work, *Film Socialisme*, a mock FBI warning against "any commercial use or duplication" of his film, at the same time indicating that such a law is not fair and that consequently "justice" should prevail and not the word of the law. Thus he

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this lettering comes from the street: We cannot prove this at all, but we think it may be derived from the stencil letters of the *Plaque Découpée Universelle*, a lettering device invented in the 1870s by a certain Joseph A. David, and first seen in France at the 1878 Exposition Universelle, where it found broad appeal and rapid adoption. We think this style of lettering was absorbed into the public domain vernacular of French lettering, and that the *2 ou 3 choses* titles are derived from these quotidien lettering style" (see: <http://www.carvalho-bernau.com/jlg/>).

9 <http://vimeo.com/16772996>

10 The video can be watched on YouTube here:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wPnSI\\_xtK8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wPnSI_xtK8)

11 Video available on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAfFfqjYLp0>

not only anticipated the DVD format of the movie and the illegal distribution or use of his film within the post-cinematic world but also seems to have commented on the already widespread (mis)appropriations of his own work. Such instances, however, show not only how far the influence of Godard may reach but also how such formalism has actually already “entered the void” compared to Godard’s imagery that at the time of *A Woman is a Woman* could still be perceived as an accurate rendition of the mixture between the “poetry” discernible in the colourful city lights and the increasingly futuristic feel of the urban jungle.

Unlike music videos that refashion Godardian stylistic elements acquired indirectly through multiple transfers (where their origin is often lost for the viewers), the contemporary commercial scene has discovered in “Godard” a more directly marketable brand. In 2007 Chanel launched a spot for its Rouge Allure lipstick in tribute to Godard’s *The Contempt/Le Mépris* (1963)<sup>12</sup> using Georges Delerue’s original soundtrack and featuring Julie Ordon as a Brigitte Bardot lookalike in a reconstruction of the film’s famous opening bed scene [Figs. 5–6.].

In May 2011 Richard Philips – an artist who is known for his hyper-realistic portraits of Hollywood icons – created a 90 second short experimental video which attempted something of a crossover between the clichés of a commercial and an artistic commentary vis-à-vis the contemporary face of celebrity featuring Lindsay Lohan. In this he portrayed the infamous American starlet in moments designed to be reminiscent of Ingmar Bergman’s *Persona* (1966) and Godard’s *Le Mépris*.<sup>13</sup> The video attests to the convergence (or at least to an experiment in convergence) of the commercial appeal of both the young American actress (who was making headlines at the time for her drug and alcohol abuse and court ordered house arrest) and of the strong images deriving from Bergman’s and Godard’s cinema, no matter how unsettling one may find such an equation.

## 2. Adopting the “Look:” JLG and Post-Photography

This market value of Godard is nowadays being repeatedly tested by the global fashion world, a world that has become increasingly intermingled with show business and cinema, and where there has been a veritable boom of promoting

12 The spot can be seen on several sites, e.g. here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8Qa2\\_bHDUs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8Qa2_bHDUs). A photo-reportage documenting the shooting of the video can be accessed here: <http://lucire.com/2007/0531be0.shtml>.

13 The video was shown as part of the *Commercial Break* series of short films presented by the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture at the 2011 Venice Biennale. It is also available on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rs7Ni7nmA>

“Godardesque” as a trendy adjective associated with the recent penchant for vintage looks. Several fashion shows and collections of clothes or accessories within the last years have been designed and advertised as connected to the films of the French New Wave in general and Godard in particular. One of the most prominent shows was that of the Dior cruise collection presented in Shanghai, in May 2011, then there was the collaboration between the Canadian handbag designer Jessica Jensen and the young, New York based designer Alexander Berardi<sup>14</sup> who teamed up to produce a limited-edition handbag collection alongside a selection of Berardi's spring/summer 2011 women's ready-to-wear line inspired by *Breathless*,<sup>15</sup> as well as the “Cine Collection” of myPetsQuare in 2010 designed for spring 2011. This latter Australian collection was advertised as “a unique brand of quirky clothing to the French New Wave with pieces inspired by cult film director Jean-Luc Godard,” and the description went on to lure the customer still deeper into Godard's world: “the clothes are a lesson in ‘60s cool, embracing off-the-cuff sex appeal and simple, super wearable silhouettes. To get you in the mood, think Jean Seberg in *Breathless* circa 2010, clad in bold stripes, printed tees with cute slogans, and boyish, cropped trousers. Pair this with the nonchalant attitude of the arresting actress of *Vivre sa vie* (and Godard's wife!) Anna Karina and voilà! The stylish existentialist emerges. For men, it's a *Bande à part* affair, with sharp blazers, checked shirts and suspenders marking modernity with Godard's inimitable brand of retro surrealism. So act fast, while it's still a secret... aren't you dying to turn the NYC streets into your very own *Alphaville*?”<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the deepest connections to Godard's cinema are exploited by the Band of Outsiders designer fashion label that borrowed the English title of Godard's cult film (*Bande à part*) – just like Quentin Tarantino who founded a production company with another version of the same name (A Band Apart) – and like the House of Berardi, it is also growing in popularity. According to the website of New York Fashion, the label was created by Scott Sternberg who launched Band of Outsiders in 2004, “designing recontextualised vintage-inspired looks with

14 Source: <http://fashionights.com/post/1359490344/lg-fashion-week-jessica-jensen-alexander-berardi>

15 Berardi who is a kind of whiz kid in the industry (being only 24 years old and already tremendously successful) excels in combining cinematic imagery and fashion design. According to his official website his earlier, 2010 spring collection was inspired by the entrancing thought of “Marlene Dietrich captaining a luxury yacht” and was based on the “theme of classic Hollywood charisma.” (See: <http://www.houseofberardi.com/main.html>)

16 Source of the quotation: <http://www.refinery29.com/mypetsquare-babel-fair-nyc>

hand-sewn seams and shrunken proportions,” the label overview mentions that “the brand’s overall look is one of sharply cut dress shirts and slim-fitting, tailored suits and knits with a boyish appeal.”<sup>17</sup>

The Band of Outsiders Boy Fall 2009 presentation at the Fashion Week show in Los Angeles was described by Angela Ashman’s review in the *Village Voice* in the following way: “A stylish young man with a red bowtie ushers us upstairs to the second floor, and suddenly it’s as though we’ve gone back in time to the ‘60s – and, in fact, we have. Inspired by the 1967 Jean-Luc Godard film *La Chinoise*, about young revolutionaries in Paris, designer Scott Sternberg has his models posing at about 10 different sets, playing classic board games, watching black-and-white television, and talking at antique wooden phone booths.”<sup>18</sup>

Scott Sternberg’s Godardesque main edge comes from the overall vintage sixties look. A similar appearance is also heavily promoted by the currently popular TV show, *Mad Men*, with a fan base hooked on the sixties clothing and hairdos, thus potentially coinciding at least partially with the customers of Band of Outsiders. But unlike the chic imagery of corporate America of the sixties reconstructed by the creators of *Mad Men*, Sternberg’s label markets a more youthful, offbeat, sometimes even subversive image that rejects some of the established standards of fashion, with clothes that are “preppy” yet do not project an image of glamour, look affordable yet are in fact rather expensive in a kind of “working class hipster” manner. Sternberg insists on a low-key yet visible connection with the cinematic world and consistently organises his ad campaigns using actors (usually not high-profile stars) instead of runway models in photo shoots relying on mock serious role play and unpretentiously “cool” poses. The actors chosen for his campaign include: Jason Schwartzman (an established “indie” anti-star who came to be known through prominent roles in Wes Anderson’s movies and HBO’s *Bored to Death*, a deadpan comedy series that is infused with allusions to literature and film), and relative newcomers to Hollywood like the British actor, Andrew Garfield or James Marsden.

Sternberg’s themes of cinematic origin may vary (his latest fashion show in Milan for the collection of 2012 Spring/Summer, was based on the 1961 musical *West Side Story*) yet the “Godardesque” elements persist as a continuous undercurrent. First of all this is ensured by a playful use of language (a hallmark of Godard’s

17 See: <http://nymag.com/fashion/fashionshows/designers/bios/bandofoutsiders/>. The description posted on the website also mentions that – although increasingly popular in the States – the label’s biggest market is Tokyo.

18 [http://blogs.villagevoice.com/music/2009/02/fashion\\_week\\_ka.php](http://blogs.villagevoice.com/music/2009/02/fashion_week_ka.php)

cinema as well) – a “flair with words and grammar”<sup>19</sup> as a review for the New York Magazine observes – e.g. the men’s line is called “Band of Outsiders,” the menswear-inspired clothes collection for women is called “Boy,” spelled with a dot (later a more feminine line having been designed with the name “girl.” – this time spelled with a lowercase “g” and a dot), and Sternberg’s line of fitted polo shirts is named “This is not a polo shirt.” The label thus perhaps self-reflexively acknowledges the fact that a shirt like this is primarily an appropriation of an image and not a piece of clothing. The campaign for the shirts uses photographs of all kinds of celebrities from the sixties and seventies to authenticate the creations that were designed to imitate them (openly and free handedly borrowing images available in various publications and on the internet). Godard himself is used as a kind of “vintage model” in original photos that show him alongside Anna Karina, Jean-Paul Belmondo and Eric Rohmer. [Figs. 7–10.]

Besides such re-contextualisations of old snapshots of celebrities, the campaign for the Band of Outsiders label relies on the quasi improvised quality of an often over- or underexposed looking series of Polaroid photographs or frames that imitate Polaroid pictures [see Figs. 10–18.] These shots also feature recurring subtle permutations of the typical visual ingredients of Godard films from the Nouvelle Vague period like the bleak yet youthful apartment with magazine decoupages, photos on the wall, piles of vinyl records that look similar to the clutter that spiced up the settings of early Godard films like *Charlotte and Her Boyfriend* (*Charlotte et son Jules*, 1958), *Breathless* (*À bout de souffle*, 1960) or *The Little Soldier* (*Le petit soldat*, 1963) while the newspapers and old photo cameras appear as the typical props that turn up in most of these films [Figs. 11–14.] (and appear, incidentally, also in the emblematic photo of Godard, Belmondo and Karina so often used as an illustration that is reproduced in the polo shirt campaign, see Fig. 9.). Other Polaroids capture the actor in characteristic poses: Jason Schwartzman, for example, seems to be another Michel Poiccard on the run in Chinatown [Fig. 15.], or place him into stylised spaces that are (re) painted in bold colours with suggestive words written in large letters over the walls (reminiscent of *Pierrot le fou*, see: Fig. 16.) or show him gesticulating like the young revolutionaries “*à la Chinoise*” [Figs. 17–18.]. Such mock characters then often end up in absurd combinations of Godardian motifs worthy of the grotesque side of Godard’s spirit, e.g. exhibiting man versus space and exploiting the surreal quality of the stylised setting [see Jason Schwartzman in Fig. 19.] or driving the “Godardesque” feel to the extreme by creating a character that assumes the look of

19 [http://nymag.com/daily/fashion/2010/03/scott\\_sternberg\\_says\\_designing.html](http://nymag.com/daily/fashion/2010/03/scott_sternberg_says_designing.html)

yet another undercover agent slash “rebel without a cause” while casually carrying “Hanoi Jane” Fonda’s workout book<sup>20</sup> under his arm as he stops outside the village on the way to the golf course (?) [see Andrew Garfield in Fig. 20.]. The retro, New Wave feel is further enhanced by the collection of photographs also posted on the label’s official website with the title, featuring yet another pun, “Band of Outtakes,” and in which we see photos that were supposedly “discarded” in the process of assembling the final collection to represent the line. Some of these photographs seem random takes, as if someone kept pushing the shutter-release button of the photo camera, some of them – like the ones in which we see Jason Schwartzman and his wife in their home under a giant poster of Louis Malle’s cult movie, *Zazie in the Metro* (*Zazie dans la metro*, 1960) – reveal further connections to the cinema of the Nouvelle Vague. The presence of the outtakes loosely links the label both to the unsophisticated style of a New Wave type cinema and – maybe in an ironic way – to the new vogue of appending outtakes as bonus features to DVD versions of films, outtakes (i.e. images, scenes that were left out in the final editing process, recordings of mistakes, etc.) that in this way aspire to a more revered, collector’s item status (and as such serve the purpose of advertising the line just as well as the photos included in the “official” collection).<sup>21</sup>

By using Polaroids, Band of Outsiders advertises an imagery that matches the “cool,” unaffected air of the *cinéma vérité* quality of Godard’s early films. It also manages to project an image that presents itself as being beyond the conventional, institutional channels and sustains the “rebellious” spirit of “outsiderism” by preserving the vintage look of the pictures both in reference (allusions to the films of the Nouvelle Vague) and in their quasi palpable and unique materiality (the sometimes fuzzy quality of the instant image that preserves the moment as it is without the possibility of retouching, the Polaroid’s feel as an object that can be taken into one’s hand), something that goes against the much debated current tendencies in fashion photography of extreme airbrushing and high-tech manipulation of every aspect of the picture (making it exceedingly artificial and immaterial yet as such compatible with all kinds of digital post processing,

20 During her brief radical period, when she became (in)famous for her protests against the war in Vietnam and was dubbed “Hanoi Jane,” the American actress played the leading role in Godard’s *Tout va bien* (1972) and consequently one of her press photographs became the subject of Godard and Gorin’s *Letter to Jane* (1972). Later, in the eighties, the actress became popular for her aerobic workout programme that she promoted through several books and videos.

21 The Polaroid of Bret Easton Ellis showing him in his West Hollywood apartment mock-seriously pointing a gun at a small toy deer on the table in front of him has indeed good chances of becoming such an item sometime.

allowing for varying formats of distribution to converge: websites, print magazines, billboards, television, etc.). The Polaroid is a form of “vernacular” photography that has always been going somewhat against mainstream (it also lacks the possibility of analogue reproduction), and has remained mainly within the sphere of private usage as well as – in a lesser degree – within the practice of the avant-garde that exploited the Polaroid’s uniqueness and its closeness to hand-crafted fine art). The set of Polaroids in question constitute at the same time a good example of how in our culture saturated with images a certain kind of clever artifice may become the symptom of a desire for authenticity.<sup>22</sup> What is paradoxical is that this is a highly “self-conscious” image in its own right that displays not so much an unaltered imprint of reality (the poses captured in the fashion label’s campaign are clearly staged) but an imprint of an earlier, more visible (and in this sense “honest”) technology,<sup>23</sup> a technology that somehow seems to be able to reflexively foreground both the haptic<sup>24</sup> and the ontological aspects characteristic of analogue photography in general, similarly to the effect of the photogram which Rosalind Krauss claims “only forces, or makes explicit, what is the case of *all* photography” (1986, 203).

The trick is, of course, similar to Godard’s old tricks of self-reflexivity in which he shows the camera filming the movie on screen (e.g. Raoul Coutard filming the introductory scene to *Le Mépris*) and makes the artifice of filmmaking (and the cinematic apparatus that is usually hidden) visible, yet the presence of the camera that actually films these images of the on screen camera still remains concealed. In this way the rhetoric of self-reflexivity harbours in fact the same technique as used in classical cinematic storytelling, just like the “image-conscious” use

22 At the same time the preference of Polaroids also connects the fashion campaign to contemporary trends in avant-garde photography that – in a revolt against digital photography – go back to using a wide array of photography’s analogue, manual forms (e.g. daguerreotypes, collodion prints, photogram tintypes, carbon dichromates, etc.) (More about this in: Rexer 2002.)

23 This is in a way something that exemplifies – with several notable twists around artifice and self-reflexivity – what Kiku Adatto speaks of in connection with the current fascination with pictures. “If one side of us appreciates, even celebrates, the image as an image, another side yearns for something more authentic. We still want the camera to fulfill its documentary promise, to provide us with insight, and to be a record of our lives and the world around us. But because we are so alive to the pose, we wrestle with the reality and artifice of the image in a more self-conscious way than our forebears.” (Adatto 2008, 8.)

24 Besides Roland Barthes’s well-known book on photography (*Camera Lucida*, 1980), it was Régis Durand (1996) who most emphatically dwelt on the tactile aspects of “seeing photographically” and seeing photographs as objects (for a more recent elaboration of possibilities in thinking of photography beyond the visual and acknowledge its haptic and embodied aspects see Edwards, 2009).



of the Polaroid form and “texture” within the digital environment ultimately complies with the current unifying frameworks of photographic representation. The Polaroids in the Band of Outsiders campaign may be real (or some may even be imitations), nevertheless, when we access these images on the web they have already undergone the same digitisation process as all the other pictures that surround them and they have been neatly fitted into an ensemble of a minimalist, yet typical web “bricolage.”

These images (or fragments of images) re-framed by the fashion label’s campaign have not only undergone a transference from cinema to photography, and a process of trading a mythical cinematic past for a digital photographic presence,<sup>25</sup> but the performative value of the “Godardesque image” has been effectively appropriated and exploited beyond the fashion world (i.e. beyond what Barthes called the “image-garment,”<sup>26</sup> the merchandising of an “image” that everyone can purchase through the clothes) by the homogenising processes of convergence in the so called “photo-op culture” itself. This is a world that not only conducts its life driven by images and thrives on visual commodities but validates its existence through various photo opportunities,<sup>27</sup> a culture that conceives everything in its potential for becoming a (marketable and public) photographic image and blurs the boundaries of private and public spheres through promoting the “snapshot,” the imprint of the moment – something that is professionally best done by paparazzi hunting down politicians and celebrities, but is actually practiced everywhere, something that brings photography into the focus more than ever before beyond the general idea of a “society of spectacle,” glorifying the act of “capturing” the photographic instance and pose (be it spontaneous or staged to look as spontaneous). In this age of convergence the iconic value of an image of Godard himself in a vintage photograph is no different than a photographic still from his movies, or a photo remixing elements from his movies, they all get to be distributed as single images that project the same idea of the “coolness” of the moment branded by his name. Although the preference for the Polaroid format may reveal a general yearning for more authenticity in the images, and the understanding of the subtle references included in the Polaroid photo campaign

25 I have borrowed the expression from the title of Michelle Henning’s article (1995).

26 Cf. Barthes’s description and analysis of the components of the “fashion system” and the “three garments” with their own set of structures: the photographic image, the verbal description and the “real” clothing itself (Barthes 1983).

27 See more about the idea of this “picture-driven” culture and its ramifications over all aspects of contemporary life from the everyday use of domestic photography and home video to political campaigns, television newscasting, Hollywood gossip, social or commercial networking over the internet – in Adatto (2008).



may require an understanding of Godard's cinema (or the ironic twists involved in marrying staged imagery paraphrasing Godard with the instant technology of the Polaroid and its self-reflexive potential), consequently the advertising value of the images may benefit from such a knowledge, the context that incorporates these cinematic references considerably weakens its actual ties with Godard's cinema or with any reality other than that of the photo shoot itself (i.e. the fictional "photo-op" event of playing "Godardesque"). It even makes it replaceable with imagery from other films or from similar promotion of "vintage" politicians, film stars or artists.<sup>28</sup> We can cite the title of Jonathan Rosenbaum's volume (2010) that describes recent changes within film culture saying "goodbye cinema, hello, cinephilia," and state that there is a complex revival of practices of cinephilia extending over the realm of cinema itself. This post-cinematic cinephilia shares the attention given to details with traditional cinephilia,<sup>29</sup> only it incorporates these details into a post-photographic endorsement of almost anything, shifting between disparate registers of visual culture with amazing ease.<sup>30</sup>

These last examples attest to Godard's post-cinéophile survival in the fashion industry via photography, or more precisely via appropriation of single decontextualised images and visual elements translating the New Wave idiosyncrasies into photographic poses that actually drift away from Godardian cinema itself.<sup>31</sup> However, there seems to be an inherent photographic quality, a deep rooted possibility of intermedial dialogue between photography and moving images in Godard's films that continues to seduce the imagination of photographers working in all kinds of areas. We have to note that it may not be a coincidence that the commercial for the Rouge Allure campaign was devised by a famed photographer (Bettina Rheims), and the Lindsay Lohan video was based

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28 The website that features the photo of Godard promoting a vintage looking polo shirt also features, among others, photos of John F. Kennedy, Clint Eastwood and Richard Avedon. "Photo-op" can be seen in this way as one of the main channels for different areas to converge and as something that levels cultural and media differences on the digital image market.

29 This is defined by Mary Anne Doane as: "a love that is attached to the detail, the moment, the trace, the gesture," and "the moment when the contingent takes on meaning" (2002, 226, 227).

30 In a recent re-evaluation of cinephilia in the digital age Thomas Elsaesser also noted (even if his examples did not go beyond new forms of cinema itself) that cinephilia can be seen not simply as a love of the cinema: "It is always already caught in several kinds of deferral: a detour in place and space, a shift in register and a delay in time." (Elsaesser 2005, 30.)

31 For an author like Godard, who himself was not a stranger to the Situationist technique of "détournement" (i.e. subversive appropriations and re-contextualisations), this is ironically within the reach of what he himself often parodied.

on iconic cinematic frames as the first incursion of a painter known for his photo-realistic style into the art of moving images.

Furthermore, several contemporary photographers who have singled out Godard films as a source of inspiration or imitation seem to have also recognised this inherent connection between Godard and photography. Some of these photographic projects tap directly into the cinematic world of Godard and recreate or paraphrase individual images from his films. Just to name a few of such examples: there is a whole gallery of photos reconstructing memorable images from *Breathless* by Martin Crespo<sup>32</sup> that can be accessed on his website [Fig. 21.]; Mike Kobal<sup>33</sup> did a photo-reconstruction as well as a video based on the photo shoot inspired by the same *Breathless*. Anna Karina and *Vivre sa vie* proved to be similarly “photogenic:” as we can see in the photo gallery posted online in 2011 by the Italian photographer, Bizarremind [Figs. 22–23.].<sup>34</sup> The Georgian photographer Tina Shaburishvili who works for the magazine AMARTA has also recently shot a series of photographs inspired by Jean Luc Godard’s *Breathless* and *Pierrot le fou*.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps the most outstanding of the photographic projects linked to Godard’s cinema is Nancy Davenport’s *Weekend Campus* (2004), a crossover between photography, installation art and cinema that has already been the subject of substantial theoretical discussions about “the expanded field of photography” (see Baker 2005). *Weekend Campus*<sup>36</sup> consists of a continuous loop of hundreds of single photographs stitched together in a simple computer animation so that they show a slow horizontal pan along the entrance to a fictitious campus revealing a long traffic jam with crashed and overturned cars and bored onlookers, inspired by the famous continuous tracking shot from Godard’s *Weekend* (1967).<sup>37</sup> [ Figs. 24–25.]

Pictures like these are not only single, isolated incidents that re-mediate cinema, but through examples like these we can understand how contemporary post-photography designates cinema as one of its possible major resources. As Geoffrey

32 See: [http://www.pbase.com/crespoide/a\\_bout\\_de\\_souffle](http://www.pbase.com/crespoide/a_bout_de_souffle)

33 See: <http://www.mikekobal.com/blog/?p=20>

34 See: <http://www.bizarremind.com/archives/646>

35 See: <http://www.dazeddigital.com/photography/article/9576/1/rise-tina-shaburishvili>. Besides these examples just a random search over the internet reveals countless uses and “adaptations” of Godard imagery displayed over photo and video sharing sites like Flickr, YouTube or DailyMotion.

36 Stills are available on the artist’s website: <http://www.nancydavenport.com/weekendcampus1.html>

37 Another possible source is Andy Warhol’s *Disaster* series (a series of paintings inspired by newspaper photos of car crashes, accidents and violent scenes of death from 1963), something that may have inspired Godard as well.

Batchen (2000, 109) observed: "Where once art photography was measured according to the conventions and aesthetic values of the painted image, today the situation is decidedly more complicated. Over the past two decades, the boundary between photography and other media like painting, sculpture, or performance has become increasingly porous." We could, of course, add cinema to the list of other media mentioned by Batchen and acknowledge that this is a process in which the "cinematic" is assimilated by the "photographic" in the broadest possible sense, while the "photographic" itself nowadays appears to be undergoing a wide array of dissemination, as – to quote Batchen (2000, 109) – "it would seem that each medium has absorbed the other, leaving the photographic residing everywhere, but nowhere in particular." (In this case the Godardian reproductions take the form of digital photography, video, photographic single print or web collage, all of them accessible and marketable over the internet. See Figs. 11–25.)

Post-photography in this way "returns the favour" to the seventh art by re-appropriating the photographic quality of modernist cinema and the iconic value of one of its emblematic authors. As mentioned before, the recent vogue of the post-Godardian convergence between the "photographic" and the "cinematic" has been undoubtedly facilitated by the intermedial quality residing in Godard's work itself: his modernist films used to incorporate the aesthetics of still photography in the process of forging a self-reflexive pictorial language.<sup>38</sup> Even so, post-photography re-frames the "photogeneity" of modern film (or, in certain cases, of the players on the scene of modern film) not only from an aesthetic point of view, but most often from the perspective of the performative world of the "photo-op, and displays it in a context of (commercial) digital image convergence. Thus the interplay between processes of convergence and intermediality observable in the phenomena of "post-cinema Godard" is one of the most multilayered possible, exemplifying how media differences and interactions (i.e. inter-mediality) can be not only meaningful but also exploited (e.g. in the Polaroid commercials), and also how these differences can be eventually weakened or obliterated by processes of post-media convergence.

In an editorial to a recent issue of the journal *History of Photography*, Ingrid Hölzl acknowledges that there is "a need for a paradigm shift in the study of photographic images," stating that: "most of the literature does not call into question the opposition still/moving, but investigates instead the relation of still

38 This seems to be relevant even though we can say that a "photo-op" culture is omnivorous and such processes of convergence between the world of cinema, digital photography, fashion or commercial videos are quite common irrespective of the qualities of the cinematic author.

and moving images.” (Hölzl 2011, 2.) Streitberger and Van Gelder argue that “the photo-filmic” should in fact be regarded as a phenomenon of contemporary visual culture as a whole and not “as a mere conjuncture of two existing, principally distinguishable mediums” (i.e. photography and film), furthermore, they consider that “photo-filmic images not only entail a profound shift in our contemporary visual culture but, more specifically, are at the very heart of these changes in terms of the production, the use, and the perception of images” (2010, 51–52). The findings of this present article support this very idea.

Furthermore, what emerges most strongly from all these previously mentioned examples is the value of single, decontextualised cinematic images in a world of convergence,<sup>39</sup> and the rhizomatic interlacings between cinema, the art scene as well as the most diverse terrains of image consumption. A photo may be worth a thousand films as Jan Baetens (2009) suggests analysing the narrative potential of a Cartier Bresson photograph. By the same token, the photographic quality of Godard seems to be worth a thousand post-cinematic ramifications. All in all, as the “cinematic turn” of contemporary photography<sup>40</sup> can be considered a reversal of modern cinema’s manifold “photographic” affinities, these “affinities” are also worth a closer look. So let us make a digression into investigating the role of the “photographic” images and photographs in Godard’s films themselves that may (or may not) have foreshadowed their “photo-filmic” appropriation.

### 3. Back to the Future of Photography in Godard’s Films

In Godard’s vast oeuvre there are several junctures where “the cinematic” and the “photographic” coexist and merge. The implications of the subject are far too vast for even the slightest possibility of exhausting the subject here, so I would merely like to sketch some of the relevant meeting points and emphasise their typology. What I would like to highlight is that in each case photography seems to offer a vantage point that is both “inside” (as an integral part of the “medium:” film being constituted by the individual frames/photograms, or being part of the diegetic world of the film as photographs appearing on screen) and “outside”

39 Even in the case of music and literature, the impact of Godard’s single images seems to be important, not to mention the huge impact of the graphic design of his title sequences that also provide single, well defined qualities in the image that can be easily subjected to extreme variations which nevertheless still remind us of the original.

40 The term is borrowed from Baker’s essay mapping some of the tendencies that link photography to cinema (see: 2005, 122).

of the seamless flow of moving images (as a perspective that reveals its basic characteristics from an aesthetic distance or that offers a commentary upon the world revealed in the film). Photography offers a centre stage both for cinematic self-reflection and for formulating ideological messages; it can activate inter-medial tensions but it can also facilitate assimilation by other media.

*a) The modern film image and its relation to photography and “becoming” photographic*

There are several books that amply discuss modernity's complex and fundamental relationship to photography in the cinema both from the point of view of the ideology of modernism and the point of view of the aesthetics of the single image. Leaving aside treatises that debate various forms of thematisations of the indexical nature of photographic representation, or the implications of the poetics of the long take that moves the experience of the moving pictures closer to the contemplation of still frames, there are two other theoretical avenues that connect more closely to the interlacing of cinema and photography especially in Godard's early films. One of these approaches is exemplified by Garrett Stewart's (1999) detailed analysis of modern film which presents modern film as a kind of “photo-synthesis” and dwells on the “flicker effect” of individual images fragmenting the fluidity of classical cinematic aesthetics of visual and narrative transparency. Through these techniques – as Stewart contends (1999, 265) – “film fulfils the genealogy not of mimesis but of text,” film becomes conceivable as a sequence of “photo-graphemes,” of “writing with images,” images appear to be put together as building blocks in a puzzle. In early Godard due to extreme de-framings and a hectic montage enhanced by jump cuts, even without the use of the split screen (as employed in *Numéro Deux*, 1975) images look sometimes, to quote Robert Stam's words, as if they “are ‘hung’ on the screen like paintings in a gallery” (1992, 227). The extreme photographic de-framings of the images also enable chiasmic combinations that underscore the idea of the film's mosaic-like structure (e.g. *A Married Woman. Fragments of a Film Made in 1964/Une Femme Mariée. Suite de fragments d'un film tourné en 1964*, see: Figs. 26–31), and suggest that the film is released in an “unfinished” form, suspended in the phase of a kind of photo-graphic writing. This may also remind us of Raymond Bellour's concept regarding the intermediary position of the single image. He states: “The ‘photographic’ as I imagine it, is not reducible to photography even while borrowing part of its soul and the fate of which we believed photography to be the guardian. The photographic exists somewhere in-between; it is a state

of ‘in-between-ness:’ in movement it is that which interrupts, that paralyzes; in immobility it perhaps bespeaks its relative impossibility” (Bellour 2008, 253).

Regarding the essential link between the art of photography and modern cinema, Damian Sutton – relying on Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts – even sustains that there is actually a continuum between photography and film, not an essential opposition that theorists keep insisting upon. He writes the following: “The substance of photography is continuous, though stretched and formed by culture into the shapes of cinema and the photograph. Cinema and photography [...] are ideas used to create objects from a monadic, folding continuum of the photographic.” (Sutton 2009, xii.) Later summarising this “folding,” “becoming”<sup>41</sup> relationship between the two mediums like this: “Cinema relies on the photography that comes to life, of which the still and projected image are both constituents. However, the monadic, folding substance is the photographic itself, the coming-into-being of the image that is an essential part of both. [...] The strip of photograms that make up cinema are not broken moments reconstituted into movement but instead are folds in the monadic continuum of photography; the still image itself is the fold between two images of time – the rational order of the movement image and the glimpsed duration of the time-image.” (Sutton 2009, 123–124.) The original subtitle of Godard’s *A Married Woman* (“a suite of fragments from a film shot in 1964”) eloquently supports this idea in its self-reflexive way of conceiving cinema as a series of photographic frames shot and assembled, disassembled, edited together in the visible process of making a cinematic statement. While a lot has been said about the permutations seen in the film regarding the relationship of the wife, lover and husband and also of the representation of genders (and the cut up representation of bodies), this relationship between the “photographic” continuously folding into the “cinematic” and the “cinematic” unfolding into the “photographic” is perhaps the film’s most relevant feature from a medial perspective. As such this technique proved to be essentially modernist, and did not only facilitate the more recent “photo-filmic” fusion of Godardesque frames within post-media contexts, but it also enabled the film to be easily “translated” into a photo-novel, as just another “fold” of the same “strip.” *A Married Woman* was indeed published in this form, together with almost all of Godard’s New Wave

41 “Becoming” is one of the key terms introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in their seminal work, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) that is clearly separated from ideas of mere formal imitation and in which (e.g. in their words: “Becoming is always double, that which one becomes no less than the one that becomes—block is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium. [...] Becoming is never imitating.” 2005, 305) and always involves the actualisation, the emerging of something “minoritarian” and virtual.

films.<sup>42</sup> While most great modern films featured arrested moments that staged the emergence (the “becoming”) of the photographic image within the medium of cinema (see Bergman’s iconic image from the prologue of *Persona* – incidentally, the image that has been most often copied<sup>43</sup> or re-contextualised from his art – or Antonioni’s final image from *L’Avventura*), some other New Wave filmmakers also experimented intensely with the deconstruction of the moving pictures into still images and called attention to the moments of the birth of the photographic within the cinematic, and vice versa (see Agnès Varda’s *L’opéra mouffe*, 1958, *Salut les cubains*, 1963, Chris Marker’s<sup>44</sup> *La Jetée*, 1962).

*b) Harnessing the performative value of on-screen photographs and the photographic act*

Godard’s use of photographs within his films is not only wide ranging but again extremely multilayered in possible meanings. Whenever photographs are used as props within a setting or used as key elements in a diegesis they always perform multiple functions of reflexivity. Photos (together with other pictures, like paintings or magazine decoupages) can primarily be “reminders” of the photographic nature of the filmic representation,<sup>45</sup> and as such count on a primary level as the self-reflection of the medium. Occasional inclusions of the negative photographic images [see: Figs. 32–33.] also serve the same purpose of “folding” the image inside-out:

42 A fact that is perhaps lesser known to the contemporary viewers: many modernist authors preferred to publish their works also in the form of photo-romans as an attempt to reach a broader audience and to experiment with the fusion of photography, film and literature. As David Company (2008, 86–87) explains: “The photonovel began to die away in the 1960s with the rise of television, eventually becoming obsolete when domestic video made films ‘possessable’ and DVD supplied the supplements and commentaries beloved of fans and scholars. But as it waned the page did become the site for new forms of cinematic analysis. European filmmakers, particularly from the French New Wave, took up the book as a means of re-presenting and expanding their films. Alain Robbe-Grillet reworked his scripts written or films directed by Alain Resnais (including *L’Année dernière à Marienbad*, 1961) into ciné-romans or ‘cine-novels.’[...] Godard published print versions of nearly all his films of the 1960s. Some were straightforward illustrated scripts, others more experimental. The book based on *Une femme mariée* (1964) recreates the episodic first-person structure of the film as word/image scrapbook. Where the film shows the lead woman confronted with representations of commodified femininity on billboards, magazines and movie posters, the book appropriates various layout styles from popular culture.”

43 This is the image paraphrased also by Richard Philips in his Lindsay Lohan video portrait.

44 Godard recognised the novelty of Marker’s photo-filmic impact early on by including one of Marker’s photographs as the image that is scanned by the camera in the credit sequence of *Alphaville*.

45 Garrett Stewart (1999, 9) notes: “The photogrammatic undertext of screen narrative may be (more or less implicitly) alluded to on-screen by ‘quoted’ photos.”

self-reflexively directing the attention towards the photographic “undertext” of the image in making the image transparent towards its own technology and distancing it both from its conventional aesthetics and its representational “reading.” On a secondary level the abundance of photographs in the films are used diegetically to identify and multiply the characters as well as to pin down the visual models on which their lives are moulded (photos of film stars in early films always denote such ideals that the female characters aspire to, e.g. *Charlotte and Her Boyfriend*, *Vivre sa vie*), photographic identification is also used as clichés of detective novels (*Alphaville*, *The Little Soldier*) or to denote more complex affinities (e.g. Bogart’s photo in *Breathless* as opposed to the reproductions of paintings that the female character is seen in analogy with),<sup>46</sup> or self-reflexively refer to Godard’s previous films. [Figs. 34–37.] In all of these cases the photographs included in the films serve a similar purpose to the function of alter-ego characters and mirrors: in the spirit of the typical modernist theme of the traumatic experience of serialisation, they become performers of the multiplication and dissolution of identity, transforming the actual characters into mere images and amalgams of refracted images that can be further reflected ad infinitum (photographs in this case being only one of the media that participate in these permutations besides drawings, paintings, other film images).

Photographic representation is also one of the main ideological targets of Godard’s early films. In *Weekend* we have a suggestive intertitle in this respect in which he spells “photographie” as “faux-tographie” (“faux” = false) alluding perhaps to the paradoxes of visual representation. Thus photography becomes for Godard a platform to exhibit and denounce among others: the objectification of women, the class representational value of group photos (see the ironic group poses in *Weekend*, 1967; and *Tout va Bien*, 1972; Figs. 38–39.), the commodification of images in general in “a society of the spectacle” (see the young men from *The Carabineers*, 1963, discovering/consuming the world through tons of photographic images), the contrast between glossy pictures of advertisements and gruesome photographs of war (e.g. *2 or 3 Things I Know about Her*, the pictures on the wall of the room in *The Little Soldier*, *La Chinoise*). Writing (or speaking) over an encyclopedic collage of photographic representations (see: *La Chinoise*, *Le Gai Savoir/The Joy of Learning*, 1969) can also provide the possibility of a further subversive use of commercial images<sup>47</sup> and of creating a montage/palimpsest of

46 See more about this in Pethő (2011, 231–265).

47 It is ironic to observe how Godard’s collages often use the same fashion photography for the purposes of denouncing visual consumerism [see Fig. 40.] that nowadays is attributed to the “Godardesque” trend of the sixties retro fashion world (see the descriptions of the characteristics of the Band of Outsiders clothing line).



ideas. [Figs. 40–41.] All in all Godard's films prove to be accurate renditions of the intrusion of photography into all layers of modern life, clear intuitions of its future, and incisive comments upon its multifarious commodification.

Presenting the photographic act itself is always a reinforcement of the performative value of the photographs in all these aspects. Godard's characters are incessantly seen in the company of photographers. Michel Poiccard in *Breathless* finds a temporary haven in the photo studio of a paparazzo, Lemmy Caution brings his small camera to *Alphaville*, Bruno in *The Little Soldier* is trying to seduce Veronica through a photo session and is tempted to engage in an impromptu philosophy of the photograph [Fig. 42.], Nana in *Vivre sa vie* aspires to become a film star but does not get further than getting her pictures taken, in *Le Vent d'Est* (*Wind from the East*, 1970) we see a group of young revolutionaries meeting in a wood and taking pictures as they debate their ideas, one of them is meticulously taking the photo of a rifle thrust into the ground (as another montage of ideas adding up “photography” and “gun” and “shooting”), and so on. [Fig. 43.] All these acts of taking photos, the repeated gestures of making pictures, even hanging pictures on the wall, commenting on pictures or just placing characters in spaces populated by pictures in these films emphasise the reflexive process of “becoming” an (photographic) image (also in the Deleuzian sense used by Sutton).

*c) The photographic versus the cinematic in radical and late Godard: the still image as inter-media platform*

Modernism is the real age of intermediality, it is the paradigm in which media differences are still relevant and meaningful, in which media borders are worth challenging, whilst in the paradigm of post-media convergence the boundaries have already been effectively blurred by the ubiquitous digital environment and we have “the flow of content across multiple media platforms” (Jenkins 2006, 2). In this sense, Godard's post-New Wave oeuvre showcases intermediality in its most tensional forms, and traces cinema's passage into the age of convergence;<sup>48</sup> furthermore, in this latter aspect photography once again is assigned a major role.

Yvonne Spielmann (2008) sees the medium of video (and its close ties with television) as a key stepping stone in understanding the emergence of post-

48 If in early Godard works inter-media tensions were all about cinema's relations to the other arts, and mainly its Oedipal relationship to literature and text as the authority that had to be effectively challenged and emulated at the same time (see more about this in Pethő 2011, 231–317), Godard's video and late cinematic work evolves around the perspective of new media for cinema.

media phenomena.<sup>49</sup> In Godard's so called radical period after 1968 as well as his "late" works we see an intense preoccupation with the technology of video that nevertheless brings to the surface – perhaps even more acutely than before – questions related to the aesthetics and philosophy of the "single image" and its relation with the medium of moving images. As Yvonne Spielmann writes in her book on "video the reflexive medium:" "whereas for photography and also for film the single image or a sequence of framed single images is what matters, video distinguishes itself by the fact that the transition between the images are central." (2008, 4). Against the "fluid pictoriality" and the "frame unbound image" of video Godard accentuates the potential of arresting the image (slowing it down, showing it at different speeds, freezing it as a *tableau vivant*) and explores the way in which film images seem to be positioned between stasis and motion, between painting and photography – as we see it in his feature films *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (*Every man for Himself/Slow Motion*, 1980), *Passion* (1982). Or he experiments with a series of short films and documentaries explicitly built on the contrast of video/television and still imagery, the most remarkable of these being his *Letter to Jane: An Investigation About a Still* (1972), a film constructed entirely on the verbal commentary added to, and the image associations conjured up by, a single photograph.<sup>50</sup>

*Ici et ailleurs* (*Here and Elsewhere*, 1976) is also remarkable in this sense – as Deleuze already noticed<sup>51</sup> – because it mixes the fluid here and now of the TV viewer experience (declaring the consumer of TV and newspaper images as a "millionaire in images") with the "arrested" self-reflection of the still frame. In one of the sequences we have people moving in front of the camera, each with a photo in their hands while Godard elaborates on the contrast between the ideas

49 She writes: "video already produces, both inter- and intramedially, the dialogue between an image type, which originates, on the one hand, in the fixed inscription into a surface, and on the other, in a processual image type, which lets the passage from analog to digital emerge in electronic transformativity. This difference from other analog media also explains the basis on which its media-specific features of processuality and transformativity, effectively predestined to play a decisive role in the intermedial context of computers' development – and of the more complex hypermedia." (Spielmann 2008, 6.)

50 I have pointed out elsewhere the ekphrastic qualities of this film (cf. Pethő 2011, 306–307). Similar experiments with films based on commentaries of single photographs can also be seen in later works of Godard's contemporary directors (Jean Eustache: *Les photos d'Alix*, 1980, Agnès Varda: *Ulysse*, 1986; Chris Marker: *Le souvenir d'un avenir*, 2003).

51 In his famous second book on cinema Deleuze extracted the "and" of the title and built an entire interpretation of Godard's language around the notion of "interstice" marked by it (cf. Deleuze 1989, 179–181).

that can be embodied by the single images (as symbols, emblems) and the way motion pictures push the individual images out of the frame one after the other in a flow. [Figs. 44–47.] Similar gestures of setting cinema and photography in opposition return in *Notre Musique* (*Our Music*, 2004) where again Godard uses photographic stills (of one of Howard Hawks's films) to speak about the way meaning is constructed or differences fail to be perceived in cinematic shot-countershot techniques that put two identical frames face to face.

*King Lear* (1987) heralds in a new type of intermedial cinema that relies heavily on the inclusion and/or superimposition of still imagery within the moving pictures and the voice over commentary of Godard himself, a formula that will be exploited to the fullest in his *Histoire(s) du cinema*, as well as his latest shorts. In *King Lear* Godard again explicitly stresses the communicative value of the single image. He explains (paraphrasing one of Bresson's notes on cinema): "If an image looked at separately expresses something clearly, if it involves an interpretation, it will not transform itself in contact with other images. The other images will have no power over it, and it will have no power over the other images." Late Godard is full of elegiac and philosophic meditations about the image within cinema (and the missed opportunities of cinema to fulfil the "promise" of the photographic image in the twentieth century). The Godard of the *Histoire(s)* is primarily a passionate collector of images and a photo-monteur who forged for this audio-visual essay a unique composite of "archaic" photographic and cinematic techniques of juxtaposition of images<sup>52</sup> that also pre-figure something of what may come after traditional cinema in an age of personalised post-mediality. As such, *Histoire(s)* pre-figures the convergence of an infinite number of images over the platform of a single hybrid medium, but this medium is one of his own making, not only in the sense of its unique hybridity, but in the literal sense that it is Godard's "handicraft" (sealed with the authenticating signature of his own voice and self-portrait).<sup>53</sup> It is the achievement of a single author created in the intimate surrounding of his personal film studio, far from the practices of classical (and institutional) film making and very close to the practices of the image remixes that nowadays anybody can perform with a few clicks on the keyboard.

52 I have published a detailed analysis of the medial aspects of Godard's *Histoire(s)* in a chapter entitled *Post-Cinema as Pre-Cinema and Media Archaeology in Jean-Luc Godard's Histoire(s) du cinema* in my book *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between* (2011, 317–340).

53 See also another approach to this in: my article *(Re)Mediating the Real. Paradoxes of an Intermedial Cinema of Immediacy* (Pethő 2009).

#### 4. The Common Good of Images: *Film Socialisme* and Godard's Passage into the Post-Media Age

*Histoire(s)* may have only foreshadowed practices of image-handling that have become our everyday experience, however, much of Godard's latest full length feature film, *Film Socialisme* (*Film Socialism*, 2010) was actually shot using various kinds of digital technology available both in cinema and outside cinema, attesting to the amazing fact that in our post-media age he successfully continues to make use of the emerging new technologies of the moving images. Godard also seems to record in this film – appropriately staging the whole film on board of a ship – the final moments of the Odyssey of the photographic image and the passages of the viewer's experience from being a “millionaire of images” (who possesses a plethora of pictures as a “common good,”<sup>54</sup> and from being the active stroller down the lanes of the “museum of memory”<sup>55</sup>) into becoming a “millionaire of photographic media” that produce and project photographic images, photo-filmic experiences of all resolutions, formats and contexts. Thus the whole film can be interpreted as an allegoric passage of the photographic image from intermediality (i.e. the dialogue of photography and film, image and text) to media convergence and confluence of media. *Film Socialisme* is replete with images of people taking photos. [Figs. 48–57.] Photographers are seen everywhere, snapshots are taken, shutters are clicking incessantly, flashes flare and the world is revealed as a hyper- and multi-mediated voyage through seeing “photographically.” The theme of ubiquitous photography, of hands holding photo cameras of all types and sizes runs through the whole film as a leit motif. Godard manages once more a *tour de force*: he uses cinema (and the format of a feature film) not primarily as an “intermedial battlefield” as he used to,<sup>56</sup> but as the site of media convergence (something that stresses hybridity and dissemination: given that different visions offered by different devices seen or unseen in the film alternate and modulate within a musical structure without their differences being really brought into play) and as the site to reflect on media convergence (turning the pitfalls of convergence against itself, managing to transfer a synthesis

54 The title in this way could be interpreted less with a political connotation and more in the direction of a universality and democratisation of imagery and means of handling imagery.

55 See especially the second half of the film rehashing Godard's main ideas in this sense and resembling the structure of the *Histoire(s)*.

56 See the chapter: “*Tensional Differences:*” *The Anxiety of Re-Mediation in Jean-Luc Godard's Films* (Pethő 2011, 231–265).

of his earlier ideas and the “music” of the images over yet another platform). He successfully appropriates once more (just as he did with earlier image forms: i.e. photography, video, television and digital cinema) a new media mixture of words and images that delight the eye and feast the senses with rich textures and colours, folding it into a configuration that is still identifiable as “cinema.” The ultimate irony is of course the trailer of the film that “enfolds” the speeding up of the entire film that becomes in this way an absurd, literal pre-view, or an impossible view due to the speed of the images adjusted so that the whole film could fit the conventional time frame of the web “teaser.”

*Film Socialisme* has produced an unprecedented buzz all over the blogosphere, just to keep track of all the internet reviews, YouTube entries, protests or comments is a task that one cannot easily undertake. And I have to confess, that I myself might be included in the mass of typical post-media consumers of Godard's art: while I am writing this article, I am alternately (sometimes simultaneously) watching parts of Godard's films on my computer, every now and then pausing the images as I am not being able to resist capturing relevant snapshots by the dozen. I keep wondering: am I in this way the “pensive spectator” that Raymond Bellour (1987) predicted and Laura Mulvey (2006) described, or am I somehow beyond that? Maybe such an activity is less “pensive,” but it is certainly more “tactile,” as it brings me closer to the creative process of virtually “handling” the images, arranging them, observing them as individual frames, deciding which captured instance to keep and which to discard in the recycling bin. My computer has increasingly acquired the status of a cinéophile notebook, and of a personal editing machine: I find myself taking “visual notes” all the time. In doing so Godard's recurrent self image comes to my mind sitting in his own video “workshop” with the small monitors in front of him. And I increasingly identify with him in that posture, I feel the excitement of “making the images happen,” I become something in-between a projectionist and a photo-monteur, a craftsman of singular pictures. As the frames are “carved out” by my own actions on the keyboard the shots become my personal collection of photo-filmic images.<sup>57</sup> The images on the computer screen are all at the “tip of my fingers,” yet paradoxically they remain more distant than ever, as I have never seen their content in “reality” (which makes them different from my other snapshots that I take with my own photo-camera and that I also store digitally), and in most cases I have never seen the film in a cinema either. The individual shots remain utterly

57 The screenshots printed here as Figs. 26–57 may also be considered as a small sample from this collection.

virtual, yet “manageable” for me. I look at these “quasi photographs” on a unique level of “virtual immediacy” and savour the unexpected fine details discovered in them that I would have missed in a cinema, in a viewing involving both a more pronounced “aesthetic distance” and a totally different feel of immersion in bodily space.<sup>58</sup>

Beside the blogosphere where entries discussing Godard’s films are mushrooming day by day, Godard’s real post-cinematic life can be traced also to such private contexts and activities like mine, to the electronic collection of a post-cinematic cinéophile, someone who has appropriated Godard’s cinematic images in gigabytes worth of screenshots alongside one’s private photographs/films and the Godard films themselves amassed in different formats. As his wide-ranging extra-cinematic influence as well as *Film Socialisme* demonstrates (together with my personal and somewhat erratic collection): Godard, the “father figure” of modernist intermediality has also successfully passed the tests of the age of convergence. Amid the profusion of photo-filmic images, Godard, the thinker in strong individual frames still sails large; both as a source of imagery convertible as “Godardesque” and as a role model for appropriating new media as effective forms of reflection and – last but not least – also for taking images into our own (virtual) hands.

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58 Jonathan Crary (1992, 1) describes how new technologies are “relocating vision to a plane severed from a human observer.” He argues that the idea of a “real, optically perceived world” has been undermined, and considers that “if these images can be said to refer to anything, it is to millions of bits of electronic mathematical data.” However, this is only partially true, in the tactile everyday “immediacy” of these captured images on my computer, the vision is no longer “severed” from my personal observation, quite the contrary; I re-personalise them on a unique and hybrid level of my own individual “screen” or “archive,” and in the context of my private space.

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## List of Figures

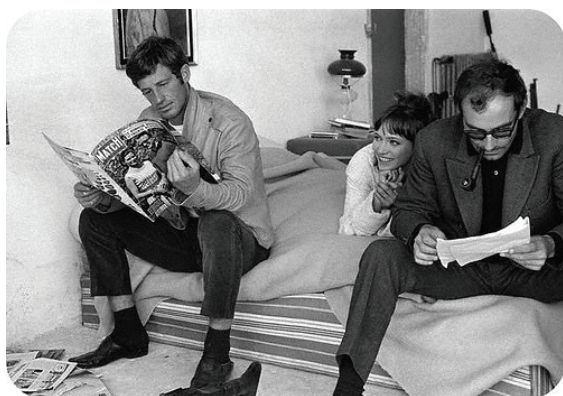
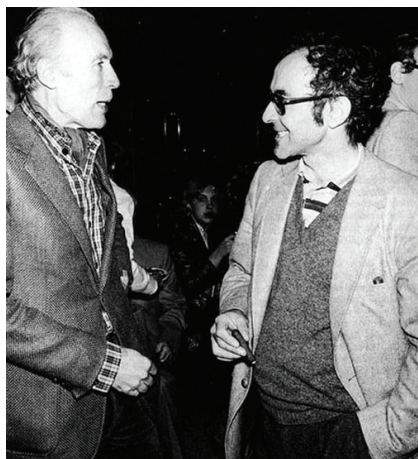
**Figures 1–2.** Post-cinema Godard as the man of letters: the (re)creation of his characteristic fonts by fans at the Atelier Carvalho–Bernau Design, and Chateau Bezerra’s music video consisting of the “vernacular typography” of street signs.



**Figures 3–6.** Further post-cinematic traces of Godard: images from Chris Applebaum’s video for Kelly Osborne’s single, *One Word* inspired by *Alphaville* (1965), and Chanel’s Rouge Allure commercial made as a tribute to *The Contempt* (*Le Mépris*, 1963).



**Figures 7–10.** Vintage photographs of Godard in the company of Eric Rohmer, Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina are used to endorse the Band of Outsiders “This is not a polo shirt.” collection.



**Figures 11–14.** Polaroids of James Marsden pictured in a bleak apartment (with magazine decoupages on the wall, vinyl records), reading a newspaper or with an old camera in his hand reminding us of settings and props of early Godard films like *Charlotte and Her Boyfriend* (1958), *Breathless* (1960), *The Little Soldier* (1963) or *Alphaville* (1965).





**Figures 15–18.** Jason Schwartzman's role play reminiscent of images of *Breathless*, *Pierrot le fou* (1965), and *La Chinoise* (1967).



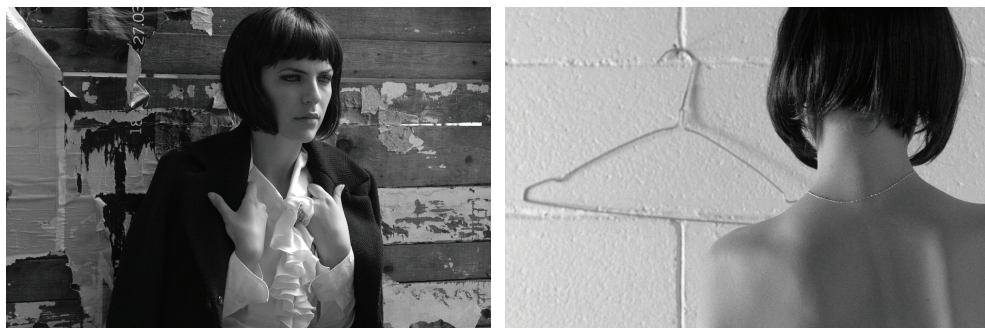
**Figures 19–20.** Ads for the Band of Outsiders collection: Jason Schwartzman exploiting the surreal quality of an abstract space, and Andrew Garfield driving the “Godardesque” feel to the extreme, looking as yet another undercover agent slash “rebel without a cause” while casually carrying “Hanoi Jane” Fonda’s workout book under his arm on the way to the golf course.



**Figure 21.** Detail of the web photo gallery of Martin Crespo reconstructing images from *Breathless* ([http://www.pbase.com/crespoide/a\\_bout\\_de\\_souffle](http://www.pbase.com/crespoide/a_bout_de_souffle)).



**Figures 22–23.** Photographs inspired by *Vivre sa vie* made available on the website of *bizarremind* (<http://www.bizarremind.com/archives/646>).



**Figure 24–25.** Nancy Davenport's *Weekend Campus* (2004) inspired by Godard's *Weekend* (1967). (Stills from the artist's website: <http://www.nancydavenport.com/weekendcampus1.html>)





**Figures 26–31.** Examples of photographic de-framings and chiasitic formal permutations in *A Married Woman. Fragments of a Film Made in 1964* (1964).



**Figures 32–33.** The photographic negative revealing the photographic “undertext” of the film images in *A Married Woman. Fragments of a Film Made in 1964* (1964).



**Figures 34–37.** Photos populating the spaces of characters and used for identification, self-identification and self-reference (frames from *The Little Soldier*, 1963; *The Carabineers*, 1963; *Her Life to Live*, 1962).





**Figures 38–39.** Group photos in *Weekend* (1967) and *Tout va Bien* (1972).



**Figures 40–41.** Photos and writing: the subversive “détournement” of commercial images (the same type that will later count as “Godardesque” in the retro fashion world) and creating a montage/palimpsest of ideas (*Le Gai Savoir*, 1969).



**Figures 42–43.** Taking photographs as means of seduction and expression of philosophical and political ideas (Veronica Dreyer/Anna Karina transformed into an image during the photo session in *The Little Soldier*, and the “shooting” of a gun in *Le Vent d’Est*).



**Figures 44–47.** *Ici et ailleurs* (1976) contrasting the fluidity of the viewer experience with individual images.



**Figures 48–57.** *Film Socialisme* (2010): the Odyssey of the photographic image into the post media age, the passage of the viewer into becoming a “millionaire in photographic media” and experiencing diverse “modulations” within the textures of photographic vision.



