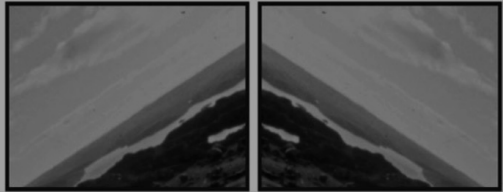


A C I N E M A S

Lyotard's Philosophy of Film



GIVE ME A SIGN

**DR KIFF BAMFORD, READER
IN CONTEMPORARY ART**

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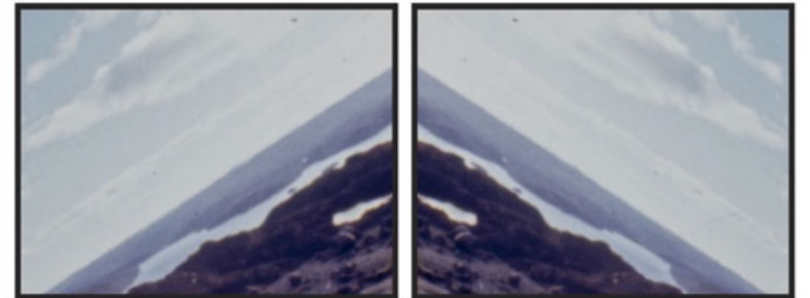
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Lyotard's Philosophy of Film



Graham Jones and Ashley Woodward

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

What happens when performance art is transcribed onto film? Is there a parallel with translations between more conventional media – from spoken conference paper to written text – or psychic translation, as described by Freud? How might the newly collected writings on film- philosophy by Jean-François Lyotard contribute to this discussion? These are questions addressed in this chapter, included in the section ‘Applications and Extensions’ in *Acinemas*, which presents all of Lyotard’s major essays on film for the first time in English. Bamford considers three examples: a film about a performance – Matthew Aker’s 2012 documentary *Marina Abramović: The Artist is Present* – an artist’s performance within a narrative film – Stuart Brisley’s performance in Ken McMullen’s *Ghost Dance* (1983) – and a performance piece to camera – Kiff Bamford’s *Emotion* (2014).

What links these examples is their exploration of the media of film and video as a means of conveying or evoking aesthetic encounter, at one remove. Central is the problematic figure of the witness, whether the observer watching Brisley’s filmed performance or the cinematic eye in Lyotard’s discussion of Michael Snow’s *La Région Centrale* (1971). The reliability of such a position is at once questioned by Lyotard’s reaching out to Freud and problematized by his later turn to the cinematic object as a conduit for free-indirect vision, following Pasolini and Deleuze. Each encounter troubles the next with a heightening sense of uncertainty and anxiety – conveyed, despite itself, through the medium of film.

Developed from an invited presentation at Dundee University (2014) which included film clips and ended with a short dance, the process of anxious exploration through gesture continues through writing, as highlighted in the review for *Senses of Cinema*: ‘the aesthetic encounters are not simply encounters with the image but encounters with dialogue ... and performative bodies’.



The first major survey of Lyotard's contribution to film theory, combining his original essays with new critical works by leading scholars

This collection presents, for the first time in English, Jean-François Lyotard's major essays on film: 'Acinema', 'The Unconscious as Mise-en-scène', 'Two Metamorphoses of the Seductive in Cinema' and 'The Idea of a Sovereign Film'. Then, eight critical essays by philosophers and film theorists examine Lyotard's film work and influence across two sections: 'Approaches and Interpretations' and 'Applications and Extensions'. These works are complemented by an introductory essay by leading French scholar Jean-Michel Durafour on Lyotard's film-philosophy, an overview of Lyotard's practical film projects written by his collaborators Claudine Eizykman and Guy Fihman, and the synopsis for a later film project Memorial Immemorial, which Lyotard proposed but was not produced.

Jean-François Lyotard was the most significant aesthete of the poststructuralist generation, but this dimension of his thought is only recently beginning to receive the attention it deserves in the English-speaking world. He devoted a number of essays to film, and was involved in making several experimental short films. Lyotard's reflections on film offer a perspective which seeks to do justice to it as an art by focusing on its aesthetic, material qualities. His work in this area remains a largely untapped resource, with the potential for inaugurating exciting new directions in film-philosophy.

Book Blurb

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