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## Media Magic

1.

As the name says, media mediate. They 'mediate' between individuals, between people, their inner selves and their environment, and also between objects. Communication media mediate between people, cultural and symbolic media place themselves between man and the world, interfaces link objects, machines and devices, networks... Not even the gods can do without media. In the Catholic tradition, Jesus, the host and the angels are all interfaces between the sacred and profane worlds. But whatever the actual form or specific function of a medium is, it always belongs to the class of the '*in-between*'. Every medium creates a middle, a medial zone that also acts as a fluid or 'format'.

Media are often multifunctional. Language is a medium of communication, but every natural language is also a symbolic medium that transforms the speechless reality into a meaningful environment. This metamorphosis is something quite miraculous. Neither grammar nor vocabulary determine how we deal with the world, not even when we consciously reflect on it. But we do always describe the world with the aid of particular words. Language is not a neutral or objective video screen, it is interpretative. It makes specific distinctions, it differentiates coarsely or finely between objects, feelings, moral attitudes, etc. Without these distinctions there is only an amorphous Reality and nothing meaningful can be observed.

Things, situations and events are by no means always the direct effect of naming or giving meaning. It is possible of course: the performative use of language is far from uncommon. No bonds of love without the sentence 'I love you' ever being spoken (answered with 'and I love you too'), no legal obligation without contracts and articles of law. But the pen I am holding at the moment still exists without language being used. The English language itself actually suggests this: everything we can call an object has an independent material existence (which does not mean that for this reason we call it an object). The idea of 'reality' is inconceivable, and thus unknowable, without such words as 'object' and 'objective', 'reality' and 'realistic'... and such complementary expressions as 'subject' ('subjective'), 'unreal' ('unrealistic'), etc.

Machines do not understand colloquial or natural language. They exchange information in their own machine language, like HTML. A couple of clicks on the mouse is sufficient to convert an HTML document into English, Dutch or French. However, natural and machine languages are different media. Basic forms of implicit meaning, such as double meanings and allusions, cannot be programmed because they are so tied to a particular context. Nor does one ever speak a machine language, since it is used to *operate*. But it is not just a question of the relationship between colloquial language and machine language. For example, what is the relationship between pre-technological media and technological media? Painted images undoubtedly differ from digital images – but in exactly which respects? And is an image calculated or recalculated by a computer actually still an image? Is it not, rather, an easily manipulated configuration of pixels which we only count as part of the world of images because of its superficial similarity to non-digital depictions?

What exactly happens to a communication medium like money when, in the course of its history, it first assumes a textual form (the banknote, the cheque, the share certificate, etc.), then mutates into bits and bytes in worldwide networks? Is digital money still actually real money? Or is it just a digitised amount whose movements are legally covered by a signature, by the banks or the share market as institutions? The digital code of ones and zeros meanwhile 're-mediate' a considerable proportion of the earlier media (does anyone still occasionally write with an old-fashioned typewriter?). In this way it seems that a new super-medium has been born that can store, execute ('perform'), transport, transform, etc., both readable texts and instructions in machine language, both images and sounds.

Digital code has penetrated virtually all spheres of life at lightning speed. Digital life is the ubiquity of hardware and software that runs on ones and zeros. We hardly notice what's happening: just like cyberspace, the whole digital realm is something of *an absent presence*. After all, you don't see any ones and zeros on a computer screen but you do see words and sentences. Nor do you hear bits and bytes coming out of the loudspeaker, only music. We disentangle signs and meanings, not mute ones and zeros or digitally-coded information. Perhaps the simultaneously strange and natural materiality of 'the digital' can best be compared with that of the body?

2.

Life and culture are analogue, not digital. The human locus of this analogue functioning is the body. An organism lives as long as the constituent cells reproduce themselves – this is what life is. Human bodies are connected to themselves and their surroundings by means of their five senses. These are our five primary media, which also mediate in our dealings with other pre-technological or technological media. At the same time the various media format our senses. First there was language, then writing, later came printing, and later still the first technological medium, photography: the history of the human body is measured by the fault lines that new inventions bring about in the links between sensory and external media. First, language formatted perception, while now the human eye is sharpening its focus on the inevitable confrontation with the various sorts of technological image.

Writing and printing benefited the eye, while conversely television and 'the electric age' once again create a quasi-oral, and partly tactile or haptic media environment. Marshall McLuhan already held this view in the 1950s and 60s, long before the digitisation of everyday life commenced. His masterpiece, *Understanding Media*, sometimes reads like a foreshadowed resurgence of the totally sensory: 'previous technologies were partial and fragmentary, the electric is total and inclusive'. Books and photos are absorbing but sensorily one-dimensional 'hot media', while cartoons and television are by contrast open texts, 'cool media' that appeal to several senses at the same time. In fact McLuhan was already dreaming out loud of a more direct link between the human body and the new technological media. In 'the electrical age', electric light and the computer screen reign supreme, and both are thought to have a direct effect on the neural system. In such pre-technological media as writing and painting there is still a connection with the body. They are manual, and thus tactile, assuming a constant feedback to other senses. You can smell ink or paint, and a handwritten text or a painted picture arises out of a relationship of constant feedback with a view and its history. Just as a dancer actualises a personal history of physical discipline in every movement, in the picture that forms on the canvas the painter always sees a series of images from memory too. There is no dance without the body's memory, no painting without a stock of physical images. It is not freely drawn on, rather the images simply appear both with and in the work that is being created and which one occasionally looks at from a distance. This is what also happens to the viewer of the result. It is not a conscious subject that views it, but it – the unconscious deposits of countless visual experiences.

The other person's gaze is the pre-technological medium in which every newborn child learns to become human. This medium precedes language, as does touch, of course. Nor does a human ever lose this medium. Your whole life long you exist (or possibly not) in the eyes of others. It is their look, not their speech, that is the primary social medium. Social isolation begins with the removal of a certain number of gazes from a human existence. But since the invention of photography there is often a device between the other's gaze and one's own body. This makes for a radical shift. The gaze is always full of meaning, even when it says nothing. By contrast the camera's eye is a detached recorder. It is in fact not an eye but a lens – a focused objective (you don't make photos, you *shoot* them).

In the theatre, the other's eyes, and also their ears, take on a collective character. The theatre auditorium condenses the audience's visual attention into one single massive view of the stage. Their watching is faceless, nameless, anonymous. The stage plus the collective gaze remain the two medial mainstays of theatre and dance. The stage directs the individual gaze, which is precisely how it is condensed into a super-gaze. The result is miraculous: everything that happens on stage is immediately charged with meaning. In this way, the most basic words and gestures can change into true enigmas during a theatre or dance performance.

3.

Device – programme – manipulation; hardware – software – operation: this trinity characterises all technical media. Take for example a simple analogue camera, like a family Kodak from the fifties. The user operated the device: he chose the subject, the angle, the lighting, etc.; he looked through a small window, then pressed the button. The rest did not concern him. Apart from enthusiasts, hardly anyone knew exactly how such a simple camera worked. It just seemed to record what happened within range of the lens. However, photos are not true-to-life illustrations. They do not duplicate reality, but record it in a way that depends on the apparatus and programming used.

An analogue photo undoubtedly refers to something other than itself, something external, that part of reality that appears in front of the lens at the moment the photo is taken. Analogue photos are therefore time machines too: they capture an instant of reality. But the photo is in any case not pure reproduction. And yet, from the very beginning the camera became *the* paradigm of epistemological realism. Hardly anyone reflected on the fact that, outside the world of photography and film, reality never appeared exclusively in black, white and grey. In fact it never quite works in analogue colour photos either, and this also applies to digital ones. In the photo of a birthday party the colours look different from what we observe: brighter or paler, with fewer or perhaps more shades.

Like every technical medium, to the layman a camera is an unfathomable application of theoretical concepts and insights, in this case originating in optics and chemistry. This remains the case in the so-called new or numeric media, which are based on digital code: they stabilise an epoch in the history of human thought by materialising it. This makes them both human *and* transhuman. This is another reason why technical media appear so incorporeal. They have emancipated themselves from the hand and tactility, and their natural environment is the laboratory and experimentation. As a theoretically founded recording device, an ordinary camera is much more akin to all sorts of scientific measuring apparatus than to the human gaze.

Media mediate between ourselves and the world in accordance with the always specific hard and soft, material and immaterial, properties of each medium. A language is an alphabet, and above all the linking of sounds or letters into words and sentences in accordance with a recognised semantics and a strict grammar. Subject – verb – object: without these it does not work, in communication just as in logical thinking. In technical media, apparatus and programming and hardware and software play a comparable part. The photographic or film camera appears to be at the service of the photographer or film-maker. But as an author, the man or woman behind the camera is not free. He or she can only record what the apparatus and programming are able ('want') to record. Both hardware and, more especially, software mark off boundaries. In the final analysis it is they, not the photographer or film-maker that define what can or cannot be photographed or filmed. At the same time their materiality meshes with a specific sensitivity, a more general way in which what is recorded is exactly captured *and* processed, recorded *and* transformed.

Photographic and film cameras do what their *operator* wants, but on their own conditions: the photographer or film-maker must want what the device is capable of. This means that the creator is not an author or a subject, but an operator. He is constantly tempted to probe the potential uses of the apparatus and its programming. The operator is a tester, trying out a virtual collection. The same thing applies to a PC and a TV. A loop always arises between the technological medium and the operator, a relationship of mutual feedback and co-implication. In this cybernetic relationship both man and medium are subject, in the sense of being 'subordinate'. Apparatus and programme need an operator, and *vice versa*.

Do we watch TV because there is something new to see, or, rather, are we essential elements in a cybernetic linkage between operator, screen and transmission channel? Having a car makes life easier, because it makes us mobile. But it also invites us ('tempts') us to use it, as if the car needs you in order to exist to the full. We not only operate technology and media – technical media, 'mediating technology' – we also serve them both. Technological and medial possibilities insist on being actualised by way of operationalisation. Whenever we accept this invitation, it seems as if we are the royal users. Media, and certainly technological media, conceal their gentle mastery by always casting us in the role of masters.

4.

Black and white photography, film and television ushered in a new visual domain, a new way of looking, and yes, even a new worldview. At one time millions of people observed the world quite naturally in black, white and tones of grey. Between them and their surroundings there were constantly images that made people and things appear in a completely different realm of colour than in normal observation. What were the consequences for everyday perceptions? What was the impact on the perception of oneself? What did it actually do to one's self-image to see one's face and body portrayed only in black and white photos and films for all those years? And then there are analogue recording devices and their particular effect on the human voice, in the sixties usually listened to on a transistor radio. People always heard politicians, actors, singers, etc., talking or singing in an 'analogue' voice. Didn't this mean they listened to their own voices differently too?

Media mediate not only between people or between people and their surroundings, they also bring these others and the world closer. They create intimacy, and with it the risk of obscenity too. In a theatre, a voice can come incredibly close, quite apart from the meaning of what is being said. At this point the meaning is no longer even of any importance, it is just the voice making purely physical contact. You can hear it breathe, grate... die away and come to life again. When a dance performance is a success, this strange intimacy is also to be found. It is as if the movements touch you directly and completely ignore the fourth wall that divides the stage from the audience. Whereas it is precisely an intermedial effect, the unpredictable result of the alchemy between the stage, the collective gaze and the fourth wall.

Media, and certainly technological media, are amplifiers: they charge the information conveyed with a 'third meaning' (this expression comes from a well-known essay on the work of Eisenstein by Roland Barthes). It is blunt because it has little transparency, is idiotic and yet questioning too. Photographic and, especially, film cameras have, for example, taught us to look at faces in a completely different way. On the screen, a face filmed in close-up undergoes a complete metamorphosis. It becomes an anonymous landscape packed full of details. Dimples, lines, shadows, etc.: it's all there, but so much more intimate - and usually much more attractive - than in real life. The category of 'the sensual' is part of the medial, as is glamour, that other by-product of Hollywood that radically reassessed interhuman relations in the twentieth century.

A voice is not usually sensual, but *becomes* so thanks to a medial prosthesis. In everyday life it sounds normal because it is familiar, whereas it sounds sultry or eroticised when passed through a telephone, cassette recorder or microphone. In the history of popular music this was the 'Sinatra-moment'. Frank Sinatra did not reject the then new possibilities of the microphone and studio, but made a pact with them. In this way he redefined the crooner genre. The sensuality of his voice is bound up with a very distinctive choreography involving the voice and the microphone. The voice dances round and with the microphone. First it is very close, then it is further off. This means you often hear something quite exceptional - something singular, something that seems both intimate and anonymous. It is this something that makes Sinatra's voice auratic, in Benjamin's sense of the word: what is heard sounds both close and distant. This something acts as the familiar punctum in Barthes' photography book: the voice goes straight through culture's wall of meanings. This thing, both personal and anonymous, is the resonance of the body *in* Sinatra's voice with the qualities of the microphone and recording apparatus as media.

The human body itself is also a medium. But of what? What does it embody and 'mediate'? A soul - an immortal one, perhaps? (Who will ever be able to tell us?). A mind - the notorious 'mind' of Anglo-Saxon philosophy? Or is this 'something' simply the unconscious? Or is it, even more matter-of-factly, the personal condensation of what is by definition an unplanned course of influences, the sediment of a socio-cultural environment in the form of a character or personality? This much is certain: something else always appears with each and every body - something that comes across both as anonymous and singular, impersonal and personal. The body looks like an interface with a face that is also a mask - the original meaning of the Latin word *persona*: it conceals what it shows. Media enhance this effect of concealment and revelation.

5.

The subtitle of McLuhan's *Understanding Media* is 'Extensions of man'. Every medium is an extension of our body and our perceptual system. This characterisation can be taken literally. Cameras and video devices have opened up a visual and acoustic spectrum that exceeds normal

human powers of perception. In a photo or film, the visible world again and again changes into a puzzle. We know the people, things and events viewed, we can identify and interpret them. But because of the media used we also always see so much that is unknown in what is known. Every interesting photo or film image brings us face-to-face with our 'optical unconscious' (*dixit* Walter Benjamin, once again), with a myriad of details that continually escape us in everyday life. As prostheses of the body or perception, media make us aware of both the limitations and the unconsciousness of normal conscious perception.

Looking at the overlooked, hearing the overheard: it sounds like the programme for a great deal of modern and contemporary art. Since it became modern, quite a lot of art has focused on a more concentrated perception of perfectly normal objects, everyday words, insignificant sounds and banal movements. Make the familiar unfamiliar, is a call we have heard also somewhere else. Much of modern and contemporary art does indeed deal wholesale in what Freud called 'the uncanny'. After the minimalist wave of the 1960s, we know what this amounts to: sometimes well considered, but much more often aiming at random at a singular sensory relationship between the work of art and the viewer. As a rule, its ultimate success depends on the institutional setting of the museum or the theatre, meaning the modern art culture that prescribes silence, attention and concentration. The paradoxical result is that the body is at the same time disciplined and can therefore be monopolised that much better by the work of art.

The present day art of experience shows us the essence of all contemporary art. It is neither didactic nor informative, it offers neither meaning nor message. Its aim is much rather to create intensive 'percepts' (this term is used by Gilles Deleuze). A contemporary work of art therefore requires neither understanding nor empathy, it wishes simply to be experienced. It defines itself as an interface between materiality and corporeality, it condenses certain energetic charges and tensions in paint, pixels and movements into observable and preferably high-impact events. Contemporary art is not so much about hegemonic or oppositional meanings, but is intended to transform signs into quanta. Successful contemporary art is the art of minute particles. You decipher meanings, you interpret and you understand – but all within an invisible force-field that justifies the interpretation and makes you watch or listen on. For this reason, every work of contemporary art is a trial of strength, a form of microphysics. It is precisely this orientation to experience that makes it a child of the 'electric age': even contemporary art wants to be cool. Transforming the body into a passive receptor of external media: it is indeed the continuously renewed project of all technological media. They are often successful too, and with significantly less effort or consideration than contemporary art. It is let's say 10 o'clock in the evening, I am absentmindedly watching a TV broadcast. I see a couple dancing on an ice rink doing their very best (it is after all the world championship). My watching is ambiguous. On one level, that of conscious perception, there is a load of meaningful information. The second level, that of the sheer attraction of moving images, is much harder to grasp. The constantly shifting configuration of pixels is 'a mesh of pervasive energy that penetrates our nervous system incessantly' (McLuhan).

Level 1 is all about a world beyond the screen, while level 2 is the world of the screen itself. The TV screen is an interface, and at the same time also a *face*, one that looks at me and makes me look back. It mediates between me and the world, but the same time it has its own effect, impact, etc.: it is fascinating, like every face. It is this *autonomy of the mediator* that creates the magic of every medium. We do not usually see or hear this. The mediator adopts a very accommodating attitude, and the medium as an instrument fits effortlessly into the expected role of 'go-between'. Every technological media derives its material power from its immaterial servitude.

'Immersion', the unresisting absorption into artificial stimuli and sensations, becoming subjectless, entering into a world which is both figuratively and, more especially, literally meaningless: both the TV and computer screen deserve a place of honour in every history of trance or of drugs. 'Television demands participation and involvement in depth of the whole being. It will not work as a background. It engages you,' as McLuhan already wrote in his manifesto with its expressive title *The Medium is the Massage*. The message is only a cultural pretext, the decisive element is the induced state of narcissistic self-forgetting. Staring, and understanding nothing (or not wanting to); clicking, and not finding anything (or not wanting to): the TV and computer screen are secularised prayer machines, just like raves and techno-parties, CDs and performances by noisy bands, and all those countless other medial artefacts that give us the opportunity to escape from the burden of a 'self', an individual or social identity, a gender, an age, etc. This is what is called

authenticity: soullessly and sinfully returning to your body by way of a bodily prosthesis, becoming the medium of a technological medium and thereby changing into organless matter.

6.

New media 're-mediate' older media, and this is possibly the most important meaning of the famous catchphrase 'the medium is the message'. More recent media are parasites on their predecessors, which they suck out and redefine. Or, as McLuhan remarked in *Understanding Media*, 'The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph'. Television and film 're-mediate' the novel and theatre genres, the radio mediates oral narration and, more recently, the Internet has given new substance to the medium of the library. Libraries in their traditional form follow the trend and transform into local nodes on worldwide information networks: they are increasingly changing into a sort of the live Internet.

'Re-mediations' leave a residue behind, they return the appropriated medium to a materiality which thereby appears specific or 'characteristic'. When photography started to monopolise portrayal, painting started to draw its strength exclusively from the combination of paint and canvas. The written story dissolved in the film, the soap, etc. – but literature found a new life by concentrating on the way of writing, the materiality of language or signifier. Film also 're-mediates' theatre or, more correctly, acting. Starting with Stanislavski, this led to a counter-movement that promoted directing and dramaturgy to the position of cornerstones of the performing arts. But there was a second reaction too. This backed the physical presence of the actor – or *liveness* and performance. Theatre becomes contemporary whenever it finds its own medial identity in the direct relationship between stage and auditorium, actors and audience. Dance followed the same course. Television and Broadway shows 're-mediated' the choreography of the virtuoso body. The answer was dance as an art of the body, no more – without other medial supplements or additions. Since the now legendary performances by Judson Church in the Sixties, every movement can be a dance movement as long as it emphasises its physical nature. This is the reason why, in contemporary dance performances, one only exceptionally sees a body simulating weightlessness.

The various technological media force the older media into materialistic self-definition. Clement Greenberg's official modernist credo confirms this reduction. Away with the story, away with portrayal: a modernist painting in the style of Rothko or Pollock is neither narrative nor figurative. On the contrary, it celebrates painting as a specific medial combination of paint and canvas – of a visuality or pictoriality coagulated into flat or two-dimensional brush strokes (Greenberg's renowned 'flatness'). But modernist painting does not make up all the art of the 20th century. Painters, and dramatists and choreographers too, keep on chatting, talking and telling, or, in short, producing meanings. A narrative painting is different from a narrative photo; a novel read out from a stage is different from the film version. However, art that does the same thing in a different way can only succeed when it also 're-mediates' the technical medium with which it is in competition. This is why Gerhard Richter is the most important painter after Andy Warhol: his paintings outdo the photos they imitate – using paint.

Richter creates hybrid art, paintings in which photography and painting meet while at the same time remaining recognisable as independent media. Painting *and* photo, and in the contemporary performing arts in the style of Meg Stuart, live performance *and* video image. If it works, it does not lead to synthesis but to an interaction in which the combined media confirm their independence without clashing. This breaks down the individual narcotic effect of each independent medium. The one medium prevents the other from assailing and intoxicating the viewer's body, and from being able to put it in a state of unconscious fascination. McLuhan once again, 'the hybrid or the meeting of two media is a moment of truth and revelation from which new form is born. For the parallel between two media holds us on the frontiers between forms that snap us out of the Narcissus-narcosis. The moment of the meeting of media is a moment of freedom and release from the ordinary trance and numbness imposed by them on our senses'.

7.

Media mediate, but the intermediate zones they create change the two poles between which they establish contact in a way that is always medially particular. For example, a telephone connection metamorphoses the voice of 'the sender', as well as the way he communicates. At the same time it

changes the way 'the receiver' hears: he listens not with two but with a single ear, and also differently than in an everyday conversation or during a meeting. And what about a simple holiday snapshot? The person photographed does his best to look good, and you see a pose that makes an effort to suggest relaxation. But sometimes you encounter something else of a completely different order, something that is not informative and radically breaks open the act of posing: a presence you had never previously noticed in the person photographed. Each medium is like a machine that only surrenders its anonymity in a self-created singularity.

The magic of a medium is that, and again and again, and often unexpectedly, it provides something to read, to see or to hear that appears unquestionably real and authentic – in the body, and thereby so much more convincing than a piece of conclusive mathematical reasoning. 'Aura', 'third meaning' and 'punctum' are terms that can undoubtedly be used to describe this effect. But the expression 'the extramedial', coined by Arjen Mulder, is much more accurate. According to him, in his book *Het twintigste-eeuwse lichaam [The 20th-century body]* (comparable formulations appear in his more recent book *Het fotografisch genoegen [The photographic pleasure]*), this means 'not the fact that a certain unique situation once occurred in front of and behind the camera, not the depiction in a photo, but the appearance of what is photogenic. ... Some photos are good, others 'don't quite have it'. The extramedial means the presence in a medium of that which you cannot possibly comprehend by means of this medium itself. ... What was a depiction (the photo) metamorphoses into something that was never present in what is depicted (the photogenic subject), something added, the presence of the dead, this speechlessness.' The final verdict follows seventeen pages later: 'the extramedial is a technical effect and an existential experience'.

In a photogenic photo, the light appears to pass through the subject's skin, straight to the 'soul' or whatever we call that thing that every body conceals *and* reveals. More is revealed than usual, and then again it isn't: what is seen is unrepeatable, apart from being bound to the medium, it can only be seen in this one photo, not in the other twenty-five snapshots. It was simply on target, unplanned and unfocused, but exceptionally effective. In exactly the same way you hear in certain recordings from the 1960s a pianist (Cecil Taylor!), a saxophonist (John Coltrane!), a guitarist (Jimi Hendrix!) or a singer (Captain Beefheart!) appearing as unique, and equally often you only listen to a simulation. The performer is truly doing his best, but it doesn't work. The desired particularity cannot be displayed nor performed, neither optimised nor rationalised. Feigning unicity is something completely different from the unobtainable 'something' that breaks open a studied pose towards... towards what in fact?

The extramedial saves bodies and things from the mush of words and images that constantly covers them. It smashes the mountain of meanings the babble produces with a single blow from *outside*, but *within* the always personal intermediate zone of a single medium, or *within* the dialogue that takes place between two or more media on their borders. A medium like language, for example, can charge thoughts with a power that is utterly alien to them. Once written down, language therefore seems to be a much more natural habitat than the mental world of the consciousness. In a similar way, a photographic or filmic image can change a landscape into a very personal imaginary zone – as if you were looking at an objectification of your own fantasy in which the vanishing point of your imagination literally becomes a face that looks back at you. Painting attempted to allay the camera's power of portrayal by limiting itself to the materiality of paint and canvas. However, every successful abstract painting is a *face to face*: it looks at you, it questions you, it is coercive because it has an anonymous strength that looks back at you with a personal face akin to the human gaze. It is no different in the performing arts. I hear a voice, I see very ordinary movements continually filled with an exceptional grace, and especially with a *présence* - presence, charisma, topicality, personality, etc. – in which the body emancipates itself from its own materiality. The dancer's name doesn't matter, nor the title of the piece. In fact I didn't even see a performance. A sightline emerged in the intermediate zone that connects performance with theatricality. It linked my body to that of the dancer, and created both a sensory and 'extra sensory' contact within the boundaries of the performing arts. I saw nothing of meaning, I just had an experience that was neither directly moving, nor brutally fascinating, because the seen extramedial body was on the border where 'body' and 'soul' are interchangeable terms.

The extra medial is an oxymoron. It is Genuine, Real, Authentic... in short it is an Outside. At the same time it is photogenic, and thoroughly filmic, because it is bound to the camera, theatrical,

dance-like, musical... in short it is 100 percent medial. The extramedial reveals the truth of our existence. We live medial lives, and yet we do not. We only realise the latter due to the appearance in a medium of a force that is external to it. But this force is only there in a medium. The world becomes World when it traverses a worldview. Reality becomes Real each time it contradicts the way we imagine reality to be. And 'everything that is the case' – Wittgenstein's definition of 'the world' – only becomes singular when one single man, thing or event finds a long-sought form in a specific medium.

In a photo, a perfectly simple vase on a table can look highly animated. On a stage an extremely simple movement can transform a body into the image of a body that looks both dead and alive. On paper, ideas can lead a life that was previously literally inconceivable. In order to believe in the extramedial it is sufficient that a body becomes convinced of itself: 'there is *experience*, so both it – *that* there – *and* I exist'. It is in the simple conjunction 'and' that lies the magic of every medium. As an intermediary it can sometimes link the utterable to the unutterable, the presentable to the unrepresentable, the audible to the inaudible... and itself to an externality, always with unpredictable consequences.

Only the art that seeks out non-art in order to become a *murmur of itself* in the extramedial is truly contemporary.

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