Engines of the Historical Imagination: Towards a Phenomenology of Cinema as Non-Art

Vinzenz Hediger

Abstract
Combining Jean-Pierre Meunier's notion of film-souvenir, which originally only referred to home movies, with Daniel Yacavone's phenomenology of film form, this contribution sketches the outline of a phenomenology of film experience which covers the entirety of what Eric de Kuyper proposes to call the "vast-domain of cinema as non-art," a domain that includes orphan films, ephemeral films and other forms of utility films.

Keywords: Utility films; home movies; ephemeral films; historical experience; Jean-Pierre Meunier

The relation between film and the end of bourgeois culture is not so much captured in the term distraction [Zerstreuung] in which, after all, capitalism protects itself from its loss of metaphysical elevation. It is captured rather in what are interruptions in the production process: in a boredom that protects itself against organization, in a form of leisure in waiting.

‒ Heide Schlüpmann

I sincerely hope we can avoid the trap of auteurism this time around.

‒ Rick Prelinger

I.

In a recent essay, Daniel Yacavone notes that thanks to the works of Dudley Andrew, Vivian Sobchack, Jennifer Barker, and others, phenomenology has once again moved to the center of the debate in film theory, which it
occupied before the advent of semiotics and post-structuralism. Yacavaone then takes Vivan Sobchack to task for focusing her phenomenology of film experience on the medium rather than the form of film. Sobchack, according to Yacavone, “advocates replacing a conception of cinematic experience rooted in the idea of filmmaker(s) as expressing subject(s) with that of a film itself as an ‘expressing subject and object.’” By contrast, Yacavone highlights the distinction between medium and form to argue for a phenomenology of film form that reinstates artistic expression, and with it an auteurist approach to film, as a primary concern.

While I am profoundly sympathetic with Yacavone’s focus on form, what I want to propose here are the outlines for a phenomenology of film form for which artistic expression is, at best, a secondary concern. My interest is in what Eric de Kuyper, in a lucid critique of a conventional film historiography driven by categories like ‘auteur,’ ‘nation,’ and ‘style’ inherited from art history and literary studies, has called the “vast domain of cinema as non-art,”; in other words, the type of film that has variously been described as “ephemeral film” (by Rick Prelinger), “useful cinema” (by Haidee Wasson and Charles Acland), and “utility film” (by Yvonne Zimmermann and myself), which includes corporate films, science and research films, educational films, and home movies. Precisely because these films constitute such a “vast domain“, such an important part of film history, we need an “aesthetic of film history,” one that gives its “due to film as an aesthetic, and not just an art phenomenon,” as De Kuyper wrote almost a quarter of a century ago. The wide availability of utility films in digital repositories today lends De Kuyper’s call for an aesthetic of film history with renewed urgency.

Jean-Pierre Meunier’s The Structures of the Film Experience (Les Structures de l’expérience filmique: L’identification filmique) can contribute to such an aesthetic. Meunier’s book was one of the first treatises on film aesthetics, if not the first, to include home movies under the rubric of ‘film.’ While Meunier’s choice of examples suggests that he was neither a cinéphile in the classical sense – his corpus includes films by non-canonical genre directors like Philippe Broca and James Bond movies – nor very concerned with the problem of artistic expression, his principal interest is in fiction films. Borrowing a triad of concepts from Sartre’s The Imaginary (L’Imaginaire) to distinguish between three major attitudes of film-viewing and three modes of film experience – the fiction attitude, the documentary attitude, and the home-movie, or film-souvenir, attitude – he considers home movies almost by accident. But that accident has consequences: Meunier extends the field of film aesthetics to include the entire domain of cinema as non-art.
Incidentally, in 1968, as Meunier was readying his book for print, the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) net, the US military’s predecessor of the internet, took shape and Sol Worth developed the project of a democratized ethnography, at the heart of which he envisioned a video-sharing platform creating a “world where symbolic forms created by one inhabitant are instantaneously available to all other inhabitants.” Just as Meunier set out to expand the horizon of film theory, the outlines of the contemporary digital ecology emerged.

In this contribution, I want to argue that we can develop the outlines of a phenomenology of cinema as non-art by combining Meunier’s concept of film-souvenir with Yacavone’s phenomenology of film form. In a first step, I want to restate the challenge such a phenomenology poses, particularly to Yacavone’s notion of form. In a second step, I discuss the experience of cinema as non-art and argue that, because of their lack of inherent interest, utility films refer viewers to their ‘thrownness’ (Geworfenheit), or, in less Heideggerian terms, to the limits of their personal and situated knowledge. Utility films thus work as virtual film-souvenirs and engines of the historical imagination. In a third step, I return to the problem of form and argue that disunity of form is what defines utility films as aesthetic devices. Incidentally, this also makes them a paradigm for an aesthetic of film history.

II.

Based on a rereading of Merleau-Ponty’s seminal 1945 essay “Film and the New Psychology” and the passages dedicated to cinema in “Art and the World of Perception” from 1961, Daniel Yacavone argues that cinema’s aesthetic potential lies in creating a “reflexive, knowledgeable, and sensitive consciousness” of the fundamental process of lived perception. In that sense, “narrative cinema made and experienced as art largely shares in [the] same dynamics as modern painting.” For narrative cinema to be art and for the fundamental process of lived perception to become the object of a reflexive, knowledgeable consciousness, the presence of an auteur is required. Yacavone speaks of a “three-term, lived relation” between “two (or more) actual human subjects – the viewer and the filmmaker(s) – and one symbolic and communicative, as well as highly expressive object, i.e. the cinematic work of art as and when experienced.” For this three-term, lived relation to result in the experience of art, the expressive object of film has to conform to certain standards. “The primary criterion for cinematic art,” Yacavone writes, paraphrasing Merleau-Ponty, “consists in the successful
creation of a distinctly aesthetic cohesiveness and expressive holism of formal and temporal (rhythmic) structure.” The auteur is the guarantor of “expressive holism”; expressive holism enables cinema as art, which in turn is the focus of a phenomenological aesthetics of film.

The medium-form distinction thus aligns with the distinction between art and non-art. This considerably enlarges the already vast domain of cinema as non-art. Stanley Cavell once wrote that the question was not whether cinema could be art, but why it was spared the fate of becoming one for so long. Only with the advent of the nouvelle vague, Cavell argues, did cinema acquire a consciousness of its own history and thus become an art in the modern sense. Like Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson, and like Bazin, who attributed the greatness of classical Hollywood cinema to the “genius of the system” rather than individual auteurs, Cavell understood Hollywood cinema as a system of conventions comparable to Greek temple architecture, i.e. as an authorless art.

We can argue that Hollywood cinema achieves ‘expressive holism’ even without an auteur figure protruding into the viewer’s consciousness at every turn. But there can be no doubt that the films at the center of Eric de Kuyper’s thinking about an aesthetic of film history do not satisfy Yacavone’s criterion of formal unity. Film archives typically include numerous unidentified or unidentifiable fragments. As deputy director of the Nederlands Filmmuseum in the 1990s, De Kuyper worked with Peter Delpeut and Mark-Paul Meyer to compile these “ruins of finished works,” as he called them, into so-called “Bits and Pieces” reels. A continuing series, “Bits and Pieces” now consists of 623 fragments on 56 reels of 300 meters. They are screened in the film museum cinema and at festivals, as well as lent and sold to other archives and institutions.

The legal term for these “Bits and Pieces” is ‘orphan film.’ It classifies films as ‘abandonware,’ i.e. as material that has been abandoned by its owners and/or copyright holders or that is of unknown or unlocatable ownership. Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White describe orphan films as “any sort of films that have survived but have no commercial interests to pay the costs of their preservation.” This description also covers the majority of utility films, i.e. films made for specific occasions such as fairs or shareholder meetings. Now collected in dedicated archives such as the Italian Archivio Nazionale del Cinema d’Impresa in Ivrea near Turin or the Prelinger collection (most of which is available online at www.archive.org), such films lost their value even in the eyes of the corporations and institutions which commissioned them once their mission was complete. Home movies, which can also be classified as utility films in that they were made to record specific occasions for a limited audience, turn into orphan
films if and when they are abandoned by the people who made them and
sold on flea markets or on eBay.

Scholars like Florian Hoof have studied the role of utility films in the
emergence and consolidation of industrial organizations in the nineteenth
and twentieth centuries. Others, like Alexandra Schneider, have provided
the outlines of a theory of practice of home-movie filmmaking by looking
for stylistic patterns in random film samples and reconstructing production
histories from biographical cues. 14

What is still missing is an aesthetic of utility films, an aesthetic of film
history in the sense of De Kuyper. The real object of film history, argues
Pierre Sorlin, is the event of projection and the experience of the screening. 15
Projection alone does not endow the “Bits and Pieces” with the ‘expressive
holism’ that would turn them into works of art according to Yacavone’s
criterion. Rather, it highlights the character of many of these films as
fragments and ‘ruins of works.’ Fragments and ruins have, of course, long
been a concern of aesthetics. Commenting on Stendahl’s observation that
the Colosseum in decay is more beautiful than it was in its original glory,
Hartmut Böhme writes: “Ruins show a precarious balance of preserved form
and decay, nature and history, violence and peace, memory and present,
mourning and longing for redemption, which no intact edifice or object of
art achieves.” 16 In that spirit, we can argue that a phenomenology of film
form will only be complete if and when it accounts not just for expressive
holism of complete works, but for the aesthetic specificity of bits, pieces,
errant home movies, and other ‘abandonware.’

III.

Fiction and documentary films are crafted to capture the attention of as
large an audience as possible, unbound by limits of a specific time and
place of viewing. Film canons imply the existence of works of inherent,
universal, and enduring value. And while it took Hollywood until the 1950s
to comprehend the longevity of film, it has been focused on the long-term
exploitation of copyrights ever since. By contrast, unless we watch them
with a “documentary attitude” in the sense of Meunier, i.e. with an eye to
historical detail such as clothing and design, home movies appear to interest
only those who made them or appeared in them, while passion for ephemeral
films fades with the occasion for which they were made.

To say that other people’s home movies and most ephemeral films lack
interest is another way of saying that they are boring. As Patrice Petro and
others have argued, boredom, defined as lack of interest, is a genuinely modern state of mind.\textsuperscript{17} The modern subject emerges in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century philosophy as the bearer of a reflexive consciousness, and of passions and interests.\textsuperscript{18} Only a subject capable of passions and interests can experience boredom as the absence of interest. If distraction, as Heide Schlüpmann argues, obfuscates the bourgeois world’s loss of metaphysical elevation, boredom, defined as the absence of interest, points to that loss. Boredom undermines a state of affairs in which the passions and the interests are constantly activated towards some specific goal or purpose. More specifically, boredom marks the point where the production of subjectivity, which critics from Adorno to Lazzarato have identified as the modus operandi of the cultural industries, breaks down.\textsuperscript{19} If boredom can thus be read, as Schlüpmann suggests, as a critique of the production logic of modern bourgeois society, watching other people’s home movies and other films devoid of interest becomes a critical, and even political, act.\textsuperscript{20} As Patrice Petro writes, “Hidden in the innovation of distraction and shock is the despair that nothing further will happen. Hidden in the negativity of waiting, however, is the anticipation that something (different) might happen.”\textsuperscript{21} Perhaps paradoxically, Petro claims, boredom “habitualizes renewed perception.” Renewing perception, of course, is the signature trait of art as understood by the Russian formalists. An aesthetic of cinema as non-art, then, has to account for this paradox: it is precisely by virtue of the fact that it is devoid of interest, i.e. inherently boring, that cinema as non-art behaves like art, and can perform the function of an artwork.

To understand this paradox better, we need to look at situations in which ephemeral films behave unexpectedly, (re-)awaken interest, and replace boredom with excitement: situations in which something indeed happens. One such instance occurred in the fall of 2004, when the Bergbaumuseum, the German National Museum of Mining in Bochum at the heart of the Ruhr Valley, organized a series of public screenings of mining films from their archive. There were more than 180 mines in West Germany in the early 1950s, with a large concentration in the Ruhr Valley. After the coal crisis of 1957/1958, the coal industry went into a managed decline; the last mines, in Bottrop and Ibbenbüren, closed in 2018. Founded in 1930 and opened in the 1950s, the National Museum of Mining is the largest of its kind in the world and holds an important film collection. Screenings are a regular feature of Industriekultur, the public celebration of industrial heritage. The films screened in 2004 dated from the 1930s through the 1960s and covered public relations, work safety, recruitment, and advertising for coal. None of the films was from a famous director or otherwise known, but all screenings were packed.
As much as by the films, I was enthralled by the spectacle of spectators experiencing the screenings in a palpably tactile way or, as the saying goes, with every fiber of their bodies. Work safety films were particularly instructive. They focused on workplace hazards, always exemplified in a dramatic scene of an accident. The audience – many of them former miners, who had been shown some of the films in their own training – tended to deride these scenes in the discussion after the screenings, mostly for the hammy acting. Rather than to the dramatization of danger, they appeared to respond to the evocation of their former workplace. In part, the discussions after the films re-litigated the labor conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s. But the politics of past decades alone could not explain the excitement of the audience.

As Jean-Pierre Meunier points out in *The Structures of the Film Experience*, the relational, intersubjective structure of the film experience always implies an element of contagion between spectators. Any spectator will also act as a second-order observer of the other spectators. He or she will track their responses and, more often than not, mimetically adjust to the response of the others in the cinema. 22 Focusing on the spectator’s relationship with the body on-screen, Meunier quotes the following passage from Hesnard:

> My body of natural knowledge – my perceived body – finds in the body of the other person a kind of extension of its own intentions: our two bodies are inhabited by the same anonymous existence. Furthermore, our two bodies realize, or at least give a hint of, expressive and significative movements, and form a single system by completing each other (p. 44/45).

Vivian Sobchack later develops this thought into the idea of the film’s body, a basic experiential structure, which enables our engagement with a film. Christiane Voss, in turn, speaks of the *Leihkörper* of the film, of the spectator as a “surrogate body.” 23 But the logic of extension also pertains to the other viewers: film and spectators aggregate as a plurality, rather than as atomized individuals. At the Bochum screening, however, the contagion by aggregation had its limits. Partly because the response of the other audience members was so intense, those who did not share their background, like myself, were confined to the position of outsiders or second-order observers. My response to the films was, in fact, largely predicated upon what they meant to the other members of the audience.

Extrapolating from self-observation and drawing on models and insights inherited from philosophy and psychology, theories of spectatorship usually assume an ideal spectator to be able to make general statements about viewer engagement. The feminist critique developed by Laura Mulvey and
others in the 1970s and 1980s introduced gender as a key marker of the spectator subject, while cultural studies in the 1980s added race and class to distinguish between modes of spectatorship. More recently, queer theory and intersectional analysis have contributed to differentiate current notions of spectatorship further.

One could, of course, describe my taking the position of second-order observer as a performance of class privilege. When I first took the job at Ruhr University, colleagues asked me how I was dealing with the ‘culture shock’ of trading Zurich, one of the richest cities in the world, with the post-industrial cityscape of Bochum. But I would argue that the challenge offered by the Bochum audience reaches beyond differences of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation.

One lesson that Gilles Deleuze retains from phenomenology is the heuristic value of epoché, the bracketing of established beliefs and consolidated (if not reified) concepts and categories. Highlighting Deleuze’s concern with thinking immanence beyond the dualities of traditional metaphysics, Leonard Lawlor writes that the “challenge of immanence appears to be nothing less than the challenge with which phenomenology confronts traditional metaphysics.”24 As Deleuze argues himself, the concept of the image in his cinema books offers an underhanded critique of the unacknowledged transcendentalism of the then-dominant psychoanalytic theories of spectatorship.25 For Deleuze, the image is not something perceived or gazed at by the spectator; rather, spectatorship is something folded into and out of the image as event.

Along similar lines, one of the lessons of the Bochum screening seems to be that we need to account for the specifics of the viewing event rather than frame it in terms of the conceptual abstraction of a viewing subject and the declination of its attributes. More specifically, I would argue that the Bochum audience’s response points to the role of what Michael Polanyi proposes to call “tacit knowledge,” while my reaction to that response highlights the importance of what Donna Haraway calls “situated knowledge,” the specific knowledge of the researcher and its experiential limits. Tacit knowledge, the non-propositional knowledge acquired through personal experience, which Hesnard seems to refer to as “natural knowledge,” plays into every event of viewing a film.26 At a general level, we understand the conventions of cinema without necessarily being able to name and describe them. At a more individual level, we respond to a film as it relates to our personal experience, and we infuse the film’s world with our knowledge of a given space, situation, or conflict. To put it in more Deleuzian terms, we affect the film as it affects us. As we engage with a narrative film, that affect
remains subordinate to the emotional engagement which is patterned into the narrative structure of the film. But with films like the mining films, which elicit no strong emotional engagement based on narrative or visual invention, the knowledge with which we affect the film takes center stage, and in a way overwhelms the film. As Jean-Pierre Meunier argues, the film experience is “a perceptual experience that underpins the imaginary attitude of consciousness” (p. 152). What Meunier writes about home movies also applies to utility films: “There is a constitutive activity on the part of consciousness. In short, consciousness constantly exceeds the image, which serves precisely as a medium between the reality perceived in the past and my present consciousness of this reality” (p. 107). In her work on the home movie, Vivian Sobchack draws on Meunier’s typology of viewing attitudes to argue that we can shift from one attitude to the other even as we watch a film. As the discussion after the screenings suggested, the Bochum audience explored all three attitudes. They adopted a fiction attitude towards the characters in the films, exploring the being-with and being-as modes of the fiction attitude (or alignment and allegiance, to use the terms of Murray Smith’s model of character participation), ultimately finding the characterization unconvincing, as they indicated in their critique of the acting and the mise en scène. They adopted a documentary attitude, treating the films as purveyors of knowledge about the world, which led to the debate about labor strife and work safety regulation. Most importantly, however, they treated the films as film-souvenirs, even though they were clearly not watching a home movie of any kind. Perhaps based on an element of self-recognition in the being-as mode, the vicarious participation in the character’s experience, the reality perceived in the past through these films was their own. In that sense, the former miners responded to the films with an excess of consciousness, which was based in their tacit knowledge of the workplace, while I reflexively responded to their perception of a reality in the past, which I had not lived and could not access. One could argue that this split describes the viewing situation of any ephemeral film: there are those who have grounds to respond to the films, and there are those who do not. In a unique way, and more than conventional fiction and documentary films, the viewing situation of utility films exemplifies the situatedness of the viewer’s knowledge. Arguing for a feminist objectivity, Donna Haraway writes that objectivity is not about “transcendence and splitting of subject and object” but “about specific and particular embodiment,” and that only “partial perspective promises objective vision.” The viewing situation of ephemeral films makes that partial perspective palpable. The experience of the film fragment, of the
ruins of works, and of works that are in ruins because they lost their original mission, is itself fractured and fragmented, an experience in ruins, and we have to understand it as such.

If the Bochum miners overwhelmed the mining films with an excess of consciousness fueled by their lived experience of the industrial past, the films required a different excess of consciousness, a different feat of the imagination, of those who did not share that past. They had to treat these films as virtual film-souvenirs, as films that worked as film-souvenirs for others but could only work as such for them if they imagined having shared the same experience. In the case of the Bochum screening, this meant imagining the experience of working in a coal mine, an epitome of the industrial world, from the vantage point of a post-industrial lived world. Yet a reliving of the past as it had been, a wie es gewesen in the sense of nineteenth-century German historian Ranke, remained out of reach for such an act of imagination. Ineluctably, it remained coupled with a second-order observation of others experiencing their remembrance of the past as it had been first hand. A comparison to two other types of film, the trailer and the historical drama, can help us define what such an act of the imagination entails. If the movie trailer presents the film in the form of a virtual memory, i.e. as we would remember it had we already seen it, the utility film challenges us to imagine what we would remember had we lived what it refers to, had we lived through its specific occasion. And where the historical drama produces subjectivity, addressing and interpellating its viewers as members of a polity and an “imagined community” whose history the film purports to tell, the utility film returns the viewer to her “partial perspective that promises objective vision.”

Lest we shift to what Meunier calls the “documentary attitude” and content ourselves with a historicist curiosity for period detail, the utility film works as an engine of the historical imagination in a reflexive way. It is an aesthetic device, i.e. it has the potential to renew perception and to elicit as Yacavone states, a “reflexive, knowledgeable, and sensitive consciousness” of the fundamental process of lived perception, precisely insofar and because the boredom it promises clears the space for the historical imagination to do its work. In that sense, if the film experience is indeed, as Meunier argues, a perceptual experience that “underpins the imaginary attitude of consciousness” (p. 152), it is the film-souvenir that invites the strongest effort of the imagination – or, more specifically, the utility film, the ephemeral film or home movie, imagined as a virtual film-souvenir by those who do not share the past reality to which the film refers. This might also explain why the home-movie fragment has become such a popular technique in narrative
cinema: it invites an excess of consciousness that anchors the fiction film more deeply in the lived experience of the viewer. It has been argued that the industrial film, a key format of the utility film, is a parasite, a function rather than a format that can shift shapes according to the situation.  

But in terms of aesthetic experience, the relationship can be reversed, and it can be the fiction film that thrives on the strength of the film-souvenir, or rather of the virtual film-souvenir.

IV.

But if film-souvenirs are indeed, as Meunier writes, a “medium between the reality perceived in the past and my present consciousness of this reality” (p. 107), then what about their form?

According to Yacavone, form only exists in a given medium as expressive holism. Whether it be a fragment, a ruin, a concoction with an ephemeral purpose or an aid to the memory of someone we never knew, most utility films lack an auteur and a primary aesthetic purpose, both of which would be required to achieve expressive holism. In retrospect, some industrial films from the format’s golden age, i.e. the 1950s and 1960s, can be reappraised.
as forgotten milestones of modernism. Robert Menegoz’s *Only the Fogs Are Grey*, a 1965 documentary for Thyssen steelworks photographed by Sacha Vierny, comes to mind, or the collaborations between industrial filmmakers and pioneers of electronic music in 1960s Italy. Yet *Only the Fogs Are Grey* is a recruitment film, extolling the virtues of a highly automated steel factory to potential hires among the moviegoing public. Such films are the Schroedinger’s cats of cinematic art: they are art and non-art at the same time.

We could contend that the external purpose of a film like *Only the Fogs are Grey* is no longer relevant today and treat the film as a self-sufficient artwork. But this would obfuscate the historicity of our viewing situation, and with it, the aesthetic specificity of the film. Viewing, from our post-industrial vantage point, an industrial film from the golden age requires an effort of the historical imagination to compensate for the limits of our situated knowledge: it requires, if you will, post-industrial objectivity. As a consequence, whatever form we can claim for a utility film must be a form in a “medium between the reality in the past and my present consciousness of this reality” (p. 107).

Phenomenology emerged in response to an existential contradiction, which also posed a fundamental challenge to philosophy: the discrepancy between the rapidly expanding scientific knowledge about the world and the subject’s fading conceptual grasp of the unity and totality of that world. For philosophy to stay true to its mission, it had to find a way to bridge that gap. A return to ‘the things themselves’ and the study of the constitutive acts of consciousness of a being embedded in the lived world, rather than of the ontological structure of the world as a totality of being, was the answer. On a much smaller scale, the project of a phenomenology of film form which includes cinema as non-art responds to a similar challenge: to provide a conceptual grasp for a ‘vast domain’ of films without having to resort to a selective criterion like authorship or the primacy of aesthetic purpose to seize the unity and totality of its object.

In the absence of an author, the viewer has to step in and provide the form that distinguishes the utility film as an aesthetic object. Just as the lack of interest was the key to understanding the structure of the utility film experience, the lack of formal unity provides the key to its form. Utility films are ephemeral not just because of their purpose, but because of their form: where art can rely on the relative solidity of ‘expressive holism,’ the form of the utility film is ultimately the fleeting, transitory work of the historical imagination, which operates in the medium “between the reality perceived in the past and my present consciousness of that reality.” When the production of subjectivity breaks down and an expressive authority fails to materialize, the productive subject gets to play and takes responsibility for form.
But we would be remiss if we thought that the formal disunity and ephemeral was a sufficient criterion to distinguish De Kuyper’s “vast domain of cinema as non-art” from cinema as art. In fact, one could argue that, in the contemporary digital ecology, the conditions of intelligibility of cinema as art are now aligning with those of cinema as non-art. Dominique Païni points out that a true film history has only become possible with the emergence of digital image technologies. The film exhibition, which, starting in the 1990s helped cinémathèques redefine their mission in the face of the competition from high-quality home video formats like the DVD, creates historical meaning by juxtaposing film fragments with other fragments, texts, material objects, and photographs. De Kuyper’s vision of an aesthetic of film history that comprises fragments and ruins of works has become the default mode not just of the history of cinema as non-art, but of the history of cinema as art. Merely a stepping stone on the path towards the film forms that really matter in Meunier’s phenomenology of film experience, the utility film, by virtue of its formal disunity, turns out to be a paradigm of a true history of cinema.

Notes

3. Ibid., p. 108.
5. Yacavone. “Film and the Phenomenology of Art,” p. 177.
6. Ibid., p. 173.


30. See the introduction by Vinzenz Hediger and Parick Vonderau in Vinzenz Hediger and Parick Vonderau (eds.), *Films that Work: Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), pp. 9-16.


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