

Give me a Brain!

Clash Continuum Senses of Cerebral Screens

Content: In contemporary cinema we no longer look through characters' eyes, we enter directly the architecture of their brain worlds. This program wants to trace how cinema has developed as brain screens in a clash/continuum with films from the French New Wave. Departing from Godard and Resnais, "Give me a Brain!" (a reference to Deleuze) investigates our changed relationship to the brain as neurocinema, neuroaesthetics and neuropower in conjunction with digital screen culture. Compared to the classic conception of the brain as disembodied rational agent, the image of the brain has become visceral, emotional and has made irrationality as its zero degree. Memory and temporal experience, affect and belief are the most salient elements of our modern brain screens that will be explored in different "chambers" of the Rietveld, where artists, filmmakers, scientists and philosophers take you on a ride through our mental scapes and screens.

Clash: Godard and Resnais broke in the sixties with laws of classical filmmaking presenting the body or the brain as source of the cinematic screen "story." Godard's bodily gestures and postures, his explicit use of colors (blood is red paint) and repetitive car accidents had as a starting point the body, often quite literally clashing bodies. Resnais on the other hand has always been interested in mental processes, the experience of time and memory (where were you last year?). Godard's and Resnais' cinematic screens seem to clash, not just with previous filmmaking traditions, but, by departing from either the body or the brain, also with each other. *Rive Droite, Rive Gauche*, like the right and left hemispheres of the brain. With *Histoire du Cinéma* in the 1990s Godard seems to have turned more explicitly into cerebral realms: "Of the body he keeps the brain, which can become a globe, a moon, an egg or a halo." (Luc Mollet in *Luc on Jean-Luc*) But in all these neuro-images that no longer seem to oppose the body, how do we use our senses to make sense? How does cinema make the invisible visible?

Continuum: While initially having very different departure points, Godard and Resnais both seem at the vanguard of our contemporary digital age, making a kind of digital cinema without digits that seems to be connected to the changed image of the brain. Godard's frayed aesthetics in his early work, fragmentary collage style and personal presence in much of his later work resonates with the DIY-attitude of participatory culture, the mash-up and personalized news collections: "His-Toi-re" according to the "Daily Me" of the blogger. Resnais' non-linear narration and his enigmatic invitations to viewers to fill in the gaps anticipates similarly aspects of contemporary digital culture. How does "digital culture" form a continuum with our "new brains"? And in all this democratization of culture, where do we continue to find the artist?

Curator: Patricia Pisters is professor of media culture and film studies and chair of the department of Media Studies of the University of Amsterdam. She published on Hitchcock, Deleuze, film-philosophy, popular culture and political cinema. Her book *The Neuro-Image* is forthcoming. In July 2010 she organized the Third International Deleuze Studies Conference in Amsterdam on the connections between art, science and philosophy, including an exhibition and international public debate on this topic (www.deleuze-amsterdam.nl) and <http://thesmoothandthetriated.wordpress.com>.