But let us not adopt these exclusive Entertainments which close up a small number of people in melancholy fashion in a gloomy cavern, which keep them fearful and immobile in silence and inaction. ...No, happy Peoples, these are not your festivals. It is in the open air, under the sky, that you ought to gather and give yourselves to the sweet sentiment of your happiness. ...Let the sun illuminate your innocent entertainments; you will constitute one yourselves, the worthiest it can illuminate. ...What will be shown in them? Nothing, if you please. ...Plant a stake crowned with flowers in the middle of a square; gather the people together there, and you will have a festival. Do better yet; let the Spectators become an Entertainment to themselves; make them actors themselves; do it so that each sees and loves himself in the others so that all will be better united.

-Jean-Jacques Rousseau, letter to d’Alembert (1758)

I am deeply thankful to Matthias Michalka, Bifst Ulin, Manuela Ammer and the Museum of Modern Art for their kind invitation, as well as for their great work on the most exciting part of cinema, and more generally of art.

I want to begin by apologizing to my distinguished audience for the complete change in the subject of my contribution. When Matthias Michalka and Manuela Ammer invited me to this event, I thought it would give me an opportunity to analyze one of my favorite films, Andy Warhol’s Exploding Plastic Inevitable, which I screened at the Cinémathèque Française in its long, twenty-two minute version, then presented in its eleven minute version on Arte, the French-German public television channel. At that point, I received the catalog for the exhibit and realized that I could perhaps contribute more interestingly or rather, more usefully, to knowledge about the history of “out-of-screen” cinema, for it was indeed the third time I had noticed that this history was being told with its French chapter missing.
I am not the chauvinistic type at all; I am simply a native of France. And I am surprised when I read great art books such as Paul Schimmel’s *Out of Actions* (the catalog for a major exhibit presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 1998) or Rosalie Goldberg’s *Performance*, both of which establish a history of performance, installations, and expanded cinema without mentioning French artists. The only exception is Jean-Jacques Lebel, probably because he was quoted both in Allan Kaprow’s *The Blurring of Art and Life* and Gene Youngblood’s *Expanded Cinema*; but even more likely because he participated in a famous happening at the Knokke-Le-Zoute’s festival in Belgium along with Japanese artist and future American superstar Yoko Ono. In any case, there appears to be a missing link and I take it as my duty, as a French native, to tell you about some names, some events, some films. Such necessity would, of course, not be so pressing if, as a cinephile, I was not also convinced of the magnificent beauty of masterpieces such as Maurice Lemaître’s *Un soir au cinéma* (1962), Pierre Clémenti’s *Visa de censure #X* (1967-1975), Daniel Pommereulle’s *Vite* (1970), or Lionel Soukaz’s *Ixe* (1980). These are major works of art, as rich and vital in my opinion as Ronald Nameth’s *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*.

Three major tendencies coexist in the French tradition of expanded cinema. All three feed on rejecting the distinction between the symbolic and the real, and much of their activity centers on the possibility of short-circuiting the gap between the two spheres.

- **The first tendency consists of a technical process of immersion.** Cinema becomes a global environment where images are mobilized to invade bodies and minds. In this instance, the image refuses its condition as a local phenomenon and establishes itself as a concrete reality, in the manner of a temporal monument.

- **The second tendency is a conceptual process of dematerialization.** The image refuses its status as plastic object and turns into psychosomatic energy. In this case there is no reality other than that of the image, which is entirely conceived as a power of psychical investment.

- **The third tendency is characterized by an out-of-body experience, a rapture, an ecstasy.** The image refuses its condition as a reflection and becomes an acting out, or activity itself. In the course of the process, it takes upon itself the modification, the destruction, or even the replacement of the state of the real.

According to such practices (the main but not the only ones, by far), the work of art possesses a performatif power, in the linguistic sense of the term. Performative art is not limited to its establishing of itself as event, be it speculative, visual, sonic, etc.: it asserts a capacity to alter its context. One may question whether this merely constitutes “magical thinking,” a transfer of worship practices into a profane, secular world. Conversely, the question arises of whether something more real, active, and complex than symbolic thinking actually occurs.

### I. PERFORMATIVE ART AS A PROCESS OF IMMERSION

Here the work of art creates a partial or a global environment. There occurs an increase in the properties of the set-up or apparatus (the “dispositif”) through the concrete increase in the scope of tools themselves. I will make three sets of observations about this tradition in France.

**A. Origins**

Without dwelling on the pre-cinematic set-up of the Physiological Station, where Etienne-Jules Marey resorted to 24 cameras to record the path of a horse, let us briefly recall some important stages in this history:

**1896-1899**: Auguste Baron’s invention of the Phototachograph and the Cinématorama, both apparatuses that synchronized image and sound (the latter using images in color) and Louis Regnault’s invention of the Maéorama, a railroad car equipped for screening on three of its
inside walls.

1896-1900: Raoul Grimoin-Sanson develops the Cinéorama for the World Fair because, as he wrote, “The small screen of movie theaters seemed insufficient to me to showcase all the possibilities the new invention offered.” The audience was expected to take its place in the gondola of a balloon in the center of a 360° screen upon which ten synchronized projectors would project images filmed from around the world (Barcelona, the Tunisian desert, Nice, Paris, Brussels, etc.), then tinted. Rather than the question of the effectiveness of such a circular projection, an object of debate among historians, what matters is the aesthetic ambition of Grimoin-Sanson’s project. Shortly after the Lumiére brothers devised the efficient projection system that set the standard for production and diffusion, its opposite was born in this search for a maximal expansion in both technological and quasi-metaphysical terms. “The illusion of reality can be almost complete or, to use better words yet, it is reality itself that is being resuscitated, complete and alive around the spectator, who is thus placed at the very center of the action.”

1899: On the initiative of producer Georges Monca, a screening was featured in a stage play for the first time.

1930: Man Ray’s “White Ball,” created for a party given by the Count and Countess Pecci-Blunt. All party guests were dressed in white, and Man Ray and Lee Miller projected tinted films by Georges Méliès on them while they danced. This constitutes the French origin of VJ-ing. Visual artist Alain Fleischer recently reactualized this practice in Lille, the French city chosen to be the European Cultural Capital for 2004. A celebration was organized, for which Fleischer asked the local population to come dressed in white. With the assistance of his students, he projected all kinds of films on the dancing crowd (mainly Un monde agité / An Agitated World, a film made by him from anonymous shots and fragments of silent movies stored at and restored by the Cinémathèque française). Thus experimental cinema is always a laboratory, but also a repository of lost ideals, as Austrian experimental filmmakers like Gustav Deutsch and Peter Tscherkassky have long known.

1951-52: Five films launch an assault on classical forms, already undergoing accelerated calcification: Jean-Isidore Isou’s le Traité de bave et d’éternité (Treatise of Dribble and Eternity), Gil J. Wolman’s L’Anticoncept, Guy-Ernest Debord’s Hurlements en faveur de Sade (Howls in Sade’s Defence), François Dufrêne’s Tambours du Jugement premier (Drums of the First Judgment), Maurice Lemaître’s Le Film a-t-il déjà commencé ? (Has the film already started?). In turn, these films: fetishize rubbish and the reverse side of cinema (Isou); project a black and white flicker on a sounding balloon (Wolman); “wreak terrorist disorganization by means of the discrepant” (Debord); sacrifice the film for the show; and transform the show into what was not yet called a happening (Lemaître). Their common purpose may be summarized in a sentence from Debord’s Hurlements: “J’ai détruit le cinéma, parce que c’était plus facile que de tuer les passants” (“I destroyed the cinema because it was easier than killing passers-by”). Without their critical energy, cinema would have perpetually remained “l’art le plus en retard” (“the most backward art,” in Lemaître’s words).

B. The Syncinéma and the Supertemporal Cinema

A different use of the set-up appeared after multiplication: displacement. Lettrism situated its experimentations in such a logic, which Isidore Isou called syncinéma. It involved combining the film apparatus with living elements; the author must be present, the audience must participate, the film should be interrupted, etc. Lettrism enacted the critical reintegration of living presence within representation. Accordingly, the work no longer was the film: it was the “séance.” The next phase was supertemporal cinema, “cinéma supertemporel,” in which the film was no longer given prior to the séance but realized by the audience with instructions or
protocols provided by the author. The first two occurrences of supertemporal cinema were in 1952 with *le Film supertemporel ou la salle des idiots* (*The Supertemporal Film or the Room Full of Idiots*) and *Film-Débat* (*Film-Debate*). Since then the Lettrist movement has come up with hundreds of protocols for screening films everywhere except on a white screen or for organizing shows involving everything but the mere projection of moving images.

The medium offered such a possibility and the Lettrist movement first took advantage of it in the supertemporal cinema, of which Isidore Isou formulated the premises. For Isou, every art develops in three stages:

1. The "phase amplique," or the period during which artists look to amplify the powers of their medium.
2. The "phase ciselante" (chiseling phase), where artists proceed to deepen their art; it is a moment of reflexivity.
3. Then comes Lettrism, which joyfully brings a decomposed art back to life.

In a sense, Isou did nothing but implement a brilliant idea put forth by Louis Delluc in 1919, which could stand as the definition for all expanded cinema: "Cinema is a progression towards the suppression of art that exceeds art, being life itself."

So as to achieve such a progression, the cinematic set-up has to be displaced and mixed with living data and elements. The work is no longer the film, but the show where all material and human elements have to move. Lettrism is the critical reintegration of a concrete presence within representation, a process named "synincinéma" (from the Greek "sun"). For instance, at the beginning of Lemaitre's first film, *le Film est déjà commence?,* a description of the show is offered: the audience must wait in line outside, a projection of Griffith's *Intolerance* must take place in the hall, people living in the building must throw water and various objects on the heads of the people waiting in line, there must be provocations and insults, the director of the theater must call the police... As to Isidore Isou, he invented two concepts: cinéma ciselant, which calls for ruptures in film screenings, by any means. The film must be stopped, then resume or, for example, be stopped and replaced by another one without any explanation provided to the audience.

The second concept is supertemporal cinema, which relies on the principle that the film, or the show, are not already given for the audience to come to and attend; rather, that the audience has to produce them, using material elements handed out for the occasion. The first two occurrences of supertemporal cinema were in 1952 with performances titled *le Film supertemporel ou la salle des idiots* and *Film-Débat.* Here is what the Lettrists called the protocol of the film: "Ladies and gentlemen, you will find on these shelves, among other artistic items, bits of films, notebooks, small canvasses and scores that you may consider as mechanical, cinematic tools. You are invited to act upon these frames according to the principles of the supertemporal aesthetic system, to inscribe and shape their elements."

Maurice Lemaître’s *Montage* (1978-1990) encapsulates the aesthetics of supertemporal cinema. *Montage* is a performance made with aleatory found footage projected onto a screen made with newspapers, while the audience reads imaginary scripts distributed by Lemaître himself. At the end, Lemaître burns the screen. A text both enthusiastic and comical, by Marc'O, at the same time realized and gave an amusing version of the Lettrist propositions at the very moment of their emergence. "Première manifestation d’un cinéma nucléaire - Diagramme, O. du cinema" ("First manifestation of a nuclear cinema -- Diagram, O. of the Cinema") was published in *Ion* -- a Lettrist periodical directed by Marc'O under his actual name, Marc-Gilbert Guillaumin—in April 1952. In the text Marc'O suggests that each and every concrete cinematographic parameter be reinvented (he uses the term "le bouleversement,” the upturning or turning upside down), from
the theater to the projection booth, temperature, screen, seats, the atmosphere inside as well as outside the theater. This particularly aims to displace the “receiving element,” that is, the “spectator in person.” Marc’O also successively put forth the invention of the aquarium-cinema (an aquarium full of fish is placed between the screen and the spectators), the electoral cinema (which “calls upon the spectator as an essential principle of mise-en-scène”), the tracking-shot cinema (seats move in the course of the screening), the nautical sport cinema (which “introduces sport as a primary principle of mise-en-scène”), the merry-go-round cinema (a circular, moving room with eight projectors with which Marc’O revives Grimoin-Sanson’s grand project), etc. In all these instances, the “receiving apparatus,” or spectator, must be prepared and transformed. In a critical tone that always verges on the burlesque, Marc’O goes through a list of practical examples: “The drunk or drugged-up spectator,” “the spectator with a vision blurred by distorting glasses,” the spectator whose glasses get changed every thirty seconds, the spectator “altered by the absorption of stimulants,” heated up on a seat to the point of torture, frozen on a block of ice.

Such propositions largely anticipate what the protest culture of the 1960s was to take very seriously, just as the Surrealists, along with all the doctrine avant-gardes in their wake, had read Lautréamont’s parodic propositions literally, particularly his famous statement that “poetry should be done not by one but by all.” As regards Marc’O, his “chain of disruptions” was never to stop again. For the record, in 1967, during the theatrical run of Les Idoles at the Bilboquet theater, he offered two free tickets to any spectator entering the theater riding a motorcycle.

C. The Work of Visual Artists

The end of the 1960s saw an explosion of initiatives linking plastic arts and the cinematographic apparatus. Let us mention, among other instances:

1. In 1968, Christian Boltanski presented The Impossible Life of Christian Boltanski at the Ranelaglgh Theater. The audience was invited to discover still images in large boxes set on wheels, which means that the audience and boxes, not the images, were the moving elements.

2. In 1973 Robert Filliou and Bob Guiny created an erotic film, Faites-le vous-même (Do it yourself), for the first Copenhagen festival. The driving principle was that orders were given to an audience plunged into the dark: “take your neighbor by the neck,” “put your hand on his knee,” “stroke his hair,” and so on.

3. In 1975 Pedro de Andrade created two films, Cinéma Corps (Cinema Body) and Film Saboté (Sabotaged Film). Cinéma Corps relied on eight projectors attached with ropes and belts to the body of a spectator (stomach, legs or anywhere else). Film Saboté is both a cinema event and a critical piece written by Patrice Kirchofer. The 1975 show was a performance in which the event was the impossibility of projecting a film. The critical piece from 2000 is a description of the show by Kirchhofer in a text where all first letters of sentences form a subtext that is an insult thrown at a famous French experimental cinema critic (“A. A. Sudre est un gros con”, or “A. A. Sudre is a big bastard”).

4. In 1978 Giovanni Martedi began a series titled MD (“Matérialisme Dialectique l’art,” or “Dialectic Materialism”). Its action consisted of projecting the beam of a projector loaded with any film-- “found in a trash can” or “ready made”-- onto a rotating circular mirror attached to a drill. The mirror thus reflected the images all over the space by flashes and fragments. This performance can be considered as a violent and moving version of Valie Export’s Abstract Film Number One (1967-68).

5. Since 1968 Jean-Pierre Bouyxou has been at work on a film titled Graphyty. It is not exactly a
ready-made; rather, I would call it a “readystroyed,” since Bouyxou has been scratching and coloring by chance all kinds of found footage with various graffiti such as “vomit cinema,” female and male sexual organs, little creatures, and anarchist slogans. He has projected it everywhere in France with all kinds of found music, but has put the film together so that it would always break in the projector, causing interruptions during the screenings and irritation in the audience. Graphyty was one hour long at its longest, and now lasts twenty minutes. The Cinémathèque Française has recently restored it accompanied by beautiful African music, much like that used by Jean Rouch in Cimetièrè dans la falaise (1951) and later in Peter Kubelka’s Adebar (1957). One can thus see this masterpiece of sheer anarchistic and infantile rage appended with an inscription reading “This film has been restored thanks to the French Ministry of Culture,” as if its reference that it was “not dedicated to the memory of André Bazin” were not enough.

6. As a transition towards and an introduction to the second part of this essay, I would add two pairs of great artists. In 1971, poets Michel Bulteau and Patrick Geoffroy made Main Line, a magnificent poem about heroin which Henri Michaux highly praised, contrasting it to Eric Duvivier’s 1963 Images du Monde Visionnaire, which illustrated Michaux’s own pieces about drugs. During a show of Main Line, Patrick Geoffroy, the protagonist of the film, took blood from his arm with a syringe and splattered it onto the white screen. The film was then projected on the white and red carnal screen.

7. Finally, I will only allude to the major body of work of two important artists, Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki (around 60 films), who have theorized and invented “corporeal cinema,” a cinema of ritual that expands its reach through a resort to other media (videos, stills, performed music).

II. PERFORMATIVE ART AS A PROCESS OF DEMATERIALIZATION AND SOMATIZATION

The historical and anthropological model of such an artistic praxis is the shaman. The image is inside the body, the body becomes a laboratory of images, and the camera is there to record the act of possession. This ritual praxis through which cinema supposedly affiliated itself to ancestral ceremonies became such a major field during the 1970s that it crystallized into a very typical aesthetic narrative form within the regular avant-garde cinema.

A. Infinitesimal Cinema

After the supertemporal cinema, in 1956 Isidore Isou invented the “infinitesimal cinema” with a piece titled Introduction to the Imaginary Aesthetics, which in France marked the beginnings of conceptual art: an art whose purpose was no longer the production of objects or forms but only of ideas, acts and principles. It both aims to critique the ideological division between art and life and to remove the work of art from the commercial circuits of capitalistic fetishization, a fetishization which transforms art into a sheer emblem of economic surplus value. Isou, Maurice Lemaître, and Roland Sabatier were the main practitioners of this aesthetic of the inappropriable. Let’s examine four samples from infinitesimal pieces by Sabatier (there are countless others):

- **Respirez** (1968, Breathe): “The film consists in a distribution of sheets of paper on which is written ‘breathe’. The film is your respiration.”

- **Ecoulement** (1969, Flow): “Announce to the audience : ‘Gather in a deep silence to think about the possibilities of flow of sounds and images that can’t exist or can’t be imagined.’”
Regardez ailleurs (1971, Look Somewhere Else): “The audience is invited not to look at the work or at its execution.”

A Super-commercial Film (1976): “The audience gathers, not to see a movie, but to proceed to exchange money, to buy and sell, for real or in imagination, everything that they bring with them in the theater.”

In these cases, the theater becomes a space inappropriate for film consumption. The overall principle is that life and creation blend together, but such creativity no longer has anything to do with the production of cultural artifacts. Instead it goes into the invention of non-reproducible, non-appropriable gestures—purely critical and often very funny gestures. In 1985, Maurice Lemaître transcribed into film some similar gestures of his own invention from the 1970s in Films Imaginaires.

B. The Shamanic Performance: Ben Vautier

Another well-known French artist, a disciple of both Lemaître and Fluxus, is Ben Vautier, who specializes in the occupation of the public sphere. Ben has worked with two main media, his writing and his body. With his writing he has “directed” what he calls “My Ten Films,” some of which I quote here:

“My first film. During the 1963 Cannes Film Festival I put a poster on the walls that read, ‘Ben, creator of the total art, presents and signs his extraordinary film City of Cannes 1963. Movie created through the invention of a total reality.
Screening locations: Everywhere.
Screen : Your Eyes.
Author : (The Whole) Ben.
Cast : You.
Music : (The Live) Ben.
Mise-en-Scene : (Ben).
Length : Unlimited.
Color : Natural.
For this film Ben requests the First Prize for Creation and will authenticate you as total actors (certificate upon request).’”

“My second film is made up of oral and written texts only. Between each text the movie is white, black or grey. Here are some of the texts:
1. You shouldn’t have come.
2. You paid too much.
3. You’re gonna be bored.
4. Nobody will get reimbursed.
5. Look at your neighbor, it’s funnier.
6. Are there beautiful women in the theater?
7. Have you seen Pierrot le Fou?”

“My sixth film: to pick any movie by chance and see it.”
“My seventh film: to go and see only the words ‘The End’ in all movies.”
“My eighth film: not to go to the movies themselves but only stand in line for them.”
“My ninth film: to sit on the first row, stare at other spectators during the whole movie and ask them at the end, ‘Did you like me?’”

Ben also had some of his performances and actions in Nice filmed. He commented on them in a hilarious voice-over monologue that he added in the 1980s. (Robert Filliou and Bob Guiny’s
erotic film, Faites-le vous-même could also be placed in this category.) The practice of performances and happenings was so emblematic at the end of the 1960s that it became a model for some narrative films, particularly for an avant-garde movement called Zanzibar.

C. The Performance Turned into a Narrative Form

The producer and leader of the Zanzibar group was Sylvina Boissonnas. She made only one film, simply titled Un Film, in 1969, an absolute masterpiece so singular and emotional that she has forbidden any screening of it. I have had the great privilege to see it; it is the most simple set-up one could imagine. Sylvina herself, wearing a white dress, stands still at the bottom of a round vat with the camera pointed at her at a right angle. The film is made of sequence shots of ten minutes each (the equivalent of a reel) over the course of which tons of water, sand, stones are poured into the vat, burying her for long minutes at the end of each of the shots. For Sylvina Boissonnas, this was an image of pure depression; for the viewer, it is one of the greatest performances in the history of cinema, one in which the author risked her life several times. It was filmed in 35mm. by Armand Marco, a cinematographer who also worked with Godard and the Dziga-Vertov group.

Other members of the Zanzibar group used the same narrative form, a performance captured in a sequence shot: Patrick Deval in Acéphale (1968) and Jackie Raynal's Deux Fois (1969) are examples. And Philippe Garrel, the most famous member of the group, experimented with the form through the establishment of a double performance, that of actors acting, and the camera in sometimes unbelievably sophisticated tracking shots. La Concentration (1968), le Révélateur (1968), la Cicatrice Intérieure (The Inner Scar, 1972), le Berceau de Cristal (The Crystal Cradle, 1975) and Un Ange Passe (1975) are all structured around this type of alliance in which the cameraman takes as many risks as the actor and where suddenly the camera becomes alive (to the point of hypostasis, as it becomes a character-in le Révélateur for instance).

Musical performance was occasionally added, as is the case with Jean-Pierre Kalfon's band les Jeunes Rebelles, who accompany the tracking shot of Christ chased by a horde of horsemen in le Lit de la vierge (1969). Its sequence shot had a strong influence on one of the unknown masterpieces of the 1970s, Yvan Lagrange's Tristan et Iseult (1972). This large, costly production financed by Pierre Cardin was presented at the 1972 Cannes Film Festival. The music was composed by Magma and was filmed by Bruno Nuytten. Structured around the aesthetics of psychedelic performance, it constitutes an unexpected link between Garrel's La Cicatrice Intérieure and Akira Kurosawa's Ran.

Let us also mention Jean-Daniel Pollet and his film Le Sang (1971), another work banned from public exhibition by its own author because it involves a ritual of sheep slaughtering. Jean-Pierre Lajournade, an anarchist filmmaker who today is scandalously forgotten, realized four great performance films between 1968 and 1970, le Joueur de Quilles (The Skittle Player, 1968), Cinéma cinéma (1969), le Droit d'asile (1969, The Right of Asylum, censored for "mental toxicity"), and la Fin des Pyrénées (1970). Lajournade greatly influenced Philippe Garrel, who was his assistant when he worked for television. And Jean-Luc Godard, of course, in the famous tracking shots of Weekend (1967), British Sounds (1969) and many other films. For some of these artists, performance was not only a way to insist on concrete presence, aesthetic danger, and contemplative duration; it was also a local actualization of the third dimension of expanded cinema, the exit from art and the affirmation of sensuous activity itself.

III. PERFORMATIVE ART AS A PROCESS OF EXIT AND ACTING OUT

The historical origin of this process could be traced back to the act of Georges Demeny,
Etienne-Jules Marey’s assistant at the Physiological Station, when he broke off from his employer, stole the camera he himself had built, and brought it home to film, not military bodies but smiling women, drinking men, and magicians at work. His desire was to record daily life in its fleeting and uncoordinated appearances, not to understand, rationalize and train the body within the framework of scientific endeavors. This initial gesture of a diversion of the apparatus, whose intention was not directly political, spontaneously achieved one of the most political ideals ascribed to cinema and art in general: expanding life itself. A major expression of such an ideal was formulated by Guy Debord in one of the first manifestoes of the Situationist International in 1957, “Rapport sur la construction des situations” (“Report on the Construction of Situations”): “A revolutionary action of culture could not have as a purpose to translate or to explain life, but to expand it. The passions, compensations and habits produced by the exploitation of man must die with it. We must define new desires.” For that generation, art had to “change the world,” as Jean-Jacques Lebel summed it up, and one of the tools to achieve such a “here and now” was the happening. In the field of cinema this utopian attitude, animated by the wish to liberate the pleasure principle, was epitomized by a Situationist formula from 1966: “Total decolonization of everyday life.”

A. “Décoloniser la vie quotidienne”

French filmmakers emblematic of this outlook are Etienne O’Leary and Pierre Clémenti. O’Leary was a Franco-Canadian artist who made three films between 1966 and 1968, Chromo Sud, Daily Tripper and Homeo. They are film diaries in 8 and 16mm, in color and with fast-paced editing and multiple superimpositions. One of O’Leary’s closest friends, Pierre Clémenti, shared these stylistic traits and produced one of the most intense masterpieces of the time, Visa de censure n°X in 1967. He would usually perform live with his band during screenings of his films. Such stylistic freedom, emphasis on pleasure, and the liberation of the senses inspired many filmmakers: Jean-Jacques Lebel made a film, l’État normal (1967, The Normal State), now lost, which was the recording of an orgiastic happening under LSD. Michel Auder, who married Andy Warhol’s superstar Viva, made some “happening films” with her, in between her collaborations with Warhol and Jack Smith. One of them was first titled Cleopatra (1969), then Viva Viva, and was shot in Rome with Taylor Mead, Nico and Christopher Walken.

Let’s also mention Jean-Michel Barjol’s What a Flash (1972), recording a happening of gigantic proportions, with 50 people locked in a large studio for a whole week. Barjol remains known in France for co-directing Le Cochon with Jean Eustache (1970), a documentary poetic film in the tradition of Georges Franju’s Le Sang des Bêtes, that constitutes the realistic pure recording of an ancestral agricultural practice. Thanks to Le Cochon, the psychedelic rituals of liberation and the ordinary rituals of work suddenly link together, in an apogee of Bazinian orthodoxy. In a funny porn movie, Amours Collectives (1976), director Jean-Pierre Bouyxou can be heard and seen giving directions to the actors and trying to take part in the sexual play (which features an actress reaching an orgasm while reciting Jean Racine’s play Phaedra). Bouyxou also made a film with the famous erotic visual artist and performer Pierre Molinier, Satan bouche en coin (1967-68; a French phrase that literally means “Satan with a grimacing mouth” but also sounds like “It leaves you speechless”).

One of the plastically most radical films of the period was Serge Bard’s Fun and Games for Everyone (1968), a mere recording in sequence shots of a private view of an Olivier Mosset exhibit in which Mosset himself, Caroline de Bendern, Jean Mascolo, Barbet Schroeder, and Salvador Dalí appear. The film was edited and exhibited in negative with an interminable layer of rock music serving as its soundtrack; it metamorphoses the everyday into a black sun. In a way, all these psychedelic or parapsychedelic works found their conceptual conclusion with the protocol invented by Maurice Lemaître, the concept of “hyperautobiographie,” or one’s own life in its entirety declared as art.
B. The Guerrilla Weapons

Rooted in the anarchist tradition that has run throughout French cinematography since Emile Cohl, leaning on the musings of Apollinaire and the Surrealists, reactualized by the example of Fluxus, psychedelic and anti-authoritarian works are also prefigured by a protocol invented by Isidore Isou in 1951, for what he called “the three-dimensional novel:” “Isou wants to make great exhibits in which an action, beginning in a bar, will move on to another one and from there, to the streets, to other shops and galleries. The novel will become a national feast.” This is one of the sources for the Situationist “drifts” already inscribed in Dadaist and Surrealist traditions. However, Debord and his friends gave this type of action a political dimension, of which I can only indicate some important stages.

o In 1960 Jean-Jacques Lebel and Alain Jouffroy organized “L’Anti-Procès,” which both means “anti-trial” and “anti-process,” a first exhibit that led to the creation of the Free Expression Festival. The idea was to inscribe the happening within a political context of contestation against the Algerian war and later the Vietnam war.

o During the 1960s Lebel, along with ex-Lettrists such as François Dufrène, visual artists such as Robert Filliou and Daniel Pommereulle, and directors and filmmakers such as Alexandre Jodorowsky, organized many scandalous happenings in Italy, Belgium and France. One of the most interesting outcomes of the period was Daniel Pommereulle’s Vite (1970), a dance of execration during which the artist travels through deserts and otherworldly places symbolically opposed to the West, in search of gestures, rhythms, connections and sensations severed from any rationalist roots (exorcism, repetition, discontinuity, access to the impossible). Had Rimbaud made films in Abyssinia, he would have shot Vite. In Vite the body of the artist is a completely political organism, vomiting colonization, a counterpart of what Jean Rouch’s les Maîtres Fous showed to the West in 1955.

Conversely, many artists tried to turn artistic gestures into guerrilla weapons. Other acting-outs, “passages à l’acte” from art world to a directly political sphere included:

o 1967 and after. Following the model of the Greek Cynics who heckled Emperor Alexander, some artists specialized in the direct interpellation of public authorities. Maurice Lemaître’s L’Ayant-Droit (1991, The Legal Successor) tells of the search for a visual archive that would provide evidence of Isidore Isou and Maurice Lemaître’s interpellation of General de Gaulle during a press conference on May 16, 1967. The following year, in the Lettre ouverte à un adjoint de Malraux (Open Letter to an Assistant of André Malraux), the Situationists demanded the transformation of museums of modern art, arts centres, the streets and parks into “fields of permanent creativity.” This claim appeared alongside the “creation of a world citizenship” and “the suppression of private as well as state property.” Jean-Pierre Kalfon’s jacket in les Idoles (1967), which is decorated with giant portraits of John F. Kennedy, may be read as an interpellation of the ultimate Emperor of spectacle, who definitively transformed the elected official into a star and politics into an industrial media enterprise, down to the very event of his death.

o 1968. The most spectacular artistic action was the occupation of the Théâtre de l’Odéon, known as the “storming of the Odéon,” prepared by Jean-Jacques Lebel and carried out (among others) by such female standard bearers as Zanzibar members Jackie Raynal and Caroline de Bendern. In his book Cours camarade! Le vieux monde est derrière toi (1968, Run Comrade! The Old World Is Behind You), Jean-Louis Brau describes in detail this big political happening and reveals that a previous plan involved the occupation of the Musée du Louvre, the confiscation of the most famous paintings, and their use as shields against the police. “Mona
Lisa,” as well as Veronese, Holbein, Goya and Ingres paintings had been carefully measured and the plan consisted of taking them around Europe, threatening to destroy them to test the commitment of governments towards the Fine Arts. Such an action would indeed have instituted the work of art as a radical political weapon.

o 1969 and after. Some artists transformed verbal interpellation into direct action. Pierre Pinoncelli, for instance, threw red paint onto the official car of André Malraux, shouting “Down with Chagall!” and thereby inventing the cultural terrorist act that was to have a prolific lineage in the 1970s. In 1975, Pinoncelli was involved in a bank hold-up in Nice to protest against the winning of the city and Cape Town, then the capital of the apartheid.

o 1972. Jean-Louis Brau published les Armes de la guérilla (Guerrilla Weapons), a strictly factual and pedagogical book on guerrilla strategies, techniques and weapons. It is the equivalent in book form of the descriptive shots by Eisenstein in Strike explaining how to assemble a machine gun or of Holger Meins’s 1967 film that gives instructions on making a Molotov cocktail. The next alternative is simply to move on to the armed struggle, as did Holger Meins himself with the German Red Army Faction, or filmmaker Adachi Masao with the Japanese Red Army or, in France, Michèle Firk with the Guatemala Revolutionary Armed Forces. However, as Jean-Louis Brau nicely mentions in the conclusion of his book, “let us hope that this panorama, besides its documentary interest, will make it clear that the resort to armed struggle must not be the result of an intellectual decision.”

I want to bring this exposition to a conclusion with a detail and a masterpiece. The detail is a shot in Godard’s Masculin Féminin. During the screening of an obscene film, the character played by Jean-Pierre Léaud leaves the theater, runs into the projection room, gives a lecture about projection standards, then goes into the theater’s backyard and begins to spray paint a slogan on the wall. He makes a spelling mistake on the name “De Gaule,” but can’t finish because the spray seems out of paint and the camera seems out of film. We too have to leave the theaters and transform our lives into political expressions, but most of all, the aesthetic of the shot itself is an act; because it’s not finished, and one can hear Godard shouting, it is like a shred of life into the film syntax. In a way it encapsulates the graffiti by Ben, Bouyxou, by the Situationists . . . Graffiti are a main articulation between art and politics.

The masterpiece -- Ixe by Lionel Soukaz -- concludes the period of expanded cinema from the 1960s and the 1970s. It is the “Ixe” of the X rating and it was made as a pure provocation against censorship, because Soukaz’s previous film, Race d’Ep, had been x-ed, despite letters of support from Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Roland Barthes. Instinctively Soukaz made a film involving all possible grounds for censorship: heroin fixes, sodomy, zoophilia, pedophilia, blasphemy. . . Ixe, in which of course the artist plays himself, is the ultimate lampoon and means much to me. Very recently the Services des Archives du Film restored it in its original two-screen version (transferred onto 35mm: the “good” version of Ixe requires a double 16mm projection). Lionel Soukaz attended the restoration of his doomed film at the site of the archives and videotaped it, shaking with emotion. And yet, if from time to time the video rendition gets blurred, it is because the film’s editing pace is too swift for it.
The French New Wave was a film movement from the 1950s and 60s and one of the most influential in cinema history. Also known as "Nouvelle Vague," it gave birth to a new kind of cinema that was highly self-aware and revolutionary to mainstream filmmaking. A group of French critics, who wrote for the journal, Cahiers du Cinema, believed films had lost their ability to capture true human emotion and "lacked sincerity." They felt the films were out of step with how people actually live. There were quite a few notable French film directors who were part of the movement, including Fra The French New Wave was a group of trailblazing directors who exploded onto the film in the late 1950's revolutionizing cinematic conventions. With an emphasis on invigorating cinematic narrative, French New Wave Cinema rejected traditional linear tropes of storytelling and created a new language of film. Inspired by both depictions of the common, lower class workers of Italian Neorealism and Hollywood's beloved "Golden Age," the French New Wave became a vibrant influence on international cinema which is still being felt today. French Cinema: a Students Guide - Free ebook download as PDF File (.pdf), Text File (.txt) or read book online for free. Phil Powrie and Keith Reader. As the post-war industry expanded, even if never recovering its hegemony, film magazines were established and a star system took root. If serials seemed to remain extremely popular, with some 60 of them produced in the first five years of the 1920s, there was an extraordinary variety of films, including the most important development for many French film historians, a film avant-garde, linked to writers and intellectuals. Improvised notes on French expanded cinema. June 2005 · Millennium Film Journal. N Brenez. Read more. Article. The Art of Looking: Women and French Cinema F391: W302. Lesley Walker. Read more. This configuration showed not only the multidisciplinary approach necessary in research on the cinema but also the new context of collaboration between conservation, research, and the training of young researchers. In 2008-2009 there should be master's and doctoral students working on several of the selected collections. The collections in question come from the Triangle Film Corporation, from the decorators Max and Douy, Serge Pimnoff, cinema photographers Georges Pierre, Raymond Cauchetier and Vincent Rossell, from the scriptwriter Lucie Lichtig for the scenario of Lola Montes. Classic French cinema adhered to the principles of strong narrative, creating what Godard described as an oppressive and deterministic aesthetic of plot. In contrast, New Wave filmmakers made no attempts to suspend the viewer's disbelief; in fact, they took steps to constantly remind the viewer that a film is just a sequence of moving images, no matter how clever the use of light and shadow. Finally, the French New Wave, as the European modern Cinema, is focused on the technique as style itself.