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Workers Leaving the Factory: Witnessing Industry in the Digital Age

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[–] Abstract and Keywords

This article appears in the *Oxford Handbook of Sound and Image in Digital Media* edited by Carol Vernallis, Amy Herzog, and John Richardson. This article discusses recent experimental nonfiction films about workers and industry. Since the cinema's 1995 centenary, a growing number of films have been responding to the state of labor in the contemporary economy, in which industrial manufacturing has been largely replaced by global finance capital. The article analyzes four examples: *Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai*) (Ben Russell, 2008), *Exit* (Sharon Lockhart, 2008), *Foreign Parts* (Véréna Paravel and J. P. Sniadecki, 2010), and *The Unstable Object* (Daniel Eisenberg, 2011). Mobilizing a style we might call "conceptual realism," these films explore themes of labor in the face of ongoing crises in global capitalism. Utilizing a digitally informed observational aesthetic shaped by long takes and stationary camerawork, this paradoxical stylistic clarity works not in the service of establishing objectivity or a stable truth, but in the spirit of bearing witness to the innumerable experiences of contemporary labor that lie beyond recognition.

Keywords: film, video, digital, documentary, workers, labor, factory, industry, realism, witnessing

IF one of the primary characteristics of the digital era is a shift away from industrial production toward the production of information, the cinema's persistent (and persistently marginal) focus on industrial subjects can provide an important perspective on our era: a front row seat, if you will, at the deathbed of industrial manufacturing. Industrial films were present at the birth of cinema: the Lumière Brothers' *Workers Leaving the Factory,* famous as the first subject on the program at the Grand Café in Paris on December 28, 1895, is an industrial film of sorts. Today, of course, *Workers Leaving the Factory* is readily available for viewing online, cropping up anytime one runs a Google search for "invention of cinema"; moreover, since 1995, the film has inspired a spate of remakes. In the 100 years between the Lumières' *Workers* and its postmodern status as a foundational cinematic text, labor and industry persisted as subjects for documentaries, even if labor subjects were never a particularly mainstream theme in fiction films. The narrator of Harun Farocki's 1995 film *Workers Leaving the Factory* remarks, "Whenever possible, film has turned hastily away from factories." And yet it is the contention of this essay that, since the turn of the twenty-first century, an important group of films has been turning back to face the factory as its "gates" have been transformed. This return to questions of industry in cinema and media is symptomatic of the historical shift away from manufacturing toward the dominance of finance capital: these new "industrial films," if we can call them that, document and respond to the state of labor in the contemporary global economy.[1] Documentaries in the Vertov tradition, such as *Three Songs of Lenin* (1934), once celebrated modern industrial production, but today's nonfiction films about industry, for all their observational reserve, seem more akin to lamentations.

This article aims to open up the subject of labor and industry in recent experimental documentary. (Fiction films concerned with labor have also been on the increase lately, particularly in Chinese cinema, but this essay is concerned with nonfiction.)[2] Although it can be hazardous to identify broad trends based on a few exceptional

films, especially when that trend is still unfolding, the frequency of this return to industry in contemporary nonfiction film is striking. This return is postmodern in terms of its quotation of previous films and outmoded genres, such as the *Workers* remakes, which I discuss below. And, too, this return reflects the growing role of online digital archives: the seemingly old-fashioned genre of the industrial film now circulates widely online as more and more public-domain "vintage" industrials are uploaded to sites such the Internet Archive and the Industry Film Archive. But one can discern another trend in the growing number of documentaries that have been focusing on industry and labor: a commitment to a rigorous observational aesthetic. Films such as *Workingman's Death* (Michael Glawogger, 2005), Wang Bing's *West of the Tracks* (2003) and *Crude Oil* (2008), *Kodak* (Tacita Dean, 2006), *Manufactured Landscapes* (Jennifer Baichwal, 2006), *Our Daily Bread* (Nikolaus Geyrhalter, 2006), *Sleep Furiously* (Gideon Koppel, 2008),*Make it New, John* (Duncan Campbell, 2009), *In Comparison* (Harun Farocki, 2009), *Ruhr* (James Benning, 2009), *Erie* (Kevin Jerome Everson, 2010), *The Forgotten Space* (Allan Sekula and Noël Burch, 2010), to name just a few, have been visualizing the changing landscape of labor and industry in the face of the unevenly technologized global economy, which people in some parts of the world experience as postindustrial but which for many others remains a world of heavy labor.[3] The unifying themes of this diverse group of films would seem to be economics and alienation, whether the people shown are Welsh farmers or Chinese steelworkers.

Although this group of films is too disparate to be defined as any kind of a movement, it does cohere around two formal tendencies: first, a style that is shaped by digital aesthetics (whether the work was shot on film or digital video), and second, a commitment to observation and avoidance of editorializing. The first tendency has been enabled by technological shifts: the ability to shoot almost limitless hours of video has encouraged higher shooting ratios than were possible in the age of expensive film stock. This allows filmmakers to shoot more footage, of course, but it is in the realm of editing that changes can be observed. The films I discuss herein are concerned with questions of duration, using the long take not as a narrative device but as a formal concern. Even films shot on 16mm or 35mm have been exploring this long take aesthetic. The second, observational tendency is arguably a countertrend to the "issues-oriented" and "character-driven" documentaries that have been popular in this same period, from Michael Moore's films to *The Cove* (Louie Psihoyos, 2009). The films I discuss here are non-narrative, and the people they depict are not presented as "characters" but rather remain unnamed, as in a traditional industrial film. Some (but not all) of these films avoid dialogue entirely, instead using ambient location sound to create a nonverbal sonic landscape. This new observational aesthetic is distinct in tone from the cinematic realism of the first half of the twentieth century. Rather than fetishizing commodities after the manner of a conventional industrial film, and rather than promoting an image of the heroic worker (Vertov again), these films quietly critique the structure of industry they observe. This new observational aesthetic is also unlike the observational style of 1960s documentary, whose *cinéma vérité* "shaky cam" has long since become a cliché of advertisements, reality TV, and Hollywood feature films. Rather, these films mobilize a style we might call "conceptual realism" to explore the increasingly urgent themes of labor and industry in the face of ongoing crises in global capitalism, along with the concurrent environmental degradation this economic system brings about. This cinematic style shares with contemporary photography a "conceptual" relationship to the real: these images retain a documentary impulse but, at the same time, call into question the very meaning of documentation.

To begin a provisional exploration of this new observational aesthetic, this essay considers several examples. First, I examine the recent spate of *Workers Leaving the Factory* remakes, focusing in particular on Ben Russell's 2008 film *Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai)* and Sharon Lockhart's *Exit* (2008). Second, I discuss the 2010 film *Foreign Parts,* made by Véréna Paravel and J. P. Sniadecki, which documents the Willetts Point neighborhood of Queens, New York, a decaying and yet in some ways vibrant neighborhood of junkyards and auto repair shops that is currently slated for urban redevelopment. Finally, I turn to Daniel Eisenberg's *The Unstable Object* (2011), a tour-de-force three-part exploration of different kinds of contemporary labor (postmodern, modern, and traditional) in three different parts of the world. All these films observe the state of industrial labor today, either commenting on labor's new forms in the global economic marketplace, documenting the denuded landscapes of industrial waste, or reflecting on the passing of old industries. Today's highly structured and surveyed forms of labor are, of course, part of the same historical moment that favors highly organized and manipulated mainstream digital media products. By challenging the commercially saturated, fast-paced style of the moment, these films enable us to witness labor and media reflecting on and even shaping each other. At stake in this work is a rigorous, digitally informed observational aesthetic that adheres to a principle of witnessing.

The concept of witnessing has taken on new relevance thanks to the emerging field of trauma studies, which

focuses on the ethical and philosophical meanings of the act of witnessing traumatic events (genocide, war); witnessing is also an important concept for contemporary historiography, which more broadly analyzes the ways in which history is recounted. Although interpretations of the concept vary, I quote from Kelly Oliver's definition, which stresses the basic dual nature of witnessing as both seeing and testifying to that which cannot be seen: "The double meaning of witnessing [is] *eyewitness* testimony based on first-hand knowledge, on the one hand, and *bearing witness* to something beyond recognition that can't be seen, on the other."[4] Or as Jane Blocker explains it, "theorists of witness argue...that the inaccessibility of events is the very nature of witness."[5] The films I discuss here do not witness trauma as such, but labor, which is at once a more banal and more ubiquitous experience. Although the list of recent traumatic events is long, this particular group of films avoids headline-grabbing subject matter such as 9/11, the Iraq War, Abu Ghraib, and the Darfur genocide, which have been covered by other documentaries. Instead, these films make the everyday reality of labor visible in some of its endlessly various guises (some of which are indeed traumatic), and they bear witness to the larger, ungraspable complexity of globalized labor shaped by economic crisis. What we might call these films' stylistic "clarity" is employed paradoxically, not in the service of establishing objectivity or a stable truth, but to evoke the partial and complex experiences of work that lie beyond the scope of the camera.

Workers Leaving the Factory

The Lumière Brothers' 1895 *Workers Leaving the Factory* actually exists in at least three different versions; the two most well-known run at 47 and 40 seconds, respectively.[6] The film is typically understood as both a promotion of the Lumière photographic factory and a demonstration of the new *cinématographe*'s ability to represent movement. The film begins: the factory gates swing open and workers stream out, heading off screen left and right. Most of the workers are women, but some men also appear, several on bicycles. A dog runs in and out of the frame, and, in the longer version, a horse-drawn carriage emerges at the end. The apparent health and well-being of these workers seems to assert the functionality of the Lumière factory, which is, in turn, all the more impressive for its presentation of this wondrous new mechanical device.

The Lumières' films, and this film in particular, have come to represent a privileged moment in cinema history; Sean Cubitt argues that *Workers Leaving the Factory* is emblematic of "an innocence of movement that never after could recur in front of the camera...at the edge of a leisure that cannot be remade or recorded: these are...visions of immanent utopia."[7] Although a few people in the film glance in the direction of the camera, for the most part, these workers do not stare at the *cinématographe*, which indicates the possibility that it was staged; in most early actuality films, people on the street gawk at the camera, which was, after all, a new apparatus and one that required a cameraman to conspicuously hand-crank it. The camera might also have been concealed from the workers, as Cubitt acknowledges. Whether the film was "staged" (by telling the workers to perform their habitual exit from the factory without looking at the camera) or the apparatus hidden, it produces a celebratory resonance, evoking the off-screen leisure to which these workers are headed rather than the labor they have just concluded. This is not exactly "innocence," then, but promotion.

The Lumières' *Workers* film presages a form of promotional cinema that flourished in the silent era and has persisted to this day: the industrial film. In the first two decades of cinema, industrial films developed into an important genre, becoming one of several kinds of nonfiction film (along with travelogues, nature films, science films, and the like) that were regularly shown in motion picture theaters in the pre–feature film era.[8] Although they are not often socially critical films, silent-era industrials quite literally visualize the Marxist concept of commodity fetishism, showing the process by which workers' labor is transformed into commodities that mask the labor that went into producing them.[9] Many early industrials were sponsored by the companies whose products were being documented, such as those of the Ford Motor Company.[10] Such films typically embodied a boosterist, pro-industry stance toward whatever production process is depicted, be it railroad air break manufacturing in the Westinghouse Works films from 1904, biscuit-making in *A Visit to Peek Frean and Co.'s Biscuit Works* (Cricks and Martin, 1906), or fish-canning in *The Fish Processing Factory at Astrakhan* (Pathé, 1908).[11] As I have argued elsewhere, early industrial films modeled a Taylorist concept of production, in which manufacturing is broken down into a series of discrete tasks; in film terms, industrials are often edited according to a logic of one shot per action.[12] The industrial film genre persisted well beyond the silent era, of course, to become a mainstay of nontheatrical film throughout the twentieth century, although it has only recently become a topic of interest to film scholarship.[13] Industrial films continue to be produced today, going by various names such as training films, marketing films, and so forth. Over

time, the industrial film genre has remained surprisingly consistent in terms of form, but it has adapted to changing media apace with emerging technology (from film to videotape to digital video to internet distribution). But I am not so much concerned here with the fate of the industrial film genre in the digital age; rather, what seems noteworthy is the way this apparently outmoded genre has become a reference point for recent nonfiction films about labor and industry. The brilliant 2009 film *Make It New, John,* for example, uses a great deal of archival footage from industrial films (along with some important staged segments) to tell the story of the production and failure of the DeLorean car in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Likewise, as I shall argue, *The Unstable Object* uses the classic industrial film as inspiration for its studied exploration of labor in the contemporary world.

In recent years, a number of remakes of the Lumière Brothers' *Workers Leaving the Factory* have appeared.[14] This particular Lumière film has become a touchstone for filmmakers in the past two decades, beginning with Farocki's *Workers Leaving the Factory*, which compiles footage of workers exiting factories from many different fiction and nonfiction films, drawing our attention to how frequent and yet parenthetical or unexplored this visual image is in film history. Farocki's film (and its 2006 iteration as a twelve-channel video installation), with its aesthetic of sampling and its dense interplay between image and sound to produce critical insight, merits extended analysis that I do not have space for here. But in a text that accompanied this film on its release in 1995, Farocki observed, "The first camera in the history of cinema was pointed at a factory, but a century later it can be said that film is hardly drawn to the factory and is even repelled by it. Films about work or workers have not become one of the main genres, and the space in front of the factory has remained on the sidelines."[15] This observation still rings true if one considers commercial fiction films, but in nonfiction, the turn toward labor and industrial subjects has been gathering steam since the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Recent remakes of the original Lumière *Workers* motif include Ben Russell's *Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai)* (2008) and Sharon Lockhart's *Exit* (2008).[16] These two films both utilize a rigorous observational style that seems to hold back from critical analysis, although one cannot watch these works without perceiving their critical attentiveness. Russell's and Lockhart's remakes refer to the original *Workers* film not just as an empty reference, but as a starting point for formal exploration of the stationary camera, deep focus, and the long take. These are, of course, the techniques famously celebrated by André Bazin as the foundations of cinematic realism, but contemporary experimental nonfiction does not engage with the long take and deep focus in the same way that, say, Italian Neorealism did. Rather, these films use the old techniques of cinematic realism in a new, self-aware manner that we might usefully think of as conceptual realism. Restricting their stylistic techniques to just these few elements, these films explore the very ontology of cinema in the digital age.

Russell's film, for example, which is readily available for viewing online, portrays in one long take the vast difference between labor in the Lumière era and the kind of labor that exists today.[17] *Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai)* responds to the globalization of labor and the flow of capital to oil-rich regions by presenting a moving portrait of Dubai construction workers, echoing the composition of the original Lumière film, but with a longer running time. The workers in Russell's film do not emerge from behind a factory gate—indeed, there is no gate or factory wall at all here—but instead proceed out from the depths of a landscape of half-built skyscrapers. The all-male workers, wearing green or blue jumpsuits, mill about the side of the construction site or walk past the camera (Figure 35.1).

Click to view larger

Figure 35.1 Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai) (Ben Russell, 2008).

Image courtesy of Ben Russell.

Unlike in the original Lumière film, many of these workers gawk at the camera as they walk by. When a line of workers boards a bus, almost all of the men crane their necks to look at the camera before they climb on board. As with the Lumière film, the workers move in a compositional flow off-screen, but in this case that flow is not only off screen right and left (which emphasizes a two-dimensional sense of space) but from back to front, into the space behind the camera, emphasizing depth of field and conjuring up the presence of the world outside the frame (which includes the camera and the filmmaker).

A text accompanying the film on Vimeo explains what the viewer may have already suspected: these laborers are not local, but from Southeast Asia. Dubai is, of course, one of the fastest growing cities today, and it is well-known as one of the few places where large-scale construction is still taking place since the 2008 recession hit (along with Beijing and Shanghai). The labor in this film is not centralized and geographically located inside a factory, but unbounded, migratory, and determined by the forces of global capital. Unlike the Lumières' *Workers*, this is not a promotional film. The company employing the workers is not named, nor do these workers project a joyous end-of-the-day mood. A brown-shirted man, apparently a supervisor, impatiently gestures the workers toward parked buses, and they hurriedly line up in order not to miss their ride. The fact that they are driven away from the work site in unmarked buses encourages the viewer to imagine not a happy world of postwork leisure but a dismal workers' housing block. We don't learn anything about these workers, other than that they are men—framed in an extreme long shot, it's difficult to make out their faces—nor do we learn precisely what their tasks are, beyond their association with the construction site. As in the era of the Lumière *cinématographe,* this is a world of class stratification, as these migrant workers construct buildings presumably to be occupied by more well-heeled consumers. But, unlike the world of the Lumières, this factory film depicts a world in which the scale of both capital and labor has become global.

Despite having been shot on 16mm film, *Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai)* evinces the long-take observational aesthetic that I am arguing is central to the new observational mode in the digital era. (The film is silent, so we don't have the extra contextual information that location sound would provide. Sound is a central part of the contemporary observational aesthetic, however, and I discuss it in my other examples to follow.) A single take, the camera remains stationary for the film's entire 6 minute and 45 second running time. The stationary camera connects this film to the tradition of portraiture, but the fact that this is a film and not a still photograph means that we view the scene in real time. But this is not the long take made famous by the traditional understanding of Bazin, which was understood as essentially realistic and humanistic. Instead, Russell's long take underscores its inadequacy as a perfect mirror of reality. And, indeed, an important new wave of scholarship has been suggesting that the realist/humanist interpretation of Bazin has been a misreading all along.[18]

What is "conceptual" about this form of observation is its gesturing beyond the boundaries of the frame. Because nothing is explained beyond what we can see, the viewer is forced to find, infer, or project meaning into the film. In this way, *Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai)* acknowledges the subjective nature of observation without having to make a fuss over the issue, as if to say, "Here is a landscape, make of it what you will, let's move on to the next example." This unstated modular quality is perhaps this film's most clear debt to the digital media ecosystem (modularity, of course, being one of Lev Manovich's five principles of new media).[19] Russell made a related film in 2008 called *Trypps #5 (Dubai)*, one of a series of short films he calls *Trypps,* which document places around the world in the interest of creating a "psychedelic ethnography." For my purposes here, it is enough to emphasize that this short film relies on outside context to generate meaning. Viewing the film in a sequence with other short films, or with knowledge about the original Lumière film or about Dubai: these are the sort of outside elements that activate the film, and Russell relies on the fact that his film exists in a messy world saturated with information and media. Although the 16mm technology of this film may not be new, its content (Dubai construction workers), structure (a single stationary take in a series of modular long-take films), and various modes of exhibition (whether theatrical or online) render it decidedly contemporary.

Sharon Lockhart's 2008 film *Exit* perhaps best exemplifies what I am calling the conceptual realism of this new observational style. One could say a great deal about this fascinating film, but most relevant for my purposes here are *Exit*'s references to the Lumière film and its reworking of photographic realism in moving images through use of the long take and stationary framing. The style of Lockhart's film, shot on 35mm (but transferred to high-definition [HD] video for exhibition), grows directly out of the photographic work for which she is perhaps more well known. *Exit* is a series of five stationary long takes of workers leaving the Bath Iron Works in Maine. These kind of industrial jobs are increasingly rare in the United States, although a press release informs us that the plant is owned by

General Dynamics, a major defense contractor, which means these jobs are subsidized by the US military.[20] Irrespective of this information, what one sees in the film feels like a bygone image from a previous era, rendered in a style that looks decidedly contemporary. Each shot runs 8 minutes, preceded by an intertitle announcing the day of the week, so that the five shots comprise a five-day workweek structure, for a total running time of 41 minutes. Although there is no visual evidence to verify that these shots were taken on the subsequent weekdays that are announced, we tend to believe the intertitles, although this is just one of the many games the film sets up for us. By presenting some details and withholding others, the film plays with the act of documentation itself.

Exit is one of two films Lockhart shot after spending a year getting to know the workers at this plant—the other film, *Lunch Break,* is a long, slow-motion, single-take tracking shot (10 minutes of original footage slowed down to 80 minutes of running time) through the inside of the plant showing workers eating lunch. (Significantly, *Lunch Break* is the first of Lockhart's films to use a moving camera.) These two films, in turn, comprise parts of a larger installation called *Lunch Break,* which also includes photographs.[21] Just as the Lumière film extended the logic of still photography by adding movement, so the stationary camera of *Exit* expands Lockhart's photographic work by adding movement, which engages the viewer differently. Lockhart's long-take aesthetic imposes a real-time experience on the spectator, in a sense rendering the act of viewing a kind of labor. This film, like all the work in this stylistic vein, demands an attentive spectator.

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Figure 35.2 Exit (Sharon Lockhart, 2008).

Image courtesy of Blum & Poe gallery.

Exit plays with the Lumières' composition by placing the camera behind rather than in front of the workers as they exit the factory. Even more than Russell's film, *Exit* shifts the axis of action away from the flat left-right sensibility of the Lumière film to a depth-emphasizing front-back movement: workers stream out from a space behind the camera and walk forward, away from the camera, creating another composition that emphasizes deep space (see Figure 35.2). Once the film's repetitive pattern has been established (this happens at the beginning of shot two, which begins exactly like shot one with the sound of the end-of-day horn and workers walking away from the camera), the viewer begins to anticipate the four identical long takes that remain to be seen. The attentive viewer must readjust her attention accordingly; the inattentive or impatient viewer grows frustrated at this point. The film then becomes a series of visual games as the viewer begins looking for patterns and visual cues. One begins paying attention to the workers' lunchboxes, their clothing, the actions certain of them repeat each day. The film's five-part repetitive structure emphasizes the quotidian nature of labor's daily routine, and the viewer becomes self-conscious about the work of spectatorship—focusing attention, contemplation, interpretation—that locates meaning in the film. We wonder many things: how much are these workers paid, how long they have been working here, do they like or dislike their jobs, what is morale like at the plant? None of that information is given, which is the key to the film's effect. At once visually lush (shot on 35mm color film stock) and restricted (the rear-view composition denies us a view of the workers' faces and frustrates our desire to see more), *Exit* demands that the viewer participate by drawing on her own resources—thoughts about labor, memories of labor, visual acuity—to produce meaning for the film.

Sound is another important part of this restrained style. The film's diegetic sync-sound is sparse and appears to have been recorded from a single source. We hear the sound of feet shuffling by, seagulls squawking (which locates the plant near a body of water that we cannot see), snippets of conversation (although we cannot make

out many words), and, most importantly, the booming end-of-day horn blast that begins each new take. Again, the effect is both specific and general, representing real sounds that happened in a specific time and place, but evoking a sense of workers everywhere.

In a perceptive article from 2001, art historian Norman Bryson termed Lockhart's strategy for conceptual photographic representation "counterpresence." It is not the photograph's presence but "what lies outside the individual photograph" that matters, not "affirmation but negation" that this style produces. "The principle at work resembled that of minimalist music: instead of attending to what lies within each sound, the listener hears the shifts *between* sounds, the variations that come forward only against the background of repetition."[22] Counterpresence is significant not only as a formal question, but for its revolutionary impact on spectator attention. "Now attention had to work on quite a different basis: not passively receiving a flow, but actively working with juxtapositions and fragments, sequences and implications."[23] Bryson applies the idea of counterpresence to Lockhart's photographic work (arguing that it also describes much contemporary conceptual photography such as that of Thomas Struth, Thomas Ruff, and Bernd and Hilla Becher), but the concept can also be extended to her film work. The concept echoes the dual nature of witnessing that I discussed earlier: counterpresence involves both seeing and what we cannot see. Just as Lockhart's *Exit* depicts a specific visual reality, it also refers to much a larger experience of labor that is not depicted, gesturing toward that which lies beyond the visible domain. Not all of the films in this new observational mode mobilize this rigorous strategy, or if they do, they differ from Lockhart's signature style. Nonetheless, this concept of "counterpresence"—and the kind of spectator attention it produces—provides a useful way of understanding the conceptual dimension of these recent films about labor and industry.

Foreign Parts

The feature-length film *Foreign Parts* is, in many ways, a more traditional observational documentary, using as it does a methodology inspired by ethnographic field research, along with a more familiar nonfiction film style resembling *cinéma vérité* (handheld camerawork, first-person interviews, interactions between filmmakers and local subjects). Yet this film, too, is deeply concerned to witness the state of contemporary industry, or rather industrial waste, and it too updates the *vérité* tradition for the digital age. This time, labor and industry are depicted in a landscape of junkyards and auto body shops that has been largely forgotten by—or rendered "foreign" to—the city that surrounds it. Likewise, this film utilizes the long take and, in many places, stationary framing; in the case of handheld shots, the long duration is determined by the interaction being recorded. Unlike the two films just discussed, which embody a dispassionate observational style, *Foreign Parts* reveals an intimate rapport between the filmmakers and their subjects. A different kind of portrait film than *Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai)* or *Exit*, the filmmakers' relationship to their subject matter is here represented rather than elided, providing the spectator a way into the film via empathy and identification.

Click to view larger

Figure 35.3 Foreign Parts (Véréna Paravel and J. P. Sniadecki, 2008).

Image courtesy of Véréna Paravel and J. P. Sniadecki.

The Queens, New York neighborhood of Willets Point that the film documents is known for its auto repair shops and junkyards, and decaying machines are an important focus of the film. (The neighborhood was also featured in Ramin Bahrani's 2007 film *Chop Shop,* which is similarly concerned with questions of economics and labor, although, as a fiction film, it approaches the subject very differently.) But, more specifically, *Foreign Parts* explores the relationship between humans and machines, finding parallels between the treatment of junked cars and

forgotten people in the larger economy of New York City (Figure 35.3). Although Willets Point is unhealthy (roads are unpaved and sewage pipes were never installed, and the dirt roads are perpetually filled with mud puddles), and in many ways dystopian (officially populated by only one legal resident, along with others who sleep in their cars), the film finds much of value there.

Named after one of the many signs that compete for attention on neighborhood storefronts, *Foreign Parts* depicts a multicultural community of 250 small businesses and the 2,000 people who work there. Willets Point is currently slated for a $3 billion redevelopment project, but the viewer is not informed of this fact until the end of the film, when a textual postscript explains the situation (and gives the numbers that I just cited). The harbinger of this urban redevelopment is the recently completed corporate-branded stadium for the New York Mets, Citi Field, visible in the background even in the film's first shot. At one point, one of the locals remarks, "This has become such a ghost town since they put that stadium up."

The industry of Willetts Point revolves around cars, and the film documents people working on them—painting, riveting, organizing parts—and also living in them—two of the film's main subjects, Sara and Luis Zapiain, have been living in a van for years. *Foreign Parts*, like the other titles I analyze here, avoids the commodity fetishism of the industrial film genre, following instead a different strategy of investing machines with uncanny soulfulness, framing junkyard cars so that they resemble dead animals. The film opens with a segment in which an old car is dismembered in such a way that it resembles a slaughterhouse beast. An engine is yanked apart, tubes are cut, brownish-yellow fluids pour forth, and the engine heaves, reminding the viewer of Georges Franju's 1949 documentary *Blood of the Beasts.* The film presents a landscape of decaying industrial production (a building marked "Feinstein Iron Works" is prominently visible in many shots), showing people who eke a living out of the end of the industrial supply chain, working in unhealthy conditions and trying to survive in a bleak economic climate. A young man says at one point, "This is a junkyard. Nobody ever wants to ever work here. I don't want to work here anymore."

Although the film does not treat the neighborhood's impending demolition and redevelopment as a major dramatic pivot point, as a more conventional "issues-oriented" documentary would, several of the people in the film discuss the proposed changes. In particular, the neighborhood's only official resident, 76-year-old Joe Ardizzone, is shown ceaselessly questing to challenge the city's redevelopment plans, although his struggle seems doomed to fail. At one point, while discussing the importance of "communication" with another man, he explains that he has missed a community meeting because the date was changed: everyone was informed by e-mail, but he didn't hear about the date change, because he doesn't have a computer. Joe explains, "Everybody's got computers. So they contact each other by computers…nobody called…so now I've got to get a, I got a rotary phone." "You've got to get a computer," the other man chuckles. "Because everybody's with a computer now." Joe responds, "Well it's like a nice thing, it's a great gadget, it's good, but I'm not into it, and I haven't got the time for computers. Why have I got to get all this equipment?" In the face of accelerating technological change and the planned obsolescence of consumer electronics, Joe and Willetts Point don't appear to stand a chance, for all their tenacious vitality.

The filmmakers, Véréna Paravel and J. P. Sniadecki, are both anthropologists affiliated with the Sensory Ethnography Lab at Harvard University (Paravel lectures in anthropology at Harvard, and Sniadecki recently completed his doctorate in anthropology there). For this film, they employed a methodology inspired by traditional field study techniques, filming and getting to know their subjects over the course of two years. The viewer does not necessarily know this, since it is not stated in the film, although at one point one young man, in the flush of a conversational monologue, says to the filmmaker (who is off-screen), "I hope you pass your test or your project, whatever you're doing. I hope you pass it, I hope you get a good grade out of this." The filmmakers' rapport with their subjects is made clear by the intimate moments to which they gain access.[24] Establishing a rapport with one's subjects is a cornerstone of the ethnographic method, a process that is today made easier by the unobtrusively small size of digital video cameras. The film's observational style utilizes classic *cinéma vérité* technique, pioneered by Jean Rouch (and exemplified in the 1960 film Rouch made in collaboration with sociologist Edgar Morin, *Chronique d'un été*): not just documenting the world but intervening in reality. The filmmakers can be heard and are briefly visible at a few points in *Foreign Parts,* along with pieces of the camera apparatus (tripod). Even though the filmmakers never become fleshed-out characters, this self-reflexivity gives the film an embodied point of view. In this way, the film is able to witness vitality in this dying industrial neighborhood and make a plea against gentrification and urban renewal without pretending to journalistic "objectivity." Indeed, journalism, too, becomes an object of study in the film, as a Spanish-speaking newscaster is shown setting up her camera and filming a story

in the neighborhood.

Foreign Parts witnesses the both the hardships of Willets Point and the vibrancy of this community, in which small trades and independent businesses have managed to survive on scraps for generations. The film presents numerous scenes of wordless, small joys, such as a couple dancing in their shop, or two men having a snowball fight. A woman named Julia (who may be homeless, although that is never explicitly stated) dances happily in a bar as she drinks from a mini J&B bottle, and later celebrates her birthday with cake and her local friends. Alongside these fragmentary moments of happiness, the film details many of the obvious depravations of life in the neighborhood. In one scene, Luis talks about how difficult it is to sleep in their van when it's freezing outside while Sara cries quietly in the background. At another point, when Luis is in jail, Sara reveals the knife and tire iron she sleeps with for protection. The film shifts between such intimate sequences, in which local people divulge private experiences to the camera/filmmakers, and external sequences focusing on landscapes and cars. The external sequences tend to be carefully framed with a stationary camera, but the intimate sequences in which the camera/filmmakers interact with their subjects tend to be handheld long takes. Similarly, location sound is used throughout the film, which is sometimes muddy or inaudible, mirroring the handheld intimacy of certain shots.

Foreign Parts is important to this analysis because it provides a contrasting view of industry to the other films discussed here. What I am calling a "conceptual" observational style does not necessarily imply a "structural" interrogation of film form; acknowledging the filmmaker as a presence in the world of the film is also a way of challenging outmoded notions of documentary objectivity. Rather than production, this film explores decay; rather than formal austerity, this film echoes the messy contingency of experience in its loose stylistics. Shot on HD video with sync-sound, even the film's digital shadows and color evoke an ephemeral quality. Instead of a negative space that gestures toward a larger world off screen, this film evokes the specificity of place in the fullness of the present, which appears to be already outmoded. Mechanical industry here appears as a dying marvel from the past; the future seems to offer no place for this formerly vibrant habitat.

The Unstable Object

Daniel Eisenberg's *The Unstable Object* is a precise and subtle meditation on three different instantiations of labor: state-of-the-art auto manufacturing in Dresden, Germany; the relatively old-fashioned production methods at a factory that makes wall clocks in Chicago; and the traditional handmade manufacturing of cymbals in Turkey. This rigorously observational film resists overt social commentary, and yet, in its three-part depiction of contemporary labor, the film portrays a kind of geography of early twenty-first century capitalism, functioning as a witness to the phenomenon of uneven development. Eisenberg's film illustrates the classic Marxist notion of uneven development visually and sonically, but for the purposes of explication, a textual definition will be helpful. The social theorist David Harvey describes today's "capitalist spatiotemporal logic" in terms of geographically uneven development:

> The general diminution in transport costs [for goods and material] in no way disrupts the significance of territorial divisions and specializations of labor. Indeed, it makes for more fine-grained territorial divisions since small differences in production costs (due to raw materials, labor conditions, intermediate inputs, consumer markets, infrastructural or taxation arrangements) are more exploitable due to highly mobile capital. Reducing the friction of distance, in short, makes capital more rather than less sensitive to geographical variations. The combined effect of freer trade and reduced transportation costs is not greater equality of power through the evolving territorial division of labor, but growing geographical inequalities.[25]

Eisenberg's film is not concerned so much with documenting inequalities as with exploring the process of labor and comparing different experiences of labor. Resolutely dispassionate (in places where one can imagine a different kind of documentary would be fairly screaming to explain and argue), *The Unstable Object,* like the other films I have been discussing, demands an attentive viewer. Here, though, the theme is not only labor and its landscapes, but the way the landscapes of labor vary in time and space.

Stylistically, Eisenberg's film is nothing like the Lumière *Workers* film or a traditional industrial, and yet it appears to have taken the classical industrial film as its inspiration and model. Shot in HD color video, with a sparse and carefully considered soundtrack, *The Unstable Object* is a triptych of sorts, each third running about 20 minutes to comprise a feature-length running time of 69 minutes. Moving across three different industries—cars, clocks, and cymbals, whose production processes we might dub the postmodern, the modern, and the traditional—Eisenberg's

film asks us to witness the specificities of these various forms of labor but also to make connections across these disparate practices. Each different national context, too, remains understated yet ever present, never spelled out but rather left to emerge from out of the larger context.

As has been noted by other scholars, Eisenberg's films defy categorization.[26] Although his work certainly falls into the category of avant-garde cinema, his films also engage with the traditions of nonfiction film, and *The Unstable Object* makes clear references to the old industrial film genre. The film documents the different stages of production in each factory, just as classic industrial films break industrial production down into discrete parts. Eisenberg's film also presents laborers without naming them, just as in a classic industrial film. Yet the film is deeply attentive to the workers it depicts, unlike traditional industrial films that focus on commodities rather than workers. And, more than anything, it is the film's careful three-part structure that transcends the industrial film formula to become a much more complicated and less celebratory depiction of labor. The film is carefully attuned to sound, for example, moving from a subdued audio presence in the first part to an increase in volume in the second part, until the sound becomes a loud din at the end of the third part as workers pound cymbals into shape. The sync-sound was recorded entirely on location, with the exception of three moments in which spare piano tones announce the start of each new section. This kind of meticulous detail is certainly absent from the classical industrial film tradition, which was more concerned with use-value than aesthetic form. Although *The Unstable Object* bears traces of that tradition of "useful cinema"—alongside its contemplative style, it does in fact document how things are made—this is no ordinary industrial film, but a magisterial statement about the contemporary experience of labor.

Click to view larger

Figure 35.4 The Unstable Object (Daniel Eisenberg, 2011).

Image courtesy of Daniel Eisenberg.

The first part of the film takes place at a high-tech Volkswagen plant in Dresden, Germany. The first several shots show the factory's ultra-modern exterior, which is unnamed in the film, although it is identified in the screening notes as the famous "transparent factory" ("Gläserne Manufaktur"), which manufactures Volkswagen's luxury Phaeton model.[27] Inside this glass-walled factory, laborers in clean white jumpsuits and white gloves concentrate on executing the final steps of manufacturing luxury cars while affluent consumers and factory tourists look on (Figure 35.4). Workers for the most part engage individually with each car, presenting the illusion that these luxury sedans are not made on an assembly line but produced like artisanal crafts. Although the film does not tell us this, it is apparent that the heavy assembly of the cars is done elsewhere, and this "factory" exists to put on a show for consumers. Indeed, an article in *Car and Driver* published the year after the factory opened in 2002 verifies that "all the smelly, noisy operations such as stamping and welding...take place elsewhere," but opines that "if the process convinces customers they're getting something special, maybe it's worth the added expense."[28] Designed not so much for manufacturing but for spectacle, this factory evokes not the grease and exhaust of an auto repair shop but the cleanliness and efficiency of a bakery, as though the cars are not being made to drive on a gritty road, but to be eaten. As this section of the film illustrates, postmodern industry has masterfully transformed the act of production into a spectacle for consumption.

This work takes place in reverential silence; we hear many ambient sounds, but the workers do not speak to each other, nor are their tasks particularly loud. We see customers quietly speaking to white-coated factory technicians, but we cannot hear what they say. In fact, this wordlessness carries forward into the other two parts of the film; although words are spoken, they are often muffled and are never translated (parts one and three are in German and Turkish), so that the overall effect is an avoidance of the dialogue-driven nature of most cinema, including documentary film. When words are spoken, they tend to be registered visually (we see mouths moving) rather than

aurally (the people speaking are often too far away to be heard), letting the images and the other sounds signify rather than language. Perhaps because of this downplaying of words, other ambient sounds rise to the foreground in part one: drilling and hammering, the clanking of metal parts, the squeaking of workers' shoes on the factory's polished hardwood floor.

One segment in this part of the film shows strange machines that seem to move independently of any human direction. These machines exit and enter elevators seemingly of their own volition, gliding effortlessly across the floor and changing direction with no visible intervention from people. This illusion of machine subjectivity is enhanced by Eisenberg's framing and editing, which eliminate any trace of human-machine interaction. The machines and the people in this factory seem to have equal function (and equal vitality), all of them uniformly mute before the onlooking consumer. The first part of *The Unstable Object* concludes, appropriately enough, with footage of workers leaving the factory, shot from inside the factory rather than from outside. Unlike the Lumière film, which elided labor by focusing on the world outside the factory gates, this film begins inside the factory and never leaves it.

The second part of the film takes place at a clock manufacturing plant staffed by visually impaired workers. Again, we are not given any information about the location beyond what we can see, but the film's screening notes explain that this segment was shot at the Chicago Lighthouse Industries manufacturing facility in Chicago, Illinois, which makes wall clocks for federal, state, and local government offices. The film does not tell us anything about the history of this facility, but instead simply shows us this reality, beginning with the visually impaired workers as they enter the factory and work throughout the day. Compared to the silent workers in part one, however, this part of the film is relatively vocal as the workers sing quietly to themselves, chat, and communicate throughout their day. Throughout this segment, we also hear the persistent, intermittent sound of air being sprayed to clean the clock faces. This more lively sound presence contributes to our understanding of these workers as blind or visually impaired: this factory is a sonic experience for its workers rather than a visual one (Figure 35.5).

Click to view larger

Figure 35.5 The Unstable Object (Daniel Eisenberg, 2011).

Image courtesy of Daniel Eisenberg.

In contrast to the work performed in the previous segment, this is a more traditional form of labor, in which a single kind of product is manufactured by a group of workers, each performing a different task. The equipment for this production is emblematic of the analog era: the clocks move down a slow conveyer belt and are assembled by hand. Each worker performs a single task repeatedly: one person places clock faces into a cutting machine, another attaches clock arms, another folds the cardboard boxes in which the clocks will be shipped, and so forth. Eisenberg emphasizes the repetitive nature of these tasks by showing certain actions over and over, editing to create a sense of the repetitive rhythm of the day. We see that progress is made: the cardboard boxes eventually stack so high that they surround the man folding them, clocks accumulate on pegboards for testing until there is no room left. These white pegboards, too, show their age by the presence of shadowy black clock outlines on the empty walls stained by years of use. The irony here, of course, is that many of these workers, whose hands we see feeling for tools, cannot see the very clocks they are assembling. Yet this segment presents a vision of self-sufficiency in which these workers are empowered by their employment in the kind of jobs that are increasingly scarce in the United States.

Part three begins without an establishing shot, inside a room in which molten metal is being cast, we do not yet know where or for what. This is the only segment in which the workers are all men, and other than the modern clothes (jeans, flannel shirts, sneakers), there is little to indicate that this is the contemporary world. This turns out

to be the Bosporus cymbal factory in Turkey, where traditional production methods are used to handcraft high-quality and much-prized cymbals. Here there is no factory division of labor—several men sit together in a room hammering cymbals by hand. The sound of all this hammering is extremely loud, and although words are spoken, an English-speaking audience cannot understand them. A great deal of time and care are devoted to the creation of these cymbals, but still the film avoids fetishizing the final product, instead focusing on the process of production and the experience of labor (this is how it looks, this is how it sounds; Figure 35.6).

Click to view larger

Figure 35.6 The Unstable Object (Daniel Eisenberg, 2011).

Image courtesy of Daniel Eisenberg.

By now, because the viewer has watched two other examples of contemporary labor, the comparisons and contrasts begin to pile up. All three kinds of labor involve production, but only the clock-making and the cymbal-making are divided into discrete repetitive tasks. None of the workers appear to be in exploitative labor situations, but our knowledge about them is limited to what we can see. Cymbal-making appears to be the most hazardous process, due to the hot metal that is poured into molds. Everyone in each factory has been trained, and, for the most part, they go about their work silently. In taking such a contemplative tone, the film forces the viewer to fall back on his or her own thoughts, just as Sharon Lockhart's *Exit* does. Ending in a traditional factory that uses production processes that have been unchanged for hundreds of years, *The Unstable Object* concludes on a note of departure. If labor used to look like this, and still does now in some places, might the future of labor look different, less bleak than one imagines it now?

These recent works of experimental nonfiction witness the state of labor today by using various open-ended observational styles and techniques. These films demand attentive viewers who are ready to meet the contemplative challenge they present. In particular, these films utilize the classical technique of the long take, not to create a more believable representation of reality but to gesture toward the larger realities that reside off-screen. Long takes in these films are not more "real" but more partial and contingent. Perhaps the long take in the digital era can be understood as a particular kind of counterpresence, a new kind of negative space whose representation evokes everything surrounding it that remains unseen. In the spirit of witnessing, these films make labor visible, but not necessarily knowable.

I would like to thank Jeanne Liotta and David Gatten for film suggestions that helped shape this article. Thanks also to Daniel Eisenberg for making the complete version of *The Unstable Object* available to me, and to all of the filmmakers for generously providing images of their work. This essay is for L. P., who happily retired his lunchbox four years ago.

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Notes:

(1) . See Fredric Jameson’s account of this historical shift in “Culture and Finance Capital,” *Critical Inquiry* 24 (Autumn 1997): 246–265.

(2) . Although the films I analyze closely in this article do not fictionalize, it should be said that some of the other titles I cite do utilize scripted elements. Staging has become an important strategy of contemporary documentary, which often self-consciously blurs boundaries between fiction and nonfiction. Indeed, the tradition of staging in nonfiction goes back to Robert Flaherty’s 1922 film *Nanook of the North,* and even before. There is a great deal of scholarship on staging and the construction of truth in documentary film; a good place to begin reading is Alexandra Juhasz and Jesse Lerner, eds., *F Is for Phony: Fake Documentary and Truth’s Undoing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

(3) . There are numerous other examples of recent experimental nonfiction films about labor, including additional titles by a number of the filmmakers I have already cited. See for example the list of films tagged “labor” distributed by Video Data Bank at www.vdb.org/category/tags/labor.

(4) . Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 16.

(5) . Jane Blocker, *Seeing Witness: Visuality and the Ethics of Testimony* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 32.

(6) . The 47-second version with horse-and-carriage can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HI63PUXnVMw. The 40-second “no-horse” version can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnVwgLORy2Y. For what it’s worth, this is not actually “the first film,” as is often claimed. Although I believe it is important to avoid the rhetoric of “firsts,” we might still note that at least two other projected film shows occurred before the Lumière *cinématographe* debuted in December 1895 (the Phantoscope in Atlanta in September and the Bioskop in Berlin in November); moreover, it is worth emphasizing that early cinema historians today refer to a gradual “emergence” of cinema through a series of overlapping practices (fast motion photography, peephole viewers, magic lantern lectures, vaudeville) rather than a single invention that sprang forth full-born.

(7) . Sean Cubitt, *The Cinema Effect* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 20.

(8) . On early travelogues and other nonfiction genres, see Jennifer Lynn Peterson, *Education in the School of Dreams: Travelogues and Early Nonfiction Film* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

(9) . For a fuller description of the industrial film genre in early cinema, see Jennifer Peterson, “industrial films,” in *The Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel (New York: Routledge, 2005), 320–323.

(10) . On the Ford Motor Company films, see Lee Greiveson, “The Work of Film in the Age of Fordist Mechanization,” *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 3 (Spring 2012): 25–51.

(11) . On the Westinghouse Works films, see Oliver Gaycken, "The Cinema of the Future: Visions of the Medium as a Modern Educator, 1895–1910," in Devin Orgeron, Marsha Orgeron, and Dan Streible, eds., *Learning with the Lights Off: Educational Film in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 67–89. A link to the 1904 Westinghouse Works Films can be found here: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/papr/west/westhome.html. A synopsis of the film *A Visit to Peek Frean and Co.'s Biscuit Works* (1906) can be found here, along with a link for viewing if one is in the United Kingdom at a registered library, college, or university: www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/711535/index.html. A shorter version of this film is available in the United States on volume 3 of the DVD box set, *The Movies Begin: A Treasury of Early Cinema, 1894–1913. The Fish Processing Factory at Astrakhan* (1908) can be viewed here: www.europafilmtreasures.eu/PY/291/see-the-film-the_fish_processing_factory_at_astrakhan.

(12) . Jennifer Peterson, "Efficiency and Abundance: Industrial Films and Early Educational Cinema" (paper delivered at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference, New Orleans, March 12, 2011).

(13) . See Vinzenz Hediger and Patrick Vonderau, eds., *Films that Work: Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009); and Rick Prelinger, *The Field Guide to Sponsored Films* (San Francisco: National Film Preservation Foundation, 2006). On nontheatrical films more generally, see Charles R. Acland and Haidee Wasson, eds., *Useful Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); and Orgeron, et al,, *Learning with the Lights Off*. Many historical industrial films have lately been made available online; for a virtuosic example, see *Master Hands,* made by the Jam Handy Organization for the Chevrolet Motor Company in 1936, available at www.archive.org/details/MasterHa1936.

(14) . These remakes are not to be confused with the *hommages* produced by various acclaimed directors for the 1995 film *Lumière and Company*.

(15) . Harun Farocki, "Workers Leaving the Factory," trans. Laurent Faasch-Ibrahim, in Thomas Elsaesser, ed., *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sightlines* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 238; originally published as "Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik," in *Meteor* (Vienna) no. 1 (December 1995): 49–55.

(16) . Nancy Davenport's DVD installation *WORKERS (Leaving the Factory)* (2005–08) is another important example, but unfortunately I have not been able to see this work in person; for a well-illustrated analysis, see Ingrid Hölzl, "Blast-Off Photography: Nancy Davenport and Expanded Photography," *History of Photography* 35:1 (February 2011), pp. 33–43. Other *Workers* "remakes" are embedded into longer works, such as Daniel Eisenberg's *Something More Than Night* (2003) and Peter Hutton's *At Sea* (2007). Another (less meticulous) example of a *Workers* remake is *Workers Leaving the Googleplex* (Andrew Norman Wilson, 2011), which can be viewed at http://vimeo.com/15852288. Finally, I can't resist mentioning Martin Scorsese's *Workers* homage in his 1985 black comedy *After Hours*, which occurs at the beginning of the film when the main character, played by Griffin Dunne, leaves his job as a word processor, exiting the building in a shot that directly quotes the Lumière film.

(17) . *Workers Leaving the Factory (Dubai)* can be viewed at http://vimeo.com/7528954.

(18) . Bazin's theory—that spatial and temporal continuity (particularly when rendered by a long take and in real time) produce realism in the cinema—has been subject to much reassessment lately. See, for example, Phil Rosen, *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), esp. 3–41; Daniel Morgan, "Rethinking Bazin: Ontology and Realist Aesthetics," *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 443–481; Tom Gunning, "Moving Away from the Index: Cinema and the Impression of Reality," *differences* 18, no. 1 (2007): 29–52; Dudley Andrew, *What Cinema Is! Bazin's Quest and Its Charge* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Dudley Andrew, ed., *Opening Bazin: Postwar Film Theory and Its Afterlife* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

(19) . Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

(20) . San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "SFMOMA Presents Lunch Break by Sharon Lockhart." August 30, 2011, www.sfmoma.org/about/press/press_exhibitions/releases/891.

(21) . *Lunch Break,* an exhibition of twenty-seven photographs and two films, debuted in the United States in November 2009 at Blum & Poe gallery in Los Angeles, and has since shown at numerous other museums and art spaces, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The films have also been shown separately from the

photographs at theaters such as the Harvard Film Archive and the REDCAT Theater in Los Angeles. Needless to say, the experience of *Exit* is entirely different if one views it in an art gallery (where the viewer can walk in and out of the viewing space) or a movie theater (where one sits immobile for the duration)...or online. *Exit* can be viewed in its entirety at UbuWeb: www.ubu.com/film/lockhart_exit.html.

(22) . Norman Bryson, "Sharon Lockhart: From Form to Flux," *Parachute* no. 103 (July 1, 2001), 88.

(23) . Bryson, "Sharon Lockhart," 89.

(24) . In an online interview about the film, Paravel says that her nickname in the neighborhood was "la mamacita con la película," (the hottie with the movie). This interview can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOk6sUVvzO4.

(25) . David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London: Verso, 2006), 77.

(26) . For analysis of Eisenberg's earlier body of work, see the essays in Jeffrey Skoller, ed., *Postwar: The Films of Daniel Eisenberg* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010).

(27) . See screening notes at www.filmlinc.com/pages/the-unstable-object.

(28) . Frank Markus, "VW's Transparent Factory," *Car and Driver*, September 2003, www.caranddriver.com/features/vws-transparent-factory.

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